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The videogame magazine

May 1999  
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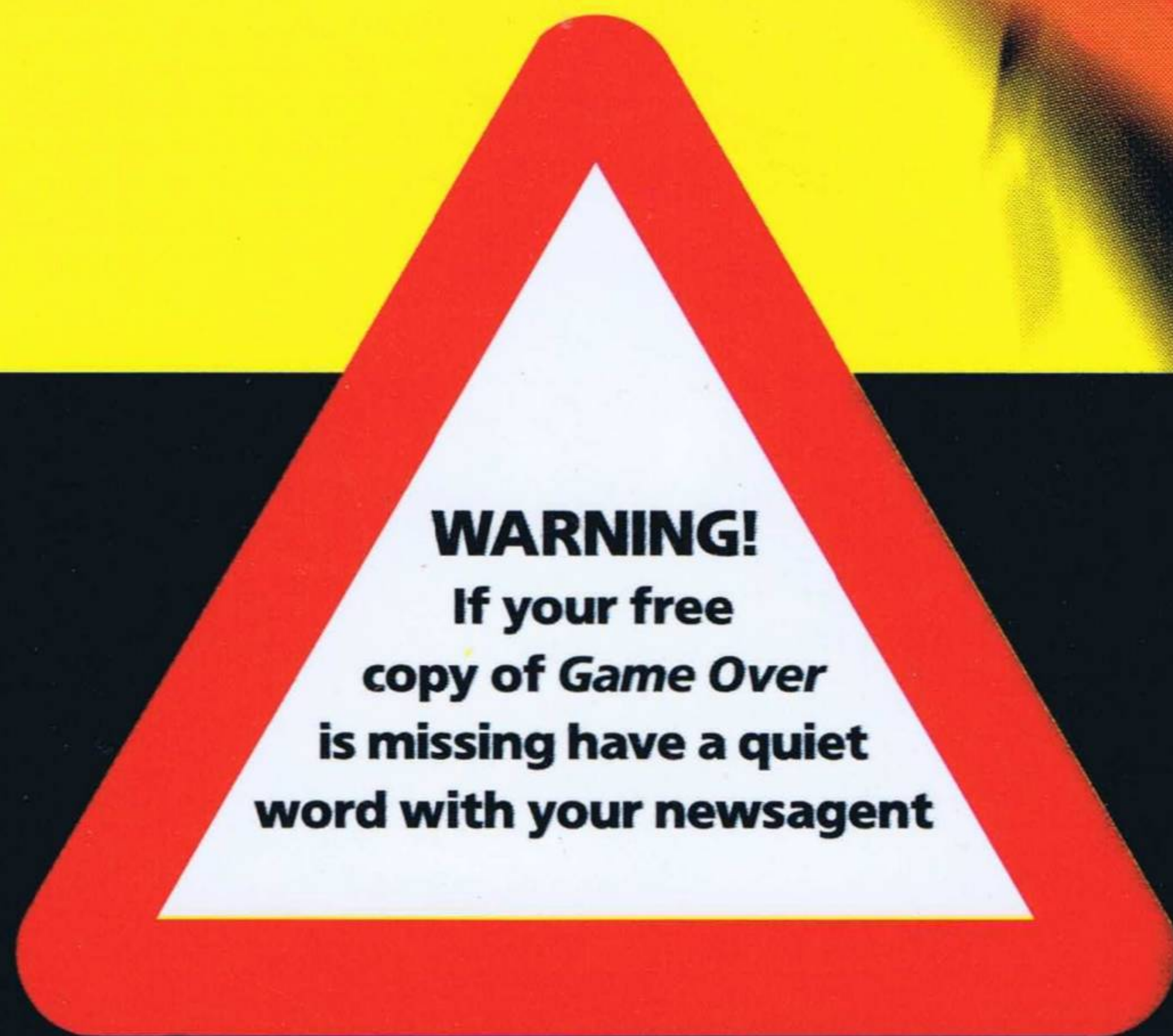
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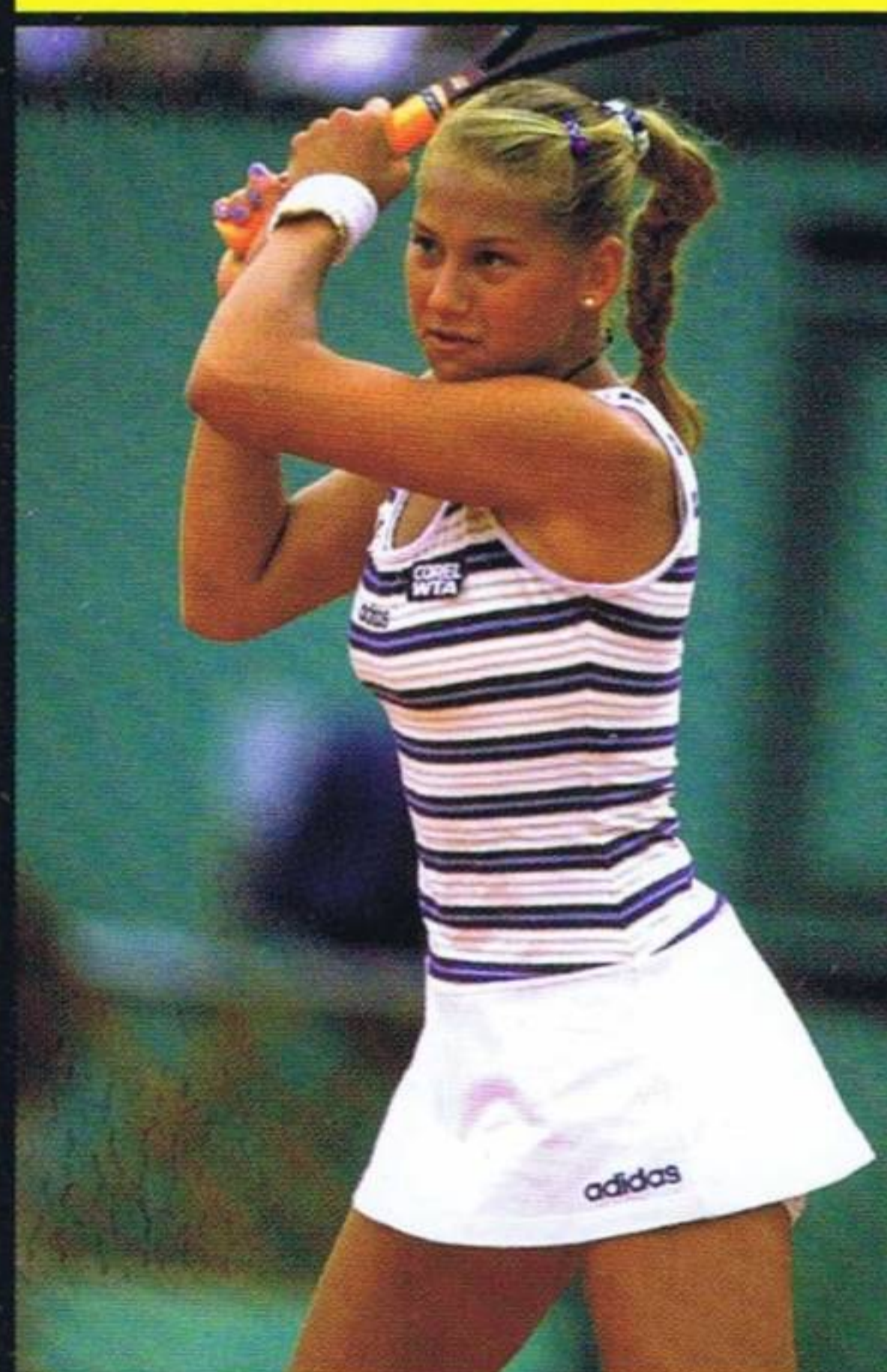
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## **JIMMY WHITE PLAYS VIDEOGAMES**

**"The Whirlwind" reveals his new snooker game**



## **BRACE YOURSELF**

**For new videogames with Aliens, Predators, and Anna Kournikova**

## **PLAYSTATION 2**

**Sony insiders tell the real story**



## **DRIVE LIKE A PRO**

**Expert tips for Ridge Racer Type 4**



## **MEN VS WOMEN**

**Who's best? Top Gear's Vicki rear-ends TOCA pro Jason in SegaWorld**

PLAYSTATION NINTENDO 64 PC GAME BOY

**NEW!**

The videogame magazine

May 1999  
Issue 6 £2.70



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**RIDGE RACER TYPE 4**

Reviewed head-to-head with  
11 classic racing videogames

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Introducing the "8 pints  
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challenge"

**IN THE PITS**

Race games of the  
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**CRASH!  
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**IT'S A VIDEOGAME RACING SPECIAL**

ON THE GRID: *Le Mans 24 Hours*/*Ridge Racer Type 4*/*Driver*/*Rollcage*/*Sega Rally 2*/*Grand Prix 3*/*V-Rally 2*/*Gran Turismo 2*

**148**  
pages of

Nintendo 64  
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PlayStation 2  
Jimmy White  
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Films  
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& more!

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PLAYSTATION, N64,  
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**"HELLO BOYS"**  
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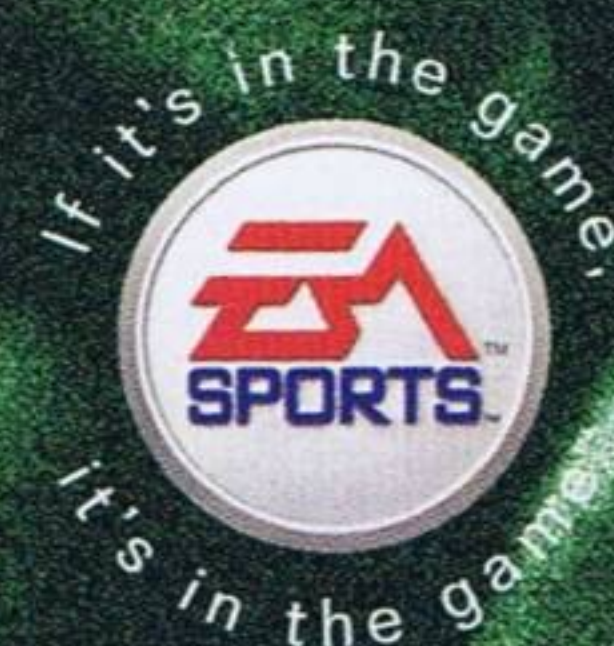


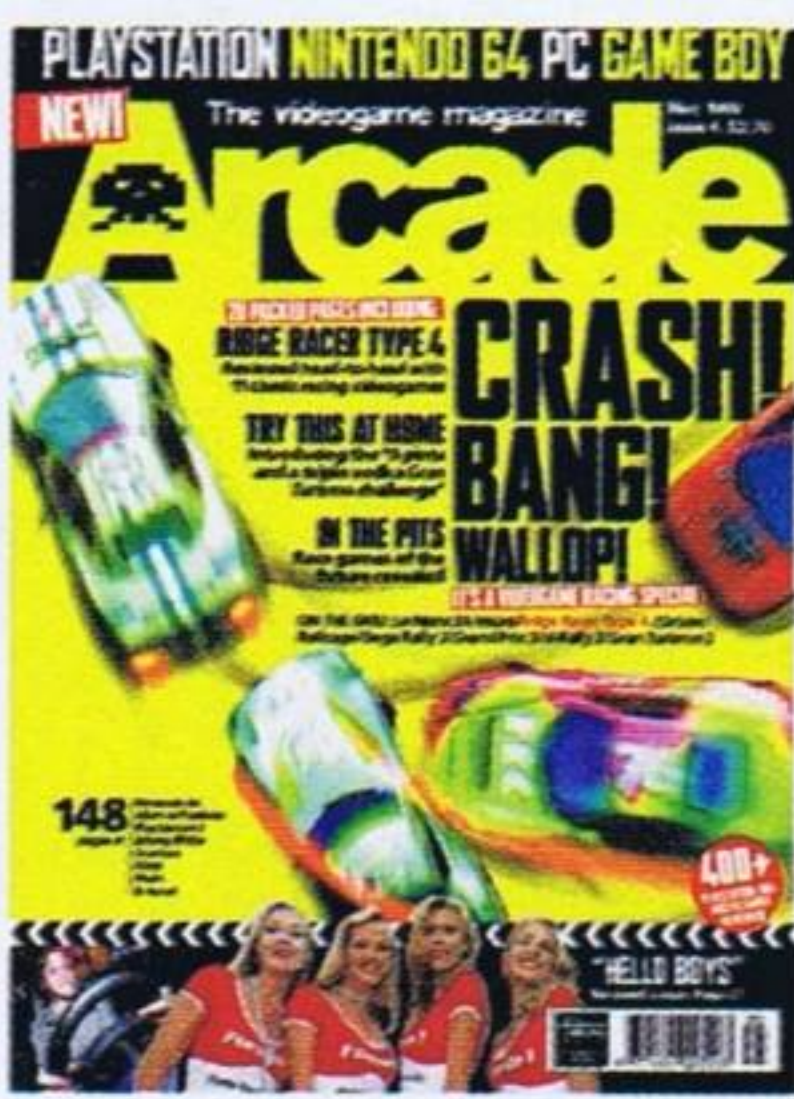
Total European club football - all the clubs, all the leagues, all the cups.

			
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# OBEY MY FEET





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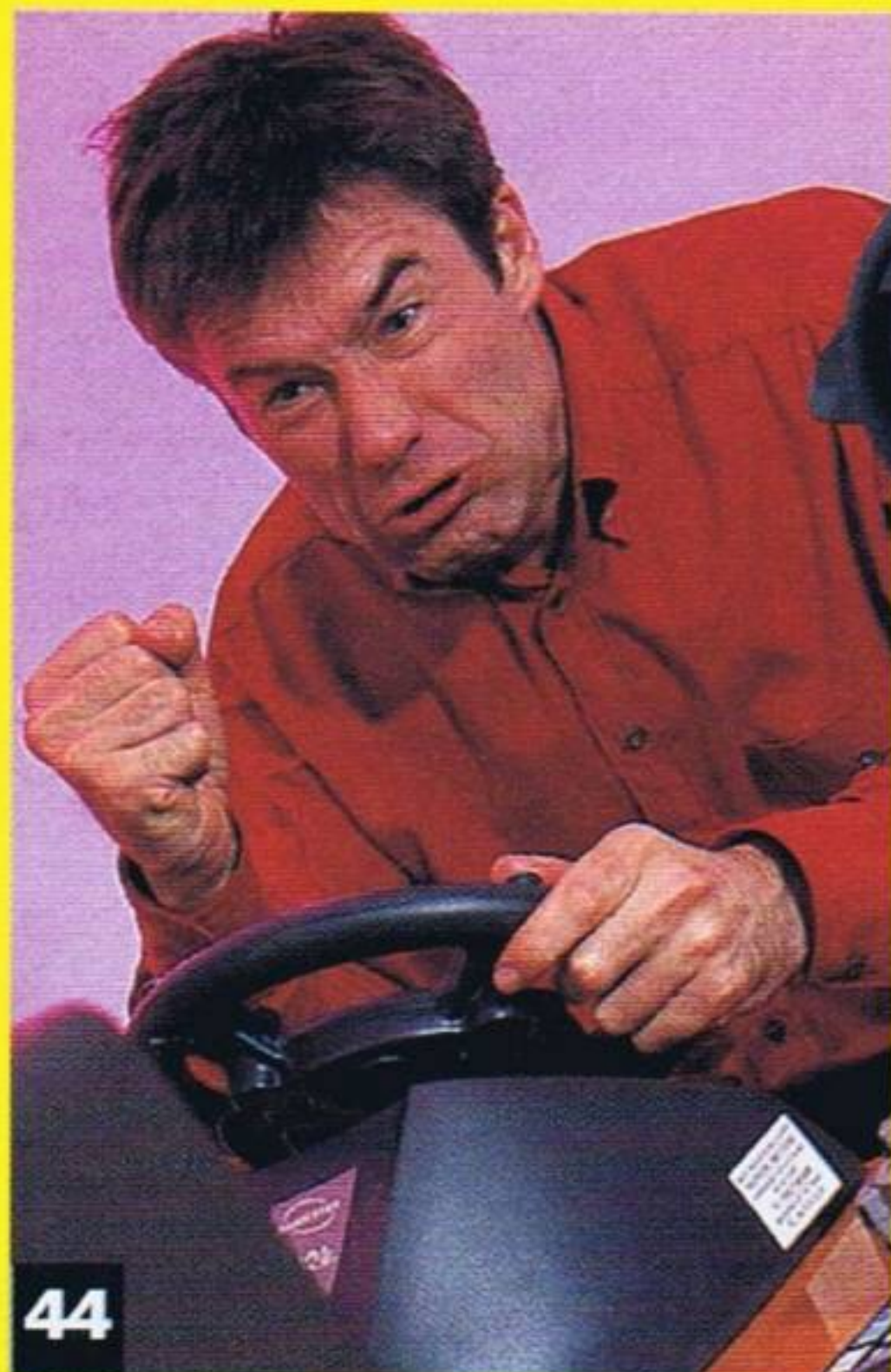
We'll pay for this one.

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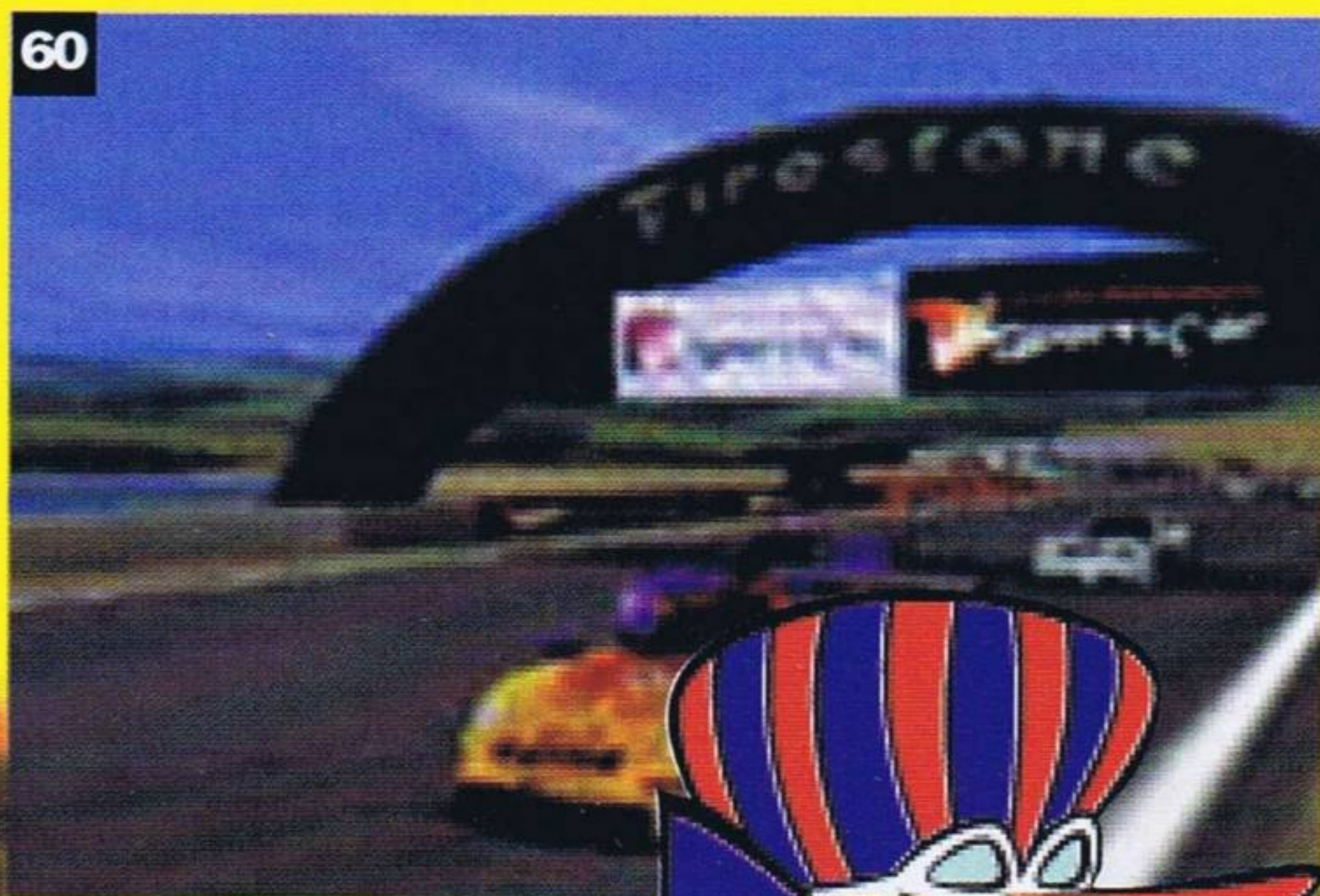
Glug. Hic! KerrSmash!



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PHOTOGRAPHY: ALLSPORT



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ILLUSTRATION: COURTESY OF CARTOON NETWORK



Final Fantasy VIII heads the UK. PlayStation 2.

# Arcade

The videogame magazine

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Cover "Ridge Racer Type 4" (Namco)

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**GAME OVER**  
NINTENDO'S BATTLE TO DOMINATE VIDEOGAMES  
DAVID SHEFF

'BEST BOOK EVER WRITTEN ABOUT VIDEOGAMES'  
Next Generation

# A Review

The Ultimate Game Buyer's Guide

## 88 New PlayStation Games

**New releases:** Bloodlines, Civilization 2, Diver's Dream, Gex: Deep Cover Gecko, KKND: Krossfire, Player Manager: Season 98/99, R-Type Delta, Racing Simulation Monaco Grand Prix, Ridge Racer Type 4, Rug Rats, Swing, Tank Racer, UEFA Champions League.

## 98 New PC Games

**New releases:** Aliens vs Predator, Brian Lara Cricket, Dark Vengeance, F-16 Aggressor, Guardian of Darkness, Grand Theft Auto: London, Jimmy White's 2: Cueball, Microsoft Golf 1999, Quest For Glory V, Roller Coaster Tycoon, Silver, Warzone 2100.

**Budget games:** Actua Soccer, Atomic Bomberman, Civilization 2, The Curse of Monkey Island, Extreme Action, Heavy Gear, Heroes of Might and Magic 2, Imperium Galactica, Outlaws, Tex Murphy: Overseer, Worms 2, Zork Grand Inquisitor.

## 108 New N64 Games

**New releases:** All Star Baseball 2000, Battletanx, Chameleon Twist 2, Milo's Astro Lanes, Racing Simulation Monaco Grand Prix.

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**68 Jimmy White**  
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COVER PHOTOGRAPHY: ANNA KOURNIKOVA, RACING GIRLS: ALLSPORT, JIMMY WHITE: JUSTIN SCOBIE, MEN VS WOMEN: JUDE EDGINTON

## Every issue

It's packed solid.

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# Right here, right now



With Neil West, Editor

**H**ello. And welcome to the sixth issue of *Arcade*. Come in, come in. Have a nose around. Make yourself at home. We hope you like your free book. Don't worry that it's just about Nintendo (it's not). Don't be put off because its emphasis is on "business" and the videogame "industry" (it's not boring at all). And don't get suspicious just because it's free (we've been chasing a deal to give you this specific book away for months. Why? Because we know you'll love it).

It's one of the most page-turningly interesting books I've ever read. And it just so happens to be about videogames, specifically Nintendo's rise to power through the 1980s and into the 1990s. It's an enjoyable history lesson for anyone interested in knowing more about where videogames came from, and – above all – it's a damn good read. Something *Arcade* aspires to be, too.

Anyway.

Sony revealed the technology that will power PlayStation 2 this month. And it's going to be awesome. We cover the story in three ways: there's an eye-witness account of the unveiling on page 12; in-depth analysis of what it all means on page 18; and an exclusive interview with Sony's VP of Research & Development on page 40. You won't find better coverage.

But remember, PlayStation 2 is still well over a year away. Don't let anticipation for what's in the future spoil your enjoyment of what's here today. That would be like fast forwarding through a great movie, just to see what happens at the finale.

Cheers,

Neil West  
Editor

■ Link, from the much hyped but worthy *Zelda*. As slagged off by our star letter of the month.



# Rants & Raves

**“Tell us your feelings on the videogame industry”, we said. And lo, the postbag was heavily stuffed with correspondence from angry readers, game industry executives, confused grannies, a village idiot, and some bloke who swears a lot.**

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

### In sickness and in elf

**Z**elda is not the greatest game in the world ever. Before you burn me at the stake for heresy please allow me to explain. Your “national elf” (ha, ha) article (*Arcade 4*) read more like a Nintendo press release than an independent piece of journalism. *Zelda* has some serious flaws.

The most serious of which is its length. Nine main dungeons is simply not enough in a game heralded as “epic” in so many magazines. Gannondorf’s castle is decidedly weak too. The world often looks blocky, giving away its long development history – some of these graphics must have been created three years ago. And why isn’t there more detail on the Sheikahs? Why aren’t we allowed to play around in the sacred realm? For a part of the story as important as that it is pretty frustrating that we only ever glimpse it in cut scenes. What is up the river beyond the waterfall to the right of the bridge on the approach to the Gerudo’s valley? We never get to explore it. So much for “the complete freedom of movement” you drooled over.

All three *Tomb Raiders* have been released in the three years since *Zelda* was announced. That’s a hell of a lot of levels and puzzles and set pieces. Surely the developers of *Zelda* could have managed a little more. And yet not one article or review of the game has offered anything but unadulterated praise and naked sycophancy. Please have some perspective; you are professional journalists not fourteen year old girls gushing over Boyzone.

Andrew Clarke  
Edmonton, London

So you’re claiming that the King’s not wearing any clothes, right? Nice try, but no cigar this time. *Zelda 64* isn’t perfect, certainly, but it’s so far ahead of the lame, tame, seen-it-all-before clones that form the majority of each month’s releases. And you’re right in assuming that games journalists can fall foul of hype. It’s also true that, once a game finds itself dubbed a “classic”, the tag usually sticks – no matter what conclusions more long-term play may yield. But *Zelda* has pedigree through and through.

We admire your bravery though.



## Write to us at Arcade

■ Let’s have some mail bonding. Let your feelings be known. Send your letters to:

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Future Publishing,  
30 Monmouth Street,  
Bath BA1 2BW.

E-mail us at: [arcade.mag@futurenet.co.uk](mailto:arcade.mag@futurenet.co.uk)

The best letter each month wins an exclusive *Arcade* T-shirt as sported here as always by Lisa. Some of you have pointed out that we never change her photo. In fact we take a new photo every month, but since Lisa is actually a blow-up doll the shot just looks identical.





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Special thanks to **Playboy**

**The Comedy Network**

**Perrin "Angel" Kaplan**

## On the side

Brilliant mag. Too much in it, though. I am still reading the old one when the new one comes out. **Charmjit Nagra, via e-mail**

*It's a bit smaller this month. Give you a chance to catch up.*

Why are you so anti-Nintendo? The mag's full of snide little comments like "Videogaming's best kept secret? The sales figures would certainly suggest so!" and you describe N64 as one of the "less popular" systems. This mag is shit! **Piss off!**

**David Rolands, via e-mail**

*David. Go home, grow up, then come back and have another go. PlayStation has sold several times more than Nintendo 64. That makes N64 "less popular". Not less good, necessarily, but definitely less popular. You twonk.*

Do any of you remember *Barbarian 2*, famous for having page three "stunna" Maria Whittaker on the cover? Have a look at the barbarian. It's none other than Wolf from *Gladiators*. **Noel Wallace, via e-mail**

*He's not wrong. And next month we'll be running a feature on the best videogame ads over the years. One of which, surprise surprise, is Palace's Barbarian 2 campaign...*

I am writing to you to say that I am not just an ordinary games player, I am in fact The Ultimate Games Player\* of 1999. **The Ultimate Games Player® / Aka ninja, via e-mail**

*You're exactly the type of person we're looking for on page 27.*

## If I were a carpenter

I was pleasantly surprised to see you include John Carpenter as one of the 50 most influential people in the games business, in your "Power Players" feature (*Arcade 5*, page 47). You were spot on with the observation that most games are influenced by him, Lucas, Romero and Cameron, but neglected to mention the impact that Carpenter has had on game music. The sinister, minimalist scores that he made for his own films were used as templates for musicians working on Amiga and ST titles in the '80s, and on the PC today. The theme for his movie *Assault On Precinct 13* was remixed by *Bomb The Bass* for *Xenon II* and turned into one of the best remixes of any music ever. Carpenter himself recently showed how it should be done with his excellent score for *Sentinel Returns* on PlayStation. In the '90s, titles like *Zelda 64* have introduced much more variety and depth into game music, but I feel that there will always be a place for his kind of moody, atmospheric tunes in the action/adventure genre.

**Imaad Shan, via e-mail**

*Yeah, as you can tell we're big fans too. Long may he continue.*

*a player feels. This involvement can be nurtured through the use of well-loved characters (Mario, Sonic, James Bond), a great story (Final Fantasy 7), an empowering game world (Quake) or, among others, objects and scenarios that come charged with "real world" importance. Metal Gear Solid, as with many games, blends several of these ingredients to create a heady cocktail few gamers are able to resist.*

*Stuart Campbell takes this point further in this month's Games Insider (page 36), explaining his belief that, when it comes to delivering a great gaming experience, it's "believability" and not necessarily "realism" that counts.*

*And then there's this bloke...*

## Life sucks

What's so bad about companies making games that accurately simulate war? I'm very sorry to break it to those who want these games banned, but the truth is that some people actually want to play "realistic" games. Yes, there are sad individuals out there, whose idea of a good time involves something a little more hard-hitting than running around the Enchanted Forest collecting Golden Apples.

I am a 26-year-old bloke, I can go into pubs, I can vote and can hire a transit van. I can watch films like *Platoon*. I can read books about the Gulf conflict. I also have *Sky News* and read *The Sunday Times* with a hangover. I do actually know what war is about. I have intelligence. I have a choice. And I would dearly like it to stay that way.

Taking a game off the shelf because it is "too realistic" is the beginning of the end. It is censorship in the extreme. It stinks.

Look at the world around you. Life sucks.

There is death, famine, war, Aids, murder, oppression, theft – all of which is part of the world we have created, which is mimicked by the game developers. It's not always healthy to pretend that bad things don't exist. Now, who's for a game of *Louise Woodward's Babysitting Challenge?* **Spencer Steel, via e-mail**

*Now you had to go and spoil it at the end.*

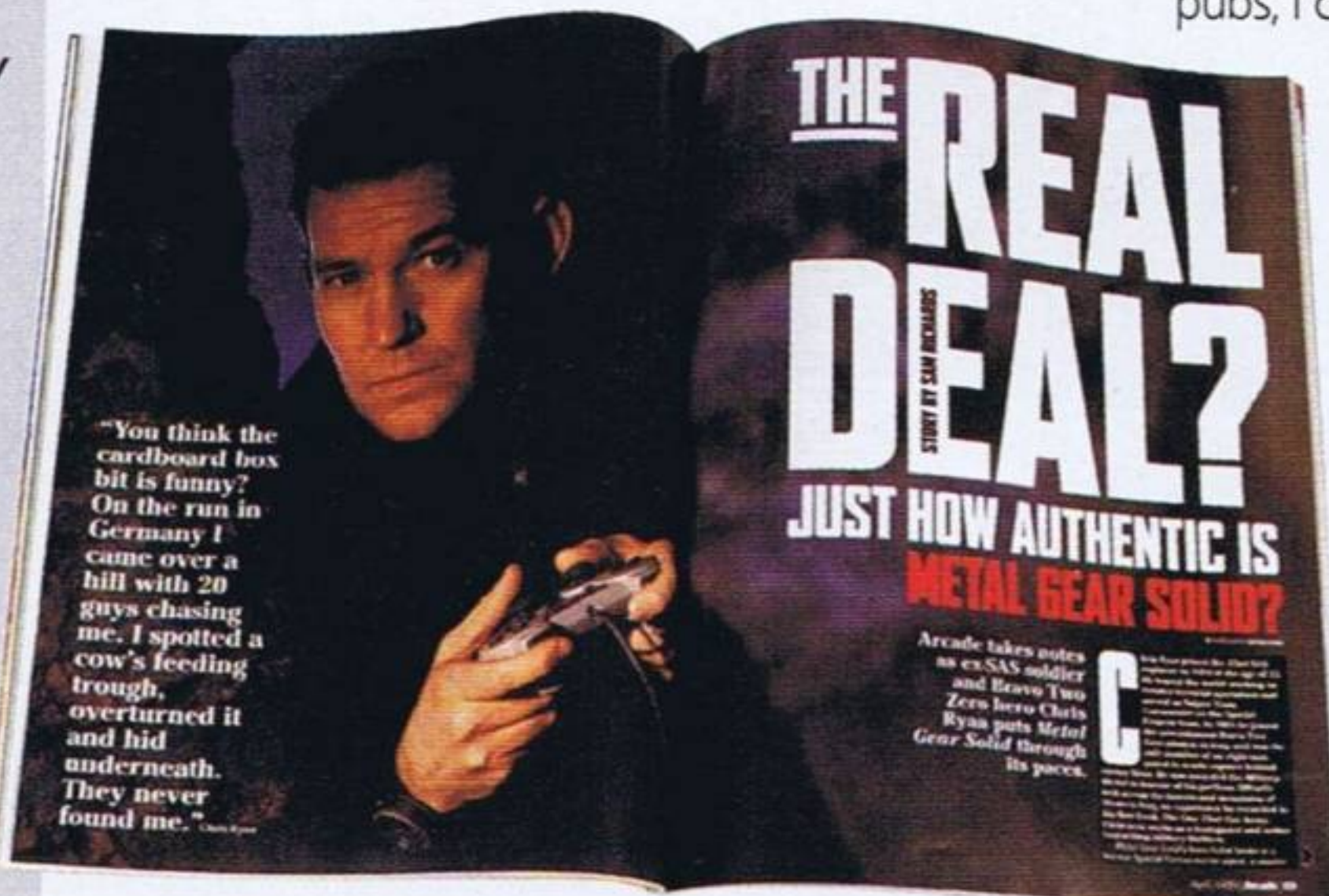
## Hands up

Erm, I don't want to be petty (but here goes anyway). Despite what SAS man Chris Ryan might say, all the weapons in *Metal Gear Solid* are very real.

The SOCOM is a big scary pistol made by Heckler and Koch. It's real. If you lived in America and had pots of cash you could buy one. The FA-MAS is the French Army's standard issue rifle. Join the French army and you'll get one for free (join the French Foreign Legion and you can have a new identity thrown in as well). The PSG-1 is a real rifle made by Heckler and Koch again and it's good for killing people from far away. If you lived in the States you could have one for, erm, killing deer, or bears, or rednecks running amok on y'all's plantation. Anyway, have fun.

**Julian Widdows, via e-mail**

*Chris was referring to the weapons that he would use (or any other SAS soldier would be equipped with) were he to be in Solid Snake's situation.*



## The real deal?

I enjoyed reading your feature on *Metal Gear Solid* (*Arcade 5*, "The Real Deal?", page 58). It's the kind of thought-provoking feature other games mags don't offer. I'd enjoyed *Metal Gear Solid* immensely, but when I went back to it after reading your article it somehow seemed even "grittier" and more important. Cheers.

Anyway, I was interested in the way you pitched the story as a test of *Metal Gear Solid's* "authenticity". SAS nutter Chris Ryan obviously knows his stuff, but the key moment was when he said the plot of his game was similar to his novel. You see? Not like his real life experiences but like his novel. I don't think *Metal Gear Solid* is meant to be real, it's meant to be like a film. Films are fun. You don't want to recreate real life all the time because long periods of it can be quite boring.

Take *Gran Turismo*. It's supposedly dead realistic. But the fact remains that if you rammed the other cars or the wall like you're allowed to in the game, your car would be damaged and your fun shortlived. So the developers have contrived the game with a certain amount of realism, but enough fantasy to make it fun to play. Realism is all very well, but we should all admit that a game has to be fun above all.

**Guy Banks, Colchester**

*Yep, it's fun that's the most important thing. But how much fun a game is to play often hinges on the emotional involvement*



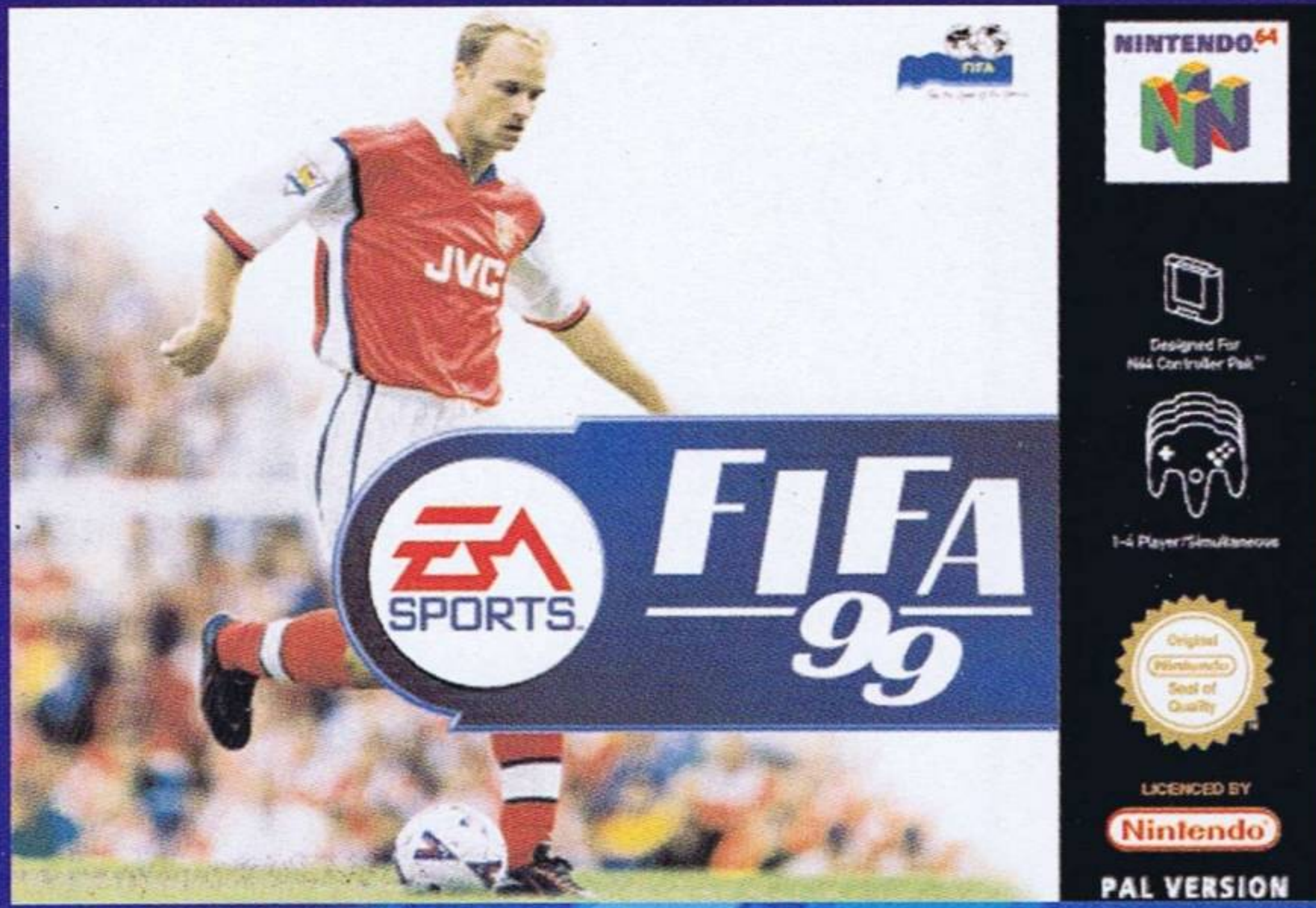
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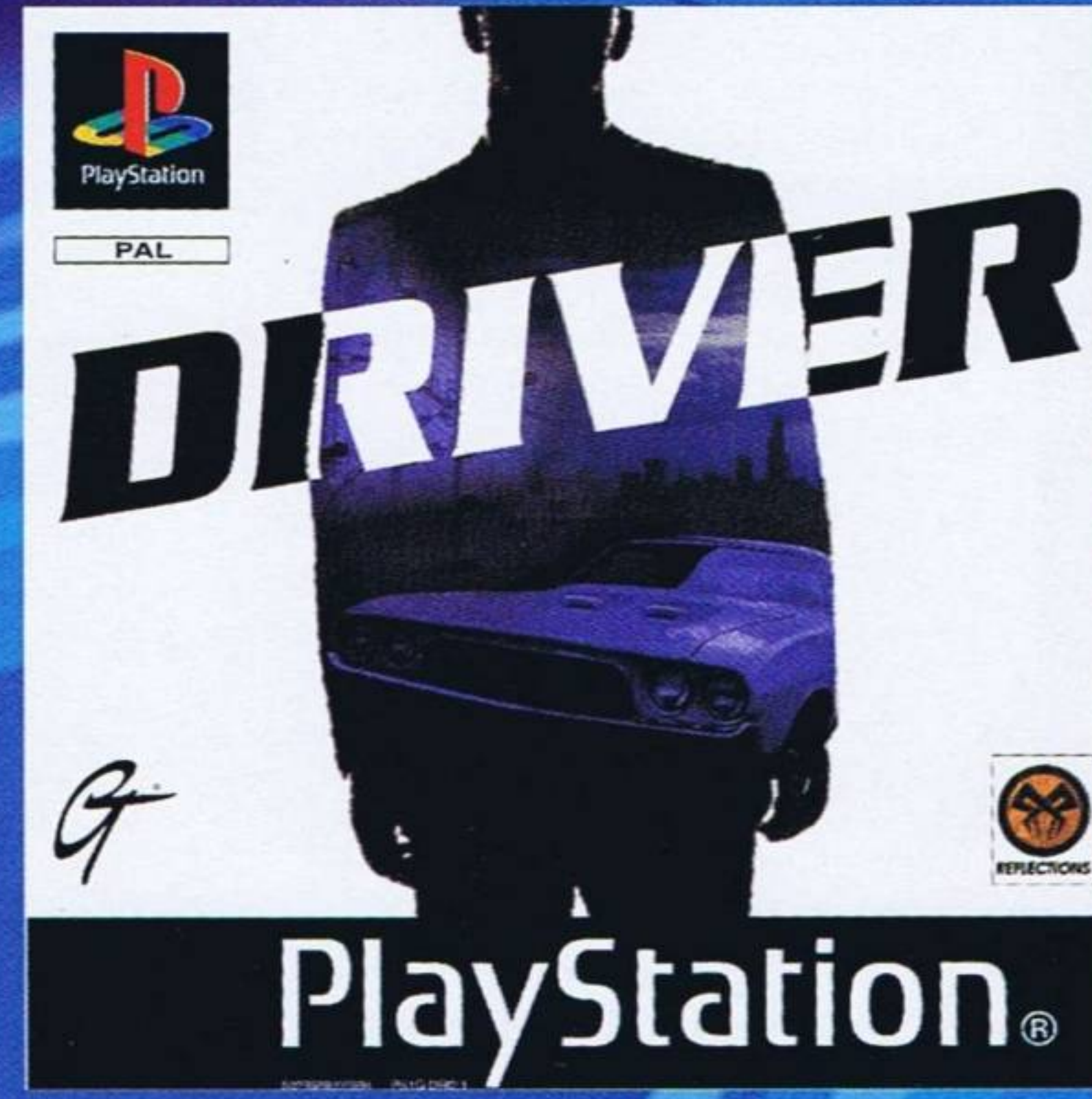
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# Rants & Raves <sup>3</sup>



■ GT's *Driver* is one of many games who's release date "slips". It's currently scheduled to hit the shops on 27 May.

## Slip slidin' away

Where on earth do you get your release dates from? I rang up GT Interactive and asked them for the release date of *Driver* on PlayStation. A nice lady told me that it should be out on 27th May. Now where the heck did your 26th March release date come from, as printed in *Arcade 4*? She said the date hadn't changed for about a month. You built my hopes up and now they are dashed. So in future please make your dates a little more accurate.

**Eric Parker, via e-mail**

*Release dates are correct to the best of our knowledge at the time of going to press. If, at the eleventh hour, the release of a game is delayed for a couple of months fine tuning and polishing (or, more likely, last minute bodging and frantic patch-up work) then there's nothing we can do.*

## Too bloody expensive

I read your piracy piece with interest and I think I can tell you exactly why piracy is so common. I have two sons who love videogames and a husband into music. My husband has a large CD collection and pays between £8 and £16 for a CD. That's expensive for something that probably just costs a couple of pounds to produce.

As for my sons and their PlayStation games, these also come on CDs and yet they have to pay around £35 for every new game. My sons are both still at school and have to save up all their pocket money and birthday money for their PlayStation games. It leaves them no money for other things that I'd prefer they spent their money on.

I don't condone piracy, but how can you blame people for being tempted to buy a game at a cheaper price? Surely the games companies could sell more if they reduced the price. And a reasonable price would stop piracy in its tracks.

**Sue Taylor, Sevenoaks**

*A fair point.*

## Sega Soccer

Okay, so we know that *Arcade* isn't a fan of Sega's old Saturn system. But an honourable mention for *Sega World Wide Soccer*, still possibly the finest football game in existence, in your videogame football special (*Arcade 4*) wouldn't have been too much to ask, would it? I'm sure if it had been released on PlayStation you wouldn't shut up about it.

**Steven Holt, via e-mail**

*Yeah, it was a great game. But there are so few people still playing Saturn games that there's very little point in us covering it. Sorry, but that's the way it is. That said...*

## Games for 47p

I thought the six other Sega Saturn owners in the country might be interested to know that nice Mr Dixons (not usually noted for his low prices) is going quite mad at the moment. I have recently bought *World Wide Soccer '97* (not a bad game by any means) for a mere 47p.

Why this cheap? Not even the shop assistant knew. Also on the shelf were *Manx TT* for £4.99, *Resident Evil* for £9.99, *Sega Rally* for £4.99, *Sega Ages* for £4.99 and plenty more similar bargains. The Saturn may not have done well but I can pick up 20 copies of a Saturn game for the

same price as one new PlayStation title.

**James D, Cardiff**

PS You must print this, you never print anything from Wales

*Bargains! Get 'em while they're hot.*

## Bearded tit

What is that tit with the beard on about? I'm talking about "Dr" Mark Griffiths, your resident psychologist, who spouts off in your news pages. To be fair, I quite enjoyed his piece about Lara Croft in *Arcade 1*, although his thread – that people liked *Tomb Raider* because they fancied Lara and the gameplay was rewarding and fun – was a bit obvious from the start.

But in conclusion to "Is videogame violence harmful?", all he could say was if violent games had any effect on the human psyche at all, which they probably didn't, then they were most likely to effect young children. Well, duh! I don't know why you print a picture of Dr Griffiths's face; surely a picture of his arse would be better because clearly that's what he's talking out of.

I'm not knocking your idea of having a game psychologist, just ask them better questions. Why are games addictive? Why do more boys like them than girls? What's the root of our fascination with violence? Questions that could be answered with some genuine psychological fact and would prove far more of an enjoyable read than the mess Dr Griffiths vomits up each month.

**Derick Travis, Chippenham**

*Now there's no need to be offensive. A problem is that he's a real psychologist, and sometimes the real deal can seem a little mundane compared to the tabloid, sensationalist "psychology" we get from Jerry Springer and The Sun. Still, he was a bit dull. Okay. He's gone.*

## Lara

You may remember a letter in *Arcade 4* dedicated to Lara Croft. It stated that Lara "is an empty vessel, a blank slate for each and every individual's personal ideals of female perfection". *Au contraire* friend Scofield, Lara is a deranged psychopath: in *Tomb Raider II*, where she steals the truck, and kills that bloke, she's wearing the biggest smile you've ever seen.

**Thomas Camfield, Beeston**

*You've got a point. And thinking about it, how do we feel about bringing Lara home to meet the folks? What would she wear? Can't see too many mothers approving.*

## Hubert Belger

Ah-ha, Mr West. Or should I say Mr Belger? I have discovered the truth. You are Hubert Belger from *Top Player's Golf* on the Neo Geo. And I enclose the proof.

**Gary Penn, via e-mail**

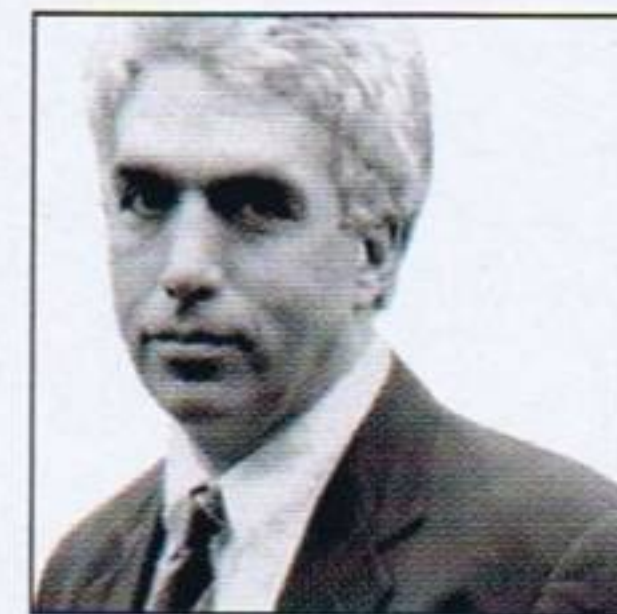
*Bloody hell. Quite clearly Neil is Hubert Belger. Do you look like a videogame character? If so, send in a picture and we'll print it. Maybe.*



■ Exposed: *Arcade* Ed Neil West's secret life as videogame golfer.

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Taking on all manner of ridiculous challenges to help *Arcade* pack the pages full this month are...**



## David Sheff

Unless you're so unbelievably keen to get to the Rants 'n' Raves section of *Arcade* each month that you've got to this bit without noticing the front cover, you'll know that every *Arcade* reader is also now the owner of a copy of *Game Over*,

"the greatest book about videogames ever written" as *Next Generation* magazine once said. And we'd agree with them. David is the author. "My son was just about the first kid in America to get a NES," he explains. "He and his friends became obsessed. But it was only when I saw a popularity poll in which Mario rated higher than Mickey Mouse that I realised the extent of the phenomena."

**Game of the moment:** "I enjoy videogames but, unfortunately, have little time to play them. I do love the new *Zelda* game, though."

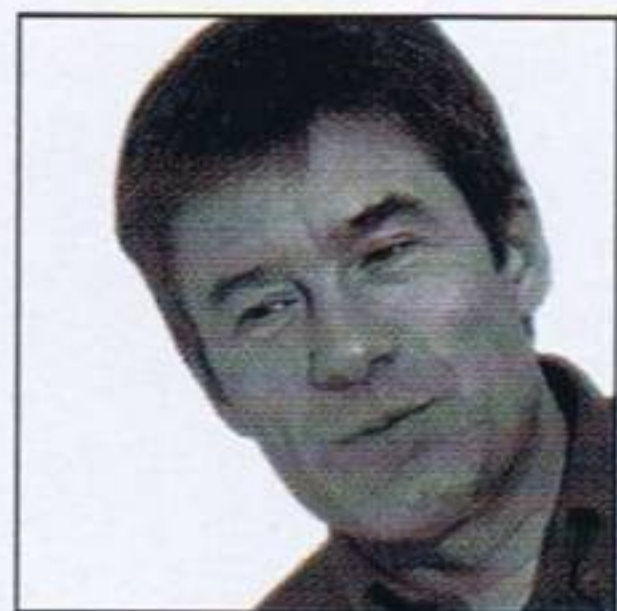


## James Ashton

When James first joined the staff of our sister publication, *N64* magazine, he was told to read *Game Over*. He's now editor of the same magazine. Coincidence? We think not. "Game Over really inspired me," James reveals. "It's an almost

unbelievable story of how a humble playing card manufacturer became a videogame giant; an astounding fable of chance and coincidence on a par with anything in Dickens' canon." To prevent James from frothing further, we made him write about *Game Over* (which you'll find taped to the front of this issue) starting on page 24.

**Game of the moment:** "I've finished *Zelda*, so have turned my attention to *Link's Awakening* on the Game Boy Color, although I'm stuck on the seventh dungeon. I'm also trying to beat my 12,000 high score on *Color Tetris DX*."



## Tiff Needell

Tiff took a break from presenting BBC 2's *Top Gear* to test-drive a host of racing games for the "What Cart?" section of this issue's motor racing feature (starting on page 43). Having spent decades

listening to the soothing sounds of petrol-driven engines, he wasn't particularly enamoured of the background music in games – especially when it came to *Ridge Racer Type 4*'s mellow jazz beat. "Arrrrgh! Those trumpets! This is awful!" he cried, before embarking on an impromptu cappella parody of the game's music.

**Game of the moment:** In common with many other celebs, Tiff's into Fox Interactive's *Croc*. "I'm not quite sure how you save your game, though," he says.



## Matt Kenyon

Illustrator Matt has been creating the images for our "Game On Extra" features since *Arcade 2*. His task is to design a visual image for a story with no obvious visual element. Take PlayStation 2; we don't know what it looks like yet, so Matt

came up with the mildly sinister image of a huge mother ship hovering above the earth. "I think there is something a little sinister about videogames in general because they challenge reality and its monopoly on our time," mused Matt. Then again, having spent the last few years addicted to *Mario Kart*, he would say that.

**Game of the moment:** "I recently excavated my old BBC B from the attic and have once again stepped into the shoes of Captain Kenyon in *Elite*. And along with everybody else I've been playing a bit of *Tomb Raider* as well."

## Arcade exit poll

### Arcade

■ We're determined to make *Arcade* the best we can. To help us, please include answers to the following questions when you write to *Arcade*.

The best bits this issue are:

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

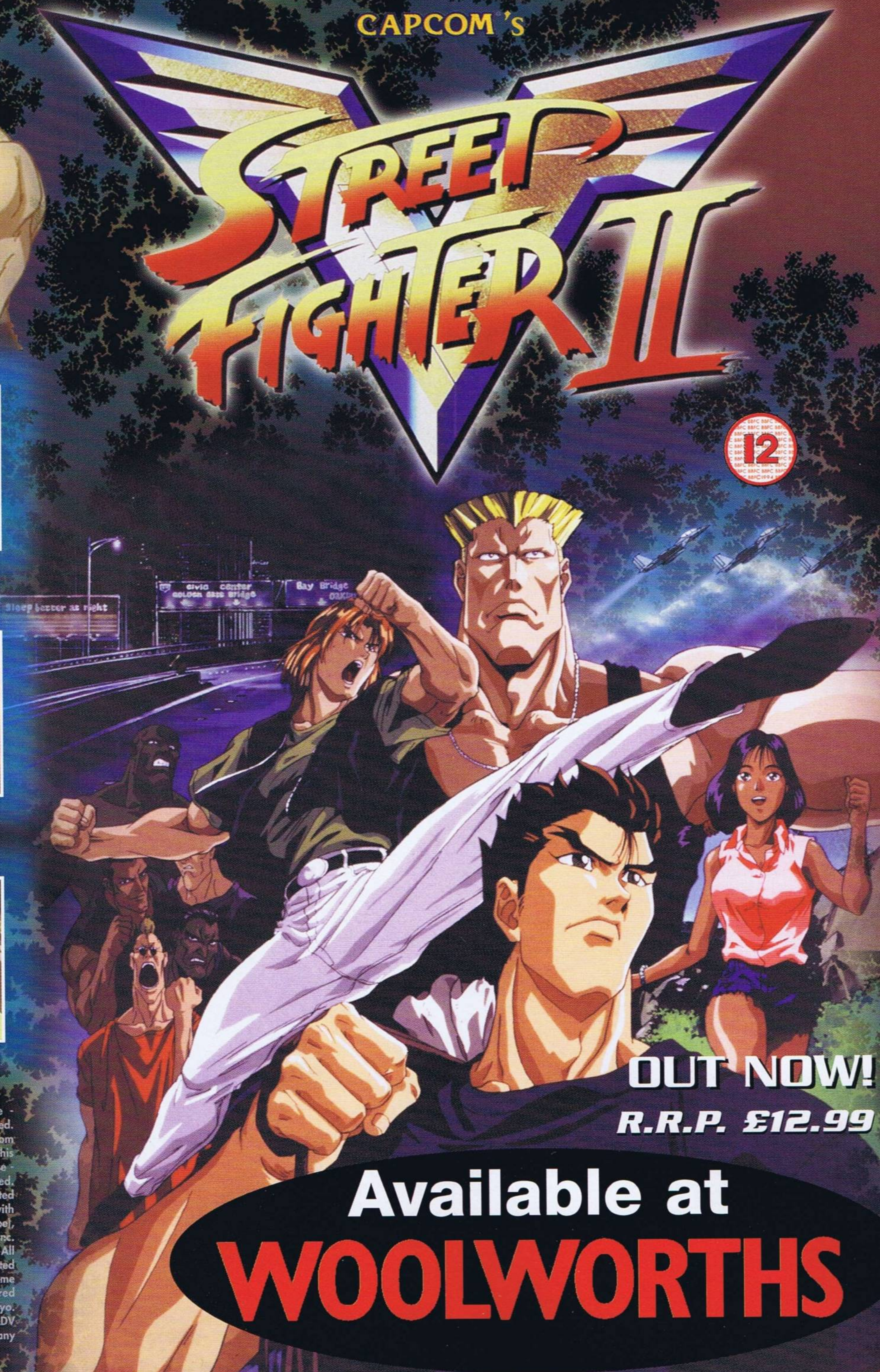
I didn't like \_\_\_\_\_

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# DATA

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



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## FACIAL ANIMATION

### REAL TIME DEMONSTRATION

CPU: 115

GPU: 198

POLYGON: 1000

RATE: 1/60

■ The PS2 game demos that wowed the world.



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#### PSX 2 FIRST LOOK

# PlayStation 2 unveiled

Sony blows the minds of the videogame industry in Tokyo | Arcade was there

**By Chris Charla**

**T**he mood of the international gaming press in Tokyo on the morning of Wednesday 3 March was a shaken but not stirred cocktail of anticipation and apprehension. We knew we were going to hear about PlayStation 2, but no-one knew what form the presentation would take: endlessly dull pie charts and graphs, or code running on final silicon?

The event itself was held in Hall C of the Tokyo International Forum and the reception area resembled nothing more than a United Nations of videogames. Every third-party and press outlet from every country where Sony does business was represented. The multicultural flavour was only enhanced when real-time translation headsets were handed out to non-Japanese attendees.

The event itself was scripted with military precision. After a lengthy preamble, Sony's technology guru Ken Kutaragi took to the stage to explain the philosophy behind PlayStation.

Sound synthesis, he said, was accomplished in the '80s with the launch of cheap DSP (digital signal processors); graphics synthesis was realised with the launch of PlayStation and the advent of practical, good-looking, realtime 3D graphics; the next generation of PlayStation would introduce nothing less than "emotion synthesis" – the ability of a computer to simulate actual

## It's fifteen times more powerful than a top of the line PC

emotional responses and facial expressions on characters.

The tools to do this, according to Sony, will be the Emotion Engine main processor, and the Graphics System graphics processor. Combined, these two will result in a machine that has 15 times the power of a Pentium II 450MHz PC, and three times the power of a 500MHz PIII – all in a system that will cost less than a Pentium processor alone. Further discussion of PCMCIA ports, FireWire, keyboards and digital cameras left some in the audience wondering if Sony wasn't more

interested in challenging the might of Intel and Microsoft for the entire home computer industry, and not just videogames.

All of this was interesting, but not as impressive as the technical demos themselves. While the first, showing Crash Bandicoot being chased by penguins, was no more impressive than a Dreamcast demo, others, including one with realtime



■ Sony's technology guru, Ken Kutaragi.

calculation of a tub of water with objects floating on it (including a rubber duck), drew gasps from the audience. More impressive yet were the actual game demos, which generally featured graphics from popular games like *Ridge Racer*, *Final Fantasy* and *Gran Turismo*; graphics that were originally created for non-interactive full-motion video movies. The difference? Now the data was being displayed and manipulated in realtime.

Most impressive was the *Tekken 4* demo. It featured two models

fighting in real time, surrounded by a ring of 30 other full polygon-count models. News of backward compatibility and DVD support were left as the icing on the cake, as if they were an afterthought in the last five minutes of the two-hour meeting.

The next few days provided a chance to play the *GT* demo on the PlayStation 2 hardware. On offer was a *GT 2* track – with no extra polygons, but with super-refined textures – combined with a super-high polygon count, photo-realistic car. And it was truly brilliant.

■ More PS2 news on page 18.

#### NEED TO KNOW

### 10 essential PlayStation 2 facts

Your at-a-glance guide to the future of videogaming (and yes, it is that good)

1. PlayStation 2 will be backward-compatible. All your old games will work as normal on the new machine.
2. PlayStation 2's graphics processor is roughly 50 times more powerful than your current PlayStation.
3. PlayStation 2 will cost either £199 or £249.
4. At its peak, the graphics engine can draw 75 million polygons a second....
5. ...which makes the graphics chip inside PlayStation 2 the most powerful on the planet. By a sizeable margin.
6. Overall, the PlayStation 2 hardware is three times more powerful than the most powerful Pentium III processor.
7. PlayStation 2 will probably be released in the UK towards the end of 2000.
8. Advanced 3D digital sound technology means the potential sound quality of the PlayStation 2 will exceed that of conventional CDs.
9. The PlayStation 2 uses DVD technology, but is unlikely to be play DVD films. This may change, however, as Sony's ambitions grow.
10. The name, appearance, software, price and release date for PlayStation 2 will not actually be confirmed for ages. So expect to hear a great deal of speculation.

IT'S GONNA BE HUGE

# Thinking big

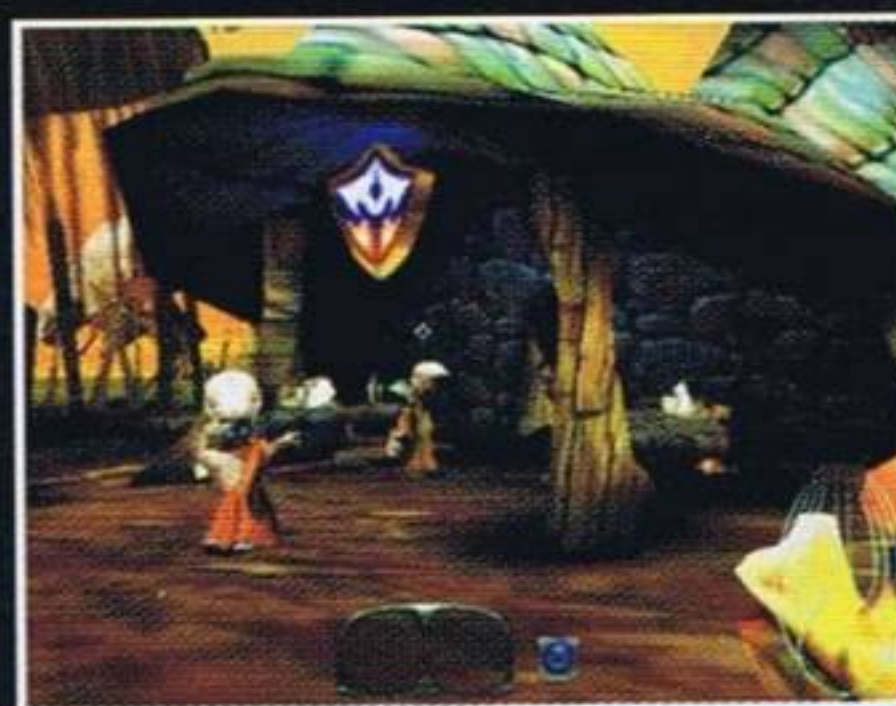
Interplay presents *Giants* | The lead character is already massive

**C**itizen Kabuto, the colossal monster of the game's title, is deep in concentration. His tiny brain is too primitive to understand where he came from, or why the tribe of female sorcerers called the Sea Reapers – who he was created to protect – is now trying to attack him. To add to his problems, the island of his inhabitation is playing host to new arrivals the Meccaryn, a group of squaddies blown off course from their lads holiday and forced to fend for themselves and repair their craft in an alien environment (naturally, they mark every piece of ground they capture with a Union Jack). Such is the world of *Giants*; three opposing factions, all of dubious virtue and motivation. To complete the game, you'll have to play as them all: the Giant, the Sea Reapers and the militaristic Meccaryn, in turn.

The *Giants* concept has been devised by a group of

people renowned for their original game ideas. The development team was previously responsible for ace bonkers shooter *MDK* before breaking off from Shiny to form Planet Moon Studios, and has deliberately attempted to expand the shoot-'em-up genre to create a game full of unpredictable elements. Gone are the typical browns and greys, replaced by orange, deep red and electric blue. The archetypal two-way goodies versus baddies conflict has been completely binned, and as well as giving you the three-way player options, *Giants* plans to challenge your resourcefulness. You're forced to coerce the local population (the Smarties) into creating food, producing the materials that you need and trading. But fear not – if they muck you about, you can just eat them for an energy boost. **A**

■ *Giants* is published by Interplay in the UK and should be out in August.



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



■ Tyrannosaurus wrecks everything and everyone.



## NEW CONSOLE

# Nintendo returns fire

Details of Nintendo's new console trickle out

This month's news has been dominated by the official announcement of PlayStation 2, but Nintendo has not let this information pass without a murmur of defiance from its quarter. Howard Lincoln, head of Nintendo USA, announced to a conference of third-party developers that the hardware for Nintendo's next generation machine (imaginatively code-named Nintendo 2000) will be developed by Art-X, and that Retro Studios has been signed up to develop games exclusively for the console (let's hope for Nintendo's sake that Rare follows suit).

Lincoln also revealed that the new console would not be cartridge-based and that it would out-gun PlayStation 2 for power. The endless speculation starts here.

Later in the week of the PlayStation 2 hullabaloo, rumours circulated on the Web about Sega's successor to Dreamcast, but the information soon proved to be a hoax. Enough new consoles, already.



■ Nintendo try to steal PlayStation 2 thunder.

## NEW GAME

# Capcom horror caper boasts Jurassic spark

Capcom announces *Dino Crisis* | *Res Evil* creator picks up the project

Reports of the PlayStation's demise, even in the light of the PlayStation 2 announcement, are being greatly exaggerated – particularly since big games are still being developed for the console.

Capcom recently revealed details of *Dino Crisis*, a graphically intense horror adventure in the style of *Resident Evil* and Konami's forthcoming *Silent Hill*. *Resident Evil* fans gasping for another helping of zombie gore may have to wait for PlayStation 2 for the

trequel, but the good news is that *Dino Crisis* is being produced by Shinji Mikami, the man who created Capcom's groundbreaking *Resident Evil* series in the first place.

*Dino Crisis*' survival horror elements will be familiar and the game aims to create an atmosphere of pervading suspense and panic. In contrast to *Res Evil*, though, the 3D environments will be expansive and the size and speed of the dinosaur enemies in a different league. Elements of strategy as well as firepower will be required to defeat the vicious predators.

"...a graphically intense horror adventure in the style of *Resident Evil*..."

The story borrows from *Jurassic Park* inasmuch as the dinosaurs of Ibis Island appear to have been created by a scientific experiment gone tits-up. The playable character is a special forces agent called Regina whose mission is to find Professor Kirk, the mad boffin at the heart of the experiment. Capcom is promising all kinds of fun with interactive

scenery and an extensive in-game arsenal of weaponry.

The pedigree of the game's makers suggests that *Dino Crisis* will be huge. UK software publisher Virgin Interactive is hopeful that the game will make it onto the market before the end of the year. And this is just one of many new PlayStation games on their way.

## NEW CONSOLE

# Looks familiar

Dreamcast has European identity dilemma

Last month we reported that Sega was considering altering its Dreamcast logo for the European launch and this might just be the reason. A well-established German computer company called Escena, who manufacture Amiga hardware, have a corporate logo spookily similar to that of Dreamcast's. No final decision has yet been taken by Sega on the European branding of Dreamcast, but this news could prove a stumbling block.



■ A spiralling logo problem.

## AD AWARDS

# Sony conquers the ad world

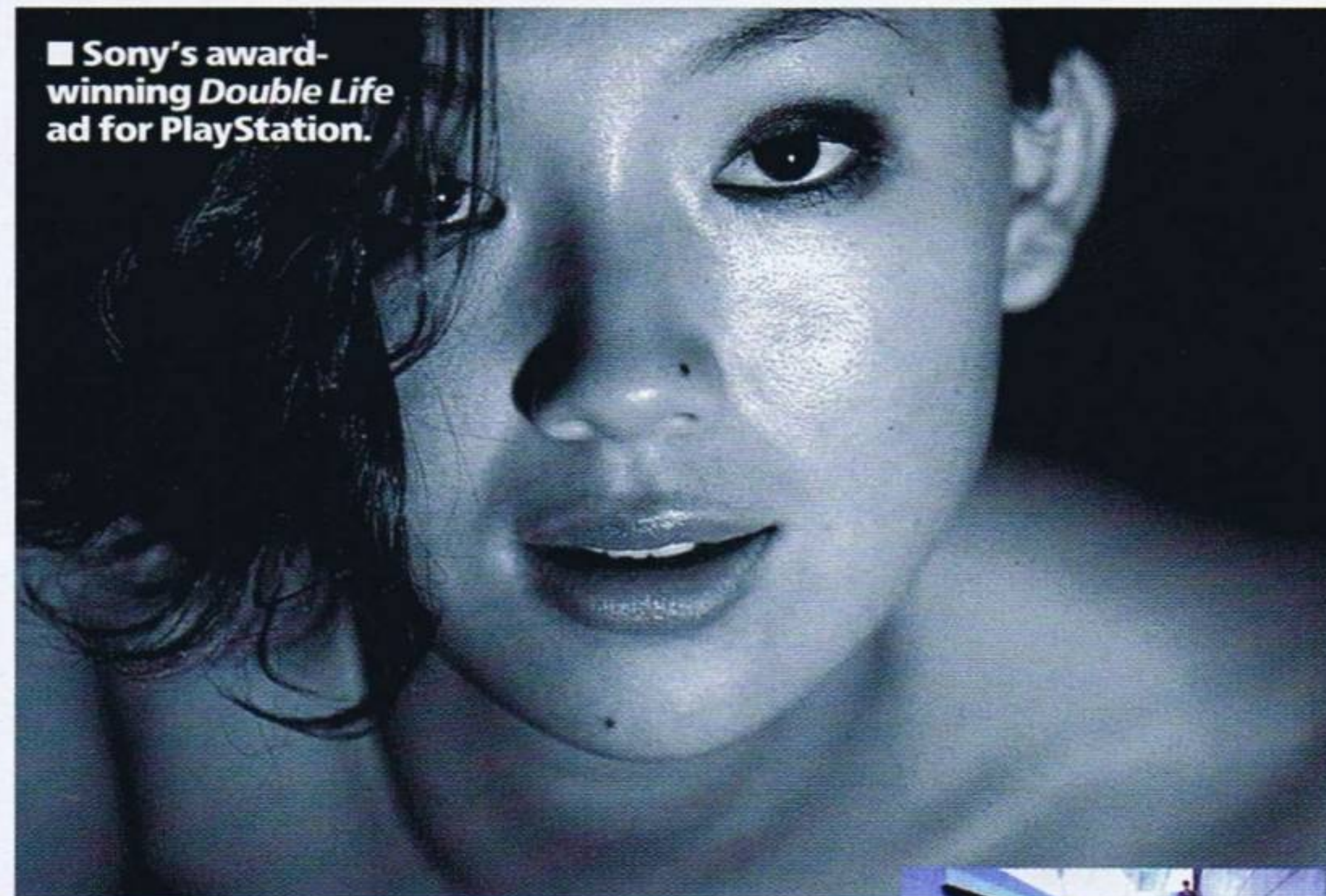
PlayStation commercial bags coveted award

They've commanded armies, they've conquered worlds and now they've won an award. Sony PlayStation's *Double Life* TV commercial recently won the ITV Award for the Best Television Commercial Of The Year in the Computer category, beating 1,100 other entries at the 1999 British Television Advertising Awards. This honour emphasises Sony's position as lords of marketing in the

world of computing – many attribute the PlayStation's massive success as a games console to the ingenuity (and ubiquity) of its advertising and marketing campaigns.

The *Double Life* commercial was created by the TBWA GGT Simons Palmer agency under the creative direction of advertising ubermeister Trevor Beattie. Shot in arty black and white, and featuring a range of characters waxing poetical

■ Sony's award-winning *Double Life* ad for PlayStation.



about their secret lives spent on the PlayStation, the ad certainly provided a contrast to the manic flashes of computer generated explosions which often pass for game

commercials. In case you were hiding under a rock or in a coma when the advert first aired, Sony are currently running it again, on all TV channels, everywhere.







■ Gorgeous Kournikova will endorse *Smash Court Tennis 2*. Ace.

SMASHING NEWS

# Anna on for tennis and *Smash Court 2* for UK

Namco's *Smash Court 2* gets UK release | Kournikova signed up

**L**ast month we prayed for Sony to grant the brilliant *Smash Court Tennis 2* a UK release and almost immediately our wishes were granted.

Even better, the game is being

endorsed in Europe by Russian tennis star and international object of lust Anna Kournikova. Hence the big picture of her printed above. No way do we approve of gratuitous pictures of beautiful women just for the sake of it. No way at all.

The 17-year-old prodigy, currently ranked 11th in the world, has taken time off from the WTA tour and numerous modelling contracts to oversee the inclusion of her character into the game, where she will play alongside the existing cast of kiddie racket-wielders. As you progress through the tournament various modes, three further "Anna" characters will be unlocked for your tennis playing pleasure.

In addition to Kournikova's seal of approval, the PAL version

of the game includes a couple of new courts and tournament modes not available in the Japanese version we've already played. The pace of the game has also been quickened to bring it up to speed with its NTSC version (relatively sluggish performance was one of the few criticisms of the original PAL *Smash Court*).

Now officially entitled *Anna Kournikova's Smash Court Tennis*, the game should be ready in time for the strawberry's and cream season. **A**

**"We prayed for Sony to grant *SCT2* a UK release. Our wish was granted..."**

**Smack my pitch up**

*Our game design dreams cruelly crushed by a ruthless industry*

## No. 4: More Parsnips?

■ **The pitch:** Welcome to the first ever food eating sim. View the world from the back of a mouth, waiting for your Dual Shock to rumble hungrily, then use the direction pad to find food. Correct use of the function keys lifts the nosh to your lips, chews and swallows.

Begin on the easy levels with porridge and soggy Weetabix, progress through sarnies, burgers, steak and kidney

pie until you reach curries. Eat something obviously poisonous such as asbestos or raw rhubarb and you lose a life. Advanced levels require you to master sushi, chopsticks and, inevitably, oysters. Can you cram it? Will you want more parsnips?

■ **The response:** This sort of game reminds me of the good old days of *Get of My Garden* or *Psst*. But games based on bodily functions are not exactly the rage.

The problem is of localisation. Can't see many Americans tucking into a steak and kidney pie and as for the German version – the food doesn't even bear thinking about.

John Kavanagh, Publishing Director, EIDOS



NEW GAME

## Snow joke

*Cheeky kid boarders back for more on N64*

**L**ast year, few things made the Arcade team feel happier inside than a four-player game of *Snowboard Kids*. Far removed from the world of rad air and indy nosebones, this was a cartoon land full of penguins and snowmen, littered with the greatest power-ups known to mankind. We duly tagged it "Mario Kart of the slopes".

*Snowboard Kids 2* is out now in the US and first reports suggest that the chortle factor has been upped tenfold. Four new heftily-schnozzed characters join the fray, including the evil Damien and a mohicaned Penguin

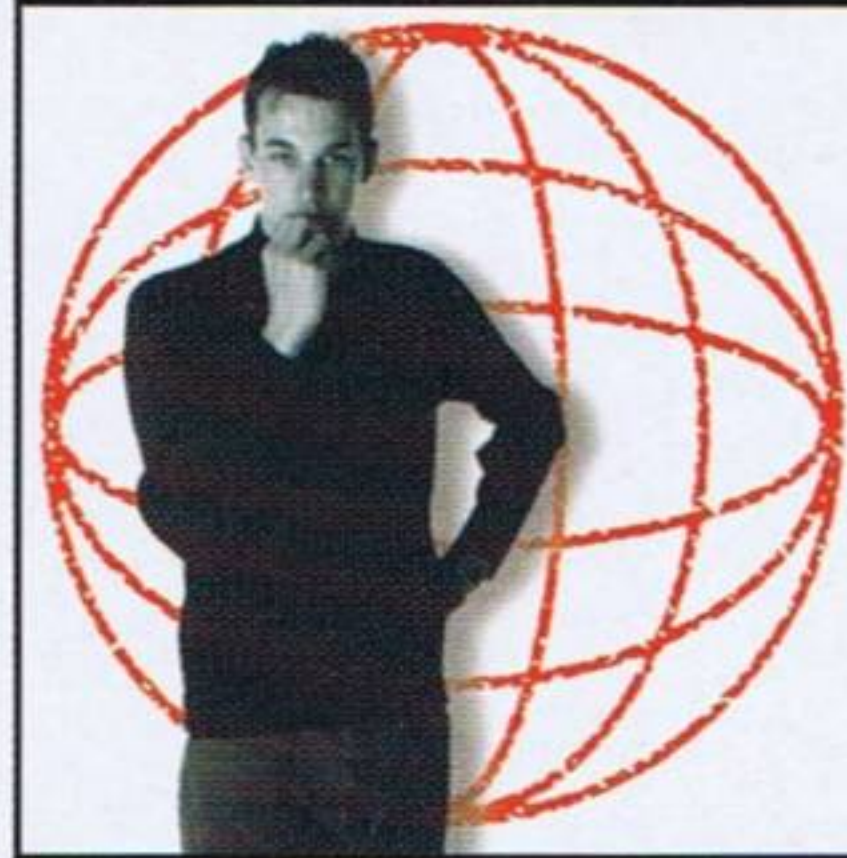


■ Board games for kids of all sizes.

named Coach. Racing purely on snow would be too prosaic for these guys, so courses involve boarding on grass, underwater, in space and even uphill – the sequel also sees the addition of special trick courses and 18 boards to chose from.

Multi-player chaos is still high on *Snowboard Kids*' agenda, so the power-up arsenal has been expanded. Thankfully, you won't have to be a minor yourself to lay your hands on a copy of *Snowboard Kids* when it reaches the UK in a few months.

## Sam Richards' World of Games



### Liberté? Non merci

■ If you thought we had it bad in the UK, with censors battling to remove scenes of gratuitous sadomasochistic orgy from our favourite videogames, spare a thought for our friends across the Channel. A sinister lobby group called Familles De France has succeeded in persuading leading retailers to remove six games from their shelves, and is taking legal action in an attempt to impose a complete ban. The games in question are *Carnageddon II*, *Sanitarium*, *Wild 9*, *Grand Theft Auto*, *Resident Evil 2* and *Unreal* – a group which includes some of the most important games of the past year. Scarily, Familles De France has referred to its crusade-cum-witch-hunt as "moral ecology". Don't let it happen here.

### Sk8 or die

■ If you spent any number of youthful summer evenings pulling off wicked railsides you should know the name of champion skater Tony Hawk. A deck inscribed with his signature was a treasured possession indeed. And now Tony is endorsing his own PlayStation game.

Tony Hawk's *Pro Skater* is developed by Neversoft and set to be published by Activision (obviously skating fans to the core, reeling off terms like kick-flips and crooked grinds in the press announcement).

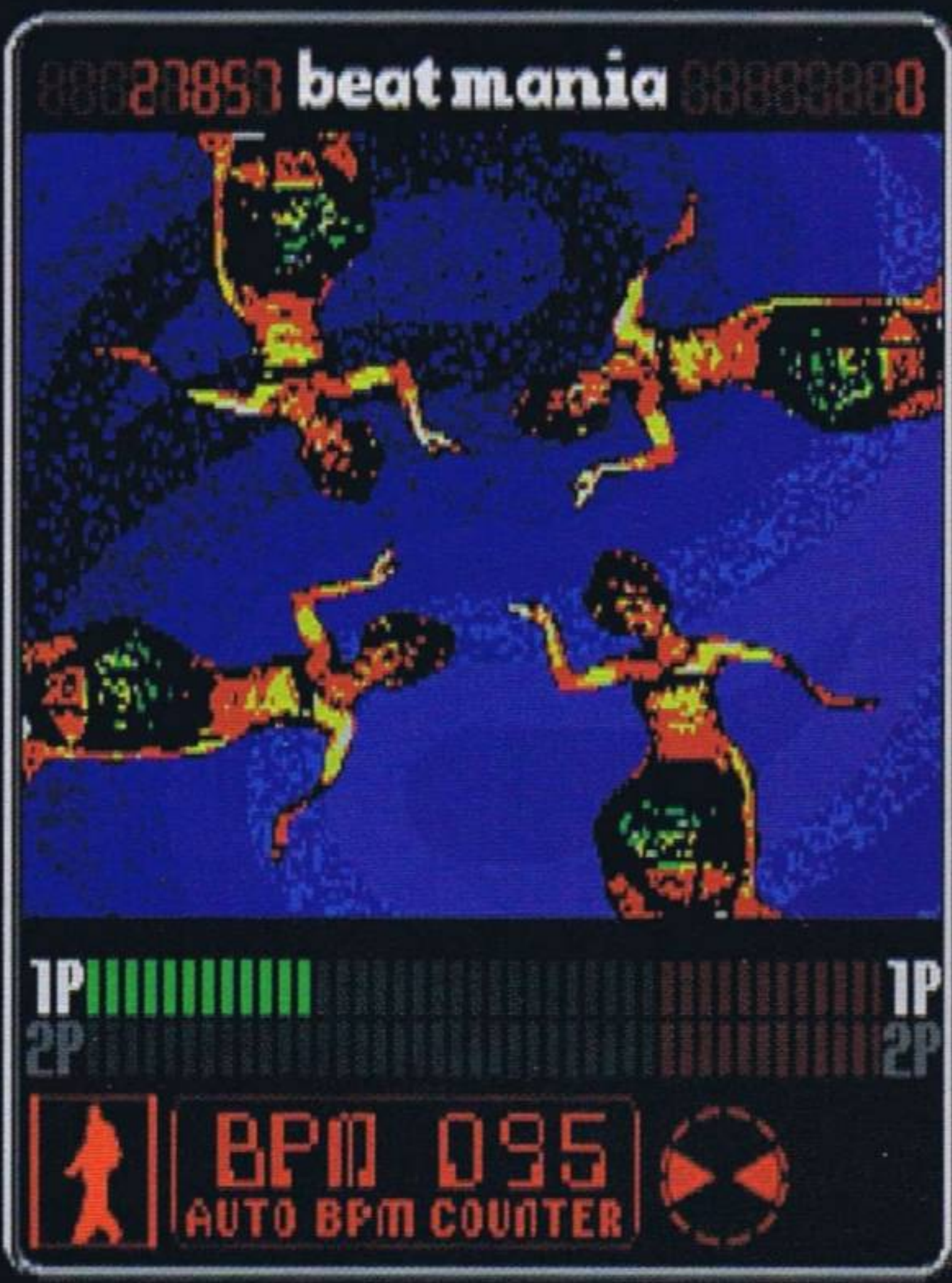
Packed with realistic skating environments, hundreds of tricks and a "rad" two-player battle, hopefully Tony Hawk's will prove a damn sight more impressive than Electronic Arts' tragic *Street Skater*.

### Cathode Rayman

■ Ubisoft's irritating but inexplicably popular game character – him of the outrageous conk and tagliatelle hair – is to get his own TV series. The French developers are currently working with American partners on a dozen 20-minute animated episodes, after a successful pilot. Can Rayman repeat the successful cartoon crossover of the redoubtable Earthworm Jim? Will we be able to get out of bed early enough to care?

PHOTOGRAPHY: ALLSPORT

The world of video games: we take you round the globe in four pages



■ **Beatmania for on coin-op and PlayStation.**

**GREAT!**  
PUSH SCRATCH



PHAT GROOVES

## Rhythm's gonna get ya

**Konami's Beatmania gets UK date | Big-name acts to feature**

**W**e've been yapping on about Japanese "rhythm action" games for months, but finally the UK is getting hip to the beat. This new

wave of videogames is spearheaded by Konami, whose much-lauded *Beatmania* coin-op should be arriving in arcades across the country right now.

*Beatmania* requires you to press buttons along to screen

actions in order to create funksome tunes in a whole range of genres. A turntable controller is also provided for additional DJ improv jinks.

The coin-op version will be much the same as its Japanese counterpart, but Konami UK is working on a full-scale overhaul of the PlayStation game in order to bring the music in line with discerning British tastes. "For UK gamers to take this game seriously, the music has to be spot on," said a Konami spokesperson. "We're currently in negotiations with a number of record companies in order to get popular tracks from big-name artists included in the game. Clubs such as the Ministry Of Sound are also interested in helping us with the game's branding."

Some of the Japanese music will remain, and of particular interest among the game's tracklisting is a remix of the theme from *Metal Gear Solid*. However, with tunes such as *Love So Groovy* by Lovemints and *Ska A Go Go* by The Bald Heads featuring on the original, it's understandable why Konami UK is taking a different approach. With a glut of current, credible dance tracks on board by the time it's released in October, *Beatmania* is set to become a huge crossover hit.



■ **Air guitar for the arcade. Mad.**

SYNC-'EM-UPS

## You should be dancing

And riffing. And drumming



■ The world's first dancing coin-op, *Dancing Stage* (formerly known as *Dance Dance Revolution*), will be coming to UK arcades in June. The idea of prancing about on coloured tiles is obviously not to be taken as seriously as *Beatmania*, and developer Konami has no plans to change the Japanese soundtrack of "universal disco". A PlayStation version, complete with electronic floor mat, is currently in development.

Next up, the clearly insane folk at Konami

give us *Guitar Freaks*, which is basically *Beatmania* with axe-shaped controllers and a theme of hilarious cock rock. This is closely followed by *Drum Mania* (complete with sticks, naturally). These two coin-op machines are designed to be linked together so that you can form your own arcade rock combos and, unbelievably, console versions with their own individual controllers are a strong possibility.

If there's any doubt as to the endurance of the "rhythm action" genre,

at least in Japan, check the games on *Beatmania's* heels: *Balance Up* from Namco, *VJ* from Jaleco and Sega's dancing offering, *Flash Beat*.



## Orient excess | Japanese gaming nonsense.

■ **How's your Japanese?**



■ Japan is the home of videogames, but unfortunately there are huge numbers of Oriental games that never see the light of day in the UK or America because publishers decide that our game playing tastes are too different. Often, they have a point.

A popular Japanese genre of which there are precisely nil UK examples is the Dating Game. These generally take the form of an RPG in which your character wanders about romancing random females with witty strains of chat. For your amusement, here are some of the latest examples:

■ **Get A Love: Panda Love Unit (Hudson)**

As usual, the name is ridiculous. We couldn't really work out the relevance of

the panda, but then, it was difficult to ascertain the relevance of anything. You can loiter at the local girls' school and chat to the students, but since you can't understand them, all unseemly fantasies are dispelled.



■ **Kiss (Kid)**  
More of a whole teenage life sim by the sounds of it - part of the game involves earning money from summer jobs to pay off debts. Then you can go get the girls.

■ **Noel 3 (Pioneer LDC)**  
No idea what this is about, but possibly

based around the undoubted pulling power of Noels Gallagher and Edmonds.

■ **Sentimental Graffiti 2: My Only Love (NEC Interchannel)**

Currently in development for Dreamcast so we have no details. Ludicrously bombastic title, though.

■ **Friends (NEC Interchannel)**

The same developer, obviously setting itself up as a dating doyenne. Nothing to do with Chandler and Monica, this is a dating/adventure.

■ **Sword Of God And The Wondrous Chivalry (Sega)**

Vying for the title of most stupid game name ever. Set many centuries ago, you can impress the laydeez with your mighty sword.

■ **Next month: More Jap weirdness. And no, we are not making this up.**



■ **SDR: super deformed image?**

## Sony's racer is no longer deformed

**Project Super Deformed Racing is now Speed Freaks**

**T**o fresh-faced gamers, the idea of *Super Deformed Racing* doesn't exactly inspire confidence. But to old-skoolers the *Super Deformed* preface conjures up images of hip shrunken Manga martial artists and squat Gundam mechanoids, which is why it's a shame that Sony got cold feet about *Super Deformed Racing* (Project SDR) and has re-named it *Speed Freaks*. Thankfully, there are no such doubts about the game itself. It's quite ridiculous that PlayStation should have gone so long jacking anything to rival the multi-player four-wheeled excesses of Nintendo's *Mario Kart* on N64 so Sony's hi-jacking of the racer for its own ends makes perfect sense. *Speed Freaks* doesn't exactly dig deep into the ideas bin for weapon power-ups, but added to the racing mix you also get speed-up strips and jolly sound and visuals. This is *Mario Karting* by any other name.

That said, *Freaks* will have a turbo bar for each racer that is topped up through the acquisition of coin-like power-ups and a speed-boost that is unleashed with the press of a shoulder button. The handling is wholly unrealistic, with the accent on fun and brutal opponent humiliation.

The six characters race on ten tracks and up to four players can compete in a tremendous split-screen multi-player mode. *Speed Freaks* is certainly a pleasing package and, if there's any justice, one which'll shift a shedload on its release in July.

■ **Speed Freaks: unrealistic fun.**



BRRRRRM BRRRRRM

# GT2 gets some new motors

**Gran Turismo sequel boasts 400 cars | Here's a tour of the car park**

By Matt Bielby

**R**emember how *Gran Turismo* offered a vast choice of motors from the big Japanese car companies, many of which were superhot numbers available only on grey import (or not at all) over here? Well, *GT2* has a completely different selection, which is far more wide-ranging, comprising a whopping 400-or-so classy motors. So here's a taster of some of the machines you'll be able to race.

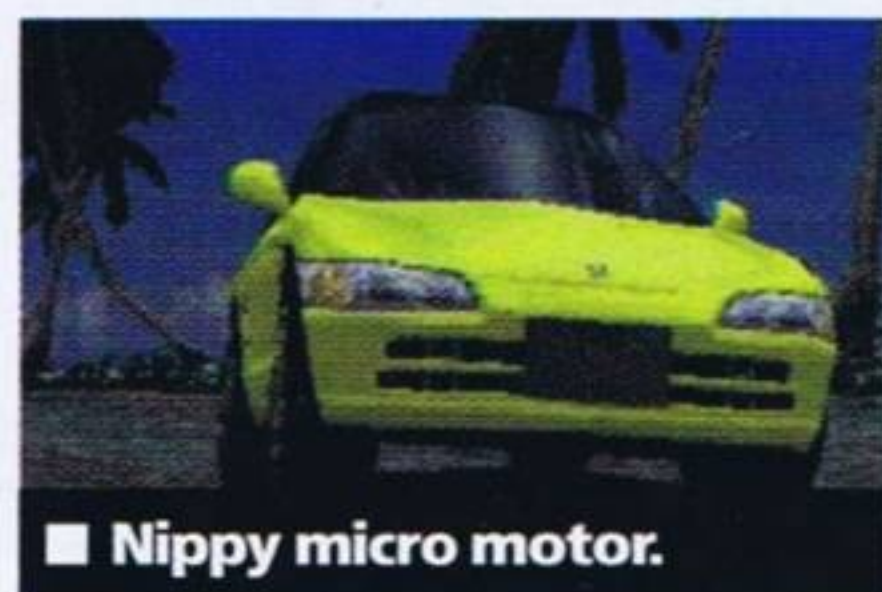


■ Traditional two-seater.

## Datsun 240Z

This journo's got one of these retro MGB-sized two-seat tin-tops himself, so we're all well intrigued to see how it plays in the game. In real life it's a traditional long bonnet/short rump rear-wheel-drive sports car with a grunty straight six and a nice feeling of balance. Overpriced in the UK, so

never very popular, but in the States, Z-cars were huge – the biggest selling sports car of the '70s, in fact. Even the Bionic Woman drove one.



■ Nippy micro motor.

## Honda Beat

Teeny tiny Japanese open sports car with an incy wincy motorbike-sized engine. Never officially imported into the UK, but we know someone who used to have one. Apparently, "it felt bloody fast, though it probably wasn't really. It was a bit scary, too – I sometimes felt like no-one could see me, and that I was about to get squashed by a big lorry or something."

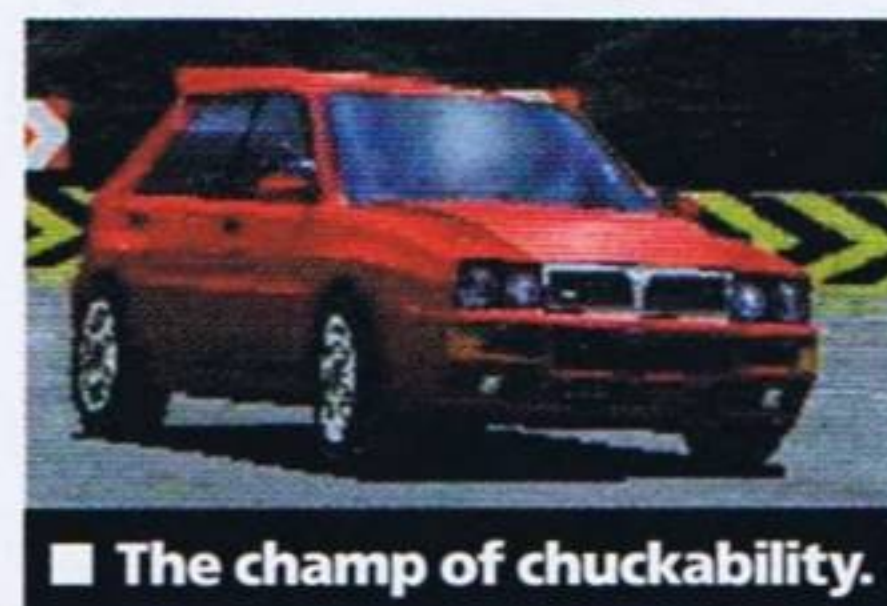
## Mini Cooper

Everyone's favourite, particularly if you're Japanese, where the diminutive Rover née Leyland née Austin geriatric has long been a



■ The legend lives.

cult object. Clearly out of its league against the *Gran Turismo* big boys, but then that's what the Turin Mafia thought in *The Italian Job*. And look where it got them.



■ The champ of chuckability.

## Lancia Delta Integrale

The ultimate rally weapon of the early '90s, and still a car to give the current champs (Subaru Impreza Turbos and the like, also in the *GT2* line-up) a run for their money. This motor's handling is legendary: for chuckability it's almost unbeatable. **A**

## Sam Richards' World of Games



### Money for nothing

■ The world of on-line gaming is shrouded in darkness and mystery and in its own way, is a little like a public lavatory – you only go there if you have to. News wafted our way recently that a player account from the biggest Internet-only game *Ultima Online* has been sold at a Web auction for \$521. The account, which took a year of frenetic on-line gaming to build, contained \$500,000 in virtual gold (enough to buy a Mage's tower, apparently) and an armoury full of magical weapons. It's a bit like paying somebody to play all the hard bits of *Half-Life* for you.

### Games on the box

■ Digital and cable television may be the conduit for a total programming free-for-all, but at least it means we're likely to get more videogame coverage on our tellies. BIB (British Interactive Broadcasting), which has links with BSkyB, plans to air an interactive games service from the spring, while major cable operator Cable And Wireless has confirmed that a games channel will form part of its interactive TV service from the autumn. The liberal use of the word "interactive" (plus the involvement of kiddie faves Hasbro and Doring Kindersley) fills us with a mild dread about what we can expect to see and play, but such progress is to be cautiously applauded.

## ZELDA FLUTES Hey ocarina

How to find the clay flutes as played by Link in *Zelda: Ocarina of Time*

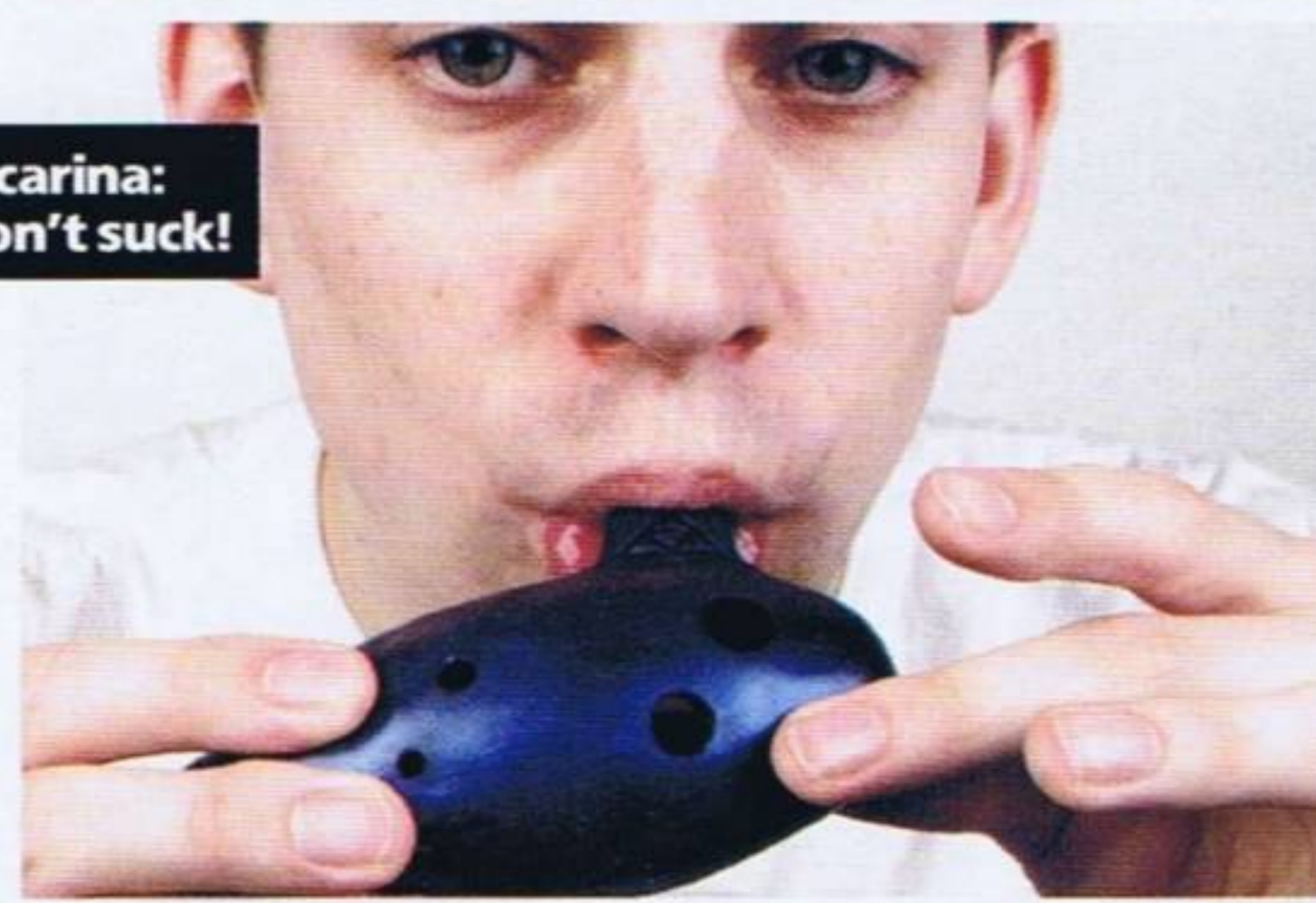
**A**n integral element of Shigeru Miyamoto's N64 masterpiece *Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina Of Time* is the clay flute (or titular "Ocarina") that Link plays in order to unleash his magic. The ingenious gameplay means you actually have to tap out the ocarina tunes on the joypad and – admit it – we've all become rather enchanted by the instrument's evocative, folksy melodies.

Now you can get hold of authentic versions of these Tri-Force Ocarinas for yourself. An independent Californian company called Songbird Ocarinas has created designs for two special ocarinas inspired by *The Legend of Zelda*. The Soprano With Tri-Force is a tiny, high-pitched instrument while the Sweet Potato is larger and has a deeper resonance. Maker Darryn Songbird creates the instruments individually from clay and fires them in a special

ceramic oven. He claims that part of their magic is that they are easy to learn but capable of amazing virtuosity.

With a special *Zelda* songsheet, we were soon torturing the rest of the office with approximate versions of the *Song Of Time* and *Serenade Of Water*. We also managed to improvise Herbie Hancock's "Watermelon Man". Funky. For more details on the ocarinas, visit <http://www.songbirdocarina.com/>

■ The ocarina: blow, don't suck!



### OCARINA FACTS

- The ocarina dates back to the stone age.
- Ocarinas have been found on all five continents.
- Some modern ocarinas have an 11-tone range.
- Ocarinas were popular in 19th century Italy.
- American servicemen played Bakelite ocarinas manufactured by Gretch during World War II.
- The original version of *The Good, The Bad And The Ugly* theme was played on an ocarina.

## INCOMING Six of the best from gaming's hazy, crazy future

3 months



### Max Payne

■ PC ■ Remedy/Take 2 ■ July  
Third-person film noir adventure with the manic Max determined to avenge all kinds of demons from his past. Big guns are a key feature here.

6 months



### 3Xtreme

■ PlayStation ■ 989 Studios/Sony ■ Autumn  
Motion-captured stunt madness aplenty are featured in this triple-disciplined sports sim involving skateboards, rollerblades and BMX.



### Road Rash 64

■ N64 ■ THQ ■ Autumn  
Editor Neil West once wrote a novel about Road Rash (with Alex Player and his lurve interest, the gorgeous Natasha), but this looks like a great update of the bike racing classic anyway.



### Power Stone

■ Coin-op/Dreamcast ■ Capcom ■ Winter  
Spikeout-flavoured beat-'em-up which bunks Capcom's 2D tradition so that characters can lob all kind of Ikea products at each other.



### Deus Ex

■ PC ■ Ion Storm/EIDOS ■ Winter  
Futuristic free-roaming RPG from the Quake stable. The game's complex plot is constructed from conspiracy theories and weirdo religious beliefs.

1 year



### Shenmue

■ Dreamcast ■ Sega AM2 ■ Early 2000  
What was originally the Virtua Fighter RPG is now turning into an epic, realistic adventure which could become the greatest game ever. We'll see.



ILLUSTRATION: MATT KENYON

### NEWS ANALYSIS

# "PlayStation 2 is coming to take over the world!" (And we're not joking).

**It's due for UK release around September 2000. And it's going to be bloody huge.**

By Dave Roberts & Neil West

**T**here's a definite Year Zero feel about the games industry at the moment. Sony's unveiling of its PlayStation 2 technology was so staggering, so impressive and so well received, it has sparked a globally pervasive sense that 2 March 1999, marked the start of a whole new era in gaming, maybe even in mass market entertainment. March 2nd was the date on which, in the Tokyo International Forum, the Japanese consumer electronics giant announced a set of tech specs that sent publishers and developers into unprecedented raptures – and its rivals, surely, into panic.

More details of the "Emotion Engine" and PS2's dedicated graphics synthesising ability can be found in our interview with Sony's Phil Harrison (see page 40), suffice to say the DVD-based machine (which can also run original PlayStation CDs) surpassed all expectations and has prompted the market's creative cognoscenti to set about redefining, at least conceptually, what is and isn't possible in the interactive arena.

Dave Perry, ever-ebullient boss of US team Shiny Entertainment announced dramatically that "Sony bought my soul" with PS2. His poetic declaration reflects an eagerness bordering on desperation amongst developers itching to get their hands on the dev kits that should be

being dispatched about now. What sort of mind-share will other new formats, such as Sega's Dreamcast, receive from the software community now?

Bruno Bonnell, president of the largest European games publisher in the business, Infogrames, has already stated: "After this we'll look mostly towards PC ports for the Dreamcast and original projects only for the new PlayStation." A comment from Kelly Sumner, boss of US operation Take 2, seems equally significant: "The industry's never had one standard games platform before. Maybe it will now." The most important questions for the UK are when is PS2 coming? How much will it cost? And what effect will it have on the current PlayStation?

Sony hasn't given any indication of its launch plans as yet (the March 2nd event was a purely technical announcement), but it looks like the Japanese will get the new console before the end of the year (at which point expect grey imports to be available in all major cities) and that it'll hit Europe officially in September or October 2000. Speculation about initial pricing has settled on either £199 or £249 – with the lower price looking favourite at this stage. And PlayStation 1? Well by the time its

successor materialises, the original will have built up a globally installed base of around 100 million machines. That is *not* going to be replaced overnight. Software publishers *will* continue to support it, they'd be mad not to.

Sony itself is hugely confident that sales of the current incarnation will not dry up ahead of PSX 2. It expects to ship as many units in 1999 as it did in 1998. The possibility of a price cut taking the hardware down to £79 coupled with the fact that all today's software will run on

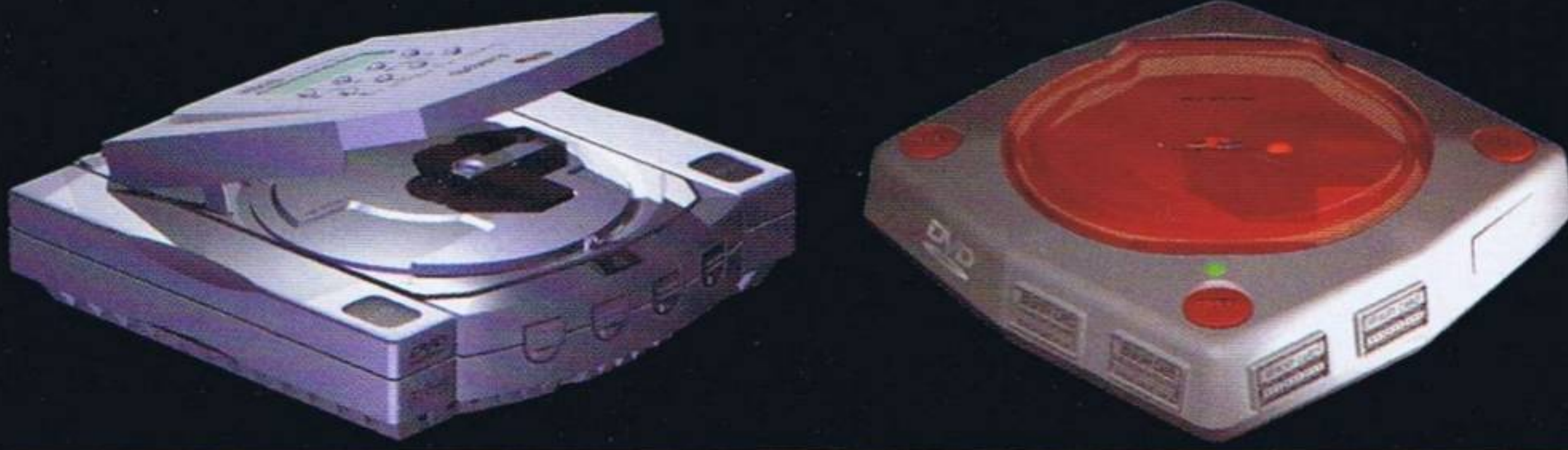
## Sega's putting on a brave face. But inwardly they must be bricking it

**SPECS**

# The power of PlayStation 2

Sony's revealed PS2's innards, but not its appearance

Sony has shown no pics of PS2's casing. Here are two artists' ideas of what it could look like.



- No matter which way you look at it, PlayStation 2 is an awesome machine... leaps and bounds ahead of PS1. If you've got a head that can handle tech specs, then check this lot out. For the rest of us, consider these stats the videogame equivalent of the US basketball team's home record.
- CPU: **128 Bit "Emotion Engine"**
- System Clock Frequency: **300 MHz**
- Cache Memory: Instruction: **16Kb** Data: **8Kb + 16Kb (ScrP)**
- Co-processor: Floating Point Performance: **6.2 GFLOPS** 3D CG Geometric Transformation: **66 million polygons per second**
- Main Memory: **Direct Rambus (Direct RDRAM)** Memory Size: **32Mb** Memory Bus Bandwidth: **3.2Gb per Second**
- Compressed Image Decoder: **MPEG2**
- Graphics: **"Graphics Synthesizer"** Clock Frequency: **150MHz** DRAM Bus Bandwidth: **48GB per second** DRAM Bus Width: **2560bits** Pixel Configuration **RGB:Alpha: Z Buffer (24-bit:8-bit:32-bit)** Maximum Polygon Rate: **75 million polygons per second**
- Interface Types: **IEEE1394, Universal Serial Bus (USB)**
- Sound: **"SPU2+CPU"** Number of Voices: **48channels on SPU2** Sampling Frequency: **48MHz**
- IOP I/O Processor CPU: **Core PlayStation CPU** Clock Frequency: **33.8MHz or 37.5MHz (selectable)** Sub Bus: **32-Bit**
- Communication: **via PC-Card (PCMCIA)**
- Disc Device: **CD-ROM and DVD-ROM**



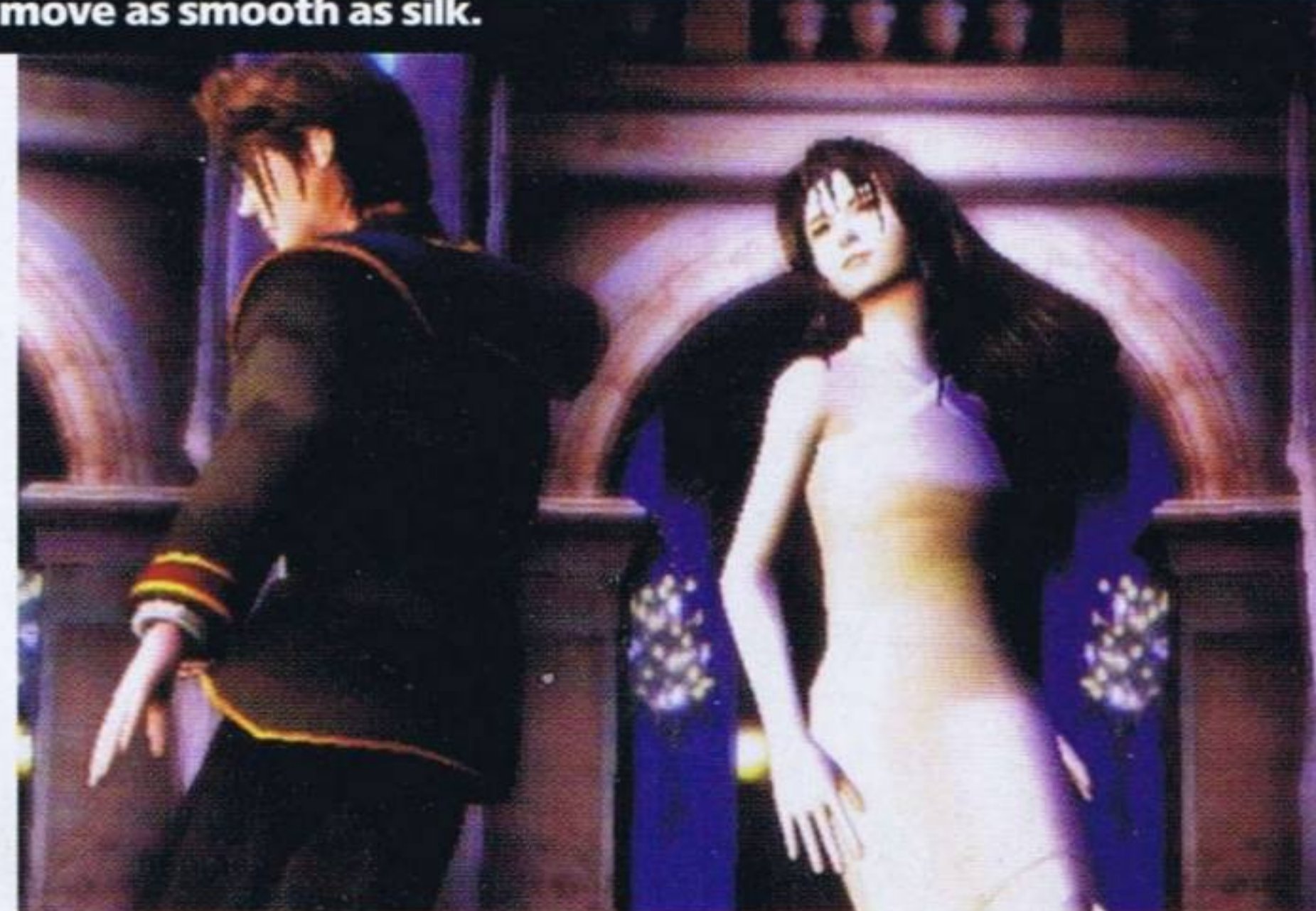
PS2 flexes its graphical muscles. All these images move as smooth as silk.

tomorrow's machine suggests that PlayStation remains a safe and sound investment from the punter's point of view. And when it is Sony's "old" console, it will probably be re-marketed as an entry level machine for the under-10s, maybe for as little as £49. My First Console territory.

Such a scenario doesn't seem to leave too much room for the competition. Sega has just started to crank up the marketing machine ahead of the launch of Dreamcast in the UK this autumn, but suddenly Sony's dominating the agenda more than ever and the only question anyone wants to ask the company that once owned the videogames market is, what do you think of PS2?

Perhaps wisely, Sega isn't saying. It's concentrating on its own targets and promoting its own strengths. It must be bricking it, though, and privately hoping that, when Sony's finished machine arrives, it won't be quite as impressive as it looked at its theatrical debut. (It's happened before. Video-based demos of new formats have subsequently been revealed to be generated by technology other than that to be found in the console being unveiled – the wires usually being traced back to the sexiest PCs on the planet at the time. See "After the dust settled...").

At its corporate heart, however, Sega knows that if the PlayStation 2 promise is delivered in the product, Sony's console won't so much leap-frog Dreamcast as hop on a jet plane, fly over it at 35,000 feet and come to land in a continent far,



far away. One option may be to switch its focus more heavily onto Dreamcast's Internet capability – an area Sony's elected to ignore. But that would be like selling a newspaper as a fly-swat – very much a secondary use rather than a reason to buy. Besides, Sony could trump the net with its DVD card. The firm hasn't said so yet, but most pundits expect the final version of PS2 to play DVD movies as well as games. "This isn't just videogames any more," ominously warns Sony's Phil Harrison.

Nintendo, in typically belligerent style, has already dismissed PS2 as old hat. Well, not quite. But at a conference held behind closed (but leaky) doors for third party publishers in Sorrento, Italy, in the very week that Sony wowed the world in Tokyo, Howard Lincoln (Nintendo's US boss) told the assembled software community that Nintendo is working on a post-64 console. He also confirmed that,

true to recent Internet rumour, it is being designed by US start-up company ArtX – an offshoot of the N64 chip design team from Silicon Graphics. Most interestingly of all he confirmed that Nintendo's next offering will not be cartridge-based. This will be the firm's first move away from the confines of carts, although it remains to be seen whether or not it will unveil a new proprietary medium or simply go down the obvious and tempting DVD route.

A clearer picture of PS2's strengths will emerge before the year's end. Then Dreamcast will have been out in Japan for a year and heading for its first European Christmas. The scene will be set for a final showdown: Nintendo and Sega, two old adversaries, united in an attempt to deny PlayStation the world domination that, since 2 March, seems eminently possible.

More PS2 news on pages 12 and 40.

**EXPERT ANALYSIS**

## After the dust settled...

There wasn't a dry eye in the house at PSX2's unveiling. But what did the experts think the morning after?

At the birth of every new piece of videogame technology, hype spins out of control. Sony's unveiling of PlayStation 2 was no exception. At a carefully stage-managed unveiling, the company sold its new baby hard. An enthusiastic audience – wowed by a heady mix of fancy graphics and theatrical pyrotechnics – lapped up tech specs and swallowed performance promises whole. Sony wants PlayStation 2 to be a huge success. The entire videogame industry (outside of Sega and Nintendo) wants PlayStation 2 to be a huge success. The combined enthusiasm has created a roar of hype that's been amplified throughout the videogame world. It's been difficult for any dissenting voices to be heard. But that's not to say that they don't exist.

Now that the dust has settled from Sony's blockbuster party in Tokyo, a few experts have started to question Sony's numbers. Top US web site Next Generation OnLine has polled more than twenty top videogame developers and technology experts – most of whom were audience members at PlayStation 2's grand

unveiling on 2 March – to discover their true feelings about Sony's aggressive sales pitch. Most requested anonymity, and most expressed niggling doubts that, while PlayStation 2 will undoubtedly be a spectacular machine, it may not be everything Sony promises.

"Remember the Jaguar?" warned one developer. "Atari said it could do a billion pixels. That number was theoretically possible if there was no software involved and all processors were dedicated to simply pushing pixels. But in actual reality, when it comes to running a game, its performance was way below that. It's the same thing here with PlayStation 2."

"It's the 3Dfx rope-a-dope," argued another developer. "3Dfx has convinced the world that the only important benchmark test of graphics performance is frame rate, because that's what they happen to measure their system's performance by."

It's the same thing happening here. Sony knew they could destroy Dreamcast on polygon count and floating point calculations and that's what they did. As for the

ease of development, or actual quality of games... Sony's hasn't shown us anything yet."

This all said, most developers are still extremely optimistic. "Even if the specs change and go down a bit in reality, so what? They're still incredible," says one developer, speaking for many.

"Everyone's numbers at hardware announcements are high," reminds another. "The 20 million number is more realistic (Sony's Phil Harrison [see interview on page 40] has said the machine's sustainable drawing figure is 20 million polygons per second with all effects), and that's an incredible number. I believe they can do that and I can't wait. If anyone can build this, it's Sony."

So, in conclusion, it seems that faith in PlayStation 2 to revolutionise gaming is well placed. The experts agree that, even when tempered with a little healthy scepticism, PlayStation 2 is a giant leap forward. But, as ever, it's important to remember that the numbers can lie and that the only real test of any console is by playing the games on it.

Personally? We're as excited as hell.



In 1993 Sony's PS1 demo led to incredible hype.

## Just a little bit of history repeating

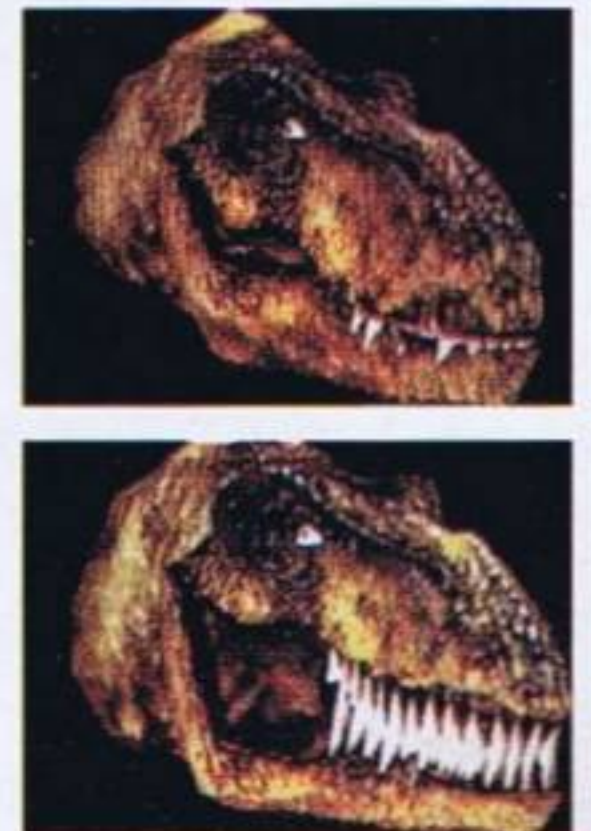
This isn't the first time Sony has wowed the world with technology demos. Almost six years ago today...

The original PlayStation was revealed to developers in slightly less glamorous fashion. Back in 1993 Sony was a mere bit-player in the videogame industry, and PlayStation was shown to developers one at a time on a gruelling tour of the world's game publishers. Sony had to go to them, as opposed to the other way around.

But it was a similarly-impressive tech demo that got everyone salivating then as now.

An animated screen-sized dinosaur (this was the Jurassic Park era, remember) ran towards the viewer and snapped its jaws. A later version even enabled a "player" to open and close its mouth. But it's only very recently that actual PlayStation games have lived up to the graphical promise of this early teaser. And the same will be true of PlayStation 2.

"It will take years for any real games to match these demos," offers one

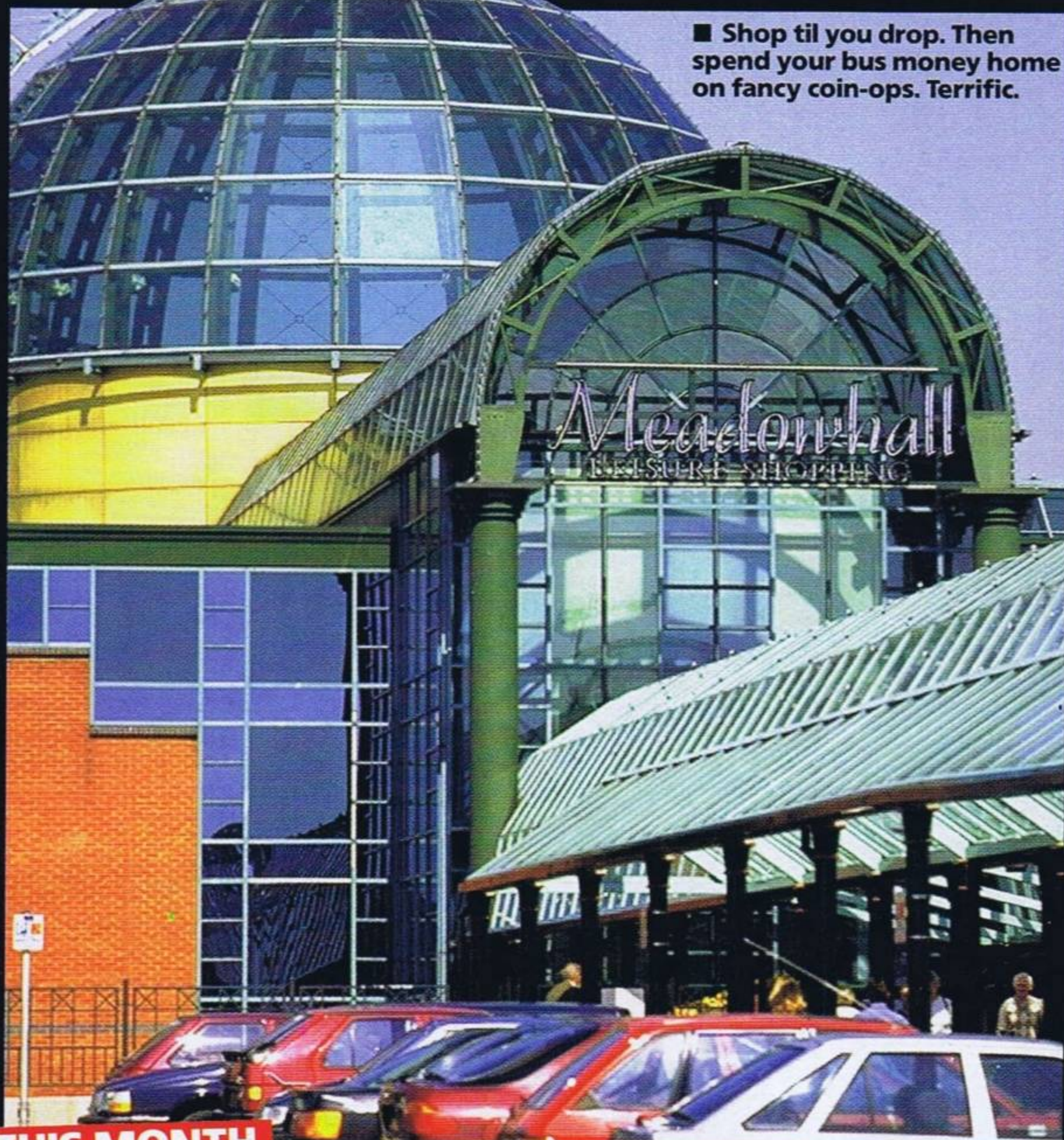


highly experienced developer (who wished to remain anonymous). There's a difference between making a 30 second demo and a whole game. We've only reached the full potential of the original PlayStation now, after five years."

So, look forward to the PS2. But don't believe all the hype.

# "My Beautiful Arcade"

It's grim up north, they say. But they still have all manner of amusement arcades, as Arcade can verify.



■ Shop til you drop. Then spend your bus money home on fancy coin-ops. Terrific.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JUDE EDGINGTON

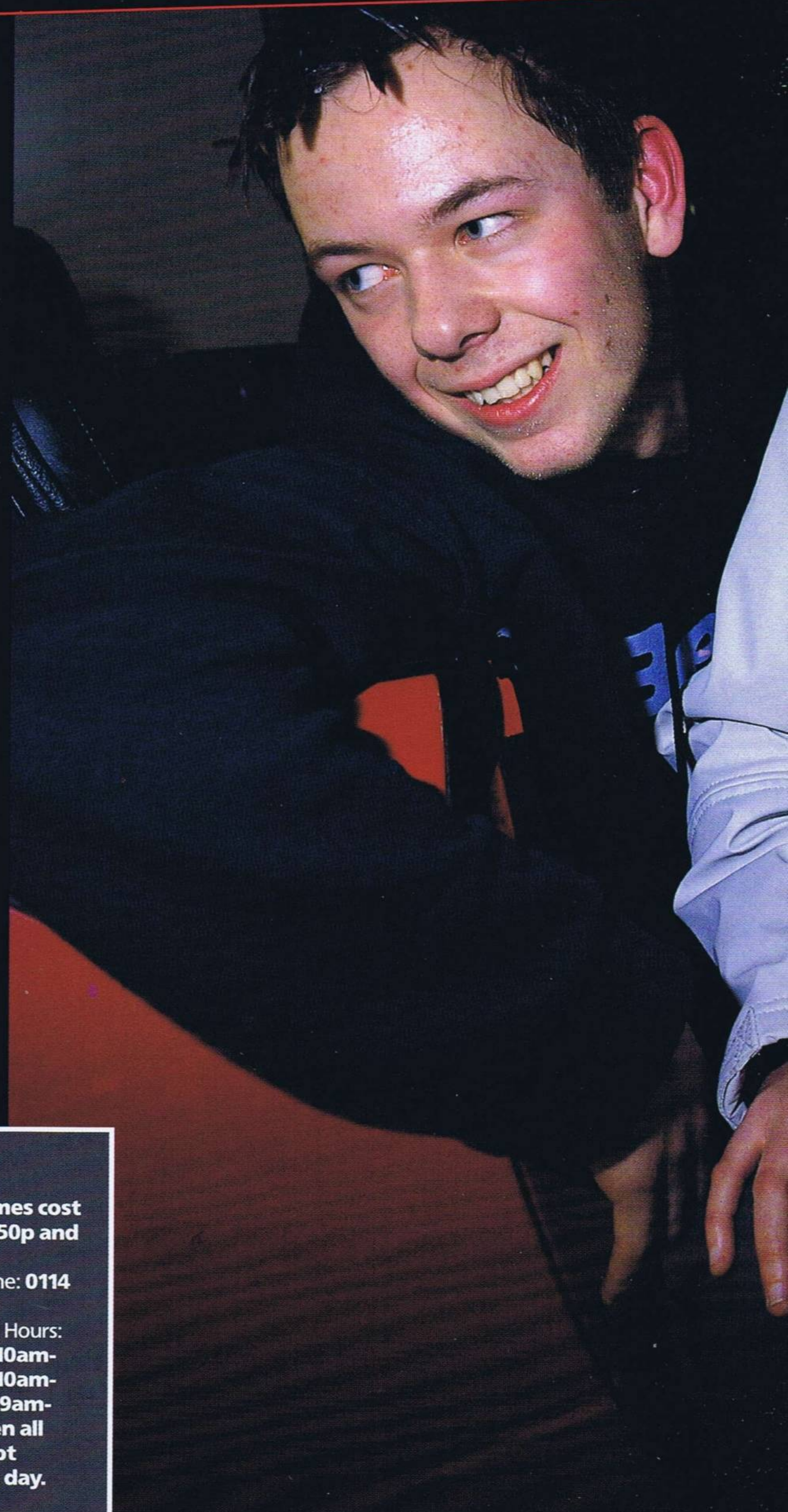
THIS MONTH

## Namco Wonderpark Meadow Hall, Sheffield

Used as a test-bed for some of the hottest Namco coin-ops before they are shipped down to the larger venue in London, Sheffield's Namco Wonderpark boasts some cracking games. It's set slap-bang at the end of the Meadow Hall shopping complex. With a relatively early closing time (to coincide with the hours of the shops) and within easy reach of the bars and restaurants, the clientele is as much hard-core gamers as those who wander in out of curiosity. A good mix of folks, then, with just the occasional nutter.

### Slot check

- Place: **Namco Wonderpark**
- Where: **60 The Oasis, Meadow Hall Centre, Sheffield S9 1EP**
- Size: **11,450 sq ft**
- Entertainment: **95 games and four "Bowlingo" bowling lanes**
- How much: **Free entry, games cost between 50p and £2s a go**
- Telephone: **0114 2569049**
- Opening Hours: **Sun-Thur 10am-10pm, Fri 10am-11pm, Sat 9am-11pm. Open all year except Christmas day.**





**"I like beat-'em-ups. She, on the other hand, likes all the cute games like *A Bug's Life*."**

**"Who are you calling 'She'?"**



## **Matt & Gill 18 & 18, Manchester**

**Hello, you two. Are you fans of *Ridge Racer Full Scale* then?**

"It's not as good as the other newer driving games. It feels a bit dated."

**It's quite cool playing *Ridge Racer* in a full-scale car, though.**

**Did you use all the gears and stuff?** "No. You never do in racing games, do you? You tend to play with one foot on the accelerator and the other on the brake. My shoes are too big to do that, so I keep pressing both pedals at the same time."

**[Examines trainers.] There're massive. What's with the big velcro strap thing?** "Saves the hassle with shoelaces."

**Clever. What's the last game you bought?** "*Street Fighter vs X-Men*. I

like beat-'em-ups, but not 3D ones. Why do you review 2D and 3D games in the same category?"

**Not sure.** "They're completely different styles of game. She, on the other hand, likes all the cute games, like *A Bug's Life*."

**"She?"** [Gill glares at Matt].

**Have you seen the film yet then, Gill?** [Matt glares at us.]

"No, not yet."

**You want to take her, mate. Where are you off to next?**

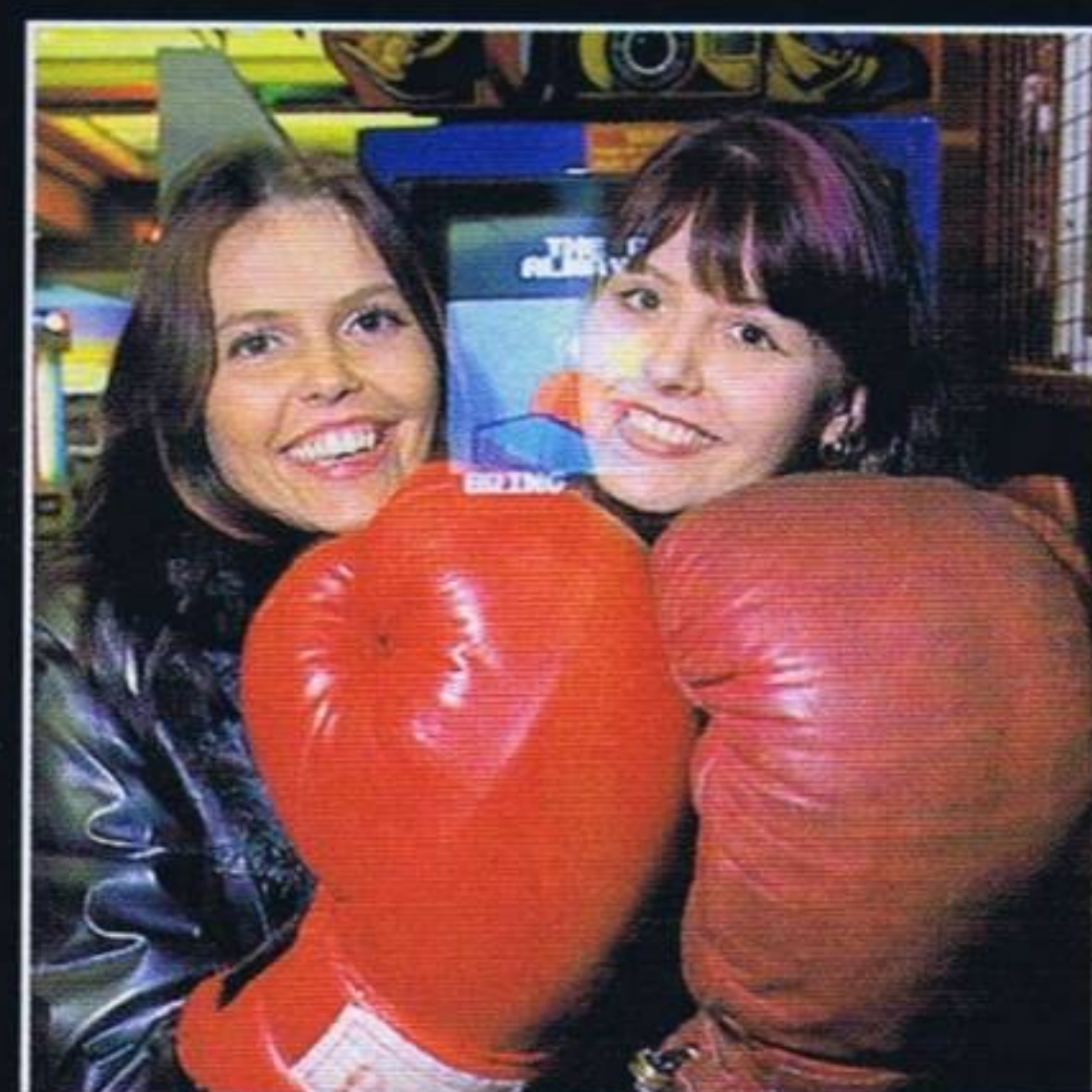
[Carefully] "Gill's on a bit of a spending spree, so I'm going to help her spend more money."

**Alright. Don't let her get too carried away, though.**

"Yeah, okay. See ya."



# "My Beautiful Arcade" Namco Wonderpark



## Tammy & Sherry 23 & 22, Sheffield

**Hello. Where have you been?**  
"Shopping."

**So you just popped in to beat the crap out of your sister in *Real PUNCHER* on the way home?**

"I like it, but you're too embarrassed to punch it, aren't you?" [Laughing.]  
"Everybody's watching!"

**Everybody looks a bit stupid in arcades, though.** "I like the horsey one, too."

**Final Furlong 2?** "It's knackerin', though. I prefer playing games at

home. My boyfriend's got a PC and a N64. My favourite's *Super Mario Kart*. I like Yoshi, 'cos he's funny."

**Everybody seems to be wearing chunky trainers with Velcro on them. Are they all the rage up here?** "They used to be, but they've gone out a bit. My sister doesn't believe these photos are for a videogame magazine, you know."

**What do you mean?** "She's convinced they are going to turn up in a dirty magazine or something."

**No, no. Arcade's very tasteful. Have you seen to big video wall down stairs?** "Simon's gone nuts and has swiped Courtney and driven to the top of a cliff, and Grant and Tony are going nuts."

**Eh?** "*EastEnders*. Don't you watch it? We just saw it on the video wall."

**No, we've been too busy 'working'. Which reminds us. We're just nipping downstairs. For half an hour. See ya.**

"See ya, have fun."



## Vanessa & Elena 18 & 18, Sheffield



**Hello. What do you do?**

"I work at a leading high street clothes shop."

**This isn't *Blind Date*, you know. You can say which one.**

"Partners."

**Never heard of it. And you?**

"I'm a hairdresser."

**So do you think *Armadillo Racing* is a good idea for a**

**game?** "I thought it was good, really. It hurt your arms, though. I was going like the clappers."

**And have you got anything at home? In the console department, that is?**

"A PlayStation. And *Tekken 3*, *FIFA 99*. The other day, we were..."

**Woo. You've got your tongue pierced. Did it hurt?** "Not really. It went a bit pussy, though." [Yanks up top.] "Not as bad as my belly button though." And look at this." [Yanks top up further.]

**Christ.** "It's my new tattoo. It's a naked woman."

**Ouch.** "...anyway, like I was saying, *Ridge Racer's* good. You get to sit in a whole car. Have you had a go?"

**It's quite an experience. But not quite as an experience as meeting you two.**

**Thanks, girls.** "No problem".







## Dominique 29, France

**'ello 'ello. Are you into videogames then?** "Of course. My favourite games are on the home computers. I have PC. I like *Duke Nukem* and *Doom*."

**Do you play against other people across the network?** "Yes. At work."

**You should see the mammoth games of networked *Quake* at the place we work at.** "I played a

lot of *Quake* during my studies."

**So what are you doing in Sheffield?** "I'm here for business."

**Are you skiving off?** "No, no. I have been to a business meeting in Sheffield. I had information to come here and make some shopping. I saw the leisure room and I had some minutes to kill."

**Er, do you hang around in arcades in France?** "I like flipper."

**[Long pause.] Pinball?** "Oui. It makes your hands go quite tired."

**Have you tried *Bass Fishing*?** "No, I haven't tried it. I played *Victory Lap*, but it is very difficult because the wheel has not the same course as in the real car."

**Yes... It is a bit oversensitive, isn't it?** "Yes, it is."

**Okay. We're going to leave now. Bye.**

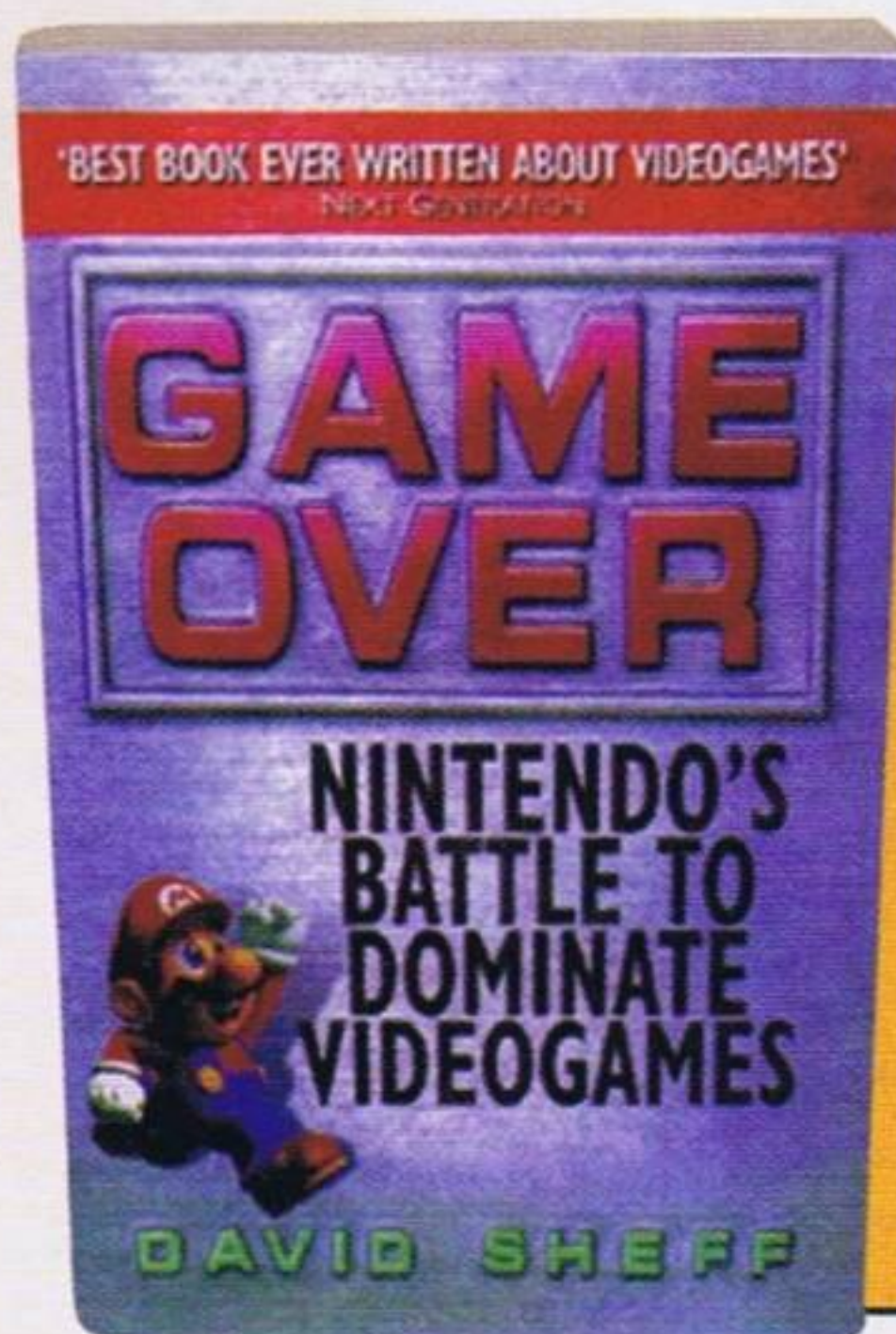


### Your beautiful arcade...

■ Chip shops, cross channel ferries, piers, motorway service stations, night clubs, bus stations, pubs – coin-ops are everywhere. But where do you like playing best of all?

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

**"Racing games are great. I would like to have been a Formula One driver!"**



# GAME OVER

Free! on the front cover of this issue of *Arcade*! It's "the greatest book about videogames ever written!" It's a must-read for anyone wanting to learn how the world of videogames works, and a great page-turner for those of us who simply enjoys a rivetting story. We hope you enjoy it.

David Sheff, the author of *Game Over*, now writes for *Playboy*.

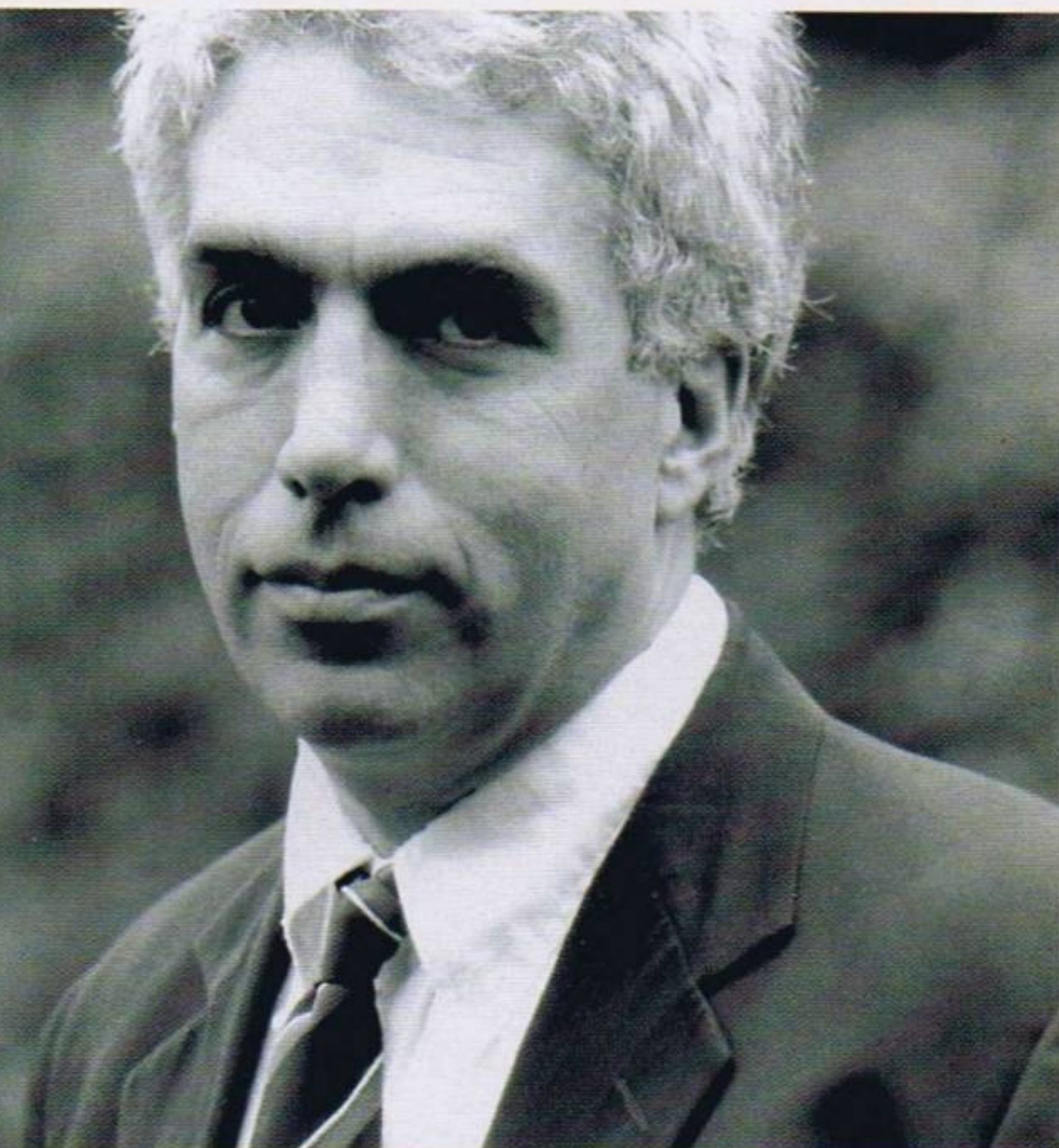


PHOTO: STEVEN BARBOUR/COURTESY PLAYBOY

## DAVID SHEFF

**Game Over** author David Sheff first realised the power of Nintendo when his son became addicted to *Mario Bros*.

**D**avid Sheff isn't a full-time videogame expert. He wrote *Game Over* in 1993 having researched articles on the company working as a freelance reporter for *Rolling Stone* magazine. *Arcade* caught up with him in California to learn more about the book's creation.

### How did *Game Over* originate?

My son was just about the first kid in America to get a NES. He and his friends became obsessed. In fact, they transformed from normal kids who liked baseball and cartoons into Nintendo zombies preoccupied with talk about Mario and Luigi and *Zelda* and hidden bombs and exploding turtles and secret passageways. But it was only when I read the results of a Q poll – these polls track who are the most recognised faces in America – that I realised that Nick's private obsession – *Mario* – had become the obsession of huge numbers of kids throughout the country. It also amazed me to see that Mario himself was rated higher in the poll than Mickey Mouse.

The implications of this caused me to look at the company. When I read the astounding figures from Nintendo Co. Ltd in Japan – its profits were ridiculously high and its prospects for growth were better than companies like Toyota – I decided to

write about the company and the phenomenon. Magazine articles in *Men's Life*, *Rolling Stone* and *Playboy* brought me to Nintendo in Japan and Seattle. A book was the obvious next step.

### It seems Nintendo helped you with considerable time and resources. Why was the company so hospitable?

Nintendo opened its doors to encourage the press accounts in the American magazines. The main people there were genuinely proud of their accomplishments and loved their product, so they felt that there was no reason to close the company's doors. In addition, Nintendo was fighting its way into America's big stores in part because it was unknown. National press may have helped its cause in that way. Regardless, by the time I was ready to push forward with a book, I had a decent relationship with the top people at the company and so they agreed to keep the doors open.

### After publication, what parts of *Game Over's* content were the book's lead characters (Mr Yamauchi, Howard Lincoln, and so on) most pleased with?

I think the Nintendo people were happy to be immortalised in the book. They are truly extraordinary characters and I think they got a kick out of the stories that were recreated, whether it was Lincoln's

successful defence of the lawsuit over *Donkey Kong* (going up against the big shots at MCA), the wild negotiations in Moscow for *Tetris* or, specifically for Mr Miyamoto, the recreation of the creative process behind his games.

### What parts was Nintendo particularly displeased with?

I know they didn't like the title because they felt that some people would think that I was implying that Nintendo's game was over. In addition, they didn't like the subtitle, because it was, I admit, pretty sensational. The paperback publisher changed the subtitle to "How Nintendo Did It", but the original was "How Nintendo Zapped An American Industry, Captured Your Dollars And Enslaved Your Children". I especially don't think they loved the word "enslaved", particularly since they knew that parents were worried about the influence of Nintendo games on their children.

### How would you describe the leading characters of Hiroshi Yamauchi, Minoru Arakawa, Howard Lincoln and Shigeru Miyamoto? *Game Over* reads as if you have developed quite an affection for them...

I would agree that I did very much like Mr Arakawa, Lincoln and Mr Miyamoto, particularly by the end of the research. Like isn't the right word to use about Mr Yamauchi, though. I certainly did respect him, but he never was easy or open in the way that the others were.

Mr Arakawa and his wife were wonderful: charming and interesting, obviously smart. Mr Miyamoto was brilliant, a nice counterbalance (as an artist) to the more serious, straight-shooting businessmen. But I wound up with the most respect and liking for Lincoln himself. Though he was always a tough minded businessman – I wouldn't want him as an adversary in a business deal – he was a journalists' dream source; open and funny and unafraid of being honest and outspoken. In truth, he added an enormous amount to the book. How often will a businessman, particularly a lawyer, candidly describe closed-door meetings with some of the biggest players in his industry? Lincoln's insights into the business were incredibly useful, too.

### At the time of *Game Over's* completion, what would have been your predictions for the future of Nintendo's business?

I knew that Nintendo would remain a key player in the industry and predicted that the company would be able to withstand the advances from Sega, Sony and other companies. I also saw that Nintendo had made some key mistakes. Had it taken Sega more seriously at the beginning, it might have retained its dominance of the industry instead of being one of three major players.

### What did you see as keys to Nintendo's successes?

Some of it was luck – great timing. But not much. It was incredibly smart and dedicated people. Mr Miyamoto's artistry was key. But so was the force of people like Lincoln, Mr Arakawa, Main, and others.

### What were Nintendo's weaknesses?

Any successful company can succumb to a certain arrogance. There were times when Nintendo felt invulnerable and made some poor decisions.

### To what extent have you followed Nintendo since writing *Game Over*?

I've been involved in other fields since *Game Over*. Currently I'm writing about the entrepreneurial revolution as a means to democracy in China. But I check in with Nintendo and the videogame industry from time to time and have returned to write about the business. When a new game sounds great, I'll give it a spin, too.

### So you do play videogames?

I enjoy videogames but have little time to play them. I try to keep them away from my little kids, because I'd rather have them reading and playing in more imaginative ways. I love the new *Zelda* game, though.

### What did you enjoy most about the experience of writing *Game Over*?

Meeting those great characters and trying to make them come alive in a book. The story of the people like Mr Miyamoto, Lincoln, the Yamauchis and Arakawas set in that fast-paced world of technology and trade was exciting. That was all good fun and then putting it all together in a readable way was a great challenge.

### *Game Over* is still one of only a very few "must read" titles for anyone looking to learn more about games. Why do you think quality writing on an industry bigger than the movies or music CD business is so scarce?

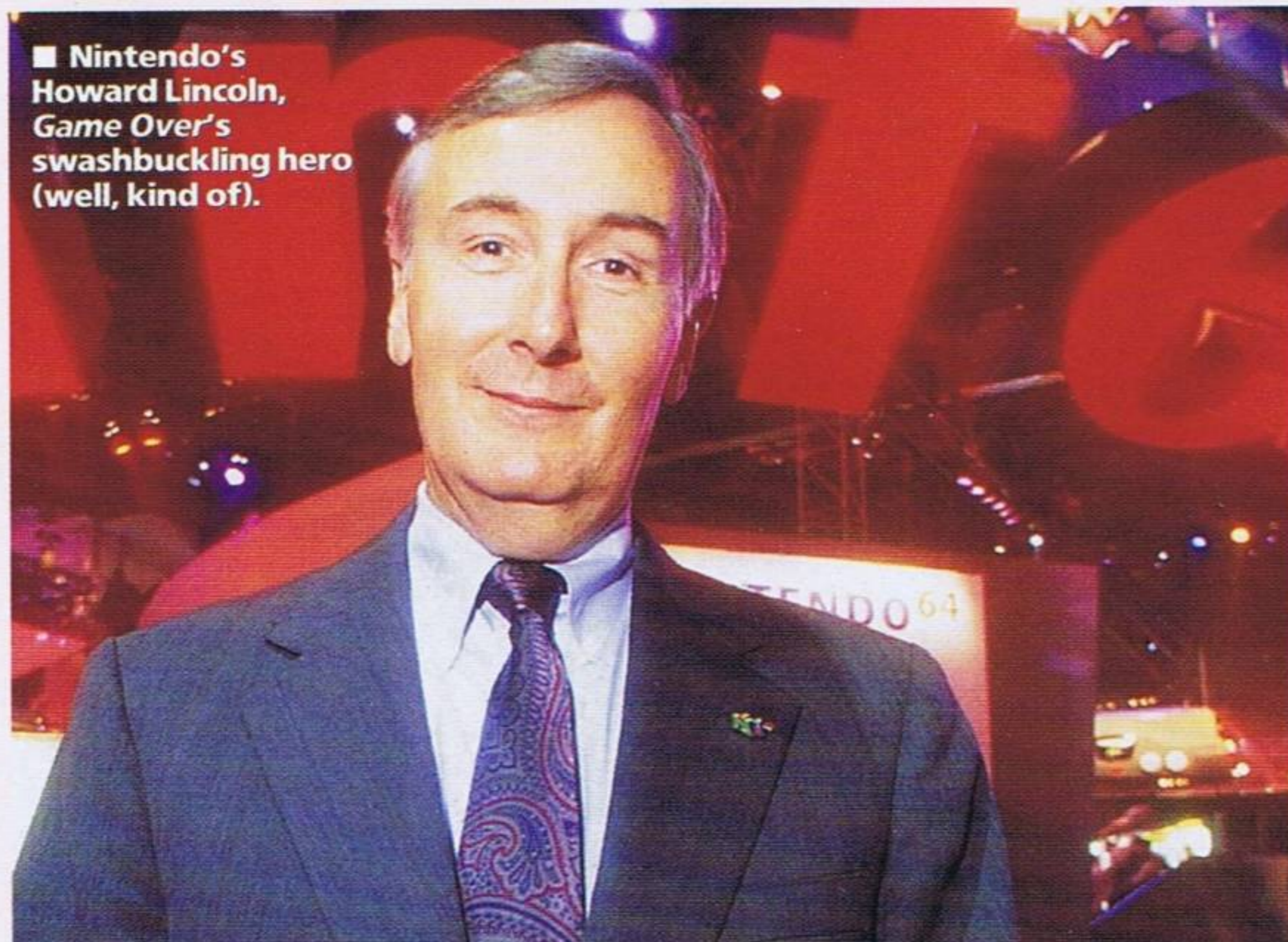
I was a writer first, and then came to look at the videogame industry. Many industry writers have the technical background and the interest, but haven't developed as writers. Since I was such an outsider, I had to draw out my sources to educate me about everything from the basics of the technology to the key aspects of the business. By the time I understood the business and technology, I was able to process it and describe it for readers, hopefully in a compelling way.

### Are you ever tempted to write a sequel? Or perhaps write about videogames again but from a different perspective?

I lived and breathed that world for long enough. Though it's a fascinating world, I'm happy to be exploring new ones. So it's unlikely I'd go back to that world again. On the other hand... I suppose anything's possible.



■ Nintendo's Howard Lincoln, *Game Over's* swashbuckling hero (well, kind of).



## HOWARD LINCOLN

**Nintendo of America's chairman may not look scary, but – as *Game Over* shows – you'd want him on your side in a fight.**

**H**oward Lincoln may look like just another American businessman, but don't let the mild manner and sober grey suit fool you. Meet his eye and you may catch a glimpse of the fighting spirit that makes him one of videogaming's fiercest boardroom tigers. *Arcade's* Neil West has interviewed Howard on numerous occasions, and can confirm that, yes – he is a nice guy too.

**In what ways were you pleased with *Game Over*? You have a leading role...**

I thought it was a good representation of the videogame industry, and the climate in which Nintendo resurrected the business from the Atari debacle.

**Which parts of *Game Over* were you particularly displeased with?**

The parts where I was portrayed as a bad guy. I'm actually a good guy – at least I like to think so!

**One of the best bits in the book is your legal battle with MCA over *Donkey Kong*. From the painstaking legal groundwork to the showdown with Sid Sheinberg, it seems a defining victory and a pivotal moment for Nintendo. How did it feel to look Sheinberg in the eye and deliver that line?**

At the time it felt great, but that was in the heat of battle and we were the little guys on the block. There's been a lot of water over the dam since those days...

**What do you see as other key moments in Nintendo's history?**

The launch of Game Boy in 1989 essentially created a new market for videogames, one that is still alive today. *Donkey Kong Country* revived the 16-bit market in 1994, and showed that great games will always be well received. The launch of *Super Mario 64* revolutionised videogames, bringing a true 3D world into homes everywhere. The launch of *Pokemon* was hugely significant. I predict it will be as big outside of Japan as it has been in Japan.

And, finally, the launch of the *Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* showed the world that videogames can be as immersive and impressive as popular novels and top films.

**How has Nintendo's strength changed since *Game Over's* completion in 1993?**

Very little. While the players in the videogame market have changed over the years, Nintendo has remained the constant. We've already competed successfully against Atari, NEC, 3DO, Sega and now Sony.

**Why has Nintendo 64, despite the fact that it hosts most of today's best gaming experiences, found itself so far behind PlayStation?**

There is no question that PlayStation has done well: but so has N64. We aren't that far behind. Independent sales data indicates that Sony's sold about 15 million machines so far in the US, and Nintendo is just short of 12 million (and we were a year behind them). With another 15-20 million machines still to be sold, I think it's way too early to declare a winner.

This is very similar to the situation that existed in the mid-point of the 16-bit era; Sega held a lead at the time, but we wound up winning in the end. It doesn't matter what inning you score runs in – only that you have the most when the game is over.

**What is your response to a commonly-drawn conclusion from analysis of the N64/PlayStation battle that you got "the kids" and Sony got "everyone else"?**

It's much too early to start writing our obituary. Nintendo sold more than 25 million copies of the *Legend of Zelda* in just 39 days at the end of 1998 and held nearly 40% of the industry last year. Besides, the "everyone else" Sony claims to have is a similar sized market to that of the "kids" market. Further, kids ages 6 to 20 are poised to have the strongest buying power of any market since the baby boomers, which positions Nintendo to be a leader in videogames

now, and into the next century.

**What are the key challenges for Nintendo today?**

The key challenges have not changed for Nintendo or any major videogame company. Provide the best quality games, at a reasonable price to consumers. Good games will always win out.

**How do you intend to make sure that your games are the best?**

No one has been more committed to quality games than Nintendo. We have always believed that a game should not go to consumers until it is perfect, and we will continue to work that way. We don't achieve that goal every time out, but we certainly try our best to do so.

***Game Over* provides yet further testament to the genius of *Zelda* designer Mr Miyamoto. Just how important is he to Nintendo?**

Mr Miyamoto and his team of game designers and developers are very important to Nintendo. They have been responsible for some of our most successful games, from *Mario* to *The Legend of Zelda*. However, we have many other designers, programmers and developers on board who are just as critical to our continued success.

Nintendo takes the time to make quality products and works with the very best developers in world. From Nintendo's internal development teams to second-party developers such as Rare and Left Field, Nintendo has the cream of the crop creating games for all its platforms. This commitment to quality ensures that gamers are getting the best product we can give them for their money.

**What is your reaction to Sony's unveiling of PlayStation 2?**

We too are hard at work on the next generation Nintendo machine. From a game-playing standpoint, it will certainly be competitive to Sony's PlayStation 2. I am pleased to say that the software will not be ROM cartridges. We expect to

make further announcements about the new hardware's specs, as well as availability of development tools later this year. But for now, we intend to stay focused on N64, because we've got some great N64 titles in the works.

**Nintendo makes the best videogames in the world. Would you ever drop the console manufacturing business and becoming a games publisher, like EA, for other people's machines?**

Nintendo is committed to bringing top quality videogames to market, and always will be. It is conceivable that, at some point, you could end up with one box that is basically in everybody's house, at which point Nintendo would become a software company. But that is a long way off.

**Mr Yamauchi has announced his intention to retire. How will the company be different without him?**

Mr Yamauchi has not named his successor. When he retires, the company will no doubt miss his strong leadership. But, he'd be the first person to say that Nintendo has a long and bright future ahead of it.

**You once affectionately described Mr Yamauchi as "a tough old bird". Can you elaborate a little?**

I think this description best characterises Mr Yamauchi's personality.

**Mr Arakawa doesn't grab many headlines. Is his contribution underestimated?**

He's one of the smartest businessmen I've ever met, yet he has never received the credit he deserves for saving this industry. Without him, we would not have been successful in New York City back in 1985. And, if we had failed then, we certainly wouldn't be making videogames now.

**What have you enjoyed most about your time at Nintendo?**

Being around people I like, admire and respect. We've had a lot of fun and made lots of money for the company for a long, long time. You can't beat that! **A**

## CONTINUE?

***Game Over* ends in 1993 after Nintendo's launch of Super NES. So what happened next? James Ashton picks up the story...**

**A**t its prime in the late '80s, Nintendo was known as the videogame industry's "900lb gorilla". This wasn't just a bad *Donkey Kong* joke, but reference to the brute power with which Nintendo dominated its rivals. It had both the talent to create a multi-billion dollar industry and then the resolve to monopolise this industry with a vice-like grip. It was ruthlessly ambitious and led by men who refused to allow anything other than total success for their corporation. It was a formidable operation.

Even the most die-hard Nintendo fan, however, would concede that the company had also enjoyed the good fortune of being in the right place at the right time. Atari had systematically destroyed the "old" videogame industry with billion dollar bungles and incompetent management, leaving the field fallow for the NES invasion. While the world's media companies believed that the public's desire for videogames had died with Atari, Nintendo realised that the craving was still there – all that was lost was the faith in the old status quo. The time was right for a new player. And so it was acknowledged that although Nintendo was the company who'd first broken into the old fun fair and discovered the all the rides still worked

## GAME OVER CONTINUE?

other companies would surely follow. And Nintendo would be exceedingly lucky if it were to keep sole possession of the keys for good.

Nintendo's grip first showed signs of weakening in the early '90s. While the SNES eventually came to triumph over Sega's Mega Drive in the United States (it was a dead-heat in Europe), Sega had still proved that it was possible for another company to come in and steal market share from Nintendo. While it was possible to argue that the arrival of Sega boosted the public's general enthusiasm for videogames and made the profit pie bigger, the point not lost to the games industry at large was that – for the first time in years – Nintendo had to share that pie with someone else. One company was no longer in sole control. Provided a rival had the skill and determination, it could become a player. Sony in particular paid close attention.

**In the meantime, the 16-bit era of Super NES and Mega Drive was struggling to re-live the highs that Nintendo had enjoyed with its eight-bit NES. For one thing, computer and chip technology was moving far faster than ever before and the capabilities of most home PCs were starting to outstrip the two main consoles in the market. More than this, though, the move to 16-bit had failed to really change the way games were designed and played. Most gamers saw the change as purely cosmetic, with games remaining two-dimensional – and usually side-on or top-down upgrades of existing eight-bit titles. At its essence, *Super Mario World* on the Super NES really wasn't that different to *Super Mario Bros 3* on the NES. Any hopes that Nintendo might have had of establishing a five-year golden age for the SNES in the way that it had for the NES seemed optimistic. Computer games were starting to lose their shine, and sales figures reflected that fact.**

At the launch of the SNES in 1991, Nintendo had announced its intention to manufacture an add-on to the console incorporating the much-vaunted and newly-fledged CD ROM technology. The drive was to be a joint venture between Nintendo and Sony, but whether as a result of Sega's catastrophic Mega CD add-on for its Genesis, or because Nintendo felt uneasy working with a company that could so easily become a major rival, the project was cancelled in June 1993. Dark rumours circulated after the cancellation announcement that the project lived on within Sony's R&D labs and had mutated into a 32-bit CD based console. With Sega's Saturn having just been announced some saw these rumours as merely a spoiling tactic. Others weren't quite so sure.

With the CD drive shelved, Nintendo acted quickly and announced a new partnership between itself and Silicon Graphics, the world-renowned graphics and special effects expert, to build a new 64-bit system. The resultant console was to boast the power of a \$10,000 Silicon Graphics workstation but at only a tiny fraction of the cost.

It was a powerful statement of intent, but by this time – having abandoned the CD project at the 11th hour – Nintendo had fallen badly behind Sega in the race to produce a "next generation" videogame console. And it didn't seem in any great rush to catch up. It wasn't until the following March (1994) that the company announced its Dream Team – a group of developers who were to work on the first round of games for the machine. Even then many of these developers had yet to receive any development hardware for the console. Meanwhile, in-game pictures of near-completion Sega Saturn games began to circulate. The gap between Nintendo and the cutting edge seemed to be slowly widening.

In the meantime Gumppei Yokoi, the man who invented the original Game Boy, had come up with a new product for Nintendo, independent of Silicon Graphics. Based on gimmicky 3D technology the Virtual Boy looked like a strange pair of goggles stuck on a wire tripod. The in-game graphics were monochrome red (to significantly reduce cost of manufacture) and were genuinely 3D. However, the machine suffered from many problems. It was very difficult to convey how innovative the graphics system was unless you actually looked into a Virtual Boy itself – screenshots in magazines looked awful and their was no real way to film what was going on for use on TV. This made it very difficult to generate any kind of "buzz". Furthermore, while many of the Virtual Boy titles worked well as games, they just didn't look as flash as the newest arcade boards, or even recent SNES hits. And while this didn't matter for a low-cost, take-anywhere machine like the Game Boy, the Virtual Boy had to be played sitting down and cost a lot more to buy.

Virtual Boy was so obviously wrong on so many counts, in retrospect it's hard to see just what Nintendo thought it could gain by releasing it. It looked clumsy, head-to-head multi-player games – one of the most popular forms of console gaming – were impossible (how could two people see the screen?) and, most tellingly, the kinds of games the Virtual Boy offered weren't the ones that the public wanted. Having had its finger placed almost

uncannily on the pulse for the past ten years, Nintendo had finally made a very public mistake. The company might have been able to force the Virtual Boy to the fore at the height of its dominance in the late '80s, but its inevitable failure was yet more evidence that the times were changing.

July 1994 saw a name announced for Nintendo's 64-bit Silicon Graphics-based machine: Ultra 64. During the press conference held to mark the announcement, a flashy platform game played in the background – a game that most people assumed to be one of the new console's launch games. To the amazement of the assembled journalists, however, far from being a 64-bit title of the future, *Donkey Kong Country* was running on a SNES. It was the first collaboration between Nintendo, Silicon Graphics and Warwickshire-based Rare, and marked Nintendo's determination to continue milking its 16-bit Super NES business. Sony's PlayStation project, meanwhile, had proved to be much more than mere rumour and gained more kudos with every testament to its capabilities leaked by game developers. Worse still for Nintendo, Saturn – Sega's 32-bit console – launched in the last months of 1994. While its games weren't wonderful by Nintendo standards, they showed a huge leap in graphical design from the 16-bit consoles – SNES included. And Saturn was in the shops.

**A**cknowledging this headstart is crucial in trying to reconcile Nintendo's position of power at the end of 1993 with the way the console market stands now. Seventeen months elapsed between Sega's launch of Saturn in November 1994 and the eventual release of the N64. During this time, the launch of Nintendo's 64-bit system was postponed, delayed and re-scheduled on what seemed like a monthly basis. PlayStation and Saturn, on the other hand, both arrived on time and began to accrue an impressive array of titles. It soon became clear that Nintendo's delay

problems were not caused by hardware issues – the specifications of the machine had long been set – but software delays. Nintendo's crack team of game designers, headed by the legendary Shigeru Miyamoto, were finding it unexpectedly difficult to translate two-dimensional gaming experiences into the world of 3D. The newly-monikered N64 was stuck on the launch pad because Nintendo couldn't perfect the games it wanted to debut with. The chief offender was its showcase title, the latest instalment in the *Mario* series – *Super Mario 64*.

By way of contrast, at Sony – where games experience was thinner on the ground – a simpler approach was taken to launching the console. Using existing arcade technology and proven game constructs, the PlayStation was playing host to games like *Tekken*, *Ridge Racer* and *WipEout*; a graphically dazzling array that corresponded with the public's expectation of what a next generation console should deliver. It didn't matter that underneath the gloss these games were fairly shallow. They provided what committed gamers wanted at that time – home versions of arcade games. Armed with these eye-grabbing titles and some slick advertising Sony quickly began to expand the videogame market into previously untapped areas. While Nintendo struggled to perfect *Mario 64* – the company's vision of the perfect game – the public at large revelled in Sony's menu of futuristic simplicity.

## It would be a harsh critic that judged Nintendo 64 a failure. But there's no denying the inroads made by Sony

By the time N64 went on sale in June 1996, Nintendo had ceded more than a year's headstart to PlayStation. While *Mario* was rightly lauded as the finest achievement in videogame design to date, the launch of a new 3D adventure on PlayStation and Saturn a few months later only seemed to highlight a gap in philosophy between Nintendo and Sony. In comparison with *Mario*, Core Design's *Tomb Raider* was a primitive and clumsy 3D platform game. But where Nintendo's game starred a cartoon plumber fighting giant dragons on a quest to rescue a fairy princess, the PlayStation game starred a sassy, sexy female lead, living out gun-toting adventures in a gritty real life environment. A seasoned gamer could quickly tell the two games apart in terms of gameplay depth, but there was no denying the appeal of *Tomb Raider's* "assets".

Sony had the style and Nintendo had the substance. But this, it seemed, wasn't enough. Contrary to the design philosophy cherished by Nintendo since it dragged gaming from the rubble of Atari's collapse, it now seemed that – to a new generation of gamers expanded by Sony to include people who had never owned a videogame console before – image was everything.

*Mario* still got the cover of *Nintendo Power*, but Lara Croft made *Newsweek* and *The Face*. And while Saturn quickly fell by the wayside, PlayStation continued to move from strength to strength.

Whether or not Nintendo fully realised this change in gamer's tastes, the technology of the N64 certainly didn't help the company to adapt. Having opted for the pirate-proof but expensive cartridge format, Nintendo found it difficult to begin to woo third-party developers who'd had a year to get used to the easy and highly profitable CD-based

games business. Nintendo 64 cartridges cost upwards of \$25 to manufacture, PlayStation CDs were around \$8.

Everyone could do the maths. Even long-term Nintendo partners such as *Final Fantasy* creator SquareSoft and beat-'em-up king Capcom jumped ship to Sony. Whether these companies wanted revenge on Nintendo for all the years of tough bargains they'd been forced to accept on the NES and SNES, or whether they just calculated it as uneconomic to develop for the N64, the effect was the same. All the best third party games made their appearance on the PlayStation.

**I**t would be a harsh and rash critic that judged the N64 a failure. At its launch it broke all sales records in America, becoming the fastest-selling console in history. It's been a highly profitable business for Nintendo and, were it not for what PlayStation has achieved, it could be categorised as another Nintendo success story. But PlayStation can't be ignored. Sony, quite simply, has changed all the rules. It's now doing to Nintendo what Nintendo's previously done to everyone else. It's stormed Nintendo's castle and walked off with all the treasure. Current market share figures for Europe show Nintendo controlling about 28% of the console business, with Sony regularly topping the 70% mark. In Japan Nintendo 64 is all but dead. In the US Nintendo 64 is putting up a little more of a fight, but is still far behind.

But the war isn't over yet. And Nintendo is still winning battles. *Zelda 64* may well go on to become the biggest-selling videogame of all time (it's already the fastest-selling) and the Game Boy phenomenon – recently boosted with the launch of Game Boy Color – shows no sign of flagging. What may be required, however, is a radical rethink of the way Nintendo does business. *Zelda* is undeniably a triumph, but development of the game tied up a huge number of the company's creative staff for three years – almost everyone they had for its final year – and cost a fortune.

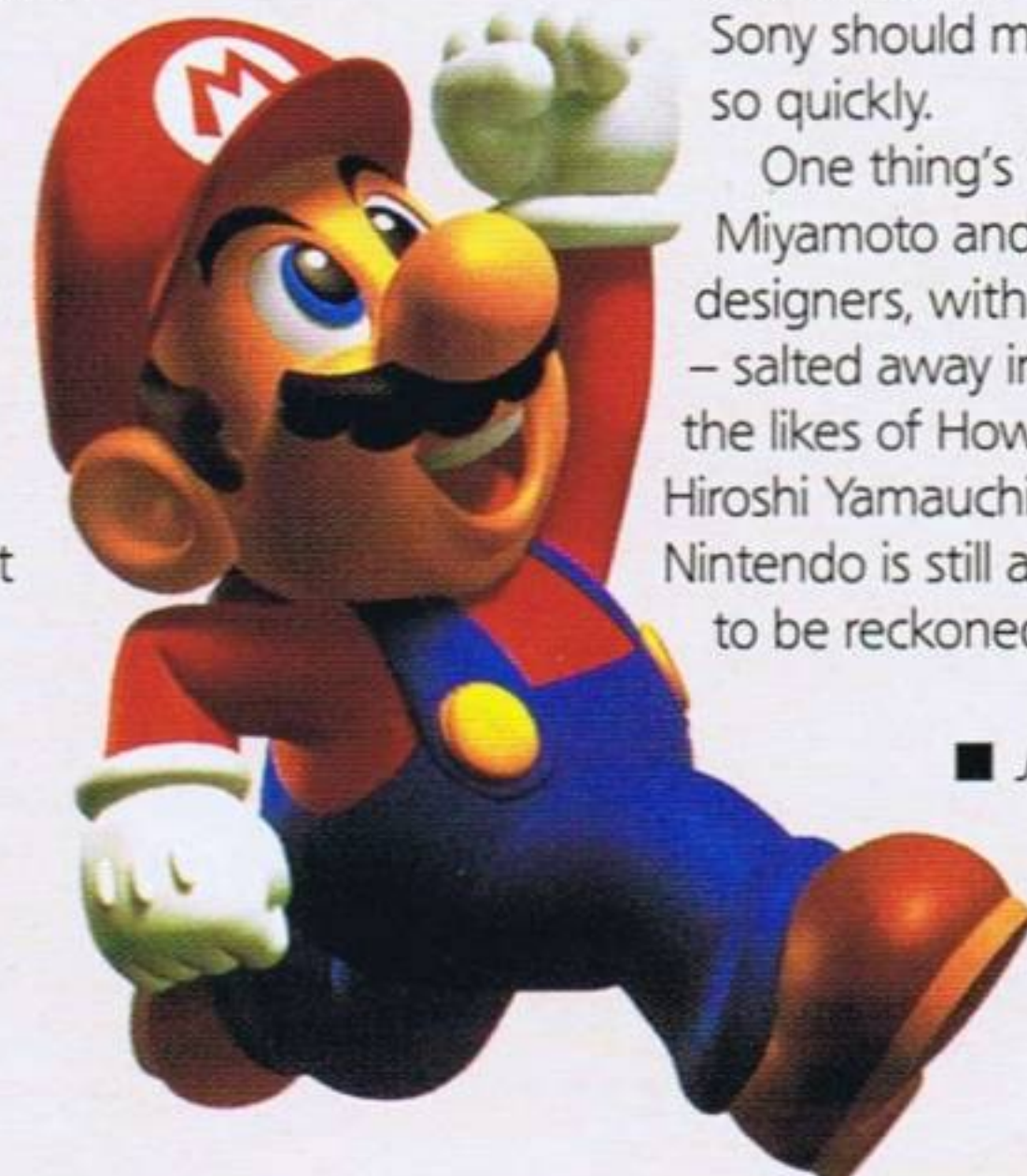
The game has wowed players around the world, but comparing the impact its elfin lead made on the world's media with that created by *Tomb Raider* or even *Tekken*, Nintendo must start to question whether its traditional brand of gameplay magic is enough any more. The company also has to ask whether it can still afford to sit outside of fashion.

In recent months, insiders at the company have begun to speak of a different business model for Nintendo's fourth console, which may arrive as early as spring 2001. More games produced more quickly by Nintendo itself, coupled with a better deal for third-party licencees, should ensure that the console doesn't suffer the sparse release dates that have prevented the N64 building up too much momentum.

But there is another possibility, and that is for Nintendo to give up the home hardware business altogether. Nintendo's core strength has always been its game development, and with PlayStation 2 looking to go where no games machine has gone before, Nintendo may chose instead to grab the biggest possible audience for its titles. Right now it may seem unthinkable that you could play *Mario* and *Zelda* on a Sony machine, but then back in 1993 it was unthinkable that Sony should make so many inroads so quickly.

One thing's for sure. With Mr Miyamoto and his team of game designers, with billions – yes, billions – salted away in the bank, and with the likes of Howard Lincoln and Hiroshi Yamauchi at the helm, Nintendo is still a gaming force to be reckoned with.

■ James Ashton is the Editor of *Arcade's* sister magazine *Nintendo 64*.



# Wanted!

## Videogaming's biggest nerds

££££  
of prizes  
to be  
won!

We're rounding up the UK's biggest videogame nerds to do battle in the Great Arcade Nerd-Off™. Those with girlfriends need not apply.

**D**o you have posters of game programmers on your bedroom wall? Can you hum the loading screen to obscure Spectrum platform games? Do you camp outside of your local games shop on a regular basis? Or, rather, do you know someone else who does?

We're deadly serious. Arcade is looking for the country's most spongy, most hardcore, no-really-we're-through-the-looking-glass-here-people nerds. Then, what we're going to do is pick 20 finalists who will be invited down to Bath for the weekend, and pitted in nerdy battle against each other until one emerges victorious. It'll be a bit like Japanese TV show *Endurance*. But nerdier.

There will fantastic prizes (we'll be giving away thousands of pounds of videogame gear) and a good time guaranteed for all. Deadline for entries is tight, so if you want to enter (sorry – if you want to enter *your mate*), you'd best get a move on.

### Entry form

## Arcade

■ Reckon you've got what it takes? Then send a photo of yourself, a small biography, and an anecdote illustrating your supreme nerd-like powers to:

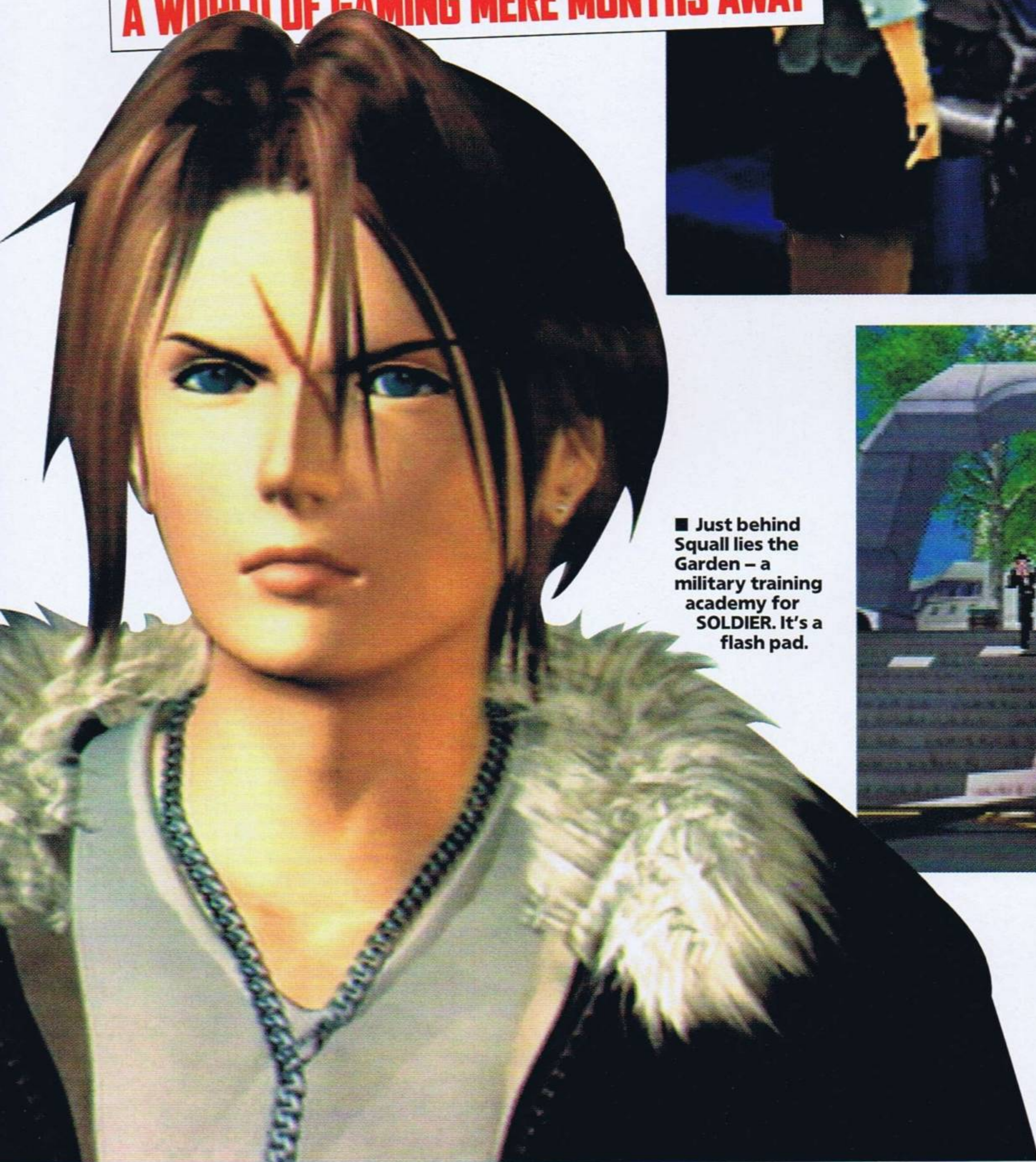
The Great Arcade Nerd-Off™  
Arcade,  
Future Publishing,  
30 Monmouth Street,  
Bath BA1 2BW.

All entries must reach us by 8 May 1999. No correspondence will be entered into. The Editor's decision is final.

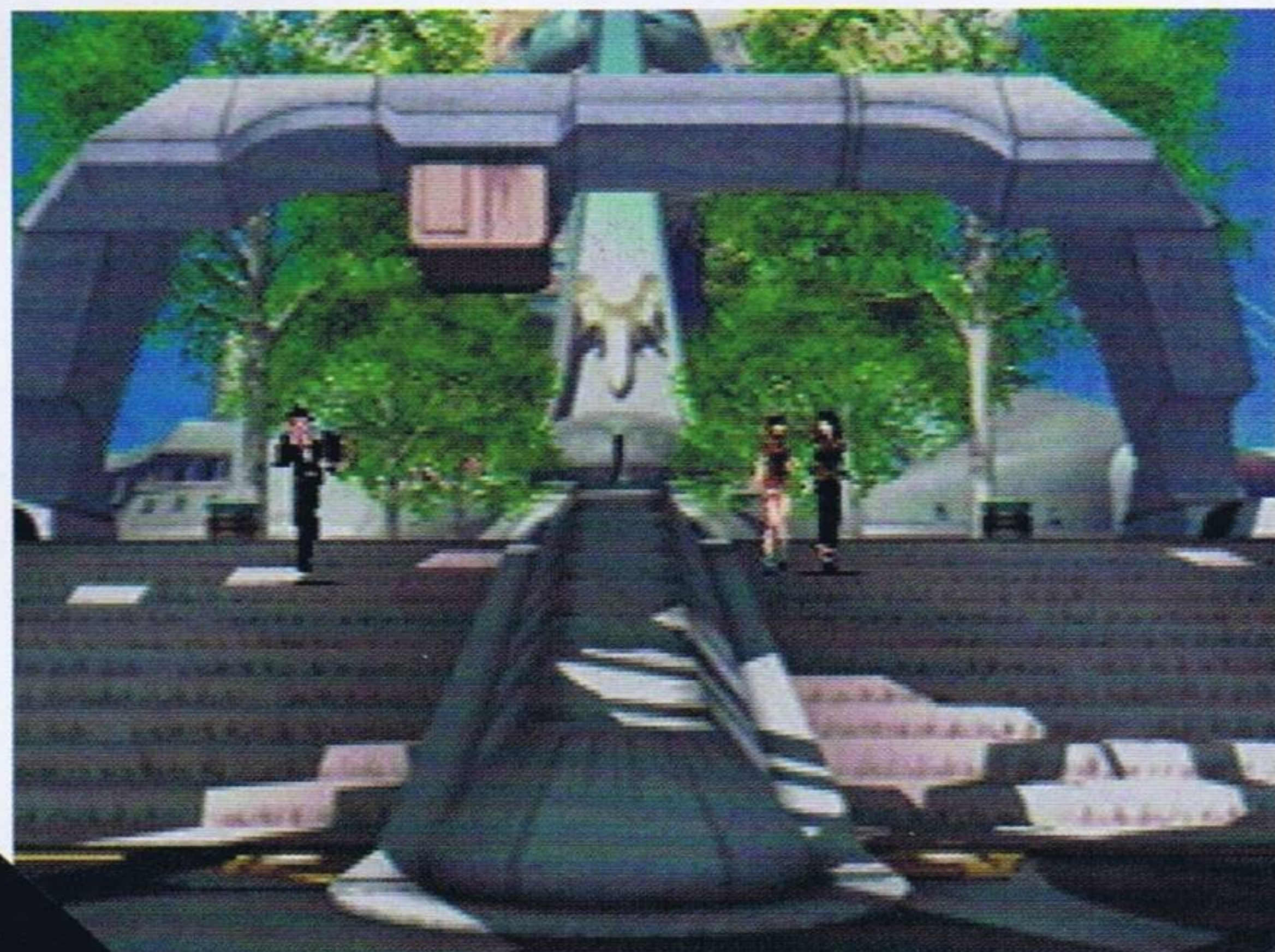
■ Do you these guys look like your mates? If so, we want to hear from you.

PHOTO: KOBAL

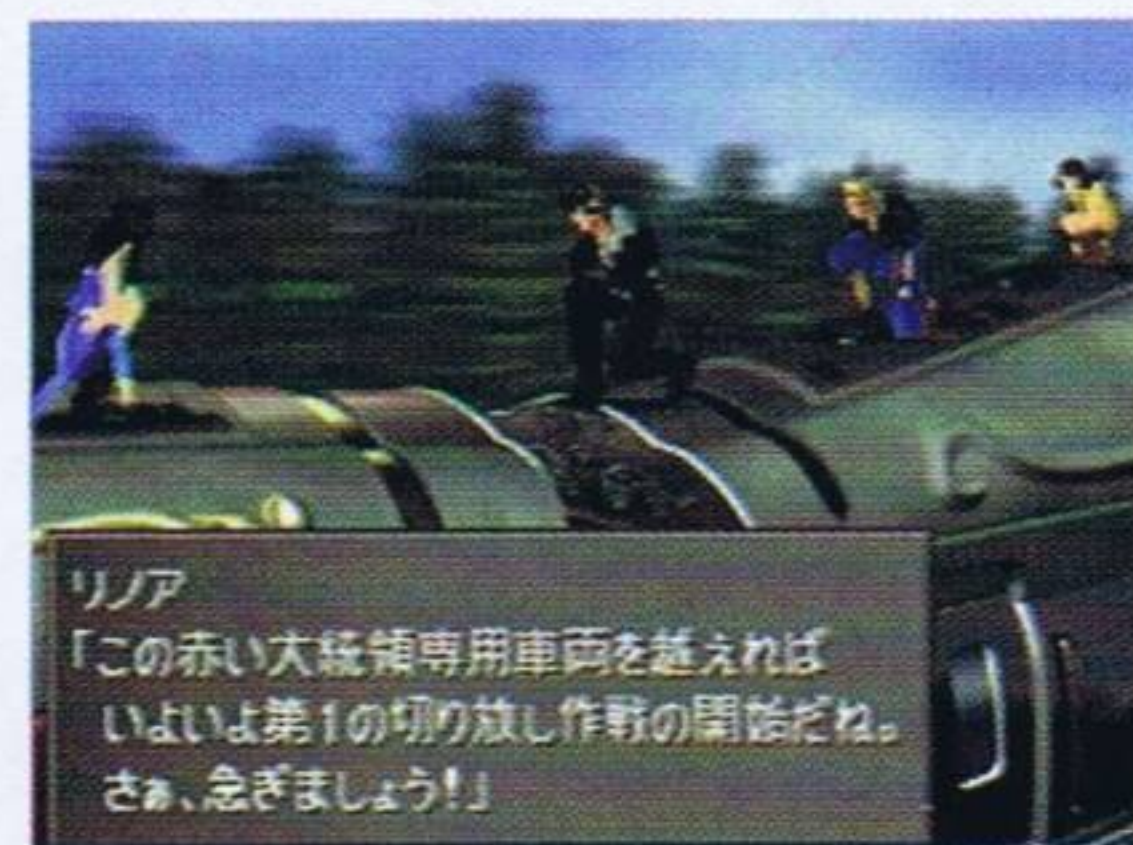
**COMING SOON**  
**A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY**



■ Just behind Squall lies the Garden – a military training academy for SOLDIER. It's a flash pad.



■ Off the rails: Squall and his companions "kidnapp" a train for entertainment.



Format: **PlayStation** | Developer: **Square Soft** | Publisher: **Square Soft** | Players: **1** | On sale in UK: **TBC**

## FINAL FANTASY VIII

The most anticipated RPG of the year launches in Japan. The UK must wait.

**D**espite its hype-driven billing as *RPG par excellence*, *Final Fantasy VII* was a landmark title for another, less immediately obvious reason: its plot. It is, without question, the most accomplished piece of storytelling the videogame industry has ever produced. As many games in the past have proved, an entertaining, intelligent script isn't necessarily a requisite for a successful RPG.

Yet *FFVII* was a game that evoked the kind of emotional responses from players that are usually the sole preserve of books, movies or, on a good day, other people. Truly, it was a landmark title.

*Final Fantasy VIII*, then, has a hard act to follow. If initial reports are to be taken as read, it supersedes its predecessor with aplomb. Reportedly selling over two million copies on its day of launch – an incredible figure – it also won a 37/40 score from weekly *Famitsu*, Japan's largest games mag.

From the perspective of a western games magazine, however, it's difficult to judge *Final Fantasy VIII* in any sense other than the aesthetic. Its script is its *raison d'être* – and any attempt by a non-Japanese speaking reviewer to appraise it would miss the point entirely. This is why *Arcade* can unreservedly relate that the latest in Square's esteemed franchise is a beautiful game, but we can't offer any kind of rating or commendation beyond that of

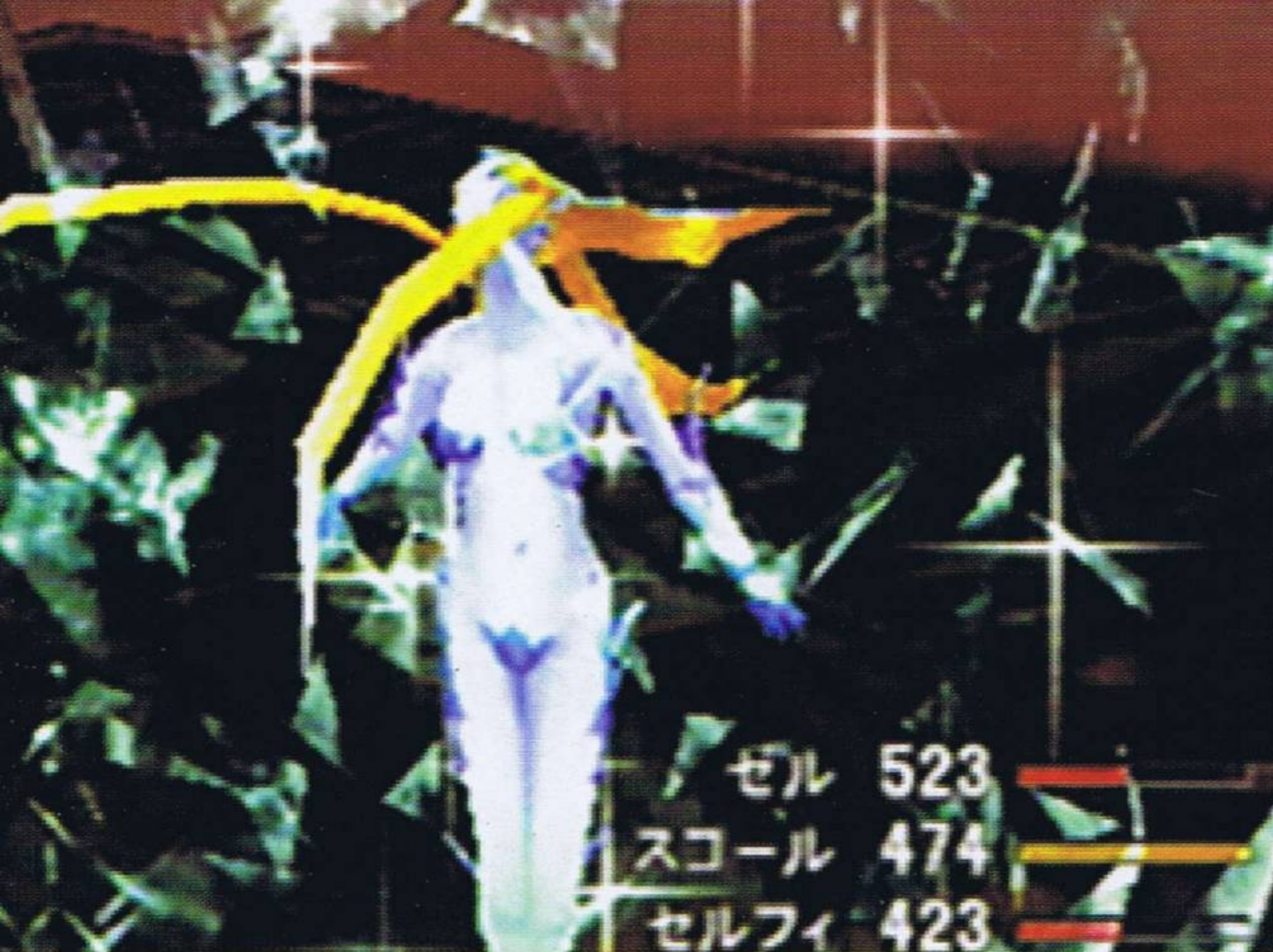
simply saying "wow". Few games can rival the sheer detail of its rendered backdrops, nor the artful characterisation that gives its polygon-based cast such distinctive appearances. It's jaw-dropping stuff.

If you're unfamiliar with earlier *Final Fantasy* games, you'll be surprised to learn that the cast and world of *FFVII* play no part in this latest installment. This is, however, traditional – each *FF* game offers an entirely new story, despite the moniker common to each. Replacing Cloud as centrepiece in this latest epic is Squall Leonhart, a student at Balmn Garden. The Garden is a military academy dedicated to the training of elite troops. Known as SOLDIER, this cream-of-the-cream are used as peace-keeping forces in nearby lands.

As *FFVIII* begins, Squall and his classmates are preparing for their SOLDIER entry examination. In a stunning FMV sequence – and, rest assured, *all* the FMV in *FFVIII* is stunning – Squall fights a training battle with Seifer, his classmate and, potentially, nemesis. The standard of animation in this cinematic introduction beggars belief. The feeling of weight as the two cross Gunblades – a mixture of gun and sword with the characteristics of both – is appreciable. To wince as they clash is an understandable reaction.

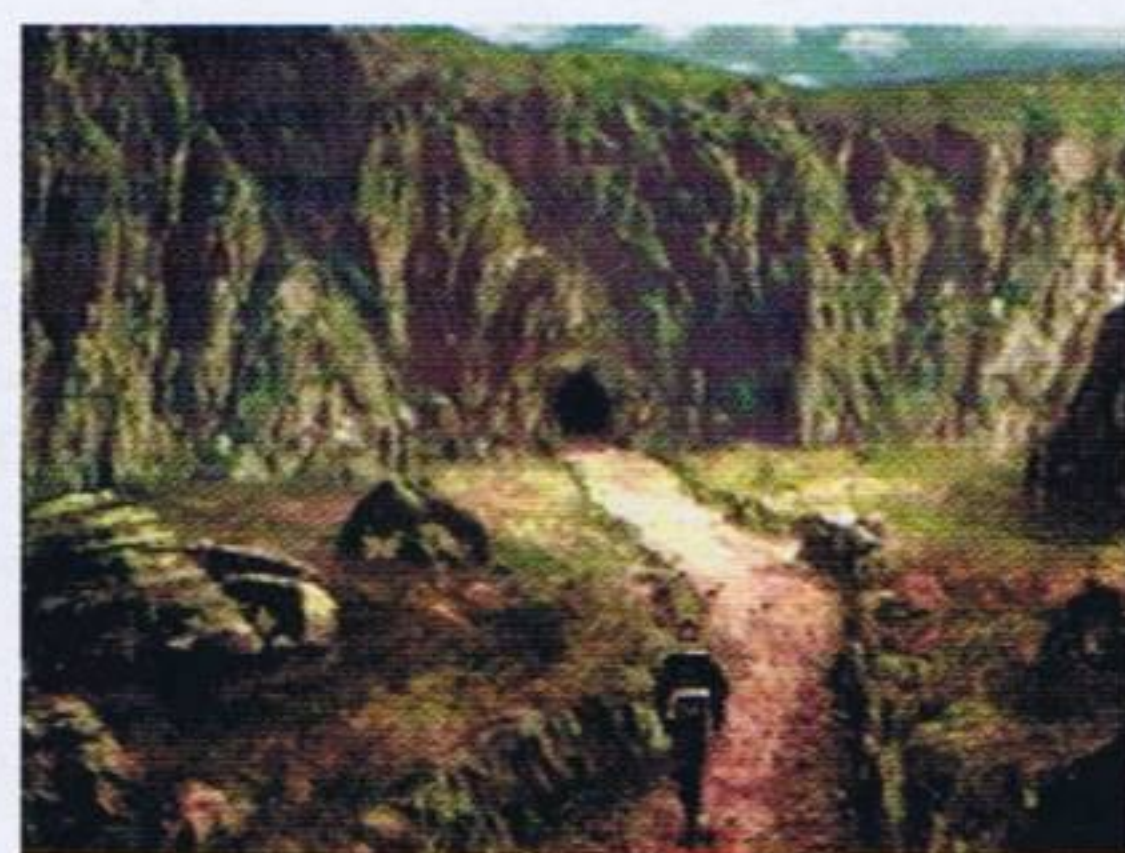
With its plot unfolding as Squall, Seifer and companions take their practical entry exam – fighting to secure a war-torn city – *Final Fantasy VIII's* distinguishing features soon become apparent. Like its forebears, it mixes fantasy with sci-fi, drawing elements from both as its story demands. In appearance, though, it eschews the angular, basic models of *FFVII* in favour of more realistic, believable bodies.

Perhaps the biggest change, though, is the overhaul of the combat system that



■ The Guardian Force attacks are superb. Wonderfully choreographed, and powerful, too. Dispatch assailants with real style...

■ The resolution of the combat sequences has been increased for FFVIII.



served *FFVII* so well. Replacing Materia are Guardian Forces: attacks that gain experience with use. Interestingly, these have their own energy ratings. When play begins, Squall obtains two Guardian Forces. When he attempts to use them during battle, they take approximately ten seconds to power-up. During this time – and throughout the game – the energy bar of the Guardian Force replaces that of the character using it. Hits, therefore, drain energy from the GF attack in use. If a Guardian Force's stamina is sufficiently drained, it will die. The strategic thinking this encourages adds much to *FFVIII*'s combat.

Another significant alteration to *Final Fantasy VIII*'s altercations is the "draw" command. Using this, Squall (or his cohorts) can effectively steal abilities and attacks from opponents. This, too, has a great bearing on the flow of battles. When faced with a daunting boss character, you will face a dichotomy. Do you attempt to grab the goodies that your sizeable assailant possesses, or simply go all-out for the kill?

It's a tricky decision – and one that, in some places, could affect later events.

*FFVIII* doesn't shirk with sub-games, either. There's a card game that becomes available from the start that promises to offer a welcome diversion throughout. By playing (and winning) against other characters, you can gain better cards. It's worrying to note that this mere curio is more entertaining than many full-price PlayStation games.

It's hard to know where to stop. *Final Fantasy VIII* is at least as huge as its predecessor, and possibly larger – it comes on three, not four, CDs. Due for an American release at some point during Autumn, a UK launch has yet to be confirmed. That is, in *Arcade*'s opinion, a disturbing fact. UK PlayStation owners deserve to play *FFVIII* before Christmas. It is, with ne'er a trace of reservation, the biggest, most hotly-anticipated adventure of 1999. To deny UK gamers the pleasure of playing it before the millennium would be little short of criminal.

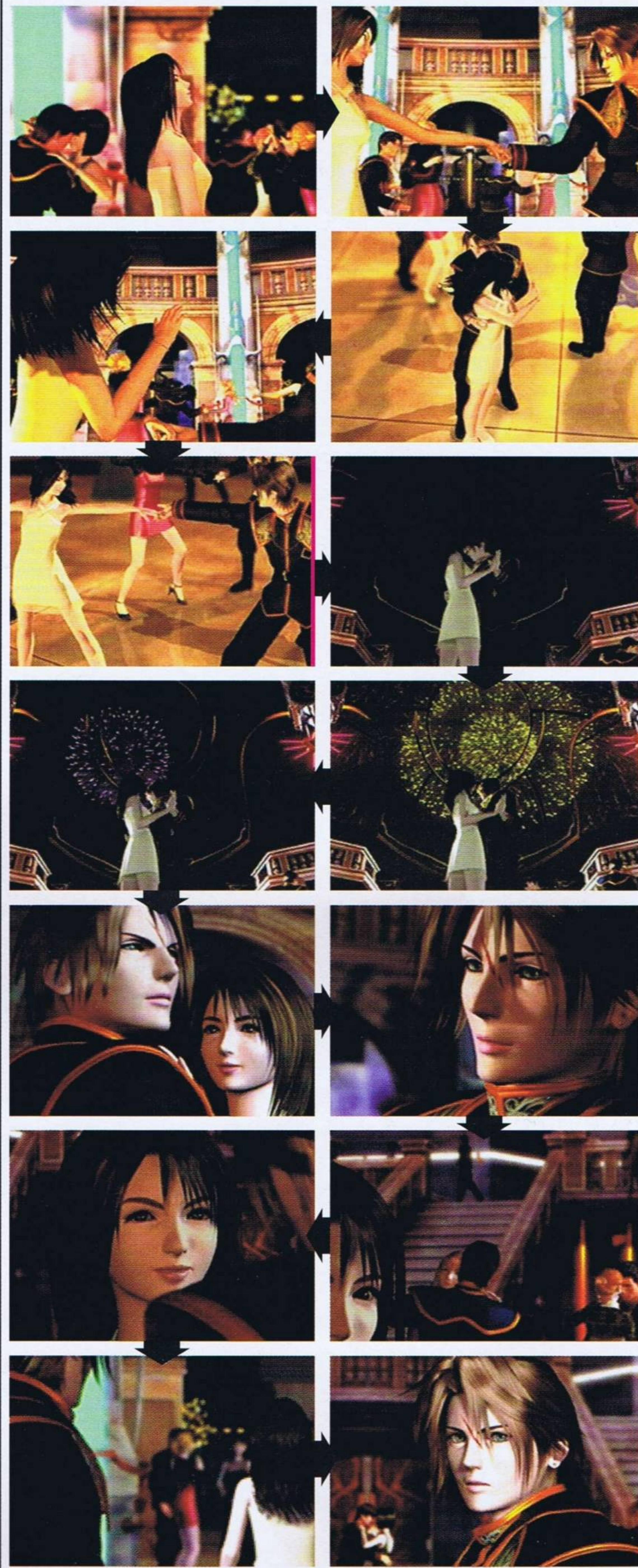
#### BEST BIT SO FAR:

### The most gorgeous intro ever seen

The introduction to *FFVIII* is, in the opinion of *Arcade* and just about anyone to have seen it, one of the greatest FMV sequences ever created. In it, Squall meets his love interest for the game – the lovely Rhinoa. Although he's reluctant at first, Squall is badgered into joining her for the next dance.

As the tune begins, Squall's shortcomings as a dance hall diva are particularly apparent. As he

bounces off nearby couples, Rhinoa gently guides him. The sheer quality of the CG as they move is, in a word, stunning. It's perfectly synched to orchestral music, too. At one point, the camera pans out to encompass an entire hall full of other dancers. It's amazing. Just as it looks as if the "will they, won't they?" question is to be resolved on the first disc, she buggers off in mysterious a hurry. Damn!

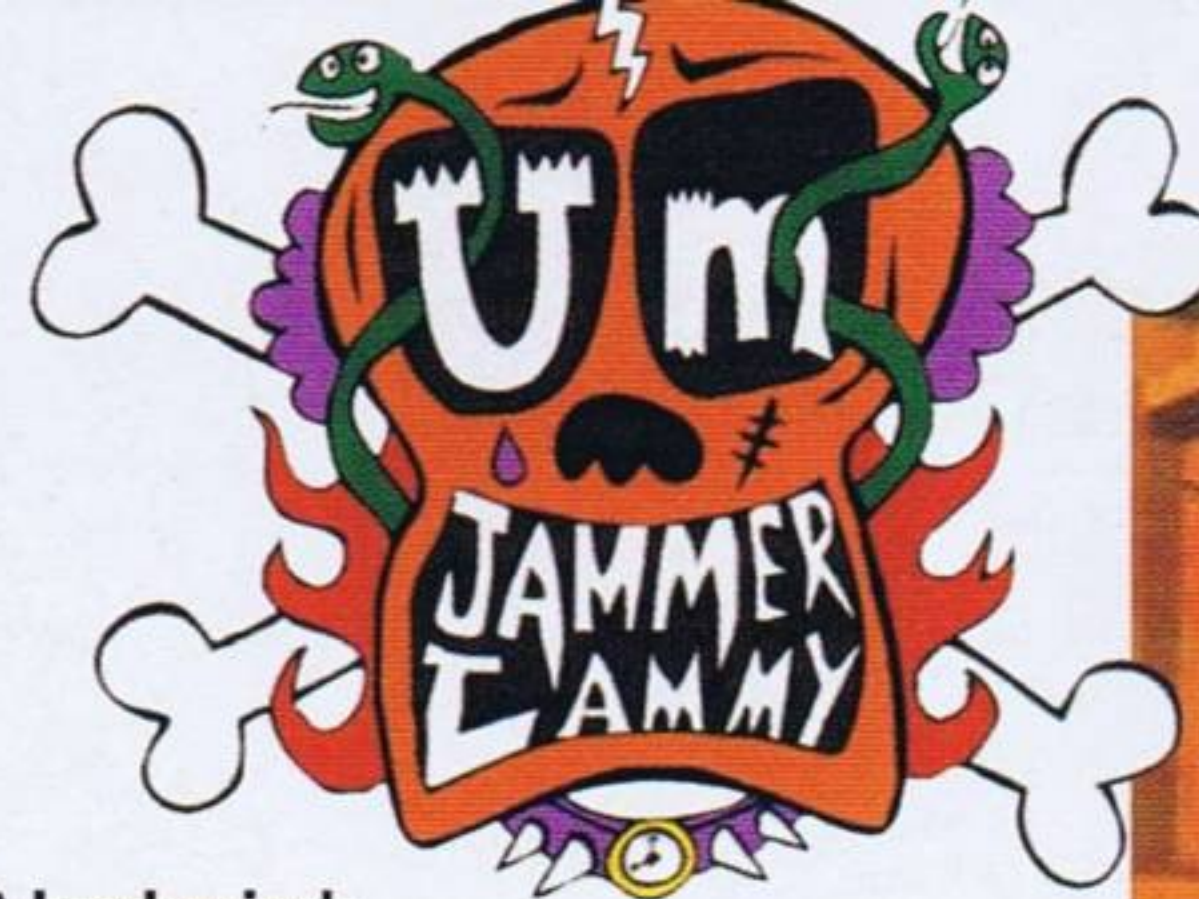


**COMING SOON**  
A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY



■ Parappa turns up to drop lyrical science in the two-player mode (above).

■ Lammy herself – a bit like Courtney Love, only she's a ewe (below).



■ A lumberjack beaver whittles Lammy a new guitar with a chainsaw.



Format: **PlayStation** | Developer: **In-house** | Publisher: **Sony** | Players: **1-2** | On sale in UK: **summer**

# UM JAMMER LAMMY

**You gotta do what? I gotta play lead!**

**T**he skunk over here will bring you luck/ And this pump over here comes from a truck". Topping the original Parappa's immortal hip hop wisdom was always going to be impossible so, as much as we're sorry to see the beanie hatted puppy getting no more than a bonus bit part here, the shift to guitar based tunes for the sequel is probably for the best.

Um Jammer Lammy features a less phat but equally paper thin star, if you get our drift – the eponymous lead guitar playing lamb in alt-rock girl group Milk Can with Katy Kat and Ma-san the drumming mouse. Instead of hitting joystick buttons in

time to the music to make the dog rap, your aim this time is keep Lammy strumming along to the beat based songs.

Thankfully the characters and story are every bit as engagingly mad as the original. Starting with Lammy's dream about a Milk Can gig featuring the fantastic Chop Chop Master Onion on vocals, there are seven levels. Various they see you playing a hose pipe with Chief Piddle the fire dog, getting caught up in a false pregnancy scare with a caterpillar cum nurse, before a plane crash and meeting with Paul Chuck, a chainsaw wielding beaver who crafts you a new axe. Before the end-of-game gig there's a trip to hell where your only hope of jamming your way back to life is to send a faxed copy of Lammy up to Earth. Thank the lord

game designer Massaya Matsuura and character artist Rodney Greenblat haven't gone all sensible on us since PaRappa.

The reward for making it through the final gig is a two-player versus mode and replay value is upped further by a new one-player game starring original MC PaRappa and a set of new songs. Even without this prospect, it's clear that Um Jammer Lammy has the same work stopping, crowd drawing potential as the original. The only conceivable drawback we've found so far is that the emphasis on guitar based music makes for less memorable tunes than the original's beatsmithery and on some of the levels you're left struggling to find a rhythm. Expect a full report for the game's translated UK release this summer.

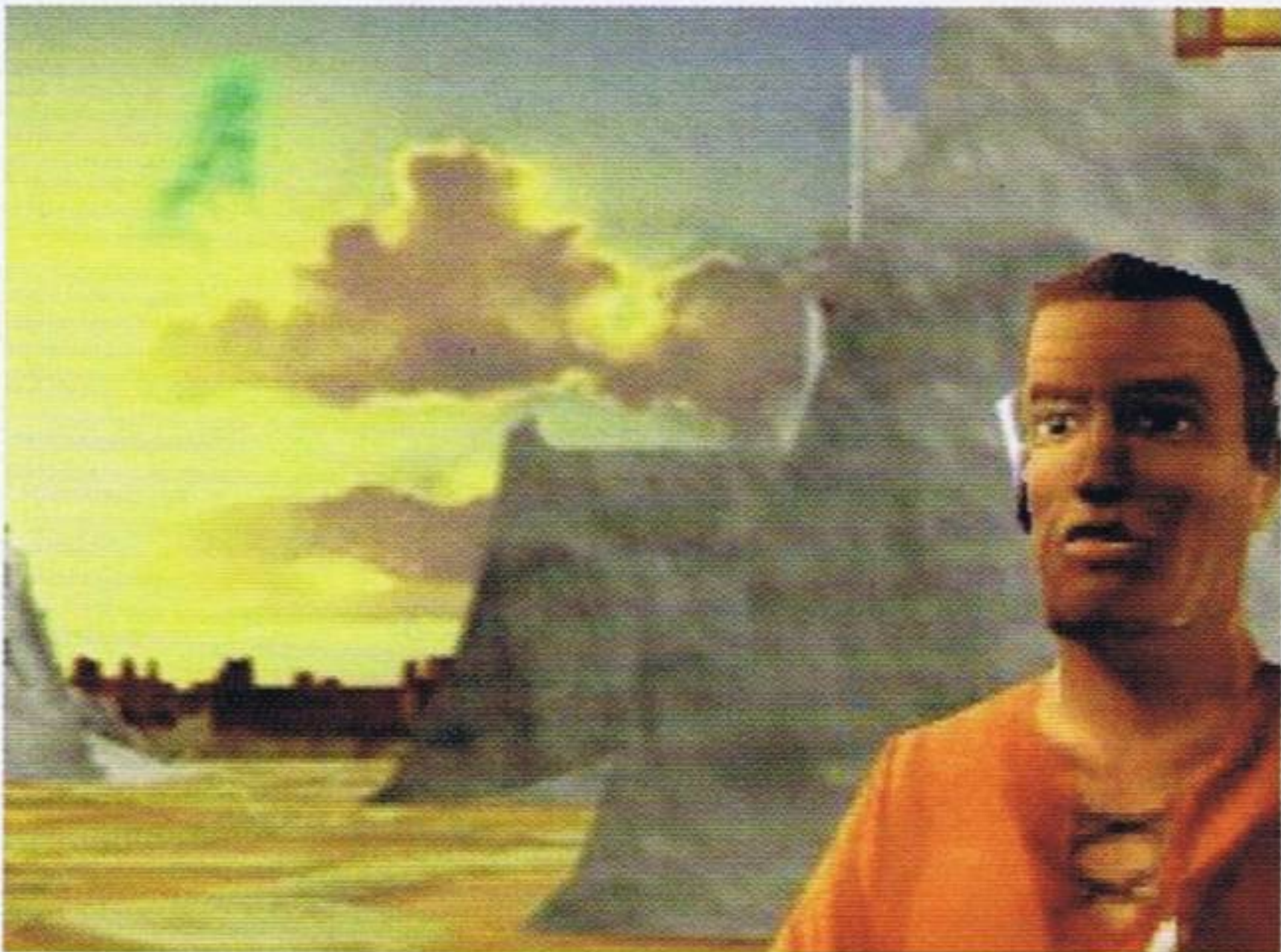
**BEST BIT SO FAR:**

**Meeting Cathy Pillar**

The best thing in Um Jammer Lammy so far has to be the third level featuring Cathy Pillar the vomiting nurse. After eating too much pizza Lammy suspects she's pregnant and gets roped into helping soothe baby rabbits to sleep with her axe skills. It's not quite up there with the original's Chop Chop Master Onion opener but could well turn out to be most people's favourite level in the new game.







■ A whole biosphere exists on Adelpha, with hunters and prey all responding to hunger and tiredness stimuli. You can sit and watch animals drink at the waterholes, or be smart and try to grab one for transport.



■ The problem with voxels has always been that close-up they look shabby. Can Appeal's use of bump-mapping, mip-mapping and blur-filters keep the visuals clean? All the images on this page are in-game. Judge for yourself.

#### WHO'S MAKING IT?

### Paradise found

Appeal was founded in 1995 by programming chums Franck Sauer, Yves Groler and Yann Robert. As youngsters they had impressed publisher Ubisoft enough to employ them by hammering together the C64 title *No* in their spare time. It sold a puny 400 copies but they went on to achieve some success with coin-op games, their best selling effort being *Ultimate Tennis*. Four years ago they left to start Appeal and began work on the Paradise engine, so-called because its purpose is to draw idyllic rolling landscapes. It's first commercial showing was in Appeal's only other title: *No Respect*: a passably entertaining sci-fi shoot-'em-up. At the time the voxel system wasn't fully refined and rumours were rife that the team rushed the game out to finance *Outcast's* development.



Format: **PC** | Developer: **Appeal** | Publisher: **Infogrames** | Players: **1** | On sale in UK: **May 1999**

# OUTCAST

Rolling landscapes, belligerent aliens, and shimmering orchestral tunes

It's the home of Stella Artois, Hercule Poirot and Tin Tin but Belgium isn't famous for an awful lot more except, perhaps, chocolate and Euro-bull. This spring, however, the games industry is going to be looking earnestly in that direction, because arguably one of the most exciting action-adventure projects currently in development is from Belgian-based company Appeal.

*Outcast* will be a sci-fi exploration jaunt set to orchestral music. The best way to get your head around it is to imagine a PC version of *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*, but with more corpses than fairies. It has, according to project manager Olivier

Masclaf at least, a "grand vision" which has necessitated four years of research into PC technology.

The absurd universe-hopping plot casts you as Cutter Slade, a Navy SEAL dispatched to protect a team of boffins, who are repairing their prototype inter-dimension probe on the other side of a portal. In the land of Adelpha, the exotic realm beyond, they get separated.

You'll steer Slade from third- and occasionally first-person viewpoints, your quest being to locate the faulty probe, and fulfil your destiny as prophet to some confused alien peasants. The world will consist of six huge continents. As well as the central scenario there'll be over 70 sub-quests to keep you occupied.

Adelpha is not a place of rigid enclosed buildings but a territory of rolling foothills and broad, grassy plains. This is managed with a proprietary voxel-based engine known as Paradise. Most current 3D games employ polygons, where each object is comprised of thousands of little flat shapes – this is hardware intensive and gives everything an angular appearance. By contrast voxels (volumetric pixels) are essentially pixels blessed with size and distance information, and they can be scaled or deformed in a blink. Although they tend to look patchy when scrutinised close up, they're fantastic for displaying wide areas of bumpy terrain, and they don't require 3D acceleration. We've seen a software-only version of the game running

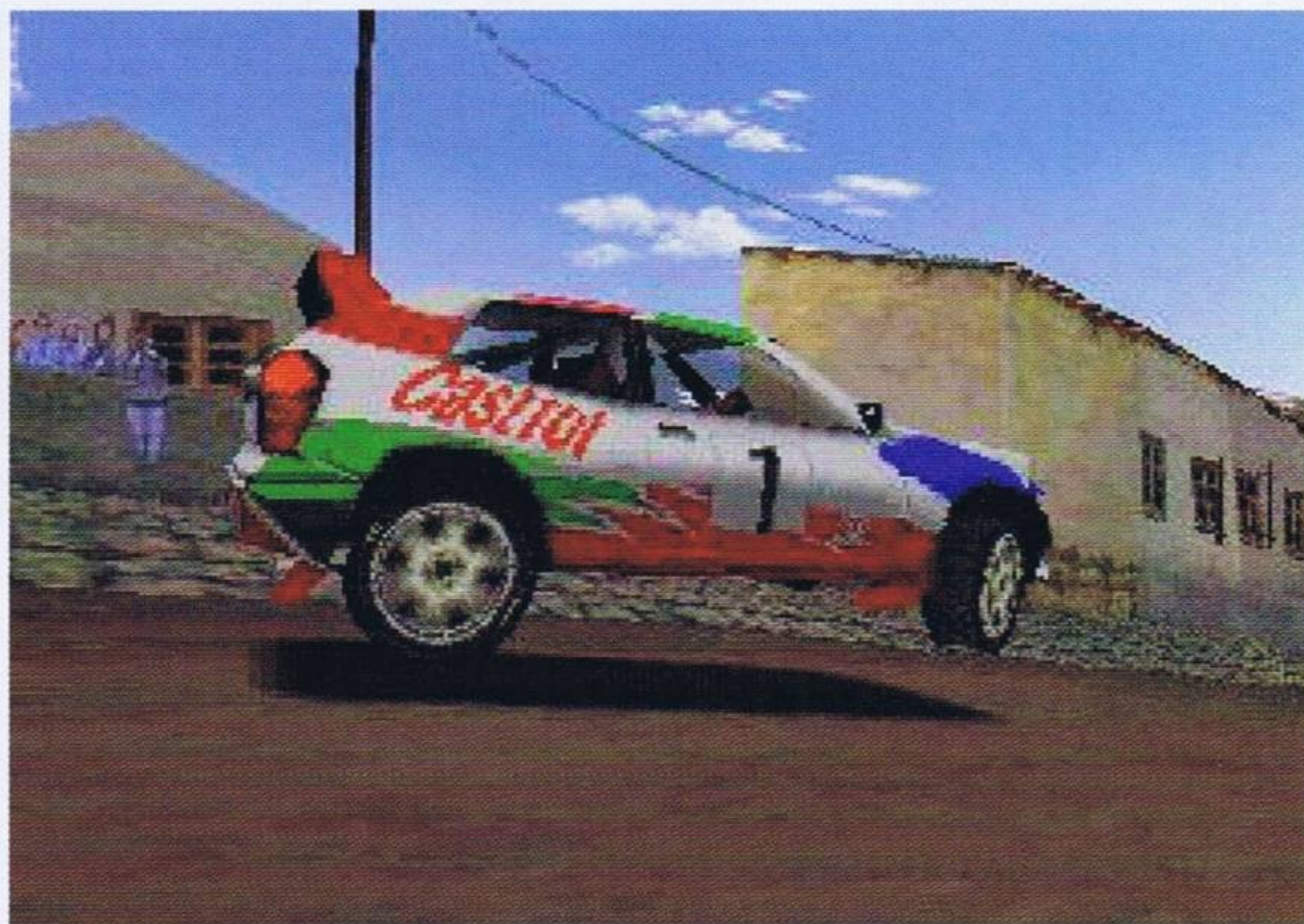
on a regular P266, and it looks stunning.

With their rounded look, voxels are also useful for depicting life forms and so Adelpha will be heavily populated. There are dozens of cities, each boasting around 250 characters. Not everyone you encounter is a target either. Slade will need to establish relationships and gather facts. Extreme violence will no doubt break out (you'll find 18 weapons including drug-tipped darts, ricochet bullets and even a mini nuclear device) but a bad reputation spreads fast.

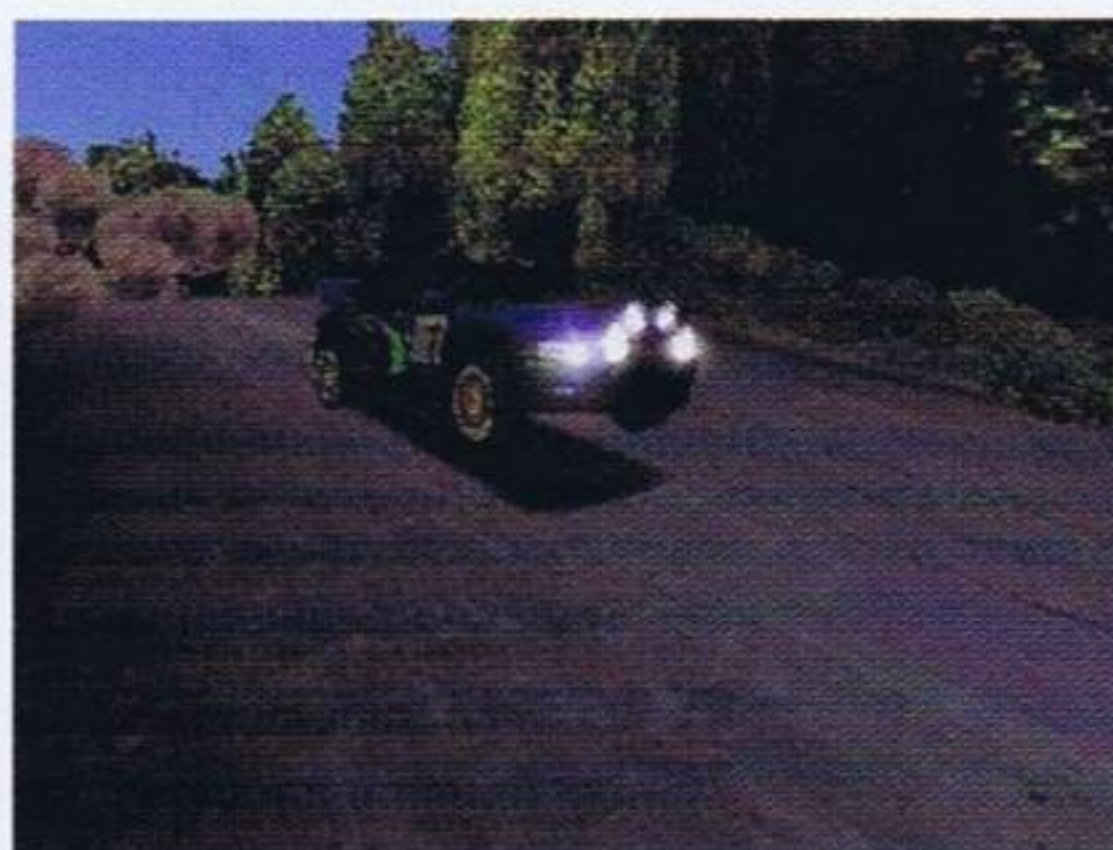
There's one thing the Paradise engine can't do, and that's deform the landscape in real-time, so forget about nuking an entire city – your anger is strictly personal. But this is a small price to pay for a PC game with so much scope.



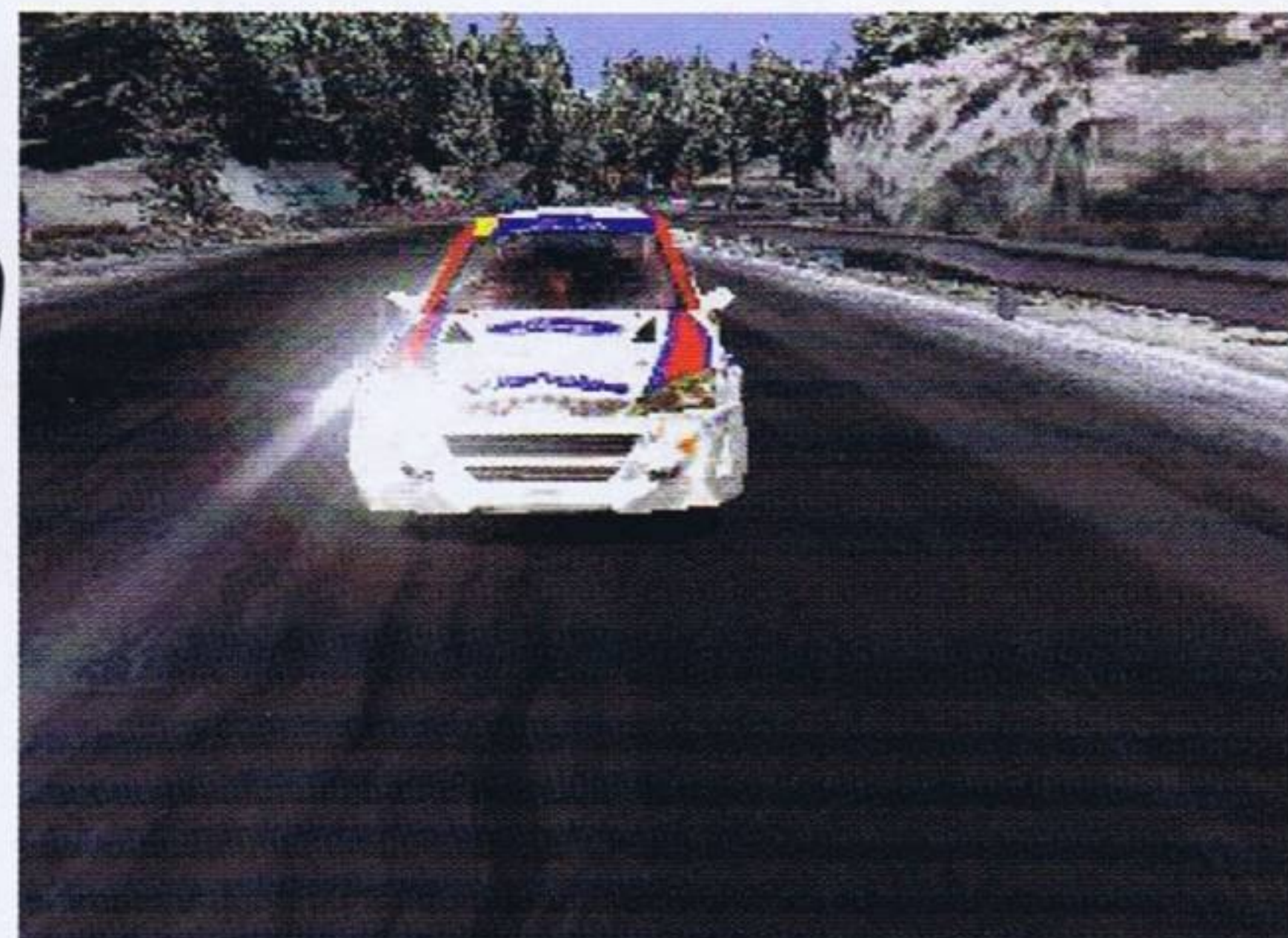
**COMING SOON**  
A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY



■ Spray mud and grit over 92 stages spanning 12 different countries.



■ The 1999 Subaru. Just one of the 18 licensed cars you'll get to drive in *V-Rally 2*.



■ *V-Rally 2*: more white-knuckle rallying realism.

**BEST BIT SO FAR:**

**4 to the floor**

Its overall polish may have made the original *V-Rally* a contender but its split-screen two-player was what made it a champ. Similarly, if *V-Rally 2* is to rule the rally roost then its four-player split-screen option will have to defy the cynics and deliver four pretty and playable mini-windows.



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

# V-RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION 2

The rally sim race is getting fast and dirty. Infogrames goes for gold

**"B**limey, where are me shock absorbers?" was the sort of comment people made when playing the original *V-Rally* for the first time. It rocked, rolled and positively roared onto the PlayStation making all previous off-roaders look like the limp gear-sticked gutless wonders they so clearly were. Who wouldn't swoon at the prospect of a muddy split-screen two-player, or a championship mode that placed every driving hazard known to the likes of Carlos Sainz between you and ultimate victory?

Not us, that's for sure. But while that

was then, this is, most definitely now. While games like *Gran Turismo* and *Ridge Racer Type 4* have upped our visual expectations, champion gravel-eaters like *Max Power Racing* and especially *Colin McRae Rally* have proved that you can have great off-road fun without spending all your time spinning around on your roof-rack. In short *V-Rally 2* is going to have to both fix the problems of *V1* and squeeze even hairier action into even smarter graphics.

While still not ready for a hands-on play, *V-Rally 2* is already looking impressive. Its 18 officially licensed rally cars should both handle more realistically and give novice drivers a chance with a Standard and a harder Expert difficulty setting. If you're a *V-Rally* buff you shouldn't be disappointed

either, as not only has the track roster been expanded (92 stages visiting 12 different countries) but the set-up options have been tweaked and improved, too, with helpful technical explanations added. It's vital to get to grips with tyre choice, suspension and gear ratios early-on if you're to navigate the *V-Rally 2*'s 300km of road in record time.

Visually, Infogrames is out to overtake its off-road rivals. The original game was pretty slick but *V-Rally 2* is aiming for a new level of detail with more reflections, more external effects and improved modelling of both damage and smearage. Areas that have previously resisted graphical innovation (flat-packed spectators and shadowy drivers) have been brought to the fore with animated bystanders, drivers and co-drivers

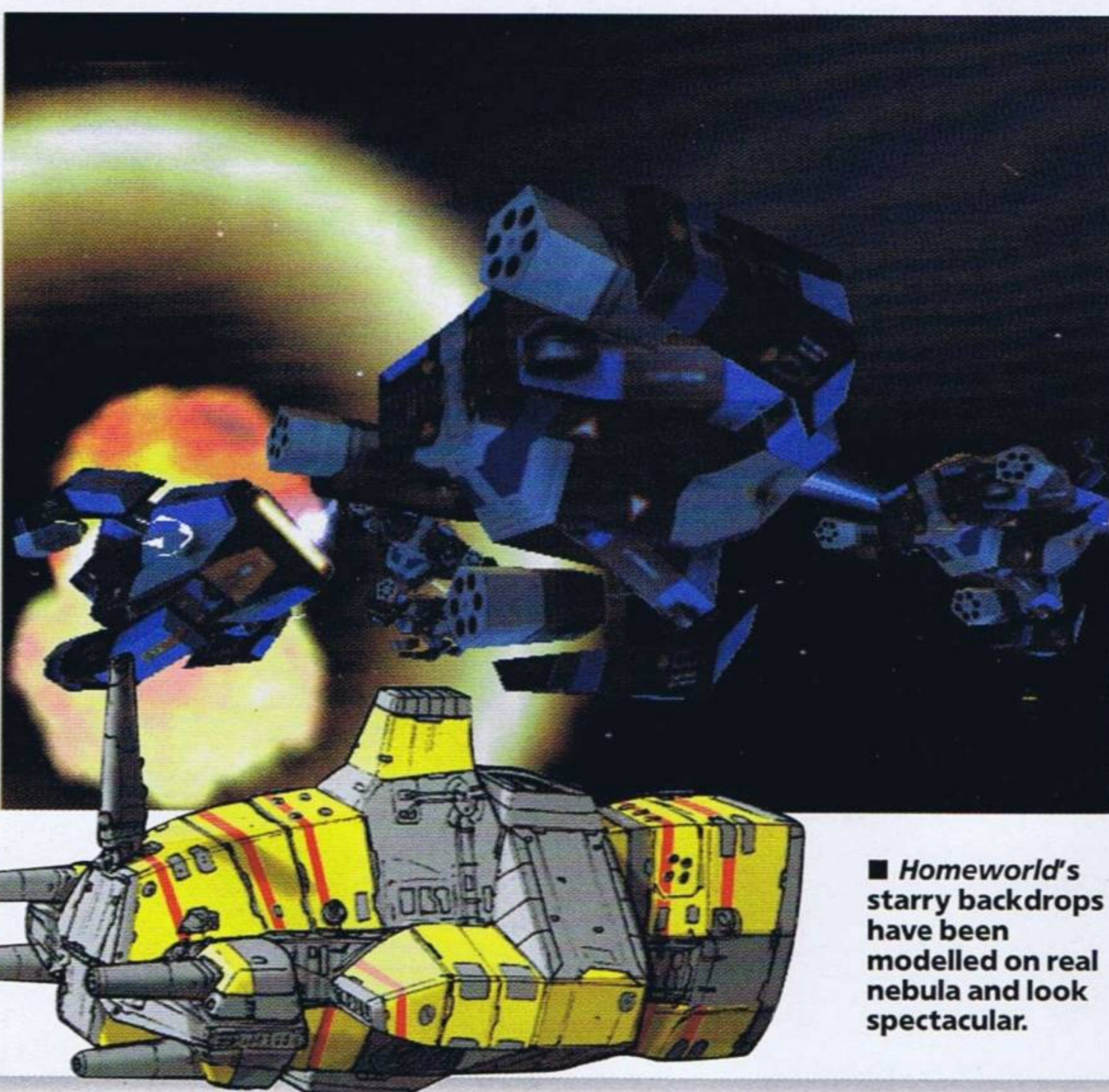
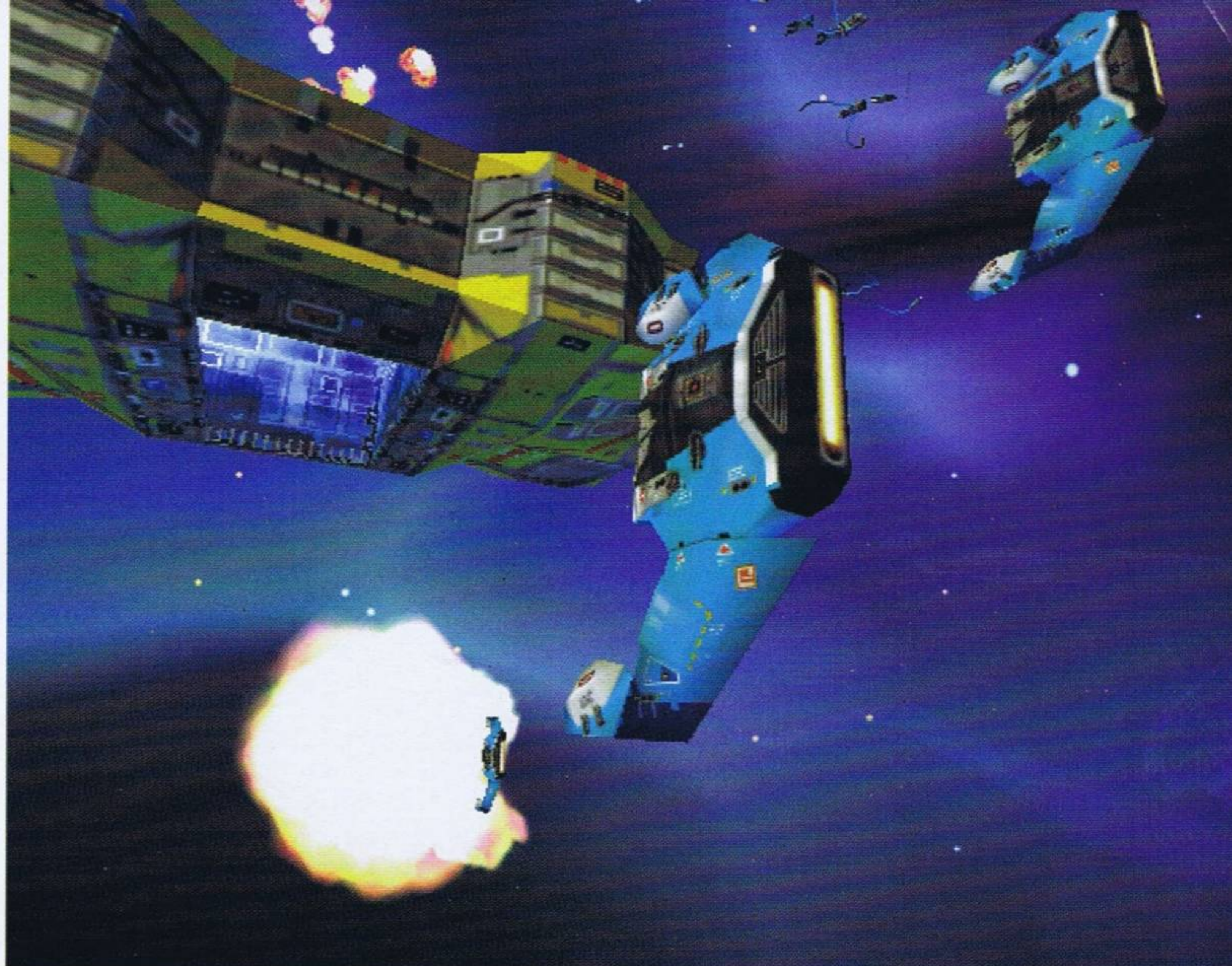
heightening realism. Most impressive of all these additions is the doubling of the multi-player options so that you can now have four players racing on just the one TV via a four-way split-screen (you can still play using a link-up cable if you wish).

It's common knowledge that more options doesn't necessarily mean a better game (often they hide a bad one) but what's heartening about this sequel is that it appears to be just as ambitious as its predecessor. Boasting short-cuts, four playing modes, three training courses, male and female co-driver directions plus a track editor and generator, *V-Rally 2*, it seems, won't be happy until it has wrestled the rallying crown from *Colin McRae's* muddy mitts.





■ Everywhere you look in *Homeworld*, there's huge, D-cup sized explosions.



■ *Homeworld's* starry backdrops have been modelled on real nebula and look spectacular.



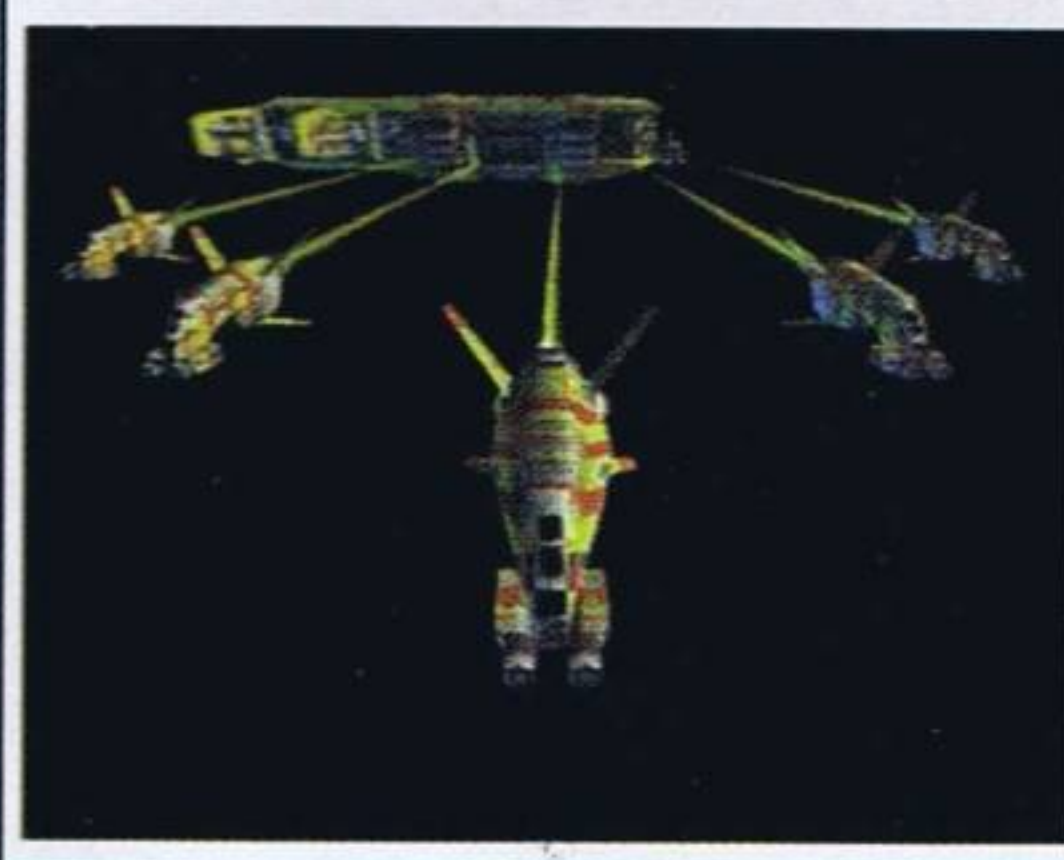
■ The ships are on a scale to dwarf Lucas' *Star Destroyers*.



**BEST BIT SO FAR:**

**You're in charge**

In *Homeworld* you're commanding a huge fleet of ships, so it's perhaps just as well that each one can be assigned different default modes and formations. Set fighters to "evasive" and they'll dodge out of enemy fire, "aggressive" and they'll go in all guns blazing. And there's much more to picking formations than making Red Arrows-like vapour trails in space. The pincer like Claw pattern, for example, is ideal for taking out a specific target, while the sphere formation gives maximum protection while escorting ships.



Format: **PC** | Developer: **Relic** | Publisher: **Sierra** | Players: **1-8** | On sale in UK: **June**

# HOMEWORLD

The plot's *Battlestar Galactica* but the quality is definitely *Star Wars*...

**E**pic. A little word meaning big which sometimes feels like it's been used to describe every videogame with a thickish manual since, ooh, *Horace Goes Skiing*. Relic's *Homeworld* justifies the tag with sheer ambition and the sort of graphical light and magic that gave your Mum a migraine during *Star Wars*.

But as much as it might look like a dogfighting shoot-'em-up in the *X-Wing* mould, *Homeworld* is actually a real time strategy game on a vast, intergalactic scale. The resource management, unit creation and all important tactical tussles centre around your mothership and accompanying fleet of craft as you search, *Battlestar*

*Galactica* style, for your race's home planet. The strategy unfolds in three dimensional space and because attacks can come from any direction, *Homeworld's* biggest worry was that it was going to be as difficult a task, control wise, as getting your mates to the 24-hour garage after a night out.

The latest preview version we've played has allayed such fears. Rather than giving you the whole universe to gaze at, the in-game camera centres on the ship you're currently controlling, allowing you to rotate your view around or zoom in and out to keep any battle firmly in sight. You can flit between different ships in the fleet – from important but dull Resource Collectors, to the awesomely vast Mothership, to nippy Stealth Fighters at the prod of a key. This is

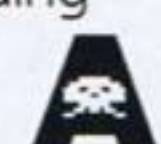
indicative of a control system that feels easier to get to grips with than it's got any right to be. Preset attacking and defensive positions further help the beginner.

The interstellar setting doesn't mean you can't make classic real-time strategy game-like tactical use of the environment you're fighting in either. Enemy fleets can be effectively blocked by creating asteroid belts, impassable to all but the smallest fighters, and Nebula gas clouds can be persuaded to unleash huge electrical storms on enemies with a few ion cannon blasts.

Developing new technologies comes much more from exploration than in other titles, adding to the epic, space opera atmosphere. You'll need to have investigated wrecks for signs of ancient

alien technology before being able to fulfil certain tasks necessary for successful progress through the game's 14 hyperspace linked sectors. And, as you'd expect, weak supply lines spell huge trouble – mainly from the pillaging alien pirates that recall *Elite*'s smug but dangerous Thargoids.

*Homeworld's* one of the finest looking strategy games we've seen. Vast ships hang in space with the same sort of look-at-the-size-of-it impressiveness of *Star Wars*' vast wedges of Imperial cheese – the *Star Destroyers*. Explosions too are magnificent; huge enveloping balls of destruction you'll never tire of seeing. One go should make you abandon any jokes about it sounding like a chain of large DIY stores out of sheer, head doffing respect.



**COMING SOON**  
A WORLD OF GAMING MERE MONTHS AWAY



■ F1 spectacle is recreated in all its meticulous money-dripping detail in *Official Formula One Racing*.



**BEST BIT SO FAR:**

**Get a different view**

Importantly for any motorsport that we've seen loads of times on TV, *Official Formula One Racing* goes all out to ape real life coverage of the sport by featuring an extensive amount of replay options and camera angles. Your embarrassingly bad driving can be seen again from any one of over 20 camera angles and there's an option to create new camera placings.



■ *Croc* is back with a whole range of attacks and super jump moves. And with a hint of the RPG influence.



■ There'll also be a bit of gliding, karting and...snowball rolling!



**WHO'S MAKING IT?**

**Remember StarFox?**

UK developers Argonaut have a long and illustrious CV. It takes in such delights as the wireframe blaster *Starglider* on ST and Amiga and *StarFox* on the SNES, which included the world's first graphic accelerator – the SFX chip – built into the cart. As well as *Croc 2* they're working on *Red Dog*, a tank game for the Dreamcast and the exciting looking *Alien Resurrection* on PlayStation.

Format: **PC/PlayStation**  
Developer: **Lankhor** | Publisher: **Eidos** | Players: **1-8** | On sale in UK: **PC-Spring, PlayStation-Summer**

**OFFICIAL FORMULA ONE RACING**

This one's got all the right drivers and cars.

**Y**ou've qualified in pole position, held first place for 15 laps in the rain at Monaco and fought your way back through the field after a spin to take a brilliant victory at the line. The only thing that might flatten your champagne is having to race as someone called Hamon Dill. Well not here.

Mindful of this potential indignity, Eidos have resisted launching their F1 game until they'd secured an official FIA licence from Video System of Japan, the people behind *F1 World Grand Prix* on N64. It's actually for last season's data (Psygnosis holding the all important piece of paper for this season and the forthcoming F1 '99) but not even

the Tifosi are going to complain when they see it in action.

Everything you'd expect and demand from an F1 game is in here: 22 cars, 16 realistic circuits, proper driver's names and changeable weather. You can tweak your motor in the pits and replay entire races from up to 20 cameras or in-car views.

Arcade and simulation modes let you swing the game between kerb chaffing realism and power sliding accessibility.

From what we've seen, Lankhor seem to have everything looking slick even without a 3D card on the PC version. Track-side scenery is in enough detail to recognise it from the TV and the cars are perfect.

So we'll be donning our fireproof undies when the finished game's out. **A**

Format: **PC/PlayStation**  
Developer: **Argonaut** | Publisher: **Fox Interactive** | Players: **1** | On sale in UK: **June**

**CROC 2**

See you later, erm, crocodile. Damn.

**W**hen he first leapt onto the PlayStation a year and half ago, Argonaut's allegedly cute reptilian star was running around making irritating whey-hey noises in just about the only truly 3D platformer on Sony's console. Now you can't move for cartoon animals spin jumping all over the shop with the likes of *Spyro*, *Crash 3* and *Gex: Deep Cover Gecko* all surpassing his unimaginative if best-selling debut.

This sequel looks to take account of everything that's happened in the coin strewn world of platforming since. The game takes in 50 levels sectioned off into five villages featuring pirates, ice, prehistoric

enemies and incas and *Croc's* been given new attacks and super jump moves. And there's more of a RPG influence here than before with speaking and trading added.

Argonaut's trademark technical prowess is to the fore with smooth animation and a much bigger explorable area than the original's. Hinted at bonus bits should push the polygon handling capabilities to the max as *Croc* hand glides, goes karting and balances on top of a giant rolling snowball.

Whether it'll be enough to see off the likes of *Crash* and *Spyro* is another matter. Let's hope the developers pack in more imagination and puzzles, rather than the original's perfunctory collecting-stuff-and-avoiding-things gameplay or it could be another case of "one for the kids". **A**

# RELEASE SCHEDULE

Looking forward to a game? Here's the latest on when you'll be able to buy it.

## APRIL

1st	Dark Stalkers 3	Capcom	PSX
1st	Gex: Deep Cover Gecko	GT	PSX
1st	X Games Pro Boarders	EA Sports	PSX
2nd	Bust-A-Move 4	Acclaim	PSX
2nd	Guardians Crusade	Activision	PSX
2nd	Moto Racer	Platinum	PSX
2nd	Need For Speed 4	EA	PSX
2nd	Sports Car GT	Virgin	PSX
2nd	Street Sk8r	Electronic Arts	PSX
2nd	Triple Play 2000	Electronic Arts	PSX
2nd	C & C: Tiberian Sun	Electronic Arts	PC
2nd	Driver	GT	PC
2nd	Heavy Gear 2	Activision	PC
2nd	Lands of Lore 3	Electronic Arts	PC
2nd	Official Formula One Racing	Psygnosis	PC
2nd	Populous: Undiscovered Country	Electronic Arts	PC
2nd	Redline	Electronic Arts	PC
2nd	Sports Car GT	Virgin	PC
2nd	Triple Play 2000	Electronic Arts	PC
2nd	V-Rally	Infogrames	PC
2nd	All Star Baseball 2000	Acclaim	N64
2nd	Beetle Adventure Rally	Electronic Arts	N64
2nd	Monaco Grand Prix	Ubisoft	N64
2nd	ODT	Psygnosis	N64
2nd	Rush 2: Extreme Racing USA	Midway	N64
2nd	Breakout	Take 2	CGB
2nd	Bust-A-Move 4	Acclaim	CGB
2nd	Centipede	Take 2	CGB
2nd	Drop Zone	Acclaim	CGB
2nd	Dungeon Warrior	Infogrames	CGB
2nd	Frogger	Majesco	CGB
2nd	Jet Pack Jack	Infogrames	CGB
2nd	Looney Tunes	Infogrames	CGB
2nd	Three Lions	Take 2	CGB
2nd	V-Rally	Infogrames	CGB

9th	Bloodlines	Sony	PSX
9th	Civilisation 2	Activision	PSX
9th	Puma Street Soccer	Infogrames	PSX
9th	Castlevania 64	Konami	N64
9th	Flying Dragons	Interplay	N64
9th	Mud Monsters	Take 2	N64
9th	Live Wire!	SCI	CGB
9th	WWF: Attitude	Acclaim	CGB

16th	PocketStation	Sony	PSX
16th	Ridge Racer R4	Namco	PSX
16th	Championship Manager 2	Sold Out	PC
16th	Commandos Data Disc	EIDOS	PC
16th	Prey For Death	Sold Out	PC
16th	Screamer	Sold Out	PC
16th	Starsiege	Cendant	PC
16th	Starsiege Tribes	Cendant	PC
16th	Terracide	Sold Out	PC
16th	Toonstruck	Sold Out	PC
16th	All Star Tennis 2	Ubisoft	N64
16th	Bug's Life	Disney	CGB
16th	Logical	Sunsoft	CGB
16th	Shadowgate	Viacom	CGB

23rd	Street Fighter Collection 2	Capcom	PSX
23rd	Warzone 2100	EIDOS	PSX
23rd	Gabriel Knight 3: Blood Of The Sacred	Cendant	PC
23rd	Kluster	Infogrames	CGB
23rd	Deadlock	Replay	MAC

23rd	Postal	Replay	MAC
23rd	Prime Target	Replay	MAC
23rd	Quake	Replay	MAC
23rd	Real Pool	Replay	MAC
23rd	Shadow Warrior	Replay	MAC
23rd	Star Control 3	Replay	MAC
30th	Bloody Roar 2	Virgin	PSX
30th	Marvel Super Heroes vs Street Fighter	Capcom	PSX
30th	Street Fighter Alpha 3	Virgin	PSX
30th	Puma Street Soccer	Infogrames	PC
30th	Holy Magic Century	Konami	CGB

TBA	X-Files The Game	Fox Interactive	PSX
TBA	360	Cryo	PSX
TBA	360	Cryo	PC
TBA	Baldur's Tales of the Sword Coast	Interplay	PC
TBA	Beneath	Activision	PC
TBA	Black & White	Electronic Arts	PC
TBA	Black Moon Chronicles	Cryo	PC
TBA	D Jump	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Fly	Take 2	PC
TBA	Giants	Interplay	PC
TBA	GTA - London Edition	Take 2	PC
TBA	Kanaan	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	Lands of Lore 2	Electronic Arts	PC
TBA	Legend of the Black Moon	Cryo	PC
TBA	Machines	Acclaim	PC
TBA	Messiah	Interplay	PC
TBA	Prince of Persia 3D	Broderbund	PC
TBA	Railroad Tycoon		
TBA	2nd Century Mission	Take 2	PC
TBA	Requiem	Ubisoft	PC
TBA	SU-27 Flanker 2	SSI	PC
TBA	Traitor's Gate	Interplay	PC
TBA	3Sixty	Cryo	N64

## MAY

7th	Castrol Super Bikes	Midas	PSX
7th	Grand Theft Auto: London Edition	Take 2	PSX
7th	Prince Naseem Hamed Boxing	Codemasters	PSX
7th	Syphon Filter	Sony	PSX
7th	Um Jamma Lammy	Sony	PSX
7th	WWF: Attitude	Acclaim	PSX
7th	Duke Nukem: Zero Hour	GT	N64
7th	Rainbow Six	Take 2	N64
7th	Tonic Trouble	Ubisoft	N64
7th	Boulderdash	Take 2	CGB
7th	Caesars Palace	Nintendo	CGB
7th	Conker's Pocket Tales	Nintendo/Rare	CGB
7th	Duke Nukem	GT	CGB
7th	Missile Command	Take 2	CGB
7th	Silicon Valley	Take 2	CGB
7th	Space Invaders	Activision	CGB
7th	Tom & Jerry	Take 2	CGB
7th	Wicked Surfing	Nintendo	CGB

14th	Drakan	Psygnosis	PC
19th	NHL Face Off '99	Sony	PSX

21st	Driver	GT	PSX
21st	X-Men	Activision	PSX
21st	Star Wars: Racer	LucasArts	PC
21st	Lode Runner 3D	Infogrames	N64
21st	Star Wars: Racer	LucasArts	N64

28th	Le Mans 24 Hours	Infogrames	PSX
28th	Quake 2	Activision	PSX

28th	Quake 2	Activision	N64
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TBA	All Star Baseball 2000	Acclaim	PC
TBA	Battlezone 2	Activision	PC
TBA	Bloodshot	Acclaim	PC
TBA	Daikatana	EIDOS	PC
TBA	Descent 3	Interplay	PC
TBA	Discworld Noir	GT	PC
TBA	Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine	LucasArts	PC
TBA	MechWarrior 3	MicroProse	PC
TBA	Omikron	EIDOS	PC
TBA	Republic	Cryo	PC
TBA	Return Fire 2	Ripcord	PC
TBA	Shadowman	Acclaim	PC
TBA	South Park Screensaver 2	Telstar	PC
TBA	Star Trek: Birth of the Federation	MicroProse	PC
TBA	Star Trek: First Contact	MicroProse	PC
TBA	Starship Troopers	MicroProse	PC
TBA	Third World	Activision	PC
TBA	Total Annihilation: Kingdoms	GT	PC
TBA	Age of Empires	Microsoft	MAC

## JUNE

4th	Bugs Bunny: Lost In Time	Infogrames	PSX
4th	Carmageddon	SCI	PSX
4th	Heart Of Darkness	Platinum	PSX
4th	No Fear		
4th	Downhill Mountain Biking	Codemasters	PSX
4th	RC Stunt Copter	Interplay	PSX
4th	Carmageddon	SCI	N64
4th	Carmageddon	SCI	CGB

11th	R-Type Delta	Sony	PSX
11th	Silent Hill	Konami	PSX
11th	Homeworld	Cendant	PC
11th	WWF: Attitude	Acclaim	N64

18th	Grand Prix 500	Funsoft	PSX
18th	Broken Sword	Sold Out	PC
18th	Conquest Earth	Sold Out	PC
18th	Outcast	Infogrames	PC
18th	PGA Golf 99	Sierra Sports	PC
18th	Test Drive Off Road	Sold Out	PC

25th	G-Police 2	Psygnosis	PSX
25th	Mission: Impossible	Infogrames	PSX
25th	Parasite Eve	Squaresoft	PSX
25th	V-Rally 2	Infogrames	PSX

TBA	Codename: Eagle	Telstar	PC
TBA	Dungeon Keeper 2	Electronic Arts	PC

## JULY

16th	Point Blank 2	Namco	PSX
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TBA	Aliens vs Predator	Electronic Arts	PC
TBA	Blade	Gremlin	PC
TBA	Carmageddon Rally	SCI	PC
TBA	Force Commander	LucasArts	PC
TBA	Max Payne	Take 2	PC
TBA	Quake 3	Activision	PC
TBA	Slave Zero	Accolade	PC
TBA	Ultima Ascension	Origin	PC
TBA	X-Com Alliance	MicroProse	PC

RELEASE SCHEDULE IN ASSOCIATION WITH HMV



# Games Insider

Do you know a lot about games? Maybe you do. But these guys know more. They're Arcade's regular columnists. And here they come...



AMERICAN EXPRESS

## Chris Charla

Our new guy gets to grips with the cross-cultural nature of skateboard sims.

**H**ello England. This is my first month, and it looks like the column is supposed to start with a funny bit, but right now all that comes to mind is the time Neil West (now editor at *Arcade*, but former editor at my mag, *Next Generation*) returned from a trip abroad. His voicemail was full with about eight grillion messages, but instead of the usual stuff, mostly it was just people laughing and hanging up. This, we discovered, was because Neil's attempt at an outgoing message, went, as I recall, "Hello you've reached Neil West at *Next Generation*, I'm not here to take your call at the... will you guys fucking shut up, this is the tenth time I've tried to..."

And in his rush to get out the door to go on his trip, he'd forgotten to go back and record it right. This illustration just points out that communication can be tough, especially when your co-workers are making donkey noises while you're trying to record your voicemail message. It also points out why voice recognition in games may never pan out: can you imagine watching a friend talking to a game, without then being compelled to sneak up to the microphone and let loose with

a sneaky "Kill self," or "Drop all weapons" over their shoulder?"

Alright, now that we've closed the coffin lid on speech recognition, let's move on to our actual topic this month, which is skateboarding games.

Skateboarding, the official sport of disenfranchised youth,

was invented and perfected in California where the climate makes it not just a lifestyle choice, but practical transportation, too. I'm not very good at it. In fact, I'm terrible. But considering the huge number of developers based here who skateboard to work, it was surprising that it took Sega – a Japanese company, don't forget – and the excellent arcade game *Top Skater* to reintroduce the sport to videogames.

Now, however, it seems that skateboarding is back, and US developers – as eager as ever to hop on the latest bandwagon – have not one but three PSX skating games due out soon. EA is releasing *Skater*, Activision has *Tony Hawk Skateboarding*, and Rock Star Games (a new division of Take 2) is working on *Thrasher: Skate and Destroy*. Even Midway is getting into the act, with a Game Boy release of the classic 720°. (An emulated version will appear on PSX later this year as well.)

Strangely, the EA game (a direct translation of a Japanese title) is the only one without a license. The game is basically a direct copy of *Top Skater*, albeit with more tracks. Activision's *Tony Hawk Skateboarding* has gained endorsement from one of California's legendary skaters, and Rock Star's game features the license from the US's premiere skateboarding magazine. Rumour has it Sega is also looking to do a Dreamcast skating title.

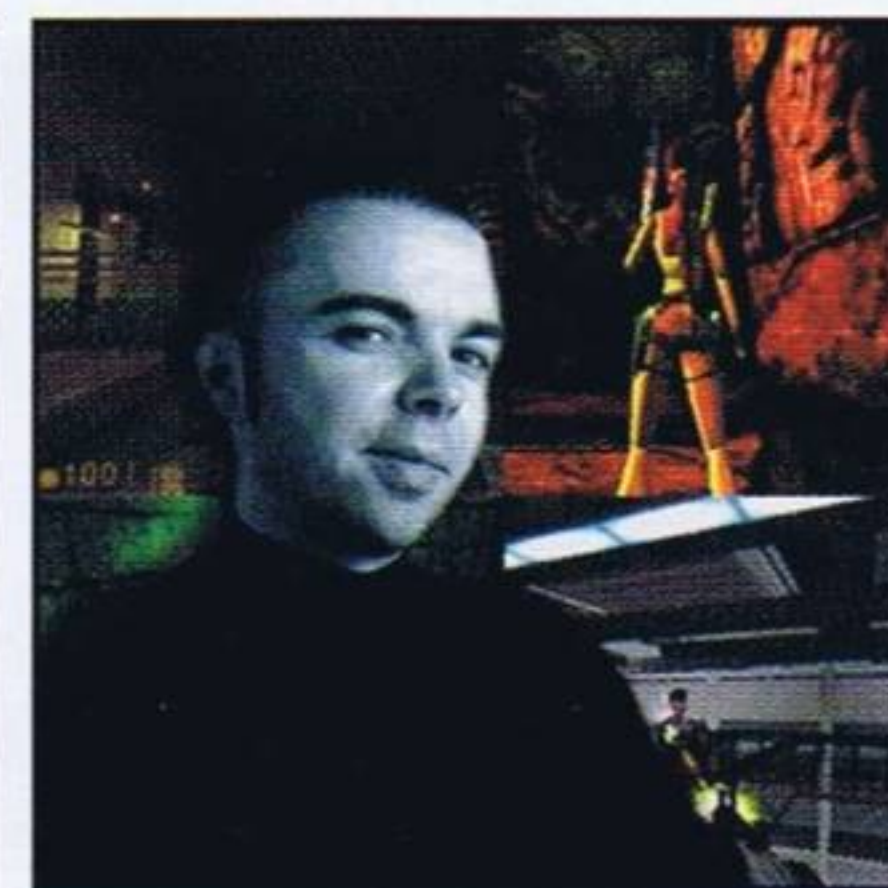
The games are ultimately what you'd expect: the control is a lot like a snowboarding game, with buttons for tricks and flips. The smart developers will couple the forward scrolling action with the latest in underground music. Unlike the UK, where electronic music (I've restrained myself from saying, "that stupid electronic music") holds sway, in the US skateboarding requires punk music as its soundtrack, and that's what most of these titles should eventually deliver.

The courses themselves are the streets, with plenty of stairs, rails and ramps. No word on whether empty swimming pools – a skater favourite, particularly in economically depressed regions of Southern California – will make it in, nor do we know if there'll be any graffiti tagging mini-games.

And what about the most recognisable element from skater fashion, the big pants? Although it's unlikely that the humble PlayStation can push enough polygons to faithfully recreate these monstrosities, our guess is that developers will try.

Right. That's quite enough about skateboarding games. I'm off to re-record my voicemail message. Next month: Texas developers and their Texas-sized egos, or, "I designed a level, now give me a Ferrari or I'll quit and start a new team." 

■ **Chris is editor-in-chief of America's Next Generation magazine, where he specialises in clearing up the mess Neil West left behind.**



THIS IS hardcore

## Stuart Campbell

He's played more videogames than any man alive.

**I**t may be winter outside, but in my heart it's spring. By which I mean, of course, "Hello viewers!" Although the issue of *Arcade* you're reading says "May" on the front cover (and you're probably reading it in April), it's still freezing cold early March as I write this column (Sunday the 7th, about 20 minutes before *Coronation Street*, if you're interested), and that's never a great time to be hunting down fab new video games.

Like a big smelly grizzly bear that's a bit slow on the uptake, the games industry goes into a long hibernation at the end of every December (until around the following October, in fact), because even though you, the gamers, are mostly in your early-to-mid-20s these days, the industry reckons you all still get most of your videogames as Christmas presents from Mummy and Daddy. Silly old the games industry, eh? Of course, the business presents the much higher sales figures around Christmas as proof that this is still the case, conveniently ignoring the fact that *of course* sales are higher around Christmas, because that's when all the good games get released, all at once. Tch! As the recent record-breaking sales of *Metal Gear Solid* show, today's gamer is prepared to go out and buy games in big numbers at any time of the year, if only anybody would release some.

I mention this to excuse the fact that the most interesting things I've managed to find to play this month have been *Zelda DX* on the Game Boy Color (the original *GB Zelda* was one of those games I just never quite got round to, and what an oversight that's turned out to have been), and Namco's much-overlooked *Liberio Grande* on PlayStation. I was going to write a column about how groundbreaking and exciting Psygnosis' *Rollcage* was, but I'm not that good a liar.

Now, you mightn't, at first glance, imagine that *Zelda DX* and *Liberio Grande* had anything in common. But they do, and what's

## So that's the coffin lid closed on the use of voice recognition

more it's the same thing that makes *Ridge Racer 4* (also featured this issue, starting on page 52) so great – believability. Not "realism", that worthless false god of the mediocre and imaginationless, but *believability* – the games' convincing adherence to the laws of their own worlds.

*Ridge 4* and *Zelda* you probably know enough about already, so let's take *Liberio Grande* as our example. Despite its player's-eye-view approach to football, this isn't a "realistic" game – even the dimmest footballers rarely get totally confused as to which way up the pitch they're running and, unless you're an Aberdeen supporter like me, it's difficult to imagine anyone as incompetent as your *Liberio Grande* team-mates ever being employed as professional footy players in real life. But because you spend so much time running around just trying to get into the action, and because your footy colleagues are so frustratingly fallible, and because you consequently get so much more of a thrill out of putting a clever move together and scoring a goal (rather than having simply weaved up the pitch from a detached viewpoint and banged one in on the diagonal, as with most conventional football games), *Liberio Grande* actually comes much closer to recreating the experience of playing football than the likes of *FIFA*, *Actua* or even the lovely *ISS* could ever dream of. Now, *Liberio* itself is too flawed to be a classic (though it's better than its reviews suggest), but if the future of games falls to a choice between hugely immersive, joyous experiences like this, or an unchanged-for-20-years template with ever-more-detailed motion capture and Michael Owen's smug little face crudely nailed on to the front, I know **A** who I'm cheering for.

**■ Stuart is a games journalist. In the driving seat this month, he took a close look at *Ridge Racer 4*, starting on page 52.**



## TURNING JAPANESE

# Jason Brookes

**Our man in Japan finds that old grudges die hard.**

**Y**ou have to feel sorry for Sega. Just as sales figures were released in Tokyo, showing its new Dreamcast console to be underperforming, its main rival Sony goes and rubs its face in the dirt by providing the industry with the first glimpses of PlayStation 2. And all over the world jaws dropped.

It's a situation uncannily reminiscent of the duel waged between the two companies several years ago. Back in early 1994, when the first details of Sega's doomed Saturn console were warmly received by an industry keen to embrace 3D graphics, Sony's well-orchestrated unveiling of the PlayStation mark one was an event that has been echoed in recent developments. The announcement and timing of PlayStation mark two was simply a case of history repeating itself.

In fact, this is perhaps the one constant of the videogames industry in Japan. You can pretty much bet that if something has stormed the market once, then its creators will do their utmost to ensure it will storm it again and again – and this is a situation that most readily applies to software. Take Squaresoft's mega series, *Final Fantasy*. The eighth epic instalment hit shops in early February '99 and sold a record 2.57 million units in its first four days. A user base of 15 million PlayStations in Japan means that it could well end up hitting its target of four million sales.

But while Sony looks set to guard its console territory like a Rottweiler defends a bone, Sega still virtually owns the coin-op market. At the year's biggest arcade event recently, the company stole the show with coin-ops based on its Dreamcast-compatible Naomi hardware.

*Ferrari 355* – from AM2, the creator of such classic Sega racers as *Out Run*, *Virtua Racing* and *Daytona USA* – is easily the best looking racing game yet seen. It uses the power of four Naomi boards for its incredible visuals and the finished cabinet will feature three screens for a convincing wrap-around effect.

Let's see Sega try and emulate that one for the home market.

Oddly enough this trend for making the coin-op experience as removed from its console equivalent as possible – despite the inclusion of much new console-compatible technology – is continued in *Airline Pilots*, a state-of-the-art coin-op that also uses Dreamcast hardware. A super realistic, hydraulically controlled cockpit (again with multiple screens in the deluxe model) will hope to tap into the same market as Taito's train sim series *Densha De Go!* (the fascinating train simulation we talked about last month; an experience where Japanese gamers compete to see who's the best loco driver in the east). And although it's a close-run thing, being at the controls of an airliner is slightly more exciting than driving a train. Don't expect to see this one making an appearance in many of the UK's arcades, though.

Finally, in a month that has seen more Japanese hardware announcements than most, Bandai and SNK have been gearing up for a battle of their own to capture respective slices of the lucrative handheld market. Bandai's Wonderswan (created by the late Gumppei Yokoi, the original creator of the Nintendo Game Boy) offers low-res monochrome graphics and costs just ¥4,800 (around 25 quid). The 16-bit eight-colour grey unit will eventually be available in seven body colours and currently has just five games – *Gunpey*, *Chocobo's Magic Dungeon*, *Densha de Go!* (yes, its those trains again, and this time in crummy black and white!), *New Japan Pro Wrestling En* and *Wonder Stadium*.

Going head-to-head with Wonderswan is the Neo-Geo Pocket Color from SNK, although this colour version of a handheld that was released only last year, will have a tough time competing with its much lower-priced competitors. **A**

**■ Before heading out to Japan, Jason was editor of *Edge* magazine. He's fixed Neil's car, but now has hold of his computer.**



## BACKSCREEN

# Neil Jackson

**It's not all fun, fun, fun making games for a living**

**I**f you've been reading this column over the last few months, you might be thinking that it looks like fun, working in the games business. I'm not going to disappoint you – it is. Serious fun. Day in, day out – whether you feel like having fun or not. Which is why, if you're wondering about giving up your day job or dumping college in favour of breaking into this biz, you'd better think twice about it.

I've been getting tons of e-mail from people asking for tips on how to get into the games industry. That's great, because the industry really needs good people, and I'm always happy to answer questions (time and nightmare deadlines permitting, of course). But the trouble is, the answer is always the same: be distinctively good at something (usually coding, art and animation, or music) and keep trying.

It's virtually impossible to jump into the business straight from a job that doesn't already involve computers. Most of the peripheral jobs – like producer, designer, development manager – are filled from within the industry, or by promotion through the ranks. The most regularly-advertised posts are raw, near-the-coalface jobs, where the heat and the hours are greatest, and the pay is worst.

Coders are always in demand – but there are some strong "no experience; no job" pressures in this arena. Occasionally, you'll see a particularly flush or expanding team hire a solid-looking newbie to write development tools (like 3D editors, or level map-making software). If the newbie handles that well, they might get to help out on a game, progressively taking on more work as they demonstrate more of their skill.

Recently, though, the industry has seen a great many coders arriving from real-world jobs – things like programming for British Aerospace, BT and the high street banks – but for some, the chance to live their dream turns into a living nightmare. Coding practices in the games world are usually a lot more experimental than they

are regimented – and the high-pressure, sometimes random "suck it and see" nature of games coding can throw a professionally trained software engineer into a whirl. With both massively complicated, speed-dependant programs and multi-million dollar deadlines to consider, the fun sometimes seems like it's a very long way away.

The art world, too, is not without its pressures. A newbie artist may find that they're given the mundane tasks to begin with – like colouring-in, tweening (drawing the countless frames of animation in-between keyframes provided by a character animator), or drawing simple interface icons and mouse cursors. Such tasks are hardly loaded with opportunities for creative expression, but they're essential work, and they always come with deadlines. And even when an artist gets their first opportunity for real freedom, they'll find no end of re-working is needed. Sometimes their hard-grafted handiwork gets chopped into all kinds of unsympathetic shapes, simply because that's the way the code handles it. And there are no end of critics: in the firm, in the press and in the public.

Musicians make up the other, most abused portion of "coalface" workers. Competition here is incredibly stiff, and musician posts tend to be a lot thinner on the ground; the simple fact is that most developers need only a couple of musicians to do all their in-game sound for their whole product range. Many companies don't have internal musicians at all – preferring to sub-contract as necessary when a project demands it. Worse still, music is often left as a last minute thought, or noticed as missing when the game code itself has gelled. Then it's suddenly required in a hurry, and creativity becomes a thousand times harder.

So, think twice. I haven't even mentioned the job insecurity, the faddish nature of the business that results in regular lay-offs, the long hours and the indigestible amounts of coffee and monitor-side meals. If you can hack it, being backscreen is fun, but like anything in life, there's a price attached, and risks to run. If you still want to get in, like I said, make sure you're good at something and *keep trying*. **A**

**■ The whirlwind nature of the games biz means that Neil's still at *Binary Asylum* and still working on *Star Trek: New Worlds*. He's also sick of takeaway food. Want to know more about it? Mail him at [backscreen@techno.demon.co.uk](mailto:backscreen@techno.demon.co.uk)**

# Pure fifth

**“Get your trousers on, you’re nicked!” It’s Captain Jane Speke, Commanding Officer of the future fuzz in *G-Police 2 – Weapons of Justice*. Things have come a long way since Juliet Bravo.**







**I**f Arcade had an office granny no doubt she'd glance up from her *Channel 4 Racing* at this point to cluck her approval of G-Cop Jane

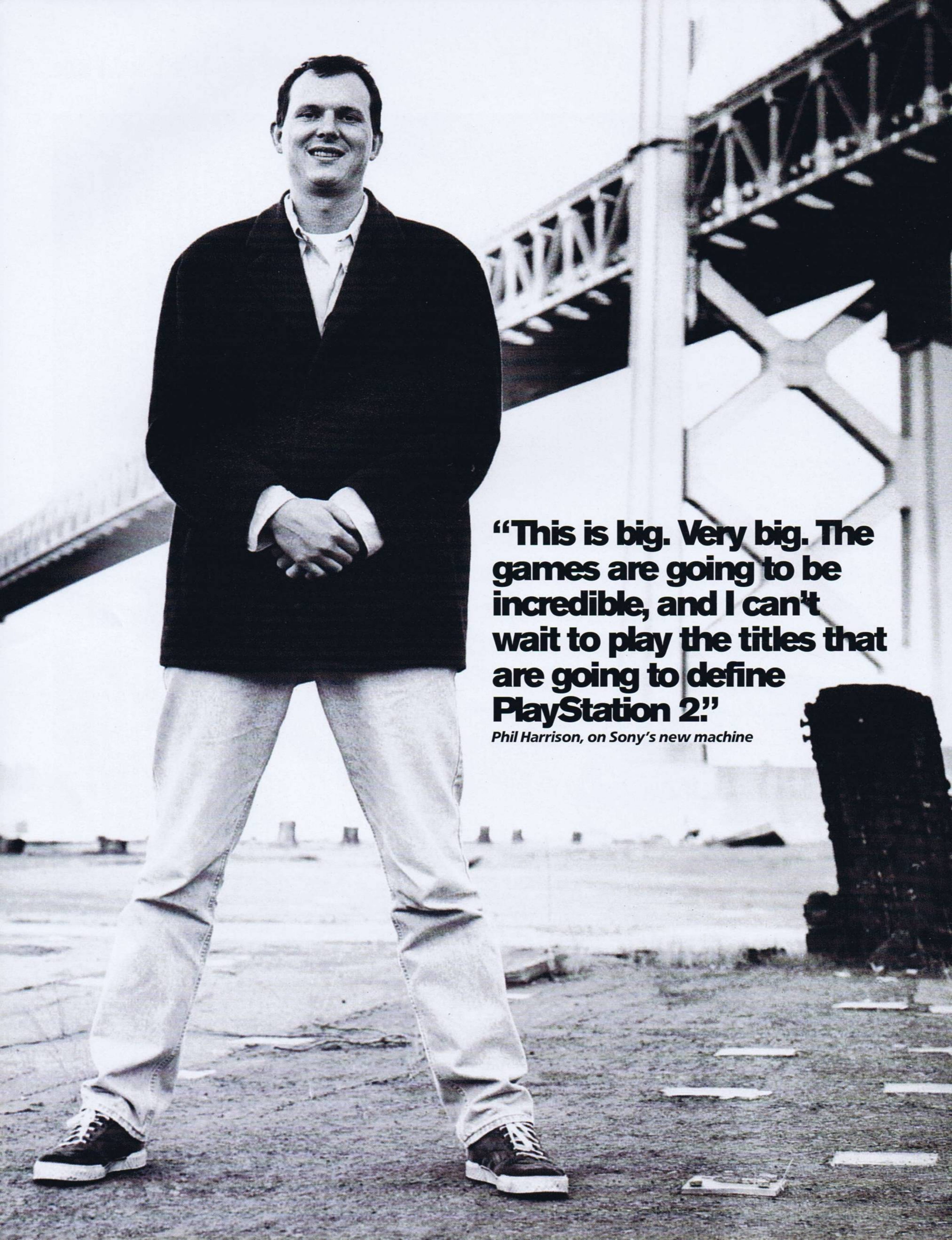
Speke's sensible warm clothing. While our previous Virtual Foxes have been barely able to contain themselves in yellow micro bikinis, fur covered thongs and shimmering space skirts with no bras, Jane's avoiding goose pimples and purple leg blotches on the moons of Jupiter with a functional uniform. And we approve. After all, if there's one thing sci fi agrees on, from

*Bladerunner* to *Psygnosis'* own dystopian scenarios, it's that the future will be chilly. You may well have "forgotten" to buy the original *G-Police* for PlayStation, despite almost universal critical praise upon its release last year. But developer Psygnosis has resisted the temptation of making the female lead of *G-Police 2* (out in July) a cynically large-breasted videogaming stunner to pull in the sweaty-palmed masses. As *Psygnosis'* Graeme Williams points out "It's a sophisticated sci-fi game. To have Pamela Anderson running around it would be decidedly un-credible".

So instead we have Ms Speke as the uncompromising Commander of the G-Police station on Callisto. Her CV boasts training in Aerospace Assault and Powerarmoured Infantry Tactics, and during her 30 missions she'll perform "everything from secret negotiations to ambushes," says Graeme, "or whatever it takes to keep her troops alive." But get to know Jane a little better and you'll realise that beneath her tough exterior lurk signs of severe mental trauma. A disastrous raid on Titan when she was a fresh officer left her with an irrational guilt,

leaving her cold and distant. And any far-future builder-type considering a shout of "Cheer up darlin'!" should be warned. "If he was lucky, she'd just cuff him. If not she'd blow his brains out" reckons Graeme. Fair enough. Dare we ask what manner of chat up line would work on her? "You've got one hell of an arsenal..." offers Graeme. Nah. We reckon, when it comes to futuristic cops armed to the eyeballs, nothing beats a simple "Search me!"

■ *G-Police 2, now known as Weapons of Justice is heading for your PlayStation in July.*



**“This is big. Very big. The games are going to be incredible, and I can’t wait to play the titles that are going to define PlayStation 2.”**

*Phil Harrison, on Sony’s new machine*

# Phil Harrison

Interview by | Neil West

**Sony's dramatic unveiling of the technology that will power PlayStation 2 was the biggest videogame event of the year. So what happens next?**

**Y**ou'd think that Sony had announced plans to send a manned mission to Mars. The buzz surrounding the news of Sony's PlayStation 2 technology is like nothing the games industry has witnessed in years. But behind the hype what are the facts? How much better than your PlayStation will Sony's new machine be? *Arcade* talks to Sony's Phil Harrison to separate the fact from the fiction.

**Can you clear up: what exactly has Sony unveiled here? What announcements are yet to come?**

We've announced the completion of our R&D project for a new system, that's all. So far we've revealed nothing in terms of the system's final name, appearance, price, software plans or release date.

**So, despite what our readers may hear elsewhere, there's no actual finished games console yet?**

That's right. All these details will be finalised at a later date.

**How much more powerful than the original PlayStation will PS2 be?**

One way of breaking down graphics performance into hard numbers is to talk in terms of pixel fill-rate. [Pixels are the building blocks used to create game screens. The faster a computer can draw (or "fill") pixels, the more impressive its graphics will be.]

The pixel fill-rate of the current PlayStation is 66 MegaPixels per second and PS2 is 2,400 MegaPixels per second. This is about three times the performance of the top-of-the-range Silicon Graphics Infinite Reality Engine 2 boxes and about 20 times the performance of Power VR [the technology upon which Dreamcast's graphics are based]. This makes PS2's Graphics Synthesizer the fastest graphics chip on the planet by a huge margin.

**And graphics are just half the story...**

Absolutely. The second important part of PS2 is the new CPU "Emotion Engine"

which handles all the maths for 3D geometry and complex physical simulation. This means that games will be far smarter. We can now add realism not just to how the objects and characters in a game look, but to how they think, act and behave.

**Just how big a deal is this? And what will the games be like?**

This is big, very big. The games are going to be incredible, and I can't wait to play the titles that are going to define PS2 in the way that *Resident Evil*, *Metal Gear Solid*, *Tomb Raider*, *Crash*, *GT* and the like define the current PlayStation.

**What's been the reaction of game developers to PS2?**

Everyone I've spoken to has been very, very happy. I think we were expected to announce something impressive, but nobody thought it was going to be this impressive.

**You've said PS2 will be released in Japan "before the end of the current fiscal year". Can't you give us a better clue than that?**

Well, it all depends on the games. Hardware production is a scientific process – we can tell pretty much exactly when production will start rolling. Developing games, however, is a different beast altogether and we won't announce a launch date until we have a good idea of what games are being developed and when they'll be ready.

Our target, though, is before March 2000 for Japan and autumn 2000 in Europe and the US.

**PS2 features a DVD player. What advantage is this to gamers? Most games with lots of video footage in are rubbish....**

DVD is a very good format for storing large amounts of data on a CD. In terms of games, this will allow more richly detailed worlds with more complex characters, animations and sound.

It also means that we can play MPEG2-compressed video back from DVD and it will look as good as anything you can see on a TV. In certain cases, this will make games better, but it does not mean that the games need be video-based nonsense. And it does not mean that the acting in them will be any good. That we cannot control in hardware... yet.

**Like nothing seen before**

Phil Harrison is Sony Computer Entertainment of America's Vice President of Third Party Relations and Research and Development. As well as having the longest job title in the world, he's at the heart of Sony's PlayStation 2 project.

Throughout the interview, Phil was careful to refer to PlayStation 2 as "the new system". The point is that Sony doesn't have a final name for its new console yet. For ease of reading, though, we've referred to it as PlayStation 2 throughout. Please keep this in mind.

As for the power of Sony's "new system", it eclipses every, and we mean every, videogame system ever created. Forget anything in the arcades, this is better. Think more along the lines of *Jurassic Park* or *A Bug's Life*. This is the kind of graphics performance we're talking about. In fact, the only bad news in Sony's announcement is that we'll probably have to wait at least a year and a half for the console to reach the UK. Autumn of 2000 seems a long, long way away all of a sudden...

An eye-witness report from Sony's announcement in Japan is on page 12. An analysis of what it all means is on page 18.

**Why all the fuss about backward compatibility? Surely people who want to play old games can play them on their old PlayStation.**

Obviously there are a few practical benefits to having only one system hooked up – especially if the "old" PlayStation gets passed down to a younger brother or sister. However, the real reason for the backward compatibility is to help define the PlayStation as a format, rather than just a videogame platform.

With over 3,000 titles available worldwide we hope many consumers will see the preservation of their game library as a good thing. Also, it means gamers can continue to buy PlayStation games with confidence in the run up to the launch of the new system – and beyond. If there are some people out there that don't own a current PlayStation (I believe there may be a few somewhere) then they can have instant access to a huge library of games when they buy the new system.

**So what's the future for the original PlayStation?**

PlayStation's future is very bright! Sony will continue to write great games for it and support the installed base which is now over 50 million worldwide. We know that this kind of audience doesn't go away overnight and I think our third-party developers and publishers will see the commercial benefits of making games for the current system for a long time to come.

**Now that you've announced PS 2's specs, how frightened are you of Sega's Dreamcast?**

Sony has always followed its own pathway – both technically and from a business perspective. Nothing we announced was influenced by any other company or product.

**Oh, go on. You can say something more controversial than that.**

What is there to say? I think their predicament is clear to everyone, so I won't add to the noise.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JUDE EDGINGTON



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**MEGASTORES**



# CRASH! BANG! WALLOP!

PHOTOGRAPHY: JUSTIN SCOBIE

## AND YOU MAY FIND YOURSELF BEHIND THE WHEEL OF A LARGE AUTOMOBILE...



## And they're off!

*It's a gruelling season of high-octane racing over 20 packed pages*

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Glug! Hic! Kerrrsmash!



# WHAT CART?

PHOTOGRAPHY: SIMON DODD, CORBIS



■ And it's a resounding victory for the Ford team, as number 20 takes the top four placings, in a photo finish.

## WHICH DRIVING GAME IS BEST? THE PROFESSIONAL DRIVER, THE GAME DEVELOPER AND THE HARDCORE GAMER TAKE 12 RACE GAME CLASSICS OUT FOR A TEST DRIVE.

**W**e've played our fair share of driving games here at *Arcade*. In fact, we've played 'em all. We know which ones are great, which ones are eye-droopingly tedious, which ones to throw straight in the bin, and so on; but by no means would we consider ourselves expert drivers.

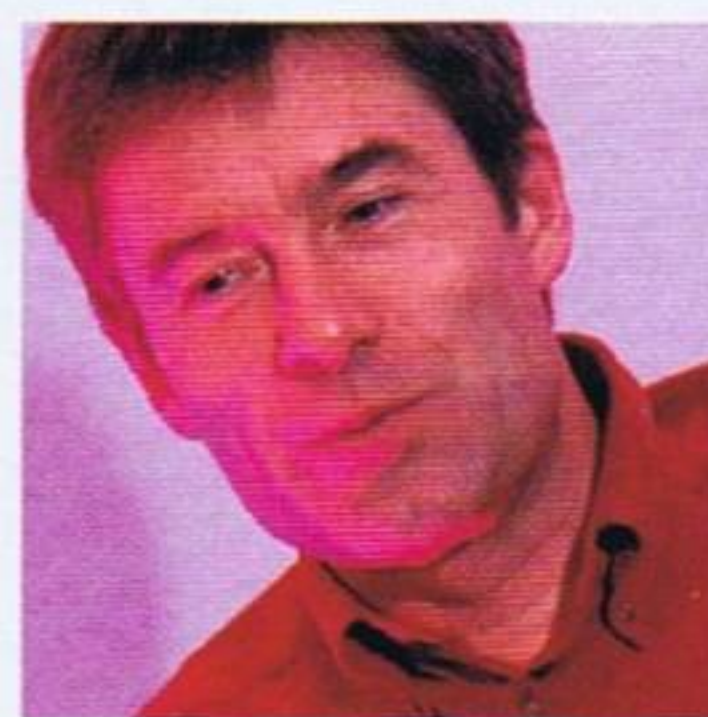
Nor are our heads bulging with technical knowledge. And – believe it or not – there are some people out there who love driving and driving

games even more than we do. What would *they* think of the current crop of driving offerings, we wondered.

We decided to find out. We packed our big *Arcade* rucksack with consoles, PCs, steering wheels, Mark's new Mini Disc dictaphone, and 12 games that we chose to represent the full range of current driving game experiences. Then we set off around the country in search of three people. Three experts in their chosen field who could comprehensively rate every title in terms of realism, technical ability and pure, unadulterated fun. Did we find them? Of course we did.

### Our driving specialists

Meet our three testers, each first-placed in his field.



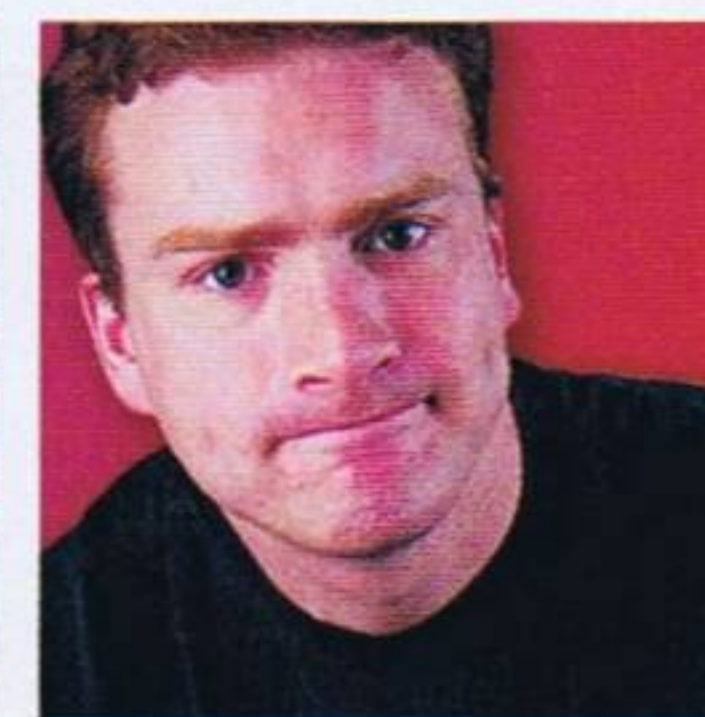
**Tiff Needell**  
Testing the games for: **REALISM**

*Top Gear* presenter and racing personality, Tiff has decades of real-life racing experience behind him. Name the discipline – TOCA, F1, rallying or NASCAR – and Tiff can detail its pleasures and pitfalls first-hand. He's a bit of a gamer in his spare time, too – Jeremy Clarkson's personal *Sega Rally* arcade machine has eaten up hours of the two presenters' time.



**Andrew Percella**  
Testing the games for: **TECHNICAL PROWESS**

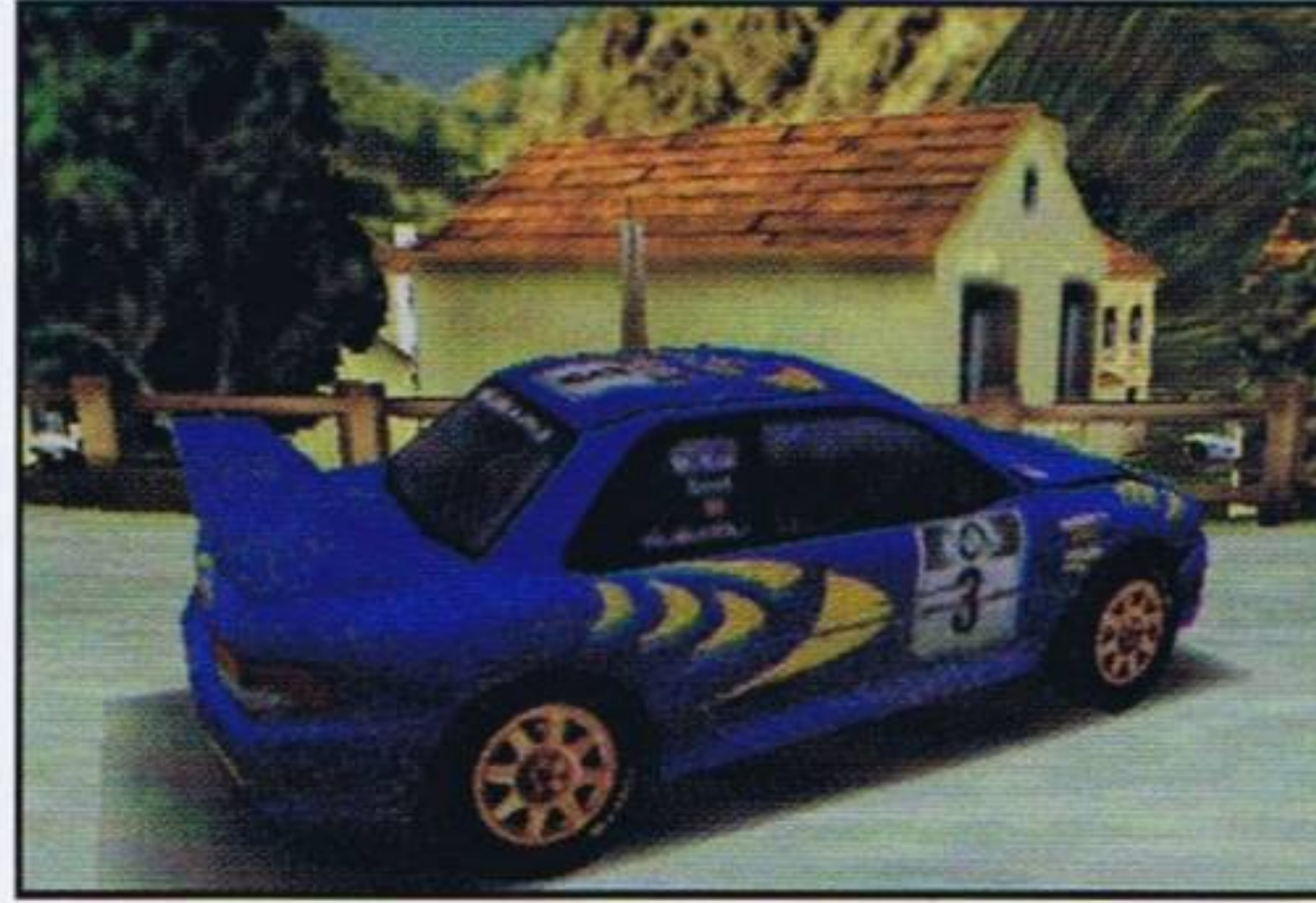
Andrew is the Programming Manager at Eutechnyx Software, the team behind such PlayStation racing titles as *Max Power Racing* and *Total Drivin'*. Andrew knows exactly how far consoles and PCs can be pushed, and he makes it his job to assess every new racing game's technical accomplishments and failings as soon as it appears. He's refreshingly willing to point out all of the good bits in rival developers' games, too.



**Jonathan Davies**  
Testing the games for: **GAMEPLAY**

A hardcore gamer for longer than most people have been playing with toy cars (and regular *Arcade* contributor) Jonathan can pinpoint the excitement factor of a game to several decimal places.

He's also Editor of the BBC's *Top Gear* Internet site (at <http://www.topgear.beeb.com/>) and comes into contact with the world of petrol-driven vehicles on a daily basis. He's the ideal man for this job.



**Colin McRae Rally**

■ System: **PlayStation & PC**  
 ■ Publisher: **Codemasters** ■ Developer:  
**Codemasters** ■ Price: **£30**

- Number of cars for you to race in: **8**
- Number of tracks: **48 + 4 special stages**
- Number of computer opponents: **0**
- Number of players: **1-8**
- Weather conditions: **yes**
- Damageable cars: **yes**
- Best bit: **the realistic feel of tyres on dirt**

A regular fixture in the Top 20 since 1998, *Colin McRae Rally* rockets you through the country with only your car, a co-pilot and a map for company. The only sounds are of your engine and the directions being yelled into your ear.

**Destruction Derby 2**

■ System: **PlayStation & PC**  
 ■ Publisher: **Psygnosis** ■ Developer:  
**Reflections** ■ Price: **£15**

- Number of cars for you to race in: **20**
- Number of tracks: **7**
- Number of computer opponents: **19**
- Number of players: **1**
- Weather conditions: **no**
- Damageable cars: **oh, yes**
- Best bit: **smacking into stalled rivals**

Developed by the team behind *Driver*, *DD2* is an arcade-style racer where intense speed, horrific jumps and multi-car pile-ups are compulsory. Your hare-brained computer opponents end up on their roofs with amusing regularity.

**What we said**

A departure from the usual racing game, with time and damage as your only opponents. The variety of terrain and responsive controls give real driving feedback. ★★★★★

A smash-'em-up racer that gives edge-of-your-set thrills, coupled with gorgeous visuals, genuine speed and smart computer cars. Yay! ★★★★★



**Tiff Needell**

"This is mega – the visuals are stunning and help immerse you in the whole experience, making you feel like you're really racing through the countryside. The nature of the game suits the PlayStation controller, so you don't have any trouble steering through the bends or pulling off truly authentic powerslides. The co-pilot commands are spot-on, too. The most realistic game on offer in this round up." ★★★★★

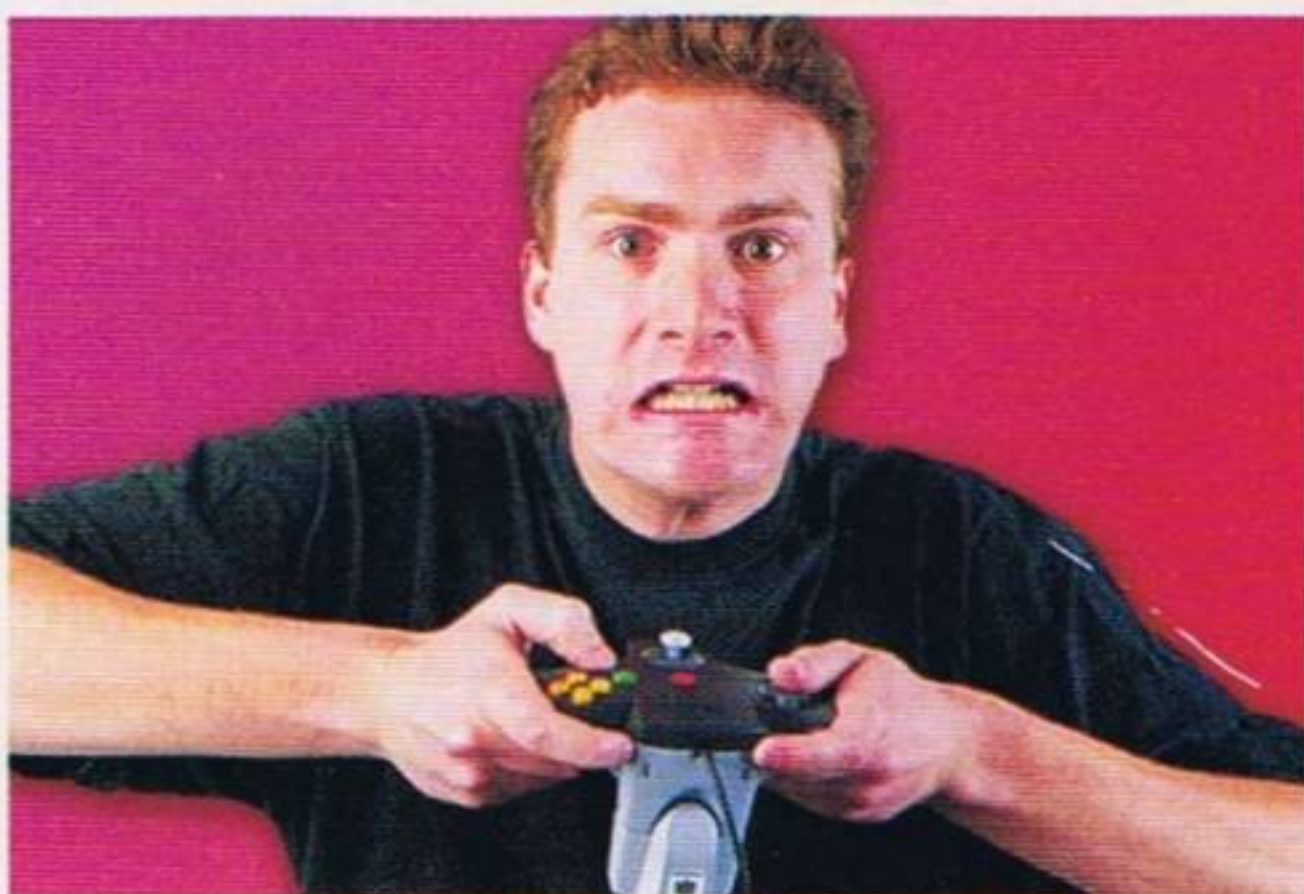
"Ooh, no, give me real driving any day. This doesn't even try to be realistic, with far too many silly jumps and crashes – real drivers would never approach a jump if there was only a 50/50 chance that they'd be the right way up at the bottom. It's bad for my ears, too – the car engines sound like sewing machines. All the banging and crashing means that this is probably a good game for the kids." ★



**Andrew Percella**

"The frame rate is smooth, the graphics engine is sturdy and the physics model is very realistic – for example, the way the car rolls is very accurate. "Obviously, *Colin McRae* is an adapted version of Codemaster's *TOCA*, but the problems that marred that game don't appear here because it's only dealing with one car at a time. Overall, another quality Codemasters release." ★★★★★

"The physics model is quite nice – realistic without being too realistic – and it's a good representation of how cars actually react to impact, although Reflections has had to prevent the game being made unplayable by toning down the amount of damage suffered, compared to how a real car would crumple. There tends to be a slow-down when you have a nasty crash." ★★★



**Jonathan Davies**

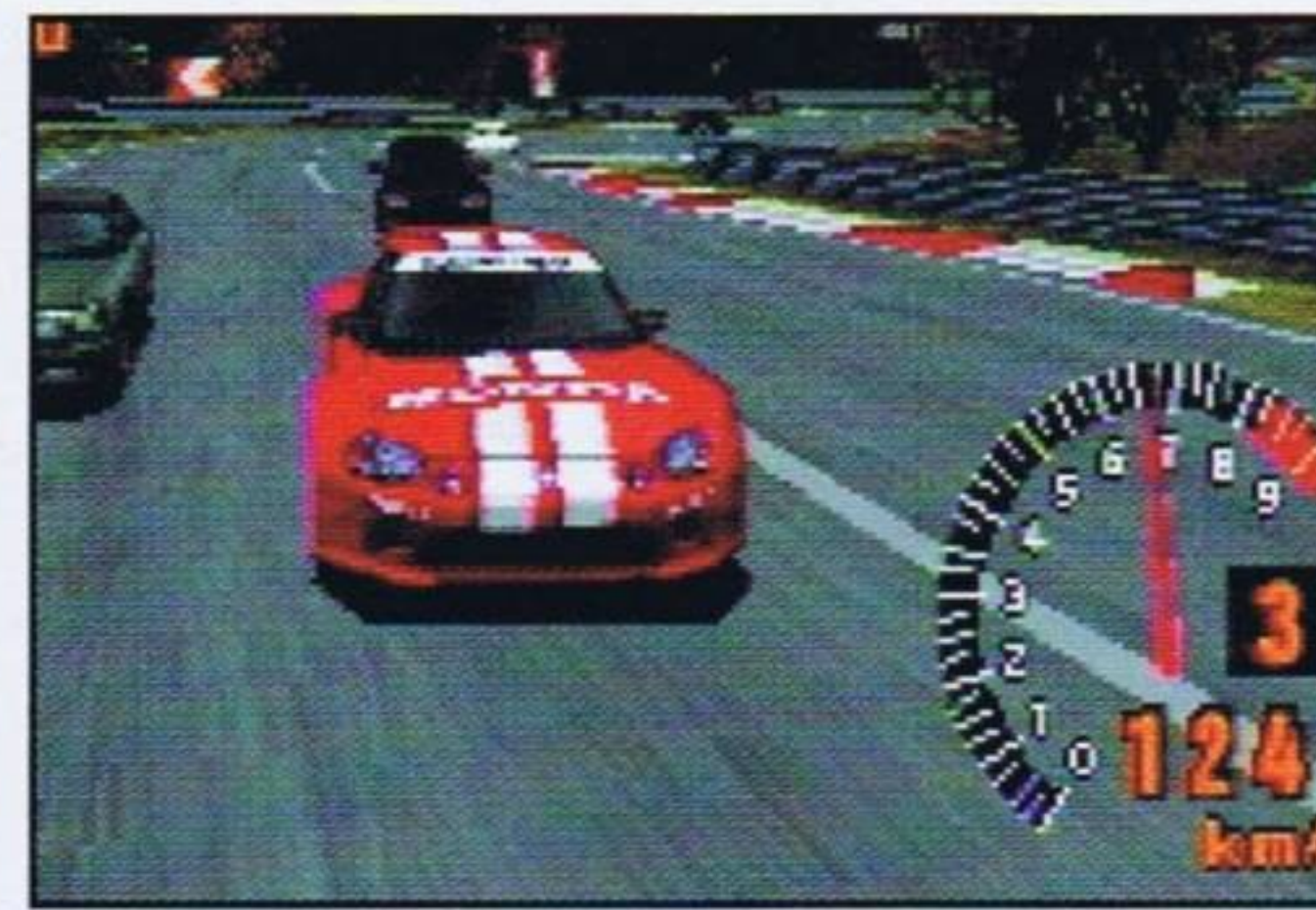
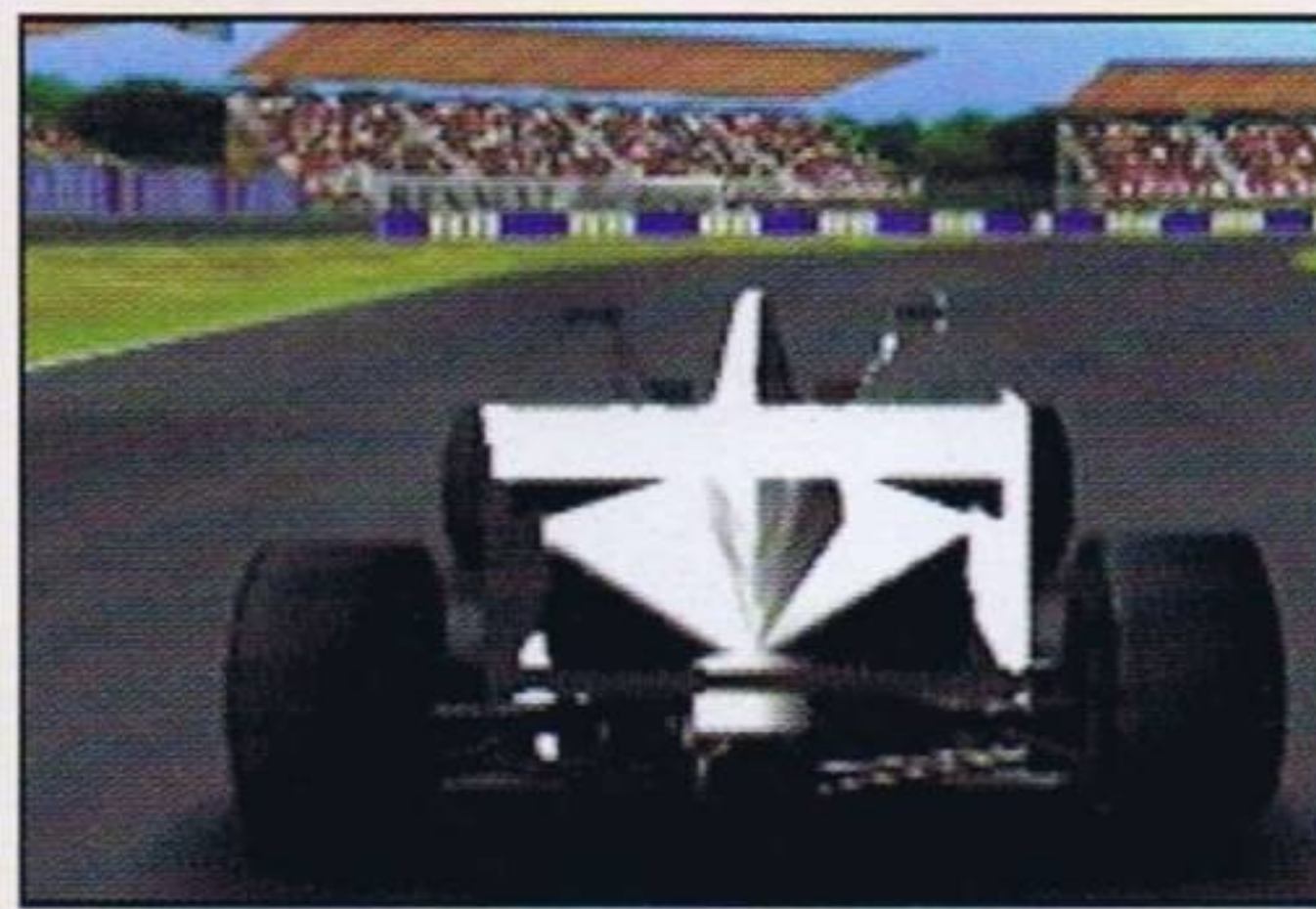
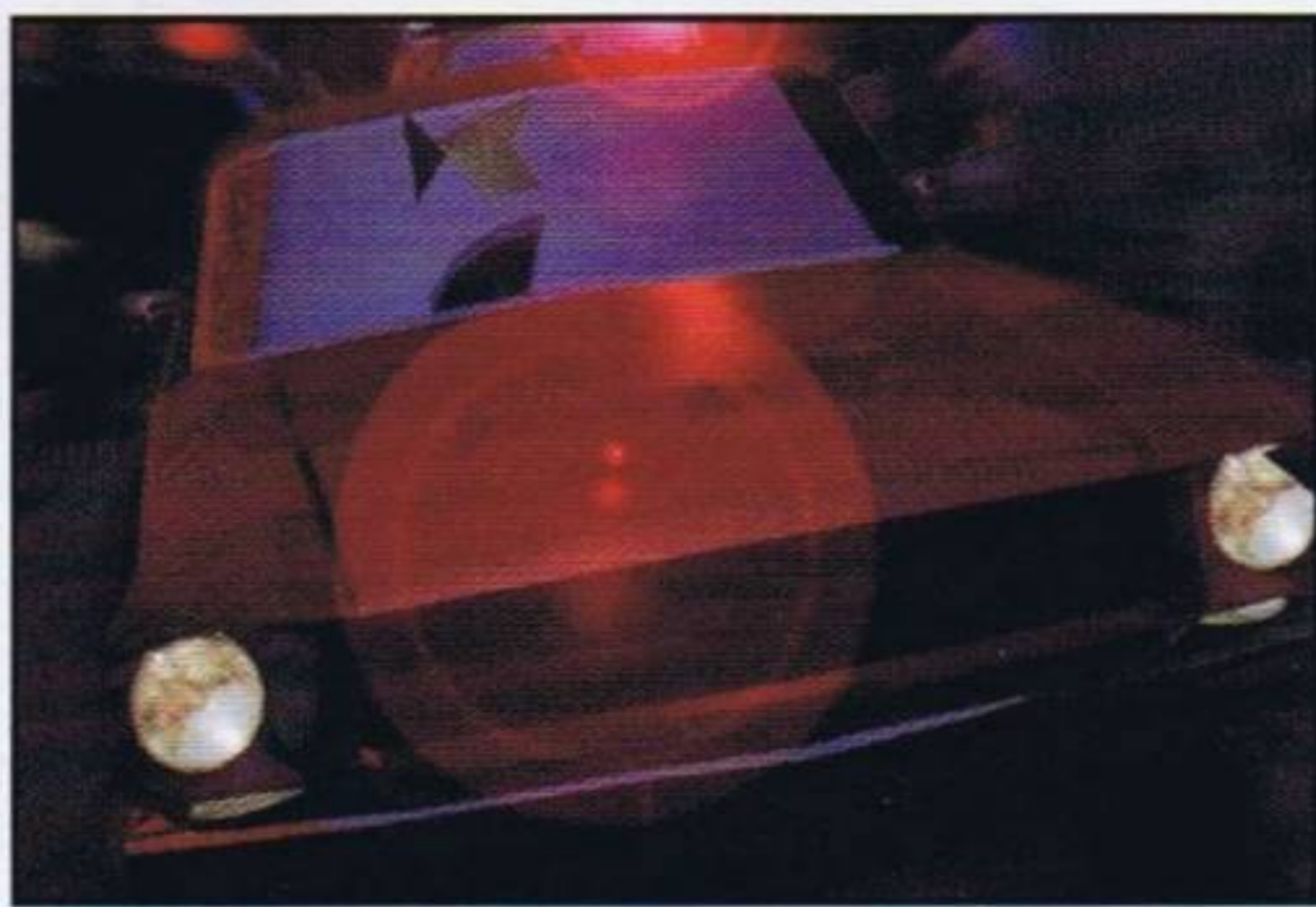
"When you've honed your skills on Tarmac-based racers, *Colin's* car seems curiously floaty and unrealistic. But the thing is, that's how rally cars actually feel as they slither over mud, snow and gravel. Once you get the hang of it you can even complete some stages without ever once facing forwards – totally excellent stuff. A structure of increasingly tough rallies around the world makes for a long-term challenge, and the two-player mode is fantastically competitive." ★★★★★

"My, don't games age fast? *Destruction Derby 2* looks positively Neolithic and it's only a couple of years old, although it runs at a fair lick. Being able to smash up your opponents offers little more than novelty value, and is unlikely to keep you rivetted for long, but it's excellent being able to nudge the first-placed man on to one of the awkwardly angled ramps and see him tip on to two wheels and then skid along on his roof. Bravo." ★★★

**Conclusion**

Although it takes time to adjust to, *Colin McRae's* realistic handling and stunning looks help to make it a thoroughly enjoyable ride. Your friend in the passenger seat helps avoid loneliness, too.

Technically, *Destruction Derby 2* is showing its age, but it's still an exhilarating and incredibly pacy drive, which offers the kind of horrendous collisions we could previously only dream about.



### Driver

■ System: **PlayStation & PC**  
 ■ Publisher: **GT Interactive** ■ Developer: **Reflections** ■ Price: **TBA**

- Number of cars for you to race in: **several**
- Number of tracks: **4 cities**
- Number of computer opponents: **loads**
- Number of players: **1**
- Weather conditions: **yes**
- Damageable cars: **yes**
- Best bit: **overturning a cop car**

*Driver* enables you to drive at speed through an accurately modelled US city, mounting kerbs and dodging roadblocks. Missions range from tailing another car, to shuttling bank robbers back home, to simply avoiding those darned rozzers.

### F1 World Grand Prix

■ Publisher: **Nintendo** ■ Developer: **Paradigm**  
 ■ System: **N64** ■ Price: **£40**

- Number of cars for you to race in: **11**
- Number of tracks: **17**
- Number of computer opponents: **21**
- Number of players: **1-2**
- Weather conditions: **yes**
- Damageable cars: **yes**
- Best bit: **keeping going with no wheels**

The N64's best-selling racer. There are drivers, cars, tracks and even ad billboards from the real world along for the ride, and the visuals are designed to fool a tired brain into mistaking them for the real thing. The difficulty options provide hope for less anal driving enthusiasts.

### Gran Turismo

■ System: **PlayStation** ■ Publisher: **SCEE** ■ Developer: **Sony Japan** ■ Price: **£45**

- Number of cars for you to race in: **290**
- Number of tracks: **11, plus mirror versions**
- Number of computer opponents: **5**
- Number of players: **1-2**
- Weather conditions: **no**
- Damageable cars: **no**
- Best bit: **those gorgeous action replays**

This revolutionised the driving game scene with hundreds of cars to earn (all looking and handling differently), limitless options for tweaking and TV-quality replays. *GT* hypnotised beginners with its immediacy of play and held experienced gamers hostage with its infinite potential.

### What we said

Borrowing the crash physics, D-pad push-perfect car handling and smoking "hoods" of the *Destruction Derby* games, but setting the whole thing in the real world. Full review in *Arcade 7*.

Looking as good as the real thing, with plenty of modes for arcade racers and true F1 fans. The two-player option rounds off the whole gorgeous package. ★★★★★

Combine outrageously good graphics, near-perfect handling, endless depth and a brilliant replay mode, and you have a pleasure pie that can't be missed. A masterpiece. ★★★★★

### Tiff Needell

"This is great fun – it's how I'd like to be able to drive around the streets! It's excellent to see an authentic city in a game, and it's satisfying to be able to smash your car up and drive along the pavements – even if the car tends to oversteer a bit. It'd be a lot better if there was a rear-view mirror – that'd be more true-to-life than the little red arrows showing where the police are." ★★★★★

"This is horrible – the steering's hyper-sensitive, and the whole game's pretending to be realistic when it isn't. You can cut across grass and gravel without spinning, there's not enough damage done when you hit scenery and other cars, and your vehicle twitches unrealistically when you push the stick hard in one direction. It sounds awful, too. I love the visuals, though – the scenery's great, and the individual wheels go up and down as you drive." ★★

"I'm a disappointed with this. It doesn't feel like you're driving a real car – the powersliding's too difficult for a start – and the courses aren't real, which is a shame. The other cars speed away far too quickly, which means you're often effectively left racing alone. The replays are great, though – the cameras are in just the right places to capture that feeling of watching racing on TV. You can do great doughnuts\*, as well." ★★★★★

### Andrew Percella

"I like the idea of coding a fully working city – it makes the player feel as if he's interacting with a real environment and real people. The game is full of "Why didn't I think of that?" moments, and although it doesn't look as if it's pushing the technical envelope, it's a good example of how details can really make a game. And seeing as developer Reflections is just down the road from us, I have to be nice!" ★★★★★

"Graphically, this game is very pleasing, with a good frame rate and minimal pop-up of scenery in the distance. But the physics model is far too much like an arcade game – driving off the track should drastically affect the cars' performance, but it doesn't seem to make any difference at all here. As an arcade racer, it would be acceptable, but since it's supposed to be a proper simulation of F1 racing, it falls short." ★★★★★

"The replays are really nice – the spectacular highlights are shiny without making the car look plastic. It's a shame that the AI is a bit weak, though – notice, for example, how every car falls into line as soon as they start. Aside from that, *GT* is pretty mighty. The sheer depth of the tuning options and the way you can actually *feel* how your individual tweaking affects the cars' performance is very well implemented." ★★★★★

### Jonathan Davies

"Salivated over the *Cannonball Run*? Drooled over *Bullitt*? Moistened your lips over the *Dukes of Hazzard*? Of course you have, and Reflections was right there with you, collecting your spittle in a big jug and pouring it into a game (metaphorically speaking, of course).

"Motoring through a living, breathing city is a thrilling experience, especially when you can gleefully ignore the boring old *Highway Code* and spend hours at a time trying to flatten a selection of innocent bystanders." ★★★★★

"F1 games are always tricky. On the one hand, *World GP* is a fan's dream, with astonishingly detailed graphics and handling that's almost worthy of Sir Geoffrey Crammond in its realism. On the other, success is down to braking at just the right point before each corner, changing into exactly the correct gear and then getting back on the power at precisely the appropriate moment – for lap after lap. Look elsewhere if you enjoy clawing your way round bends at the limit of traction, revelling in oversteer and opposite-locking your way out of trouble." ★★★★★

"Merely watching an action replay in *Gran Turismo* is more entertaining than playing 97.5% of all other racing games, such is the quality of the graphics. *GT*'s handling is so believable that taking a single corner, tyres protesting, liberally oversteering – just kissing the kerb – is more enjoyable than an entire lap of 99.9% of other racing games. Just one of *GT*'s tournaments will provide more long-term fun than a pile of other racing games as high as a house. It's the *Mario 64* of racing games, a *Mask of Zorro* among a multiplex full of *This Year's Loves*." ★★★★★

### Conclusion

The new kid on the grid offers the rule-breaking driving we really want. The authentic environments help you forget that realism is being sacrificed in order to keep those cool car chases exciting.

Reasonably exciting as a re-creation of F1 driving, but cheekily ignores many of the sport's finer points, and isn't a good option if you're looking for foot-to-the-floor racing thrills.

Its looks and incredible depth make *GT* the King of Racers. Experienced drivers may question its handling and the behaviour of opposition cars, but it'll keep you in the driving seat for hours at a time.

\*A "doughnut" is the act of driving your car around and around in a small circle. Tiff's rather keen on them.





**Mario Kart 64**

■ System: **N64** ■ Publisher: **Nintendo**  
 ■ Developer: **Nintendo** ■ Price: **£40**

- Number of karts for you to race in: **8**
- Number of tracks: **16, plus mirror versions**
- Number of computer opponents: **7**
- Number of players: **1-4**
- Weather conditions: **no**
- Damageable cars: **no**
- Best bit: **a red shell up Toad's exhaust pipe**

Nintendo's karter boasts comedy characters, infuriating weapons and tracks scattered liberally with beaches, ghosts and giant chomping metallic faces. Everyone's favourite Nintendo characters take up the reins, and the sparse visuals help the four-player races fly.

The one-player game is a lonely experience, but the time-trial mode adds longevity, and the multi-player game is arguably the best on any platform. ★★★★★

"This is stupid. It's a game for kids, really, isn't it? Take it away". ★

"Technically, the game isn't exactly stretching the hardware. It's certainly not the same kind of step-up from the original SNES version as *Super Mario 64* was from the earlier *Mario* games. Still, the multi-player game is one of the best, thanks to some great level designs and the relatively constant speed that the N64 manages to maintain even when there are four players on screen at the same time." ★★

"The odd thing about *Mario Kart 64* is that the basic one-player game is a load of cobblers. An evening's work and you'll have finished it, never to glance at it again. Instead, it's the little extras that make *Mario Kart 64* one of the N64's top five games. The four-player split-screen game is endlessly amusing – every game turns out differently. And the time-trial mode, seemingly just a token bolt-on, proves to be intensely compulsive as you compete against the world's best to shave milliseconds off your Mario Raceway time." ★★★★★

**Avid drivers may turn their noses up at the cartoon looks and lack of pizzazz, but share Mario Kart with friends and you won't be able to leave it alone for more than a minute.**

**Max Power Racing**

■ System: **PlayStation & PC**  
 ■ Publisher: **Infogrames**  
 ■ Developer: **Eutechnyx** ■ Price: **£40**

- Number of cars for you to race in: **30**
- Number of tracks: **20**
- Number of computer opponents: **5**
- Number of players: **1-2**
- Weather conditions: **yes**
- Damageable cars: **yes**
- Best bit: **shunting rivals off the bridge**

It has courses from around the world, but *MPR* includes vehicles that wouldn't look out of place in your Dad's garage. With clever but flawed opponents and scenery modelled on real-life locales, *MPR* aims to marry speed and reality.

This just can't compete with *Gran Turismo*. The global locations and fancy headlight effects are quickly forgotten in the face of over-long tracks and finger-clenching difficulty. ★★

"This has got the best handling of all the games here. The graphics are boxy and unrealistic, and the music and the sound of the cars are driving me mad, but its non-twitchy nature is very easy to get the hang of for a real driver like me. "The opposition aren't super-human in their ability, and the fact that you can acquire damage is a good thing. I like the fact that if you fall off the track, it's the end of your race – that's realism, you see." ★★★★★

"We actually calculated how headlights would illuminate the road ahead, and they're probably the most realistic lighting effects available on the PlayStation. We've also employed a very advanced artificial intelligence system, where the computer drivers are limited to the same constraints as a real player would be if they were driving that car. And our game engine eliminates scenery pop-up and enables you to drive off the road – just like in real life." ★★★★★

"Not nearly as naff as its name suggests, *Max Power Racing* spares you from having to drive round Sainsbury's car park in a D-reg XR2 and then pull your trousers down. In fact it's nifty, with a line-up of real-life cars, brutal courses (including rivers you can fall in and drown), realistically error-prone computer cars and a good feeling of speed. But, crucially, in every respect – graphics, handling, game structure, you name it – it yields to *Gran Turismo*." ★★★★★

**Widely lauded for its velocity and authenticity (especially by its designer), Max Power Racing is comprehensive enough even for drivers who don't spend every evening roaring around a ring road.**

**R4 Ridge Racer Type 4**

■ System: **PlayStation** ■ Publisher: **SCEE**  
 ■ Developer: **Namco** ■ Price: **£40**

- Number of cars for you to race in: **300+**
- Number of tracks: **8**
- Number of computer opponents: **5**
- Number of players: **1-4**
- Weather conditions: **no**
- Damageable cars: **no**
- Best bit: **powersliding past an opponent**

Just out of the garage, *R4* is the latest in a long line of arcade racers that sacrifices realism for speed, speed and – yep – more speed. Detailed graphics and swift computer opponents don't matter a jot when you're careering through Tokyo at something approaching 300mph.

A fantastic experience but nothing like actually driving a car. This is an arcade racing game – the hippest, snappiest, sexiest arcade racing game ever created – not a driving sim ★★★★★

"This is another game that doesn't seem to try to be realistic. You can pull off some great powerslides, but you need quite a bit of practice to carry them out convincingly. The music's horrendous – I want some authentic-sounding engine noises, not trumpety jazz nonsense. Still, the first track is obviously based on the Tokyo suburbs, and the brilliant visuals really do make you feel like you're there. The addition of a rear-view mirror is a nice touch, too." ★★★★★

"Like *GT*, the replays are amazing, but there's a certain amount of pop-up on some levels during the race. Also, the field of racers is too spread out, which is obviously a cunning ploy to help keep the frame rate up. The physics engine is just too unrealistic – I know it's an arcade racer, but it plays like a '80s coin-op. Still, it's a good showcase for the PlayStation's graphical power, and the intro is pretty amazing!" ★★

"You know exactly where you are with *Ridge Racer* – press ⊗ to accelerate, and... well, that's just about it. The game cleverly defaults to an in-car view, which helps maximise the incredible sensation of speed, and there are few better feelings than screeching perfectly around every corner and gaining on the unsuspecting bloke in front. It's occasionally clinical – powersliding is a simple case of pressing the right buttons in the right order – but this won't prevent you whooping with barely-concealed joy." ★★★★★

**Although taking all manner of short-cuts to achieve its speed, R4 is an exhilarating racing dream. Its sounds and handling have made it some enemies, but it delivers arcade racing thrills by the spade.**

**What we said**

**Tiff Needell**

**Andrew Percella**

**Jonathan Davies**

**Conclusion**



### Rollcage

■ Publisher: **Psygnosis** ■ Developer: **Attention To Detail** ■ System: **PlayStation** ■ Price: **£40**

- Number of cars for you to race in: **6**
- Number of tracks: **11**
- Number of computer opponents: **5**
- Number of players: **1-2**
- Weather conditions: **yes**
- Damageable cars: **not in the slightest**
- Best bit: **climbing the walls**

*Rollcage* presents a future where cars with huge wheels can drive up vertical surfaces, smash their way through buildings and flip out of collisions, all without dropping much below 400kmph. *Rollcage* features even more speed, big weapons and fancy neon-lit scenery than *WipEout*.

### TOCA 2

■ System: **PlayStation & PC**  
 ■ Publisher: **Codemasters**  
 ■ Developer: **Codemasters** ■ Price: **£40**

- Number of cars for you to race in: **12**
- Number of tracks: **16**
- Number of computer opponents: **15**
- Number of players: **1-8**
- Weather conditions: **yes**
- Damageable cars: **yes**
- Best bit: **creaming the S-bend at Thruxton**

Tiff commentates as cars hammer their way around courses called "Snetterton Park" and "Thruxton". The scenery is authentic, qualifying laps are compulsory and brakes are a must if you want to keep your car in one piece.

### Vigilante 8

■ System: **PlayStation** ■ Publisher: **Activision**  
 ■ Developer: **Luxoflux** ■ Price: **£20**

- Number of cars for you to race in: **8**
- Number of tracks: **8**
- Number of computer opponents: **3**
- Number of players: **1-4**
- Weather conditions: **no**
- Damageable cars: **yes**
- Best bit: **drowning the school bus**

Less a racer, more a no-holds-barred automobile punch-up. Several cars are dumped in an area and offered a plethora of nasty-looking weapons. It's not just four-wheelers that suffer, either, as the local environment – including sheds and trees – proves susceptible to a multi-missile drubbing.

### What we said

Crisp visuals, block-rocking beats and flipping cars are great, but the speed and ease of crashes creates a random, unfair feel. Otherwise, original and exhilarating racing. ★★★★★

A garage-full of cars that handle differently and embrace accurate driving physics, as well as very accurate courses and a smoothness and difficulty that'll genuinely frighten you. ★★★★★

Blowing up buildings and cars with crayzee '70s vehicles sounds great, but with simply more destruction per level and no "oomph" behind the explosions, monotony is hot on your heels. ★★★★★

### Tiff Needell

"If this is the racing of the future, I don't think I'd mind it too much – the fact that these are wheeled vehicles makes it a lot more believable than *WipEout*. It looks great, too – being able to drive upside-down in the tunnels is wonderful. Despite the speed, the handling isn't too bad, although it's occasionally difficult to see what's going on and where the track's going – especially with those explosions all over the place." ★★★★★

"This looks incredibly authentic – all the tracks are exact copies of their real-life counterparts. The Tarmac seems a little dark, but other than that it's perfect. I know where the corners are and how quickly I should take them, and I know exactly what tactics to use. The other cars seem to be realistic in their behaviour, too. The steering's a bit too sensitive, but I'll forgive it for its excellent in-car view – now you know what a tricky time we real-life drivers have." ★★★★★

"Well, I'm not sure you'd get too many cars with strap-on weapons in the real world, and it'd probably take more than a bit of machine-gun fire to bring a house crashing down.

"The handling suits the game well – you can brake and spin around quickly – but it all seems a bit too slow. I do like being able to drive where I like within each arena, though." ★★

### Andrew Percella

"How fast is this game? The speed at which *Rollcage* runs, coupled with the minimal pop-up and some very nice graphic effects, help to make this exceedingly good-looking. It takes up a lot of the PlayStation's time and power to produce backgrounds you can interacted with (or to put it another way, destroy), but Attention to Detail has managed to do it without sacrificing the game's phenomenal speed." ★★★★★

"You need a pretty hefty PC to play, or you'll be looking at quite a drop in the frame rate when there are a few cars on screen, especially during the collisions. The cars' behaviour on corners seems a bit strange, too – if you're travelling under a certain speed, you can wobble your car all over and not come off, but go over that speed and you'll invariably fly from the track. Aside from that, though, the physics engine is solid and the collisions feel right." ★★★★★

"The developer claims it has coded an advanced artificial intelligence system that makes your enemies work together. I like that idea – it's much better than having bad guys who simply attack you in wave after wave, and helps to give the game much more depth. The way that the cars attain damage is also impressive, and some of the lighting and explosion effects are very attractive." ★★★★★

### Jonathan Davies

"Psygnosis has created *WipEout* with wheels. And done it well, with slippery graphics that give a cheek-flapping impression of speed. But once the novelty of being able to drive around the walls and roll upside-down has worn off, you're left with another keep-your-thumb-on-the-accelerator-and-weave-slightly-from-side-to-side game. I want to feel rubber straining against Tarmac, and to be able to clip the apex of a bend with millimetre-precision on every lap." ★★★★★

"What *TOCA 2* gives you that other racing games don't is cars. Loads of 'em. All on the track at once. Wherever you go you're surrounded by a herd of souped-up saloons, each one after your blood. The air is a haze of bumper and wing mirror fragments, and you're forever having to tap the brakes to avoid the chassis of a stricken rival spinning across your path. All of this makes for unbeatable fun, marred only by the fearsome struggle of having to learn the circuits without the benefit of an on-screen map." ★★★★★

"Hang on. This isn't a racing game. It's *Doom* in cars. But there's nowhere to hide, and even if there was you've got a scanner, so you spend the whole time driving head-on towards an opponent with all weapons blazing and then, when you eventually collide, circling tiresomely around till the one with weedier shields blows up. Which ceases to be fun within picoseconds. It does, however, look excellent – the scenery is superb – and the '70s vehicles are much appreciated, particularly the school bus." ★★★★★

### Conclusion

**A thrilling view of post-millennial racing that finds favour with fans of four-wheels, but which is ultimately unsatisfying due to its confusing speed and blinding visuals and getting-stuck-up-wall shenanigans.**

**Stunningly authentic and as tricky to master as the real thing, TOCA 2 subscribes to the school of regular braking, and consequently provides a satisfying, skillful experience. It looks an absolute treat, too.**

**It's slightly unfair to compare Vigilante 8 to the other racers here, as there's no actual racing to be done. Besides, pumping your opponents full of missiles is limited fun, despite the relative simplicity of it all.**



**WipEout 64**

■ System: **N64** ■ Publisher: **Midway**  
 ■ Developer: **Psygnosis** ■ Price: **£45**

- Number of cars for you to race in: **20**
- Number of tracks: **7**
- Number of computer opponents: **14**
- Number of players: **1-4**
- Weather conditions: **no**
- Damageable cars: **no**
- Best bit: **wibble wibble wibble**

Nintendo's interpretation of Psygnosis' famous-but-ageing futuristic racer doesn't deviate from the tried-and-tested formula. Designers Republic scenery, dart-like vehicles and an assortment of weapons are all present and correct, but it's the vomit-inducing velocity that's most recognisable.

Plenty of weapons and sumptuous graphics on offer, but the vehicles still feel floaty and temperamental, and there are better space-age racing games available for the N64. ★★

**What we said**

"I'm not really into futuristic racers unless they're tinged with a bit of realism. This is completely unbelievable racing. Don't like it." ★

**Tiff Needell**

"The N64 version is okay, but *WipEout's* showing its age these days. The speed of the thing was very impressive back when the PlayStation version came out, but this version was never going to be able to make that impact. Still, the frame rate and speed are good, and that's what's important in a *WipEout* title." ★★★

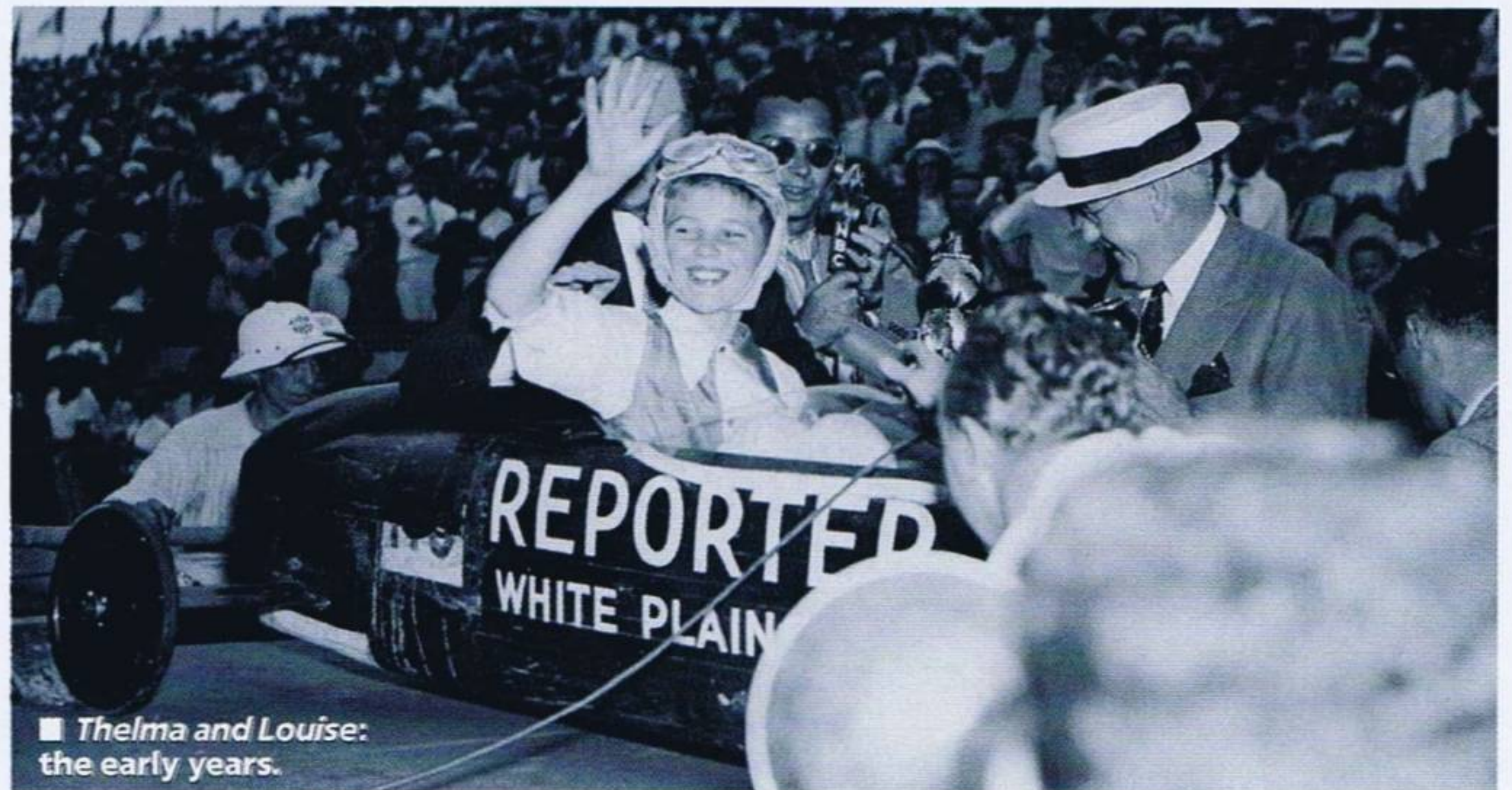
**Andrew Percella**

"Programmer: 'Bah! I just can't get these cars to handle realistically at all.'  
 Marketing man: 'How come?'  
 Programmer: 'Whatever I do it's just like they're, I dunno... like they're floating.'  
 Marketing man: 'Wait! I've got an idea. Just delete the wheels. We'll call them... hover cars.'  
 Programmer: 'No way! That'd be no fun.'  
 Marketing man: 'Ah, but who's in charge here?'  
 "Hover cars suck. I'll concede that Psygnosis does them better than most, but even *WipEout* is harrowingly dull. Cars need wheels." ★

**Jonathan Davies**

**Less popular than *Rollcage* because of a difficult-to-believe premise and lack of tyres-against-Tarmac feel. Golen oldie *WipEout* also suffers when compared to more recent racers.**

**Conclusion**



■ *Thelma and Louise: the early years.*

# "BACK TO THE GARAGE, BETSY"

**We've had shunts, tight bends, false starts and even a painful rear-ending. But what have we learned? What does a race game need to lead the pack?**

**Graphics count.**

Experienced gamers can easily enjoy a title that doesn't "look like TV" (such as *Mario Kart 64*), but a non-gamer will take one look such offerings and start pointing and laughing. Impressive visuals, frightening speeds and movie-like intros will never harm a game's prospects of racing ahead.

The message to developers is: we like a bit of velocity, but our brains can only cope with so much.

**Real isn't always better....**

Games that make a stab at realism offer mixed results, depending on how hard they try. *Colin McRae* and *TOCA 2* were universally adored for their tricky handling and authentic tracks, but *F1 World Grand Prix* was criticised for being an arcade racer dressed up in a proper-simulation dinner jacket. A dose of authenticity can work wonders, as long as you don't take short-cuts to achieve it.

games shoved in front of him matched his experiences. Accurate and detailed visuals can help immerse you, as can the option to tinker with your vehicle and make it your own, but anyone in possession of a real-life driving license will scoff at most games' pitiful attempts to copy real-world experiences.

**Keep your eyes on the road.**

Speed is good, but not when it comes at the expense of control. *Rollcage* might be the fastest thing on four wheels, but it stops being much fun when you find yourself driving through a building for the 24th time. Similarly, finding yourself facing in the wrong direction in *Destruction Derby 2* is a far-too-common occurrence.

**...besides, it's just a game.**

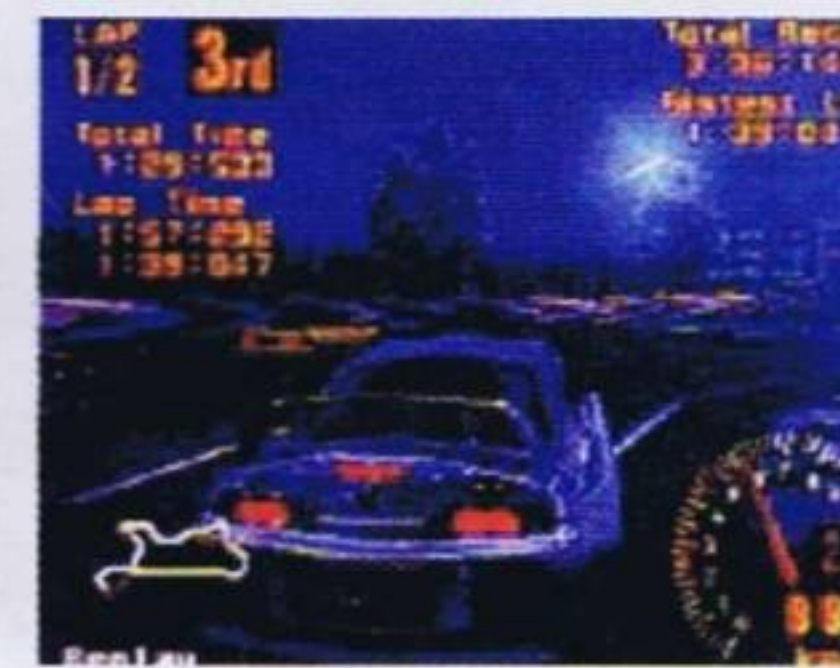
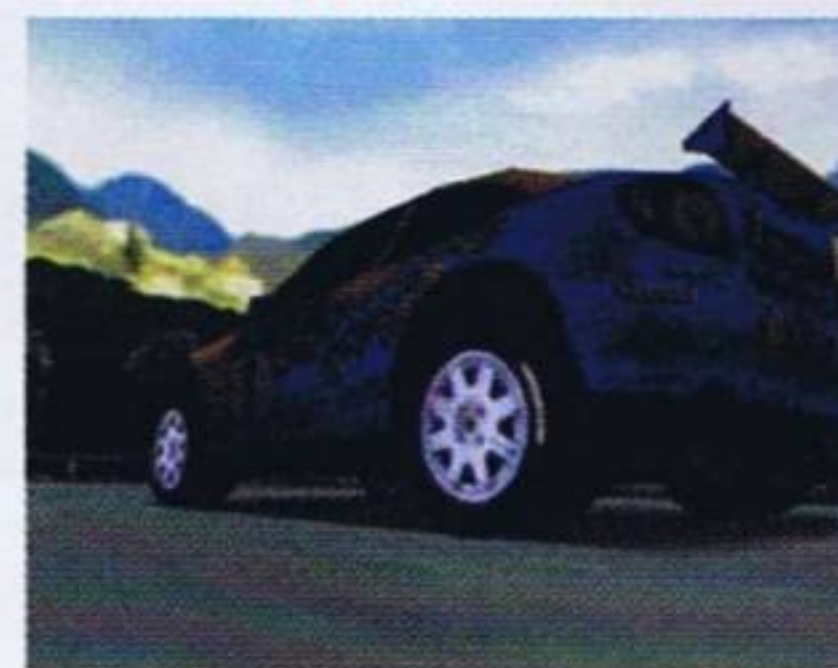
Racing games can never be truly realistic. Tiff knows his racing, and he didn't think that any of the

**Give us something we can't do in real life.**

When it comes to that elusive "fun" factor, everyone secretly wishes they could be the getaway driver in a bank heist, flip police-cars on to their bonnets and send pedestrians fleeing from an impromptu journey on to the pavement. And that's why you're going to love *Driver*.

## At the chequered flag...

**On the podium, guzzling champagne and snogging models, are:**



■ The winner:  
**Colin McRae Rally**  
 Codemasters' game impressed our three experts equally. Tiff was immediately at home with the courses and found the controls easy to get along with. He also felt it was the game that put his real-life driving skills to most use. Andrew was impressed with the physics and gorgeous graphics, and Jonathan was exploding with happiness as he slip-slided his way around the countryside. When it comes to all-round ability, *Colin* finishes way ahead of the pack.

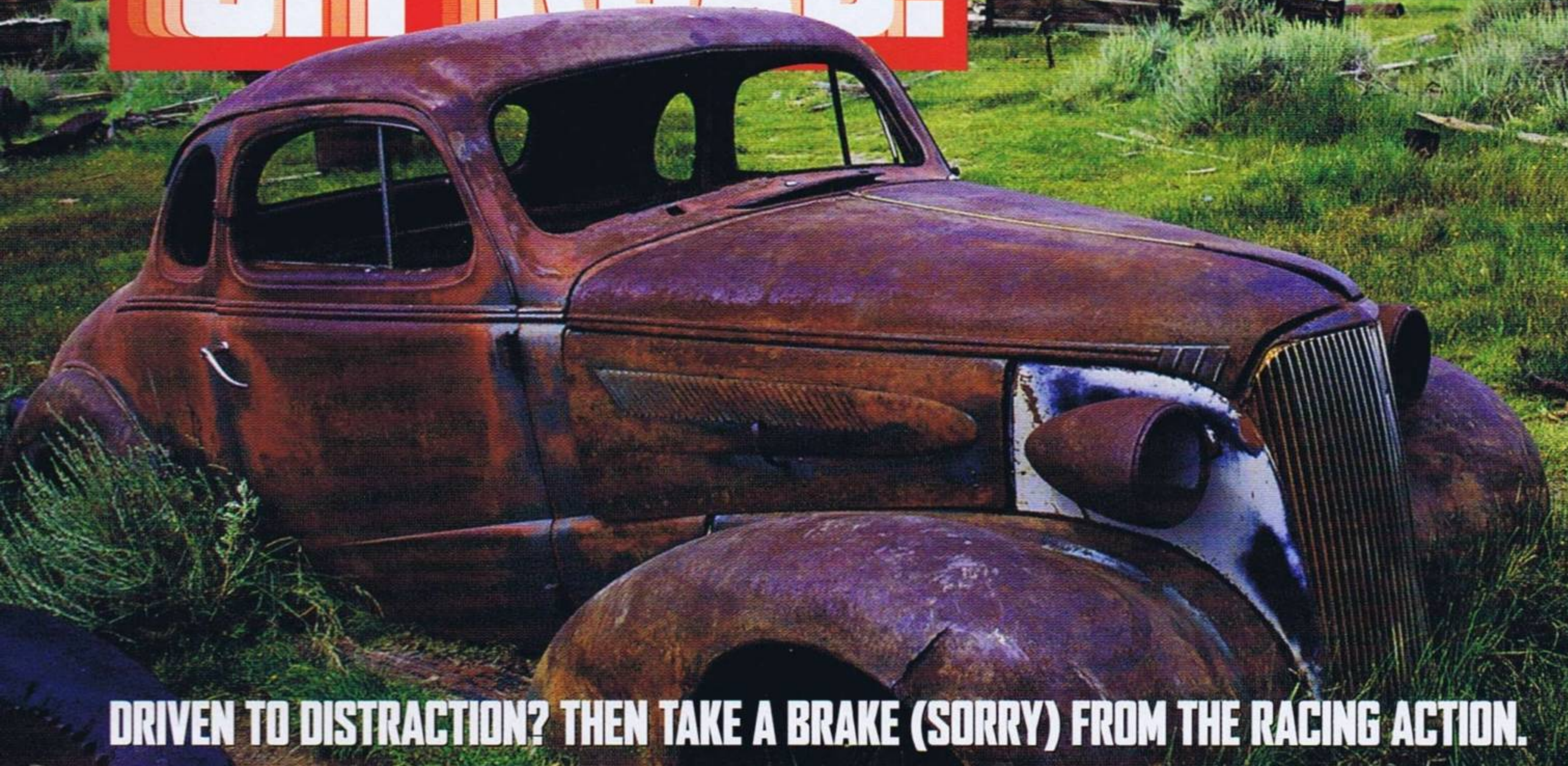
■ The runner-up:  
**Gran Turismo**  
 Surprisingly shunted into second place, mainly because of Tiff's dissatisfaction with the handling and Andrew's reservations about the behaviour of the opposition cars. Undeniably the racing game that's most fun, but proving that you just can't please all of the people all of the time.

■ The loser:  
**WipEout 64**  
 Its had its day, thanks largely to the arrival of the young upstart *Rollcage*. Maybe *WipEout 3* will freshen up a game that's starting to smell stale.

■ **Tiff tests out a new ultra-lightweight chassis.**



**RACING SPECIAL**  
PHOTOGRAPHY: CORBIS, ALLSPORT.  
**OFFROAD!**



**DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION? THEN TAKE A BRAKE (SORRY) FROM THE RACING ACTION.**

**What happened next?**  
*Do you know?*

**WIN!**



**d**  
**destiny**

So then. Take a look at this. Here, our lad is playing a game of *Rollcage*. He's got off to a flying start and cruised into second position – everything is hunky dory. So the question is... what happens next? Think about it. And let us know. The winners will be those who, in the Judge's opinion, get the answer right. Up for grabs, we have ten copies of *Rollcage* (five PlayStation, five PC), five copies of *Rush 2* (N64) and ten copies of *Official Formula One Racing* (PC). And there's more. Thanks to our friends at LMP, we've got nine steering wheels to give away (as reviewed on page 122). Three PlayStation Dual Force Steering Wheels, three N64 Steering Wheels, and three PC Destiny Force Feedback Steering Wheels.

So, check out the screengrabs and use your noodle. Cut out this coupon (or photocopy it) and send it in to the address below. Don't forget to tell us which system you've got.



**Clearly, what happens next is...**

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**Rules of the Game**

1. No purchase necessary.
2. No Future Publishing, GT Interactive, Psygnosis, EIDOS or LMP employees or their associates may enter the competition.
3. The closing date is 15 May 1999.
4. The editor's decision may be wrong, but it's final.
5. There is no cash alternative to the prizes.
6. Absolutely no

correspondence will be entered into regarding any aspect of this competition. 7. Individuals may only enter once. 9. What happened to 8? 8. Ah, there it is. 10. All entries must be sent to:

**What happens next?**  
Arcade  
Future Publishing  
29 Monmouth Street  
Bath BA1 2DL

**What are you staring at?**

*Putting the spectators under the microscope*

Visit any racetrack and you'll find hordes of adoring fans, screaming and waving. In videogames, you'll be treated to a crowd full of dullards, cretins, and farmyard animals.



**Carmageddon 2**

The spectators might think that being in 3D and wandering all over the track is rather clever, but they're soon shown how the body reacts to a car driven swiftly through the chest. Emily Pankhurst would be proud.



**Total Drivin'**

You've bought your tickets, packed your bags and booked the hotel room – it's off to the races! But make sure to wear your least fashionable business suit, and stand around looking like you've been told you've got three months to live.



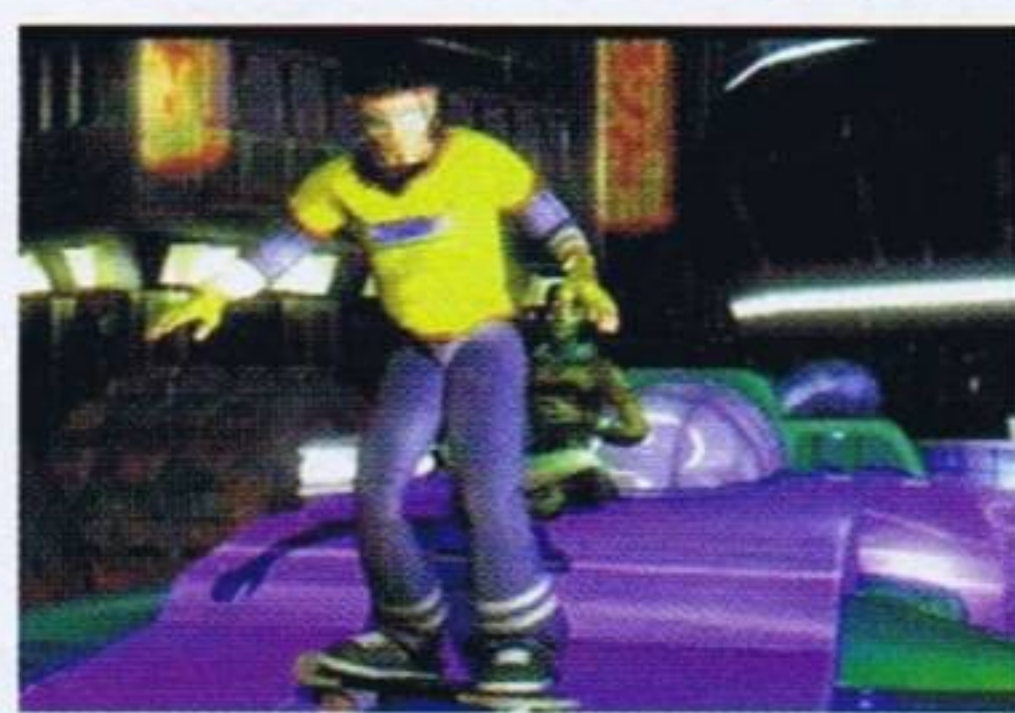
**NASCAR 99**

And the crowd goes wild! Or rather, it turns into a multi-coloured blurry mess, which seems to have been accurately modelled from the view inside a kaleidoscope. Don't stare too closely – it's meddling with your mind. Hey! I can see a dolphin in there!



**Mario Kart 64**

Sure, it's a farm, but even we were surprised by the nonchalant cows chewing the cud in the fields surrounding the track. To be unnerved, drive slowly past them and watch as, almost imperceptibly, they turn to face you all the way.



**Rollcage**

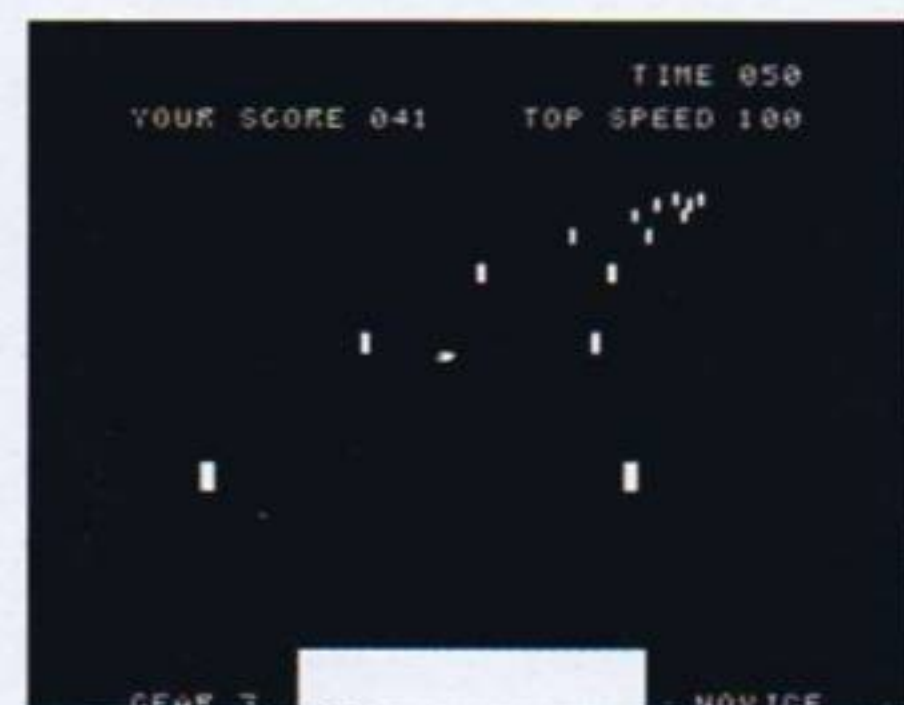
"Hey, Darren! There's some Big Trak-style vehicles racing at breakneck speeds through the city streets, often flipping from the road and destroying local buildings in a shower of fire and rubble. Sounds like a good place to go and skateboard."



**Micro Machines v3**

Driving an inch-high car around and under school desks and kitchen tables is always a dangerous business, especially when you run the risk of penetrating a dog's arse or driving your way up a cat's colon.

**The history of driving games** *It's been a long and winding road...*



**1976**  
Atari's *Night Driver* was the first successful racer, a bare-bones but hypnotically-compelling affair. Its ultra-primitive 3D graphics looked like nothing more than some suspended pieces of chalk sliding frighteningly out of the screen at you, but allowed the game to reach mind-boggling speeds.



**1977**  
While *Night Driver* was just you and the road on a hypnotic journey to nowhere, Midway's *Laguna Racer* added to the excitement with numerous enemy cars, battling for pole position in a unique, amusingly jerky way.



**1980**  
The awesome *Monaco GP* from Sega dazzled a generation by ushering in the era of colour, and also brought with it an urban street-racing setting, with nary a hovering chalk-piece to be seen.



**1982**  
Atari caused eyes to pop out with *Pole Position*, which combined the two styles of racing and invented the ideas of nightmarish hairpin bends (which the car would seemingly accelerate to go around), and the lap structure. Oh, and that frightening multi-coloured, screeching billboard collision. *Pole Position* was the dominant racing game of yore until...



**1986**  
Sega brought *Out Run* into chippies everywhere, chucking gorgeous scenery and great europop into the equation for the first time. Palm trees, rock bridges and trucks whizzed past at a phenomenal speed. Nothing was funnier than watching your dizzy blonde passenger being flung from the Ferrari when you crashed.

■ Dick Dasterdly.  
Our hero.



## Top 10 ways not to lose at racing games

As if you needed to know how to cheat. Yeah, right

1. Pull opponent's controller lead out when he's not looking.
2. Shout "Your mum's on the phone", gallantly pause game, wait until your opponent's left the room, sneakily un-pause game and race two extra laps, reposition yourself at the same point on the track for when they get back.
3. Tell your rival to look at the wrong half of the screen.
4. Shout "Spider!"
5. Touch arse (other player's).
6. Touch arse (your own) (provocatively).
7. Give your opponent a TV remote saying it's a new state-of-the-art infrared joypad.
8. Tell them there's no brake.
9. Say you won't race unless both of you bet at least £3,000 on the result. (Requires high-octane poker face).
10. Race halfway round track, stop, dress up as alligator, leave complicated booby trap which will then fail miserably, get chased by amorous female alligator, lose race, realise you would have won if you hadn't stopped, wave clenched fist, tell dog not to laugh at your misfortune.

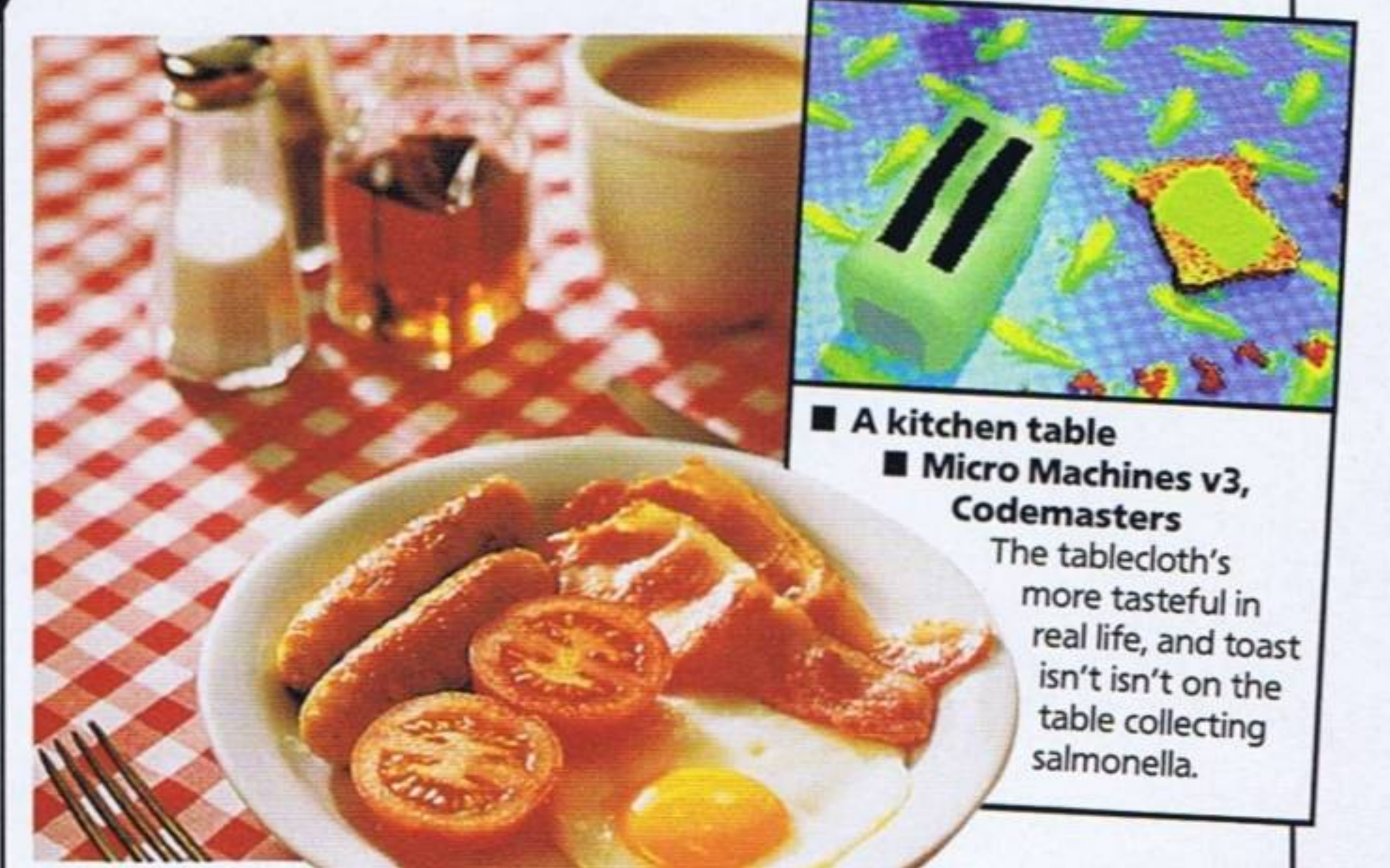
## Reality bites back

When pixels and polygons are pants

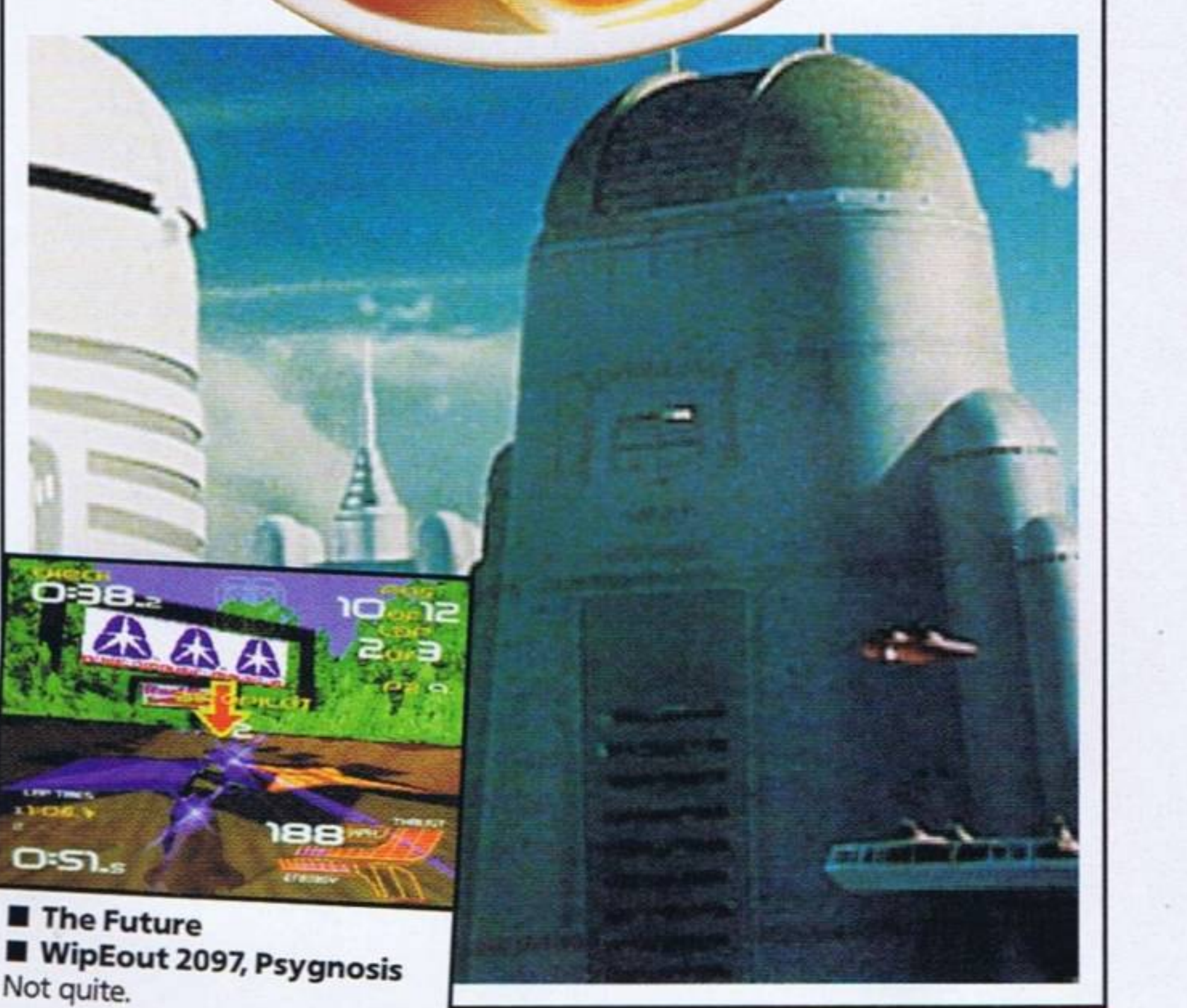
With hi-res 3D graphics the norm, racing games are re-creating real places ever more accurately. Or so they'd like to think.



■ Brands Hatch  
■ TOCA 2, Codemasters  
The infamous big half-tyre successfully hangs over the track in all its black, rubbery glory.



■ A kitchen table  
■ Micro Machines v3, Codemasters  
The tablecloth's more tasteful in real life, and toast isn't isn't on the table collecting salmonella.



■ The Future  
■ WipeOut 2097, Psygnosis  
Not quite.



**1990**  
After *Out Run*, there seemed little else for race-game developers to do except tweak the formula forever. There was, however, the odd detour into niche territory such as Atari's *Hard Drivin'*. The more realistic physics environment in this just-like-driving-a-real-car game made it the first title where you could turn your car right round and go entirely the wrong way if you felt like it. This would prove, with hindsight, to be a pivotal point in race-game development.



**1992**  
In mainstream terms the awesome *Virtua Racing* from Sega came out of nowhere, all dressed in fancy new 3D polygon graphics. It introduced the notion of head-to-head multi-player competition, with multiple selectable camera angles (which Sega have now patented) and full action replays coming along too as bonuses (limited replays had already cropped up in *Hard Drivin'*).



**1994**  
The crucial slip-slidey powersliding around hairpin bends was pioneered by Namco's original *Ridge Racer* (page 52), and finely tuned in Sega's *Daytona USA*. Which brings us to the only non-arcade-based innovator on the racing grid...



**1998**  
*Gran Turismo*, which appeared from Sony with its hundreds of different driveable cars, ultra-realistic handling and great racing action and set-up options.



**1999**  
Chuck all that lot into a blender and (after inadvertently creating several dozen horrible mutants like *Penny Racers* first) and you've got *RR4*. Good work, Dr Frankenstein – the boy dun good.



# RIDGE RACER TYPE 4

# TAKING IT TO THE LIMIT

GORGEOUS CARS, SCREAMING TYRES, THUMPING SOUNDS AND COURSES TO DIE FOR. REMIND US AGAIN - JUST WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES RIDGE 4 THE BEST ARCADE RACER IN THE WORLD?

**O**kay, first things first. Dedicated *Gran Turismo* fans can clear off right now. Why? Well, (a) because I just don't like you, but much more importantly, because (b) this game simply isn't meant for the likes of you. This isn't "Advanced Garage Mechanic Simulator" – you can't fiddle with your gear ratios, you can't alter your wheel balancing, you can't upgrade your flange grommets and you can't fit a muffle spoiler on your big end to re-bias your torque. In *Ridge Racer 4*, there's only one thing you can do. Race.

Y'see, that's the completely weird thing about *Gran Turismo*. It might bill itself as "The Real Driving Simulator", but since when was crashing a TVR Cerbera into a Honda NSX head-on at a closing speed of 400mph, with painful no side-effects other than a loss of speed and the need to turn round and zoom off again, a "realistic" simulation of the driving experience? What *GT*, with its obsession with tuning and testing and tweaking, simulates so accurately isn't the experience of being a top touring-car driver, it's the experience of being a Kwik-Fit fitter, complete with the blue and yellow boiler suit. Mmm, feel that glamour.

Namco's *RR4* team, led by Motomi Katayama, takes a rather different approach. Realising that the only valid thing you can "simulate" about driving is the irrelevant surface detail – because the true experience

comes from the physical sensations of high-speed cornering and battling with the protesting steering wheel, underpinned with the frisson of genuine life-threatening danger – they more or less abandoned the idea of creating technically "accurate" realism straight off. Instead, what you get in *Ridge Racer Type 4* – as, indeed, in all the *Ridge Racers* – is a videogame that *knows* it's a videogame, and that is completely proud of the fact. With that conceptual hurdle out of the way, *RR4*'s designers have been free to go to town creating a work of sheer unadulterated gameplay. The team is released from the constrictions of reality and hence – ironically – able to create a game so tense and fast and rewarding and flat-out exciting that it's a lot closer to the experience of racing a real car than any statistic-obsessed train-spottery "simulator" could ever dream of.

**BUT WHEN ALL'S SAID AND DONE, IT'S JUST ANOTHER BLOODY RACING GAME, ISN'T IT?**



More than any other console in history, the PlayStation is blighted by a ridiculous overpreponderance of driving games. To the casual observer, it seems like about 60% of the machine's library is made up of barely-distinguishable racers and, unless you bought your PlayStation sometime in the last 20 minutes, it's likely that you've already got a fairly extensive collection of them. So why the heck would you be interested in coughing up cash for another one? Well, the thing is this: pretty much since the original *Ridge Racer*, there's been a fundamental change in the dominant style of racing

games, and not just in terms of performance-tuning. Pioneered by Sega with games like *Daytona USA* and *Sega Rally*, but quickly picked up by everyone else, the model for console racers quickly became that of "realistic" (it's that pesky word again) handling, with vehicles that were as difficult to drive in a straight line for 50 feet as they were to get to the finish line before everyone else. Most previous games took road-holding as a given, with the challenge being to overtake the other cars without crashing into them, indeed the need for braking was almost completely unheard of, but all that changed.

When analogue controllers became commonplace, the problem got almost infinitely worse, with everyone and his pet chimp releasing games where your car steered like a rough approximation of a greased-up shopping trolley on an ice rink. These people failed to spot in their quest for "realism" the fact that if any car manufacturer brought out a real car that was as hard to keep on the road as the ones in *Max Power Racing* or *V-Rally*, you wouldn't be able to move on Britain's motorways for piled-up corpses.

Nevertheless, jittery, skittery cars with turning circles like oil tankers soon became the norm (with only Konami's wafer-thin but underrated *Midnight Run* carrying the torch for the old school). This has meant that fans of the old arcade-style racing have been left out in the cold for the last couple of years. The tight roadholding and precise, digital movement of the *Ridge* series – where the game always keeps you pointing in more or less the right direction and enables you to concentrate on the *race* rather than worrying about just staying on the road – have been out of fashion for too long. And this is why *RR4* is a breath of fresh air, particularly if you're the kind of person who likes to keep real life and

**Ridge tracks have always been distinctive, dramatic and exciting to race on**



■ Keep playing. You've got another 319 of these babies to collect.

## Real Racing Roots '99

The twisty-turny history of the Ridge series.

It's probably a fair bet to suggest that the PlayStation wouldn't be the absolutely phenomenal success story that it is today without *Ridge Racer*. *Ridge* was the state-of-the-art in coin-op racing when the PlayStation was launched in Japan in 1994, so the last thing anyone was expecting was that one of the machine's launch games would be a near-perfect conversion of the arcade smash. But such it was (even more miraculous given the few short months that were available to the

programmers to knock out the PlayStation version), and the staggering graphics and perfectly-balanced high-speed gameplay saw both PlayStations and *Ridge Racers* fly off the shelves. Its success prompted Namco into producing a PlayStation sequel in 1995.

Despite the "revolution" suggested in the title, *Ridge Racer Revolution* was little more than the same game with different tracks (but what tracks they were – tight, tortuous, twisting affairs, much harder than

those in the original *RR*). This led some people to start moaning about the limited number of courses in both games (basically, there's one-and-a-half in each, although *Revolution* offered link cable owners the chance to play head-to-head races on the original *RR* tracks, too). The whinging was a little bizarre in itself – after all, you don't hear people coming out of cinemas complaining that *Titanic* all takes place in one location – but the initiative was lost and other racing games came in to steal *Ridge's* thunder. A brilliant coin-op sequel (*Rave Racer*) inexplicably wasn't converted to any home systems – despite being used as a demo for an early PC 3D card, which left the way clear for Namco to create another PlayStation-only sequel.

1996's *Rage Racer* moved away from the shallow

arcade values and brightly coloured graphics of the earlier games and introduced a new, more serious look and a more in-depth game structure, involving the accumulation of prize money to upgrade and buy new cars, and the need to work your way through a lengthy championship season. (Indeed, *Rage's* game structure is identifiably the template for *Gran Turismo's*, although the actual racing style is still pure *Ridge*.) To compensate for this more sober approach, Namco went to town on the *Rage* track design, packing the courses full of insane hairpins, breathtakingly steep hills and dramatic scenery (climbing past the massive waterfall which provides the centrepiece to all three *Rage* tracks is still one of PlayStation gaming's finest moments).

All three games still stand up incredibly well today – despite Namco's trademark lazy-arsed, huge-bordered PAL conversions – and at the giveaway prices you can pick most of them up for these days, you'd have to be a dribbling loon not to own the entire series.



The original Ridge.



Then RR Revolution...



Rave Racer coin-op.



Rage Racer on PSX.



And now RR Type 4.

videogames separate. After all, if you want a precise and detailed simulation of what it's like to drive a real car, why don't you just go out and drive a damn car?

## THE TRACKS OF MY TEARS

The one thing that's set the *Ridge Racer* series apart from the racing-game crowd over the last five years, though, is the unparalleled quality of the track designs. Where other games are content to feature tedious, flat, antiseptic racing circuits (*Gran Turismo*) or endless miles of featureless generic countryside (*Max Power Racing*), *Ridge* tracks have always been distinctive, dramatic and exciting, both to look at and to race on. The trademark style is the combination of heavily built-up city streets and steep, winding mountain roads, with some coastal scenery thrown in for variation.

The real joy of this, however, lies in the memorability of the tracks. Unlike so many racers, where you need gigantic flashing arrows to remind you when there's a corner coming up, a single lap of a *Ridge* circuit is usually enough to commit it to memory, so packed will it be with striking landmarks and memorable sections. Try for yourself – if you haven't played the original *RR* for years, see if you can sketch out a close approximation of the track layout from memory alone. I bet you can, and I also bet you can't do it for any other racer of the last five years.

But there's even more to it than that. In the box below you'll read that you have to win *RR4's* eight-race Grand Prix a whopping 64 times in order to access all of the game's

## Show me the numbers

However you look at it, Ridge stacks up well.

With no fewer than 320 different cars available to drive (though to be fair, many of them are just faster versions of the same model), *R4* puts even *Gran Turismo* to shame. The cars you're offered are a fun selection, though, ranging from the bog-standard saloons you start off with, through turbo-charged roadsters and then all the way up to Formula 1 racers, rocket cars and great ultra-futuristic super vehicles that look like Thrust SSC and travel only slightly slower. Also, *RR4's* cars have fantastic names like the Assoluto Fatalita, the Lizard Reckless, the Terrazi Terrific and the Age Solo Antilope.

Okay, so they're all gorgeous, but how do you

get hold of them? Well, we've been sitting up for nights on end playing the game and staring blankly at Japanese hint books, and as far as we can figure out, you're going to have to complete and win the entire eight-race Grand Prix at least 64 times over if you're going to get your hands on the full fleet.

It works like this: there are four different makes of car, with 19 "ordinary" models per make, plus a super-deluxe "Devil Car" for each. There are also four levels of difficulty settings (represented by the four different teams you can drive for). Each time you win the Grand Prix with a

particular make of car, you get awarded extra cars (a total of five cars per Grand Prix if you can get right through), depending on which of the four teams you're driving for, and on which position you finish the races in. To get some of the lesser cars, you will actually have to deliberately come second or third in a couple of the earlier races, which is a bit weird. Win the Grand Prix having come first in every race (and not having used any Continues for the first four), and you'll have access to the team's fastest car in that group, which in turn will give you a chance at beating the Devil Car in the special head-to-head race called the "Extra Trial". You actually get Extra

Trials every time you win the Grand Prix, regardless of positions, but the car you'll have if you didn't win every race will be so rubbish that you won't have a cat's chance of beating the Devil.

So there you have it. Four manufacturers x 20 cars x four difficulty settings = 320. Here's a hot tip, though; seemingly, if you do get all 320, there's one more secret bonus car (called "PacMan") hidden away as a special treat for the insanely dedicated.

If all this car collecting sounds like a bit of a drag, it's not. For one thing, *RR4's* design is so clever that every time you race a Grand



Prix, it'll be different to the last time (see "The tracks of my tears", above, for more detail). And for another, the game is structured in such a way that you can knock off as much or as little of it as you want at a time. An entire eight-race Grand Prix only takes about 35 minutes to play through from start to finish, but you can save after every couple of races, which makes *RR4* one of a very small number of PlayStation games that you can meaningfully play if you fancy a quick blast on something exciting while

you're waiting to go out, rather than being forced to devote hours at a time to it.

This instant accessibility gives away *Ridge's* arcade roots, but also shows a user-friendliness that's disturbingly rare in today's epic titles, titles that all too often demand you put in a whole bunch of needlessly tedious effort before they'll deign to reward you with any actual fun. (Are you listening, *Final Fantasy*?)



Right, so there's four skill levels, four car manufacturers each offering 20 vehicles...



available cars, and that 512-race undertaking might strike you as a rather forbidding, potentially tedious pursuit. But the Namco designers are way ahead of you. Because with every new car you access, the character of each track changes, and not just because you have to start braking/powersliding on corners you could previously whip round at full tilt.

On Helter Skelter (the game's very first course), for example, there's a small dip in the road just before a shallow corner leading to the last stretch. In the slow early cars, your car dutifully clings to the road into the bend, presenting no difficulties. Move up a couple of classes, though, and you'll be at the wheel of a much speedier vehicle, whose velocity will cause it to fly into the air at the dip, robbing you of control at the crucial point and sending you hurtling nose-first into the facing wall with a sickening crunch (while two or three computer-controlled cars whizz past, sniggering). Only taking a completely new

racing line (or using a dramatic application of brakes, something that you don't want to be even *thinking* about doing at the higher levels) will get you through the familiar course safely.

And computer-controlled enemy cars have another critical role to play, too, because in *Ridge Racer 4* the opposition are less like straight racing opponents and more like interactive, moving sections of the track scenery; as much a part of the course design as every hairpin bend or chicane. With each different car you drive, the opposition change vehicles and capabilities, too, and of course their speed changes relative to the speed of your new car (while remaining constant to the particular course). What this means is that the first time you race on a course, you might catch up with one opponent on a long wide stretch, where it's easy to overtake him. Second time round, though, the different relative speeds might mean that you reach the overtaking position right at the entry point to a particularly nasty corner, forcing you to change your racing strategy for the lap.

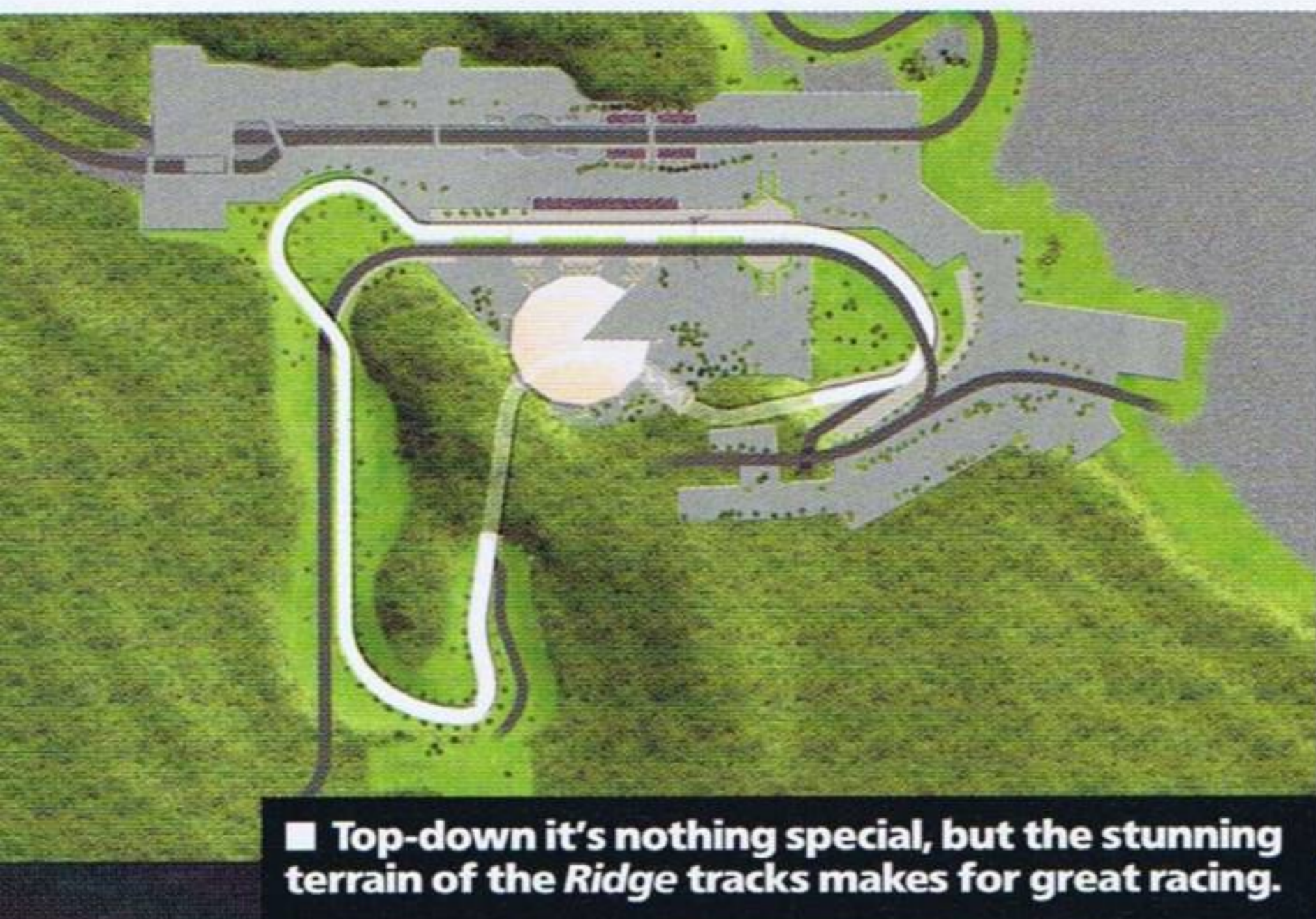
Together, these two features mean that every time you go through the Grand Prix to get some new cars, you'll have to race each track in a substantially different way. Some races will be all-out foot-to-the-floor jobs, while others (on what's ostensibly the same

course) will have to be handled with a tight, restrained display of opportunistic guerrilla tactics. This game has been specifically created by the *Ridge* team to be played over and over and over again, and yet be fresh and exciting every single time, and we love the designers for it.

## THEY THINK IT'S ALL OVER

**And yet, even after 512 races, it isn't over yet.** You also get the classic Time Attack speed trials, reversed tracks and – crucially, and for the first time ever in a *Ridge* game – a split-screen two-player mode. And a phenomenal piece of work it is, too. There's no loss of detail, no pop-up or fogging or shortened draw distance, and no slow-down, even when using the blindingly fast bonus cars. It's just you and a mate, hurtling around the best-designed tracks in the history of racing games, in cars moving so fast that the wind strips layers of paint off them as they race. Life doesn't get much better.

This "Versus" mode was always the one critical ingredient missing from *Ridge Racer*, but now you've no excuses left. Of course, you don't *need* excuses. You don't *have* to listen to us. Nobody's going to *force* you to go out and buy a copy of *Ridge Racer Type 4*. If you want to stay in and fiddle with simulated wheel nuts for the rest of your life, that's up to you. But you'll forgive us if we make our excuses and leave you alone now. We've got some *racing* to be getting on with. **A**



■ Top-down it's nothing special, but the stunning terrain of the *Ridge* tracks makes for great racing.

## It's just you and a mate, hurtling around the best-designed tracks in history



## High specs please, we're British

You know your new game's good when you can give away your old one for free...

■ As if all this wasn't enough, there's an extra treat in store. Sony's *Ridge 4* release comes complete with a bonus CD featuring *Ridge Racer HS* (High Specification). This is a cut-down version of the original – you get all the head-to-head TT modes and the Time Attack

original courses, as well as mirrored and reversed tracks, but not the basic multi-car Grand Prix or the night-time races – all boasting improved high-resolution graphics and a super-smooth 60fps frame rate. (To see just *how* improved, Namco has thrown in an even more

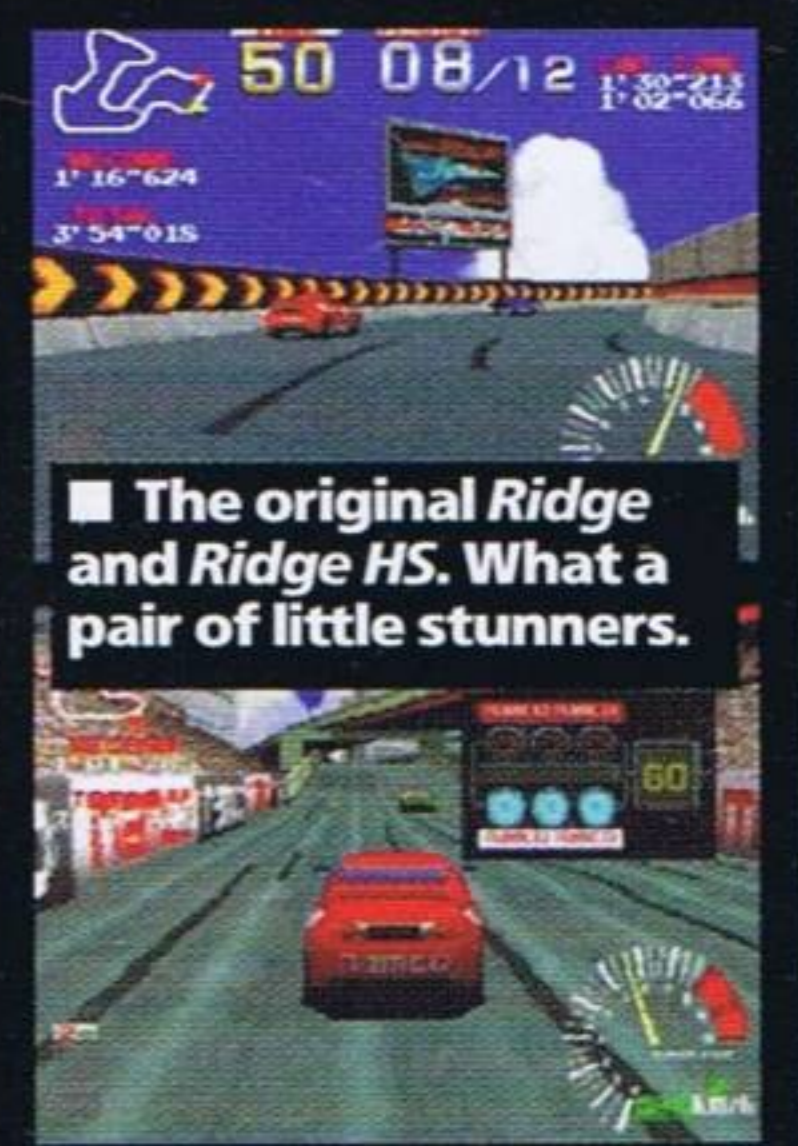
cut-down version of original *RR* with the original graphics on the same disc. In comparison it looks like the work of a talentless child playing with blunt crayons.)

*Ridge Racer HS* is pretty impressive as a technical display alone, but when you play the original *Ridge*

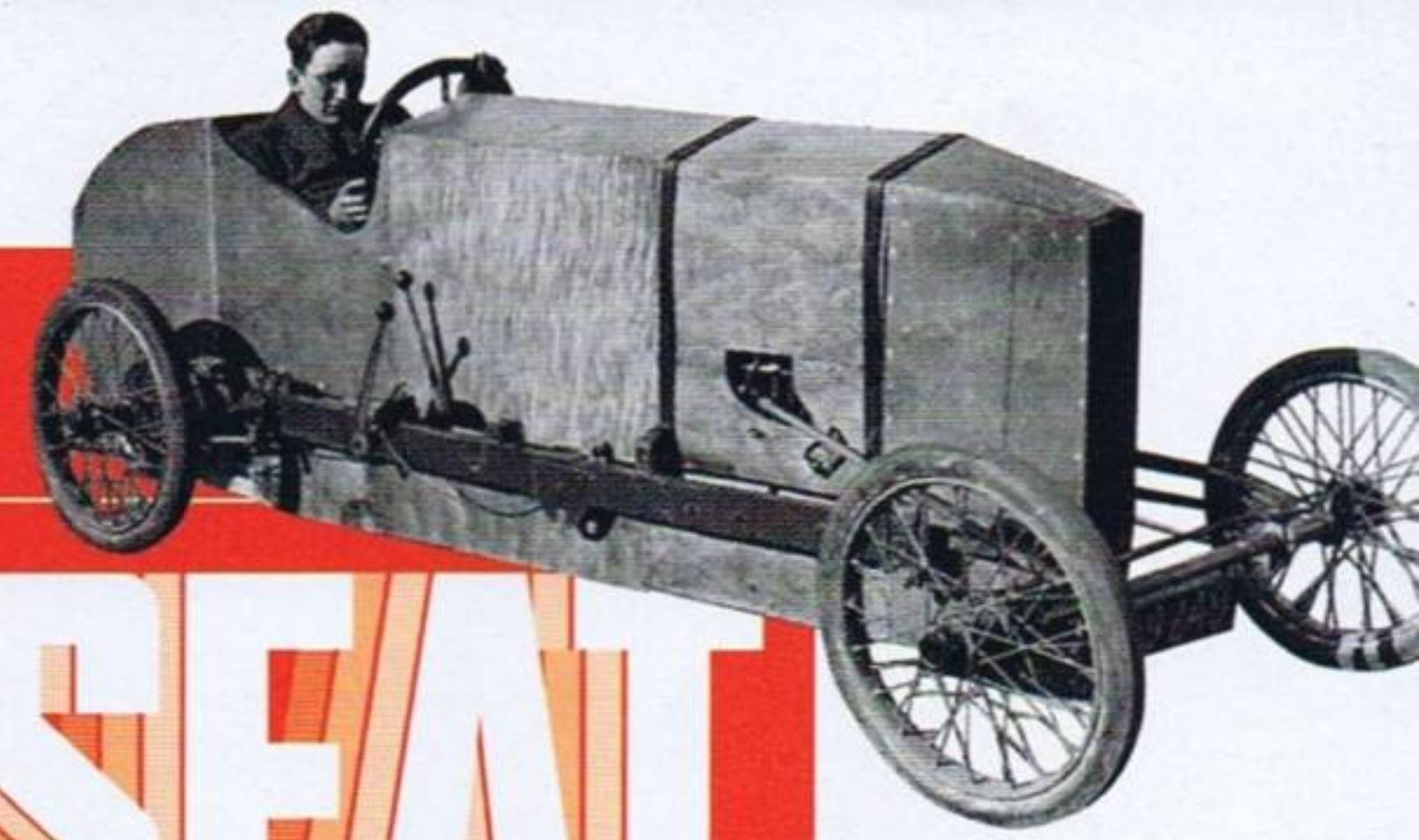
and realise what a stunning game it still is, it comes as an astonishing freebie. It's almost as if Namco is saying "We're confident that *Ridge Racer 4* is so good, we can give you this all-time classic for nothing in a throwaway gesture and still have you gasping at how fantastic

the new one is".

This disc was first given away with the Japanese release of *R4*. It wasn't certain that Sony and Namco would see fit to include it with the UK release, so cheers to them for making the right decision. Get ready for even more race action.



■ The original *Ridge* and *Ridge HS*. What a pair of little stunners.



■ One more satisfied customer.

# IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

PHOTOGRAPHY: CORBIS

## TO DRIVE LIKE A DEMON YOU NEED TO HAVE A DECENT GRIP ON THE ACTION. SO WHEEL 'EM ON...



### V3 Racing Wheel

■ For: PSX ■ Price: £49.99  
■ Available from: **Interact** on 0161 702 5000

■ A decent, well-made wheel that is comfortable to drive and works best with the arcade-style racers. You can lose control of your car a little too readily, but its best feature is the mighty pedal board. ★★★



### Gamester Steering Wheel

■ For: N64 ■ price: £59.99  
■ Available from: **LMP** on 01992 503133

■ The perfect wheel for N64's (admittedly small number of) realistic racing games. It's sturdy, brash and powerful, with a decent rumble facility and fine pedal board, but perhaps lacking a little in the subtlety stakes. ★★★★

### ASCIWheel 64

■ For: N64 ■ Price: £49.99  
■ Available from: **ASCII** on 01923 202097

■ Purpose-built N64 wheel, perfectly capturing the Nintendo spirit. It's small, comfortable and ideal for cartoon racers like *Mario Kart* and *Diddy Kong Racing*. Fares less well with realistic sims, but that's not what it's designed for. ★★★★



### OUR CHOICE

### Formula Race Pro

■ For: PSX/N64 ■ Price: £69.99  
■ Available from: **Thrustmaster** on 01276 609955

■ An ingenious design means this wheel can be comfortably cradled in your lap with no apparent loss of control. Also handles excellently, making this the best value console steering wheel on the market. ★★★★



### Formula Sprint Wheel

■ For: PC ■ Price: £54.99  
■ Available from: **Thrustmaster** on 01276 609955

■ The ideal purchase if you're a PC owner and not bothered with all that Force Feedback business. This wheel drives excellently, handles comfortably and is designed to take a serious battering from your more frantic circuits. ★★★★



### Race Leader Force Feedback Wheel

■ For: PC ■ Price: £99.99  
■ Available from: **Guillemot** on 0181 944 1940

■ The best Force Feedback PC wheel for under £100, this is a great-looking design with the sturdiest pedal board around, but drives a little erratically. Plenty of function buttons to configure, but they could do with being labelled. ★★★



### Dual Force Racing Wheel

■ For: PSX ■ Price: £59.99  
■ Available from: **Mad Catz** on 01992 707407

■ A decent wheel, which drives very well with both arcade-style and realistic racers. Unfortunately marred by a couple of faults including thin, uncomfortable hand-grips and creaky pedals. ★★



### Destiny Force Feedback Steering Wheel

■ For: PC ■ Price: £129.99  
■ Available from: **LMP** on 01992 503133

■ Weighty, chunky and distinctly masculine, this wheel is great for a full-on, close-up driving experience. The excellent Force Feedback means that it handles and thrusts with serious power. Grrrrr. ★★★★



### Jordan Grand Prix Racing Wheel II

■ For: PSX/N64 ■ price: £59.99  
■ Available from: **Joytech** on 01525 852900

■ A very solid, desk-based wheel, benefitting from some high-profile endorsement. Loads of configurable buttons give you plenty of flexibility, although its over-sensitivity when driving is a little frustrating. Better on arcade-style racers. ★★★



### OUR CHOICE

### Saitek R4 Force Wheel

■ For: PC ■ Price: £169.99 ■ Available from: **Saitek** on 01454 855050

■ Truly a beast of a wheel. For the price of a starter home in a leafy suburb, this is the most complete steering wheel on the market, boasting tremendous Force Feedback capabilities and a truly solid driving experience. For pros only. ★★★★



**RACING SPECIAL**  
Interview by | **Mark Green**

# DRIVER!

**"I often forget myself and start tearing down the back alleys."**

*Martin Edmondson on Driver*



## IT'S THE MOST ANTICIPATED DRIVING GAME SINCE GRAN TURISMO. SO WHAT DOES THE LEAD DEVELOPER BEHIND DRIVER HAVE TO SAY ABOUT IT?

**B**eing chased by the cops around a proper city is great – so why hasn't anyone done a game like this before?

Well a lot of developers may have been put off the idea, because programming a game like *Driver* is so complex and time consuming, but with hindsight it seems so obvious. We talk to the man who bought the plan to life, developer Reflections' Creative Director, Martin Edmondson.

**After all the work, do you like *Driver*?**

Surprisingly, yes. Usually by this stage, testing the game is as much fun as pulling teeth. With *Driver*, I often forget myself and start tearing through parks and down the back alleys.

**The Hollywood car chase influence is plain for everyone to see.**

Yes, and the '70s vehicles are deliberate to keep the feel of those classic chase scenes you find in movies like *The French Connection*, *Gone in 60 Seconds*, *Blues Brothers* and *Driver* the movie, of course. The replays in the game come as close as we could have hoped to real TV car chases – right down to the way those

huge American muscle cars lean over on their soft suspension as they turn.

**But if it's so good, why did *Driver* spend months without a publisher?**

We could have taken money from a publisher at the start and settled for a lower royalty fee, but we decided to fund it ourselves and wait until the last minute to secure the best terms, with our choice of publisher. It was risky – games these days can cost upwards of £1 million – but it worked, and GT liked *Driver* so much they bought the company.

**Have you had anyone concerned over the content of the plot?**

Some countries furrowed their brows when we presented *Driver*'s hero as a hardened criminal earning money from doing bank jobs. So now he's doing the same thing, but instead he's acting as an undercover cop, à la *Reservoir Dogs*. It's strange – alter the story and everyone's suddenly okay, even though the game itself hasn't changed a bit.

**So those "real cities" – tell us how you managed to create them?**

Two artists drove around each of the cities for hours, collecting thousands of

photographs and miles of digital video footage. A camera in the front of their car gave us a good 3D view of how the buildings fit together and all of their surroundings, while a camera facing sideways enabled us to collect textures to use on the buildings in the game. We put all that together with standard road maps to help lay out 150,000 buildings across 30 miles of road in each of the game's levels.

**But are the cities you've included really all that accurate?**

There is a fair degree of artistic license. There are a lot of generic buildings scattered about, and not all the roads are to scale. Having said that, one American journalist was able to make his way down to San Francisco's Ocean Drive from a location five miles away in the financial district, downtown.

**And are those darned cops as realistic as the environments?**

They're very intelligent. They need to be able to hunt you down in an open city, and weave their way through buildings, trees and fast-moving traffic, as well as recovering from crashes. The cops were one of the most time-consuming aspects of programming *Driver*, especially on the PlayStation, working with its relatively tiny memory and slow processor.

**We particularly love the over-the-top Huggy Bear-style voiceover...**

Most of our voice talents had been used to doing TV advert voice-overs for Volvo cars and margarine, so, yes, they did get carried away, but you can't blame them. After all, they spend most of their days trying to sound enthusiastic about a sandwich spread.

**No matter how hard you try, the pedestrians always manage to avoid being run over. Was this a deliberate move to appease the BBFC?**

There was never any intention to run over pedestrians. It's much more amusing watching people stare at your car and dive out of the way as you race into their path. *Driver* is a simulation of TV and film car chases, and I can't remember many of those that involve mowing down innocent bystanders.

**Any plans for a sequel?**

There are plenty of ideas that we simply didn't have time to include, or are possible only on more powerful hardware. But that's all top secret!

**"More powerful hardware", eh? You must be excited about PlayStation 2.**

Oh, yes – it'll enable us to make a leap towards greater realism. The PlayStation's limited memory and power prevented us doing a lot of things in *Driver*. Having said that, though, in a year or two's time we'll probably be complaining about the same things on PlayStation 2!

### Getting reflective

■ In the early '80s, Martin worked on the 8-bit BBC Micro, creating the action adventure *Ravenskull* and the 2D platformer *Codename Droid: Stryker's Run II*.

The 16-bit revolution of the mid '80s saw a host of new publishing houses appear, including the Liverpool-based Psygnosis. At Psygnosis Martin developed the successful – and visually stunning – 2D platform game *Shadow Of The Beast*, which went on to spawn a host of sequels. The arrival of the PSX led Psygnosis to create *Destruction Derby*, a driving game with an emphasis on smashing your car to bits, and a popular and equally successful sequel *DD2*.

Martin split away from Psygnosis to form Reflections, where he's putting the final touches to *Driver* as we speak.





# MEN VS WOMEN

PHOTOGRAPHY: JUDE EDGINTON

**WHO'S BEST AT DRIVING, MEN OR WOMEN? IT'S A DEBATE EVEN OLDER THAN THAT CLAPPED-OUT MORRIS MINOR YOUR DAD USED TO DRIVE. ARCADE SORTS IT ALL OUT.**

**A**ctually, this didn't start off as a battle of the sexes at all. BBC's *Top Gear* presenter Vicki Butler-Henderson and Nescafé Blend 37 Williams-Renault's pro Touring Car driver Jason Plato had agreed to meet *Arcade* at SegaWorld and spend an afternoon comparing videogame racers to the real thing. We wanted to see if an eight-player game of *Daytona USA* matches the excitement of a real race. And if the hydraulic cockpits and Force Feedback steering feel like a real racing car. You know, that kind of stuff.

But then competitive instincts got the better of them. Before we could say "Anyone got any pound coins?" they were off. And five coin-ops later one of them was demanding champagne and a laurel wreath. We just sat and watched...



■ At the end of the day, the spirit of fair play was the only loser.

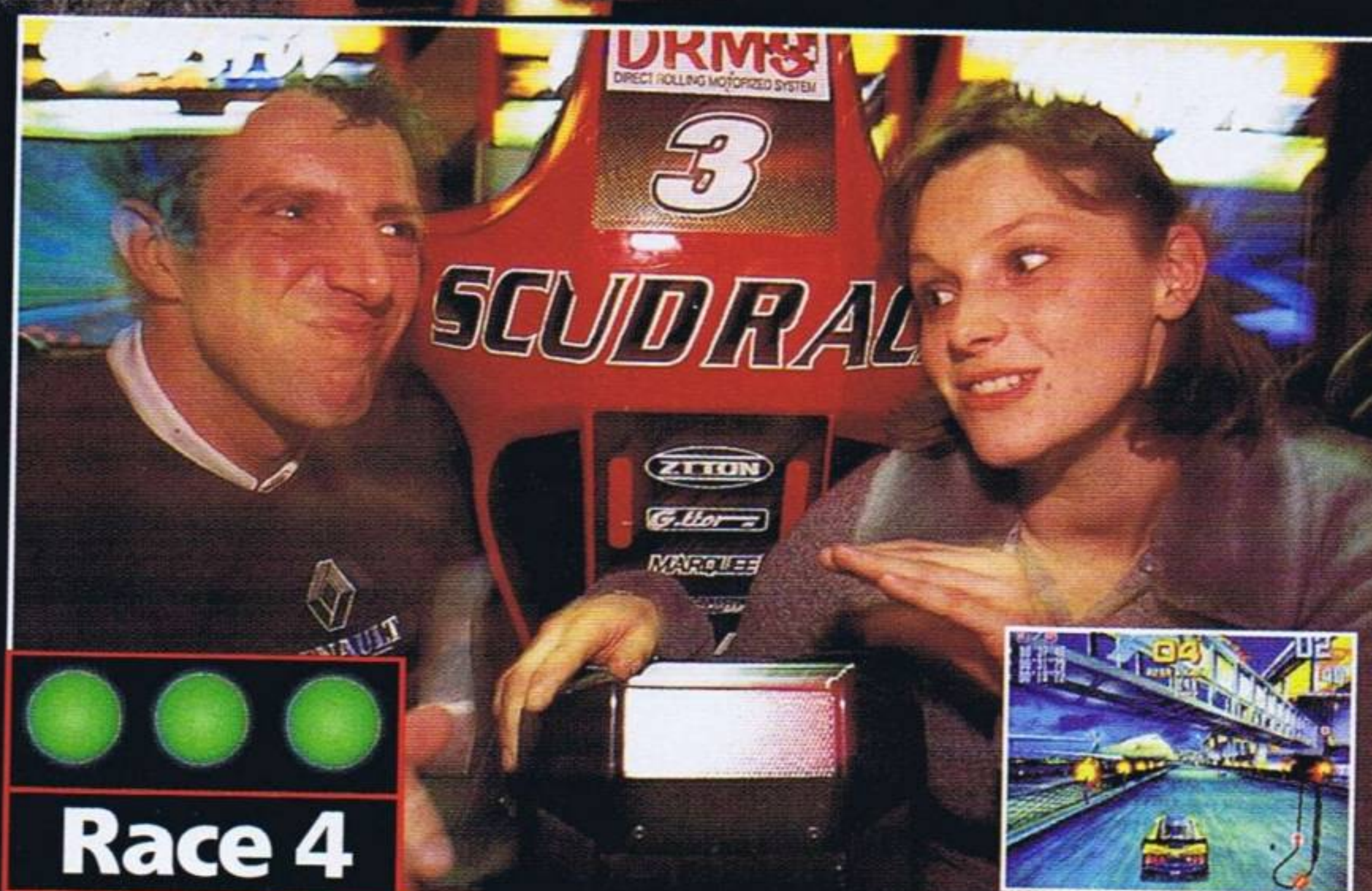


## Race 3

### Sega Touring car championship

■ Bit of an odd-ball game, this one. Seldom liked, occasionally loved, it's friendly to neither beginners nor experts, and yet still is capable of coaxing just one more pound coin from more gamers than you'd expect. On to to the touring cars. Home turf for you here Jason, right? "This one's based more on the ITC, but

yeah, I suppose so." Um, so how come Vicki's winning? "This game's crap. It doesn't do anything. The steering doesn't make sense. The worst game I've ever played. Utter garbage." Vicki, you creamed him. "I agree with Jason, this game's crap. But let the record show, I beat him in every race and I out qualified him" ■ Results: Jason 2 – Vicki 1

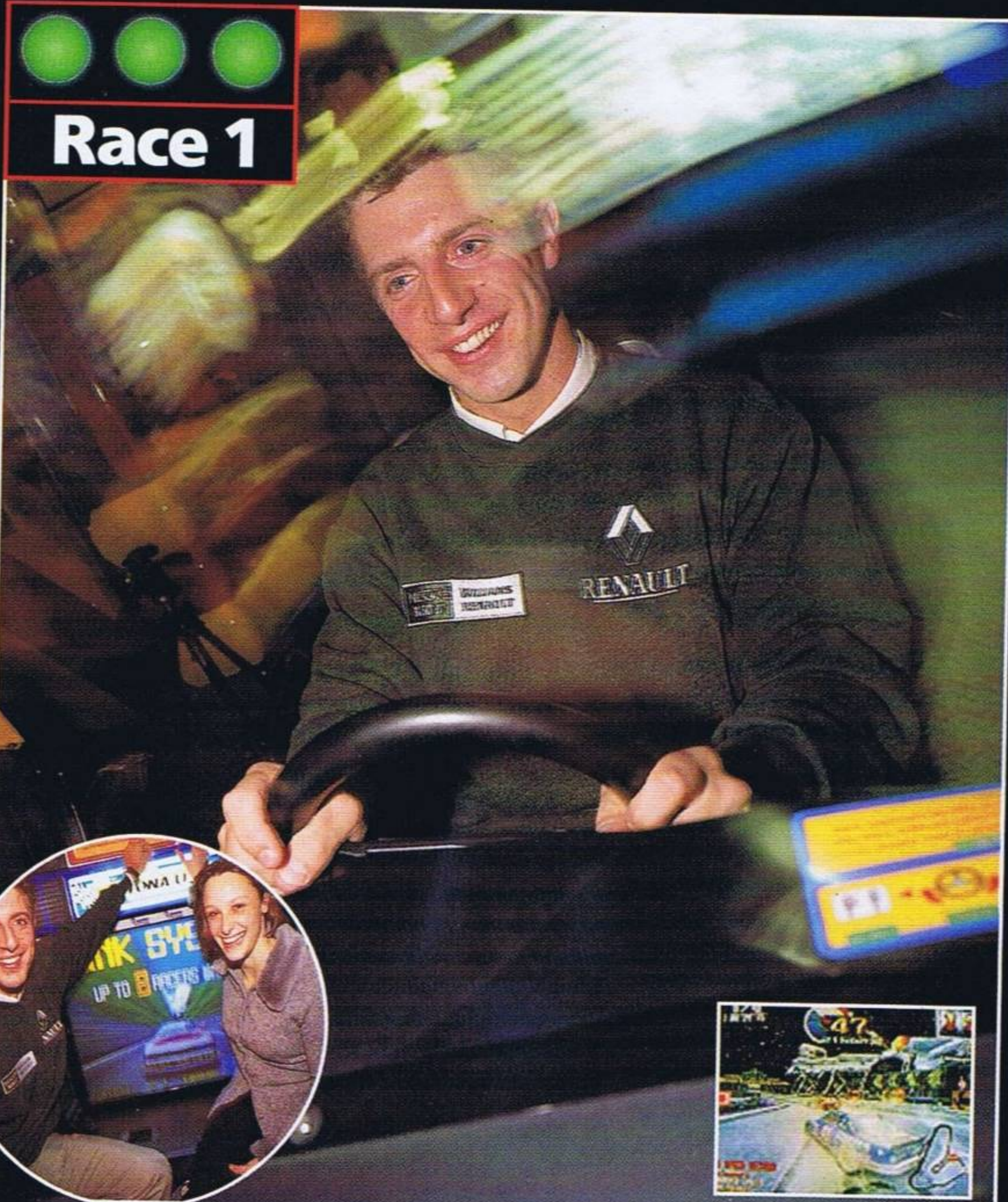


## Race 4

### Scudrace

■ What the hell's a "scud"? Other than an Iraqi missile, of course. And why should they be racing? "Um, I think it's something to do with the rack," offers Jason, trying to sound confident but looking sheepish. He hasn't got a clue. What do you think of this Vicki? "I like this one. The gears seem quite smooth. The seat vibrates, which I'm always a fan of, but the cockpit doesn't

seem to be moving in the right direction at the right time." Jason, she's beating you again. "The movement of the seat's all wrong. It's not linked to the motion of the car, it's linked to the steering – which is all wrong. Because often, when you're slinging cars around corners like this, where you're pointing the wheels is different to the direction the car's going." ■ Results: Jason 2 – Vicki 2



## Race 1

### Daytona USA

■ It's an oldie, but still a goldie. Best of all, eight players can race at once. Both Vicki and Jason pick manual transmission and the oval circuit and the race is on with six innocent punters.

**Vicki, how come your car's already so knackered? You've only completed three laps.**

"I'm, um, trying to put on a good show for the spectators. You know,

entertainment value."

**We don't believe you. And you've hardly got any bodywork left.**

"It's Jason, he's playing dirty. He's driving backwards."

**Jason, what's going on?**

"I've got a duffer car, here. It won't go any more than 200kmph so the only chance I've got of winning is by taking everyone else out."

■ **Results: Jason 1 – Vicki 0**



## Race 2

### Sega Rally 2

■ Of all the deluxe coin-ops in SegaWorld, the *Sega Rally* cockpits are the best. You get a high seat, a big screen, and even a handbrake.

**Vicki, how does the feel of this compare to *Sega Rally*?**

"It's a different league. You can really feel the difference between driving on the Tarmac and on the gravel. And it has a handbrake, which is useful."

**Not for parking, presumably?**

"Err, no. But I just did some pretty spectacular high speed parking just now. Um, by accident."

**Jason, it seems you're cruising to victory again. Was that one easy?**

"It would be unfair of me to answer that." [Smirks, and is elbowed by Vicki]

**Vicki?** "It's very very close actually."

[Tries to keep a straight face. Then has hysterics] "Anyway, Jason's Subaru was quicker off the mark than my Lancia."

■ **Results: Jason 2 – Vicki 0**



## Race 5

### Daytona 2

■ So it's a final showdown on that sexiest of graphically fantastic racers, *Daytona 2*. Giant robot spiders creep and swinging pirate ships dwarf the track as Sega's model 3 technology flexes its graphics muscles. Beneath the visual pyrotechnics, there's a race going on. **So you've got the powerslides sorted out then Jason...**

"Yeah, you've just got to work out when

is the best time to brake."

**Vicki, you're in the grass again.**

**What's going on?**

"I saw Jason take a corner at full speed, so I tried to follow and ended up with a pretty spectacular roll."

**Well done. It was a good one. It's not going to help you win, though, is it?**

"Well, you know. Got to let the boys think they're the best." [Grins].

■ **Results: Jason 3 – Vicki 2**

# At the finish line

*The stewards demand an action replay.*

■ So Jason won the championship, but only just. And both of them were cheating throughout. So we haven't resolved the battle of the sexes just yet.

But we have learned what two driving experts feel about coin-op racers. "First of all," says Jason, "give up any idea that playing a videogame physically feels like driving a race car. It doesn't."

"But that doesn't mean you can't recreate all the excitement of racing other people," reckons Vicki. "I felt competitive from the moment we started. I hated Jason beating me!"

Jason agrees. "Any race is about competing. So it doesn't really matter if you're in a real car or in a videogame. A lot of the emotions we've felt today are the same as those you might feel in a real race."

Okay, so that said could

videogame racing prepare you for a career as a real life racing driver?

"No, it's a completely different thing," says Jason. "Oh, I don't know," says Vicki, "You might suss a better idea for getting the racing line." But Jason's not impressed. "That's just stuff you'd learn on your first day at race school."

So how could all of this videogame racing be made to be more realistic?

"Perhaps you could take the moving cockpit to its logical extreme," says Vicki, "and make it spin around when you crash ..."

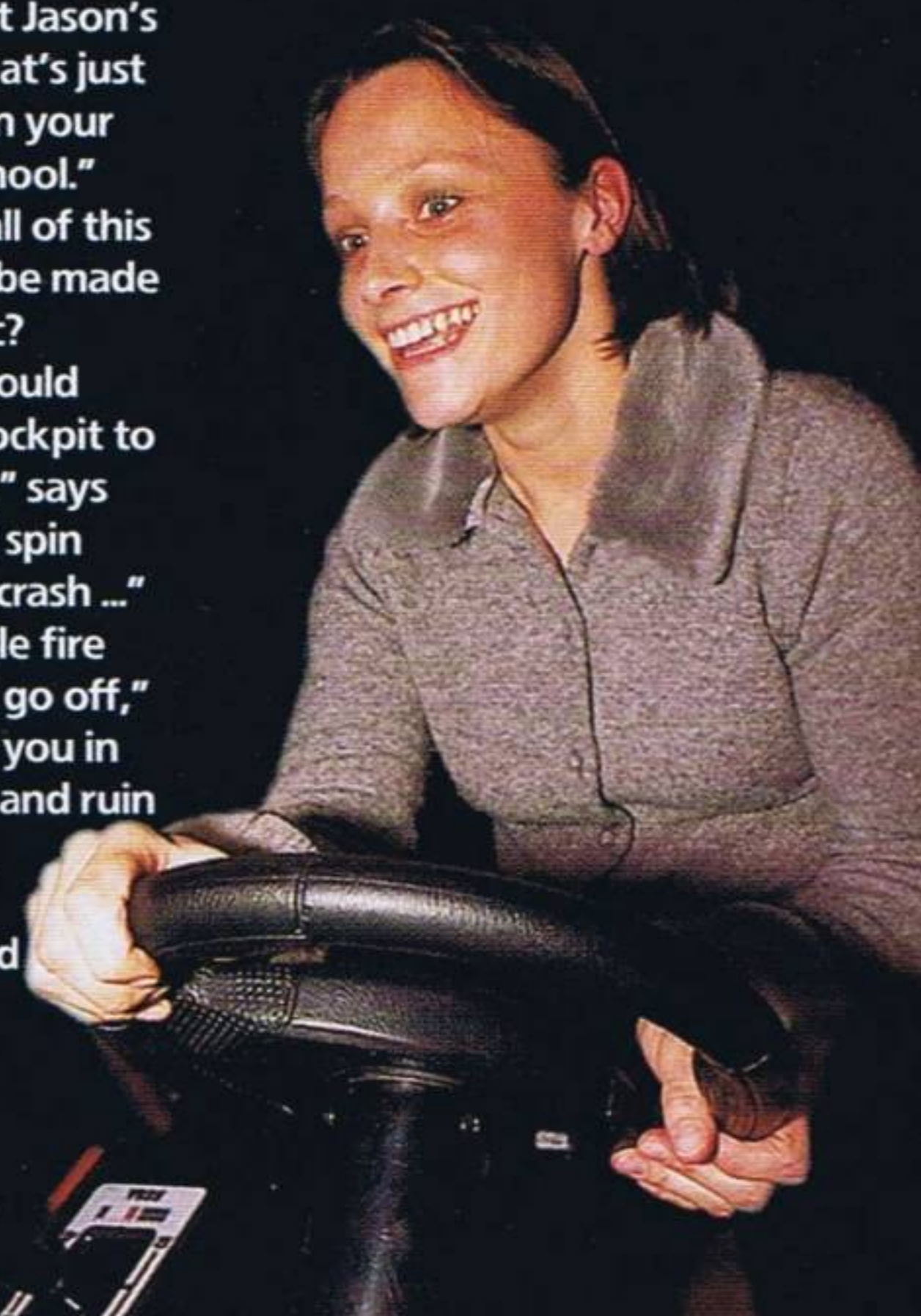
"And then a little fire extinguisher could go off," adds Jason, "cover you in freezing cold stuff and ruin your clothes!"

Oh, fantastic. Perhaps there could even be a chance you might die.

"Yes! That

would be great!" enthuses Jason. "Well, it would be a lot more realistic..." enthuses Vicki.

Professional drivers. They're all raving mad.





# WARMING UP

PHOTOGRAPHY: ALLSPORT

YOU'RE STANDING ON THE EDGE OF A ROAD. YOU HEAR A DISTANT ROAR LIKE APPROACHING THUNDER, BECOMING LOUDER EVERY SECOND AND MAKING THE GROUND VIBRATE. PREPARE YOURSELF, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN – THE NEXT GENERATION OF RACING GAMES IS COMING YOUR WAY...

**R**acing games have come a long way. It doesn't seem too far back that everyone was watching a cartoon Ferrari accelerating past a blocky truck and screaming, "It doesn't get any better than this, dude!" Now, with *Gran Turismo*, *Ridge Racer Type 4* and *TOCA 2*, people up and down the country are ripping up their driving licenses and locking themselves in their bedrooms with their PlayStations. But it doesn't end there. Developers, encouraged by booming sales, are pushing games even further in pursuit of the ultimate racing thrill, and there's a car boot-full of new driving titles to take us into 2000. Secure your seat belt, friends – it's going to be quite a ride.

ANYONE WANT A FASTER CAR?

■ They wouldn't say no, so why should you?



**PlayStation**  
**Gran Turismo 2**  
■ Developer: Sony  
■ Publisher: SCEE ■ Players: 1-2  
■ Release: TBC

■ If you thought that the original GT represented the pinnacle of PlayStation racing, you may soon have your hat-eating abilities put to the test. Expect 400 cars, more types of race and greater track variety, including Rome and Seattle-based circuits. The handling should be tighter, the opponents even more similar to their real-life counterparts and, as if all that wasn't enough, it'll be coated in graphics that have been handed the unenviable task of bettering the original.



**PlayStation**  
**WipEout 3**  
■ Developer: Psygnosis  
■ Publisher: Psygnosis  
■ Players: 1-4 ■ Release: TBC

■ Psygnosis has its lips zipped over this sequel, but the mesmerising mix of stomach-churning tracks, eye-watering speed and gaudy Designers Republic scenery is likely to be left largely intact. Look out for features carried over from the recent N64 interpretation, as well as less cheatsome computer-opponents and – we guarantee it – a soundtrack to die for.



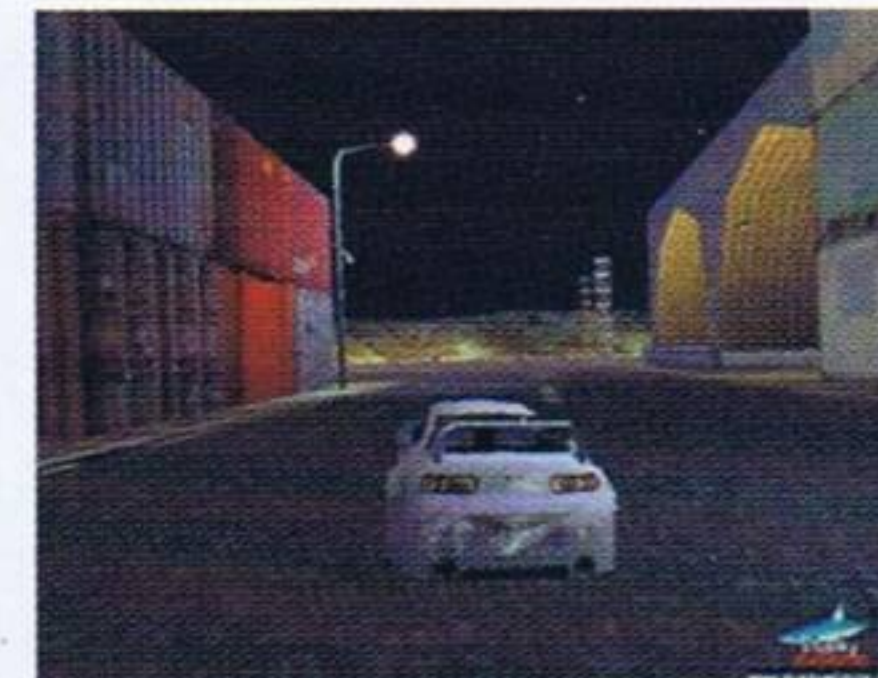
**Dreamcast**  
**Sega Rally 2**  
■ Developer: Sega ■ Publisher: Sega ■ Players: 1-Internet  
■ Release: September

■ The Dreamcast's first proper racing title will do its arcade daddy proud, while throwing in a bunch of new tracks, new cars and whizz-bang effects. Expect to be immersed completely in the hectic world of dirt-track racing, with water and mud splashing off the vehicles, and spectators running to avoid being punched in the ribs by your car bonnet. A split-screen mode and the opportunity to compete over the Internet should round it all off nicely.



**PlayStation**  
**V-Rally 2**  
■ Developer: Infogrames  
■ Publisher: Infogrames  
■ Players: 1-2  
■ Release: Summer

■ The least forgiving racer in town will soon return to test your swear word vocabulary to the limit. Things have been made a little easier this time, and the improved range of weather conditions is one of this sequel's main selling points. Your cars will even get progressively dirtier as they slip and slide over mud, snow, dirt and Tarmac. Keep your eyes peeled for a splendid two-player battle mode, too.



**PlayStation PC**  
**Midnight GT**  
■ Developer: Rage  
■ Publisher: Rage ■ Players: 1-2  
■ Release: Summer

■ The developer of *Incoming*, one of the finest shoot-'em-ups to spring forth from the world of PC, has turned its attention to this arcade-style racer. The tracks have an odd, other-worldly feel, and most of them are smothered in the black cloak of night, giving Rage permission to fill the screen with fancy highlights on the cars and eerily-lit scenery.



**PC**  
**Rally Championship 99**  
 ■ Publisher: **Gremlin**  
 ■ Players: **1-Internet**  
 ■ Developer: **Magnetic Fields**  
 ■ Release: **Spring**

■ Jaw-dropping photo-realistic graphics will help this driving title stand out from the crowd. Developer Magnetic Fields has had a cup of tea and a chat with the boys from the Ordnance Survey, enabling the team to create tracks where drivers can meander off in any direction and know that they're flattening true-to-life scenery and greenery as they go.



**PC**  
**Official Formula 1 Racing**  
 ■ Publisher: **EIDOS/Video System** ■ Developer: **Lankhor**  
 ■ Players: **1-16** ■ Release: **April**

■ Psygnosis holds the license for the 1999 Formula 1 season, but Video System – the Japanese publisher that used official drivers and stats in *F1 World Grand Prix* on the N64 – has sold its 1998 tracks, drivers and stats to EIDOS. The *Tomb Raider* crew isn't putting this lucrative license to waste, either, promising photo-realistic graphics, extensive multi-player support, customisable camera angles, and both Simulation and Arcade modes.



**PlayStation**  
**Racing Lagoon**  
 ■ Developer: **Squaresoft**  
 ■ Publisher: **Squaresoft**  
 ■ Players: **1-2** ■ Release: **TBC**

■ This racer from the *Final Fantasy* boys is described as a "high speed role-playing game", with trips to the racetrack tempered by chin-wagging moments with the locals. Your racing hero is on a quest to become the world's greatest driver, which means competing over various tracks on the way to finding "the legendary man of racing". This comes complete with gorgeous lighting and the option to tinker with your vehicle's set-up 'til the cars come home.



**PlayStation PC**  
**Rollage 2**  
 ■ Developer: **Attention To Detail** ■ Publisher: **Psygnosis**  
 ■ Players: **1-2** ■ Release: **TBC**

■ With the original barely out of the garage, the sequel to the most rollicking rollercoaster racer on the PlayStation is on its way already. The big-wheeled vehicles from the first game will make a welcome return, doing their driving-up-walls-and-twisting-in-the-air party piece all over again, and keep your fingers crossed for more tracks, more types of vehicle, and – can it be possible? – even greater speeds.



**PC**  
**Interstate '82**  
 ■ Developer: **Activision**  
 ■ Publisher: **Activision**  
 ■ Players: **1-2** ■ Release: **Summer**

■ After the flares-laden *Interstate '76*, the inevitable '80s sequel is on its way, complete with Hasselhoff-style haircuts and sleek black petrol-guzzlers (though without the cool swishing red light on the bonnet). Take to the road in one of 40 vehicles (including a helicopter), strap on some death-bringing weaponry, and smack your opponents into the next decade (you'll be doing them a favour style-wise).



**PlayStation**  
**Project SDR**  
 ■ Developer: **Funcom**  
 ■ Publisher: **SCEE** ■ Players: **1-4**  
 ■ Release: **TBC**

■ Trumpeted as "Mario Kart for the PlayStation", *Project SDR* is built around the kind of comedy tracks, simplistic vehicles, cartoon characters and sneaky power-ups that are already available on the N64. Funcom has thrown away the physics textbooks and waved goodbye to realism, concentrating instead on visuals that emulate the N64's tongue-in-cheek style, and characters chosen from "a gang of mischievous kids". Hmm.



**PlayStation PC**  
**Le Mans 24 Hours**  
 ■ Developer: **Eutechnyx**  
 ■ Publisher: **Infogrames**  
 ■ Players: **1-2** ■ Release: **May**

■ The rights to arguably the most famous race in the world should receive TLC in the hands of the team behind *Max Power Racing* and *Total Drivin'*. Running in crisp high-res, with shiny cars and real-time headlight effects, *Le Mans* won't disappoint if you're searching for accuracy – the track will be modelled in minute detail, you can tune and test the car to within an inch of its life, and you can even choose to take part in a full, real-time, 24-hour race.



**PC**  
**Grand Prix 3**  
 ■ Developer: **Geoff Crammond**  
 ■ Publisher: **MicroProse**  
 ■ Players: **1-Internet**  
 ■ Release: **December**

■ Mr Crammond has been busy knocking out driving games for over ten years, and they've all proved hugely realistic and influential – pop round to see the creator of *Gran Turismo* and you'll probably find one of Geoff's games on the telly. Spectacular crashes, tons of set-up options and the full 1999 line-up of cars and constructors should make this the definitive F1 sim.



**PlayStation PC**  
**Grand Theft Auto 2**  
 ■ Publisher: **Take 2** ■ Developer: **DMA Design** ■ Players: **1**  
 ■ Release: **Winter**

■ Cop-killing and drug-smuggling will be high on the agenda in DMA's bad-taste sequel. The camera will look upon your driving antics from high in the sky once again, but expect an adjustable viewpoint, a greater variety of missions (including an increased amount of out-of-car action), and a bigger variety of vehicles to steal.



**Nintendo 64**  
**World Driver Championship**  
 ■ Developer: **Boss**  
 ■ Publisher: **Midway**  
 ■ Players: **1-4** ■ Release: **TBC**

■ The best-looking console game yet? Boss certainly hopes so, as this unofficial sequel to *Top Gear Rally* utilises every technique from the Big Book Of Fancy Graphic Effects. A high-res Letterbox mode will see the screen come alive with highlights, reflections and realistic scenery, spread across ten round-the-world tracks. Thirty-three cars and multiple versions of each track should keep you in the driving seat for ages.



**PlayStation PC**  
**Destruction Derby 3**  
 ■ Developer: **Psygnosis**  
 ■ Publisher: **Psygnosis**  
 ■ Players: **1-2** ■ Release: **TBC**

■ The *DD* games have specialised in abandoning "real racing" in favour of giving you the chance to cause a multi-car pile-up without any of the consequences. With previous *Destruction Derby* development team Reflections kidnapped by GT Interactive, Psygnosis has to hope that its in-house programmers can do the car-colliding classic justice. Expect to see the now compulsory "better graphics, more tracks, tighter handling" scenario.



**PlayStation PC**  
**Need for Speed: High Stakes**  
 ■ Developer: **EA** ■ Publisher: **EA**  
 ■ Players: **1-2** ■ Release: **Spring**

■ The latest instalment in the long-running series features a garage-full of licensed cars, plenty of tracks (with a random track generator that positions obstacles in different areas on every race), and modes where you can choose to either wager cars against steely-eyed competitors, or try to outrun the cops for big money prizes. Weather effects and real-time damage have agreed to put in an impressive cameo appearance, too.



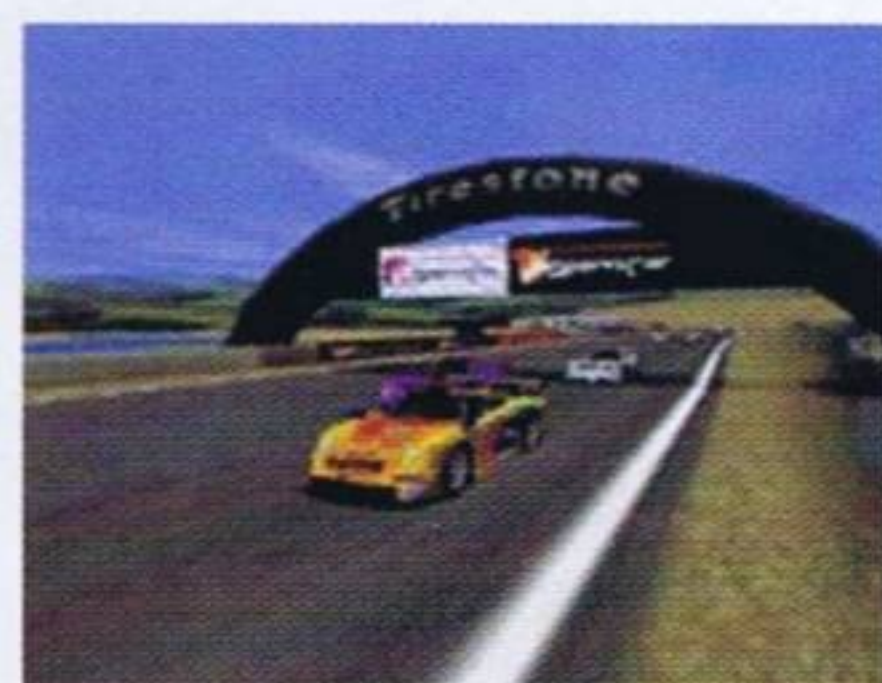
**PlayStation**  
**Bomberman Fantasy Race**  
 ■ Developer: **Hudson**  
 ■ Publisher: **Atlus**  
 ■ Players: **1-2** ■ Release: **Spring**

■ The racing equivalent of school sports day, *Fantasy Race* sees a whole slew of Hudson characters (including the *Bomberman* heroes) jostling for the pole with their running, jumping and bombing capabilities. The emphasis is as much on smacking up your competitors with carelessly-strewn power-ups as on rocketing around hairpin bends, and there should be plenty of multi-player belly-laughs on offer.



**PlayStation PC**  
**F1 99**  
 ■ Developer: **Visual Sciences**  
 ■ Publisher: **Psygnosis**  
 ■ Players: **1-2** ■ Release: **TBC**

■ The teams behind this are keeping their mouths shut so far, but you can be assured that after the critical mauling that *F1 98* received, Psygnosis will have a foot hovering threateningly close to Visual Sciences' butt throughout the development process. All the drivers, stats and sponsorship boards should re-appear, looking just like they do on the telly.



**PlayStation PC**  
**Sports Car GT**  
 ■ Developer: **Westwood**  
 ■ Publisher: **EA** ■ Players: **1-2**  
 ■ Release: **Spring**

■ Westwood is striving for that real-world feel, packing in licenses from the McLaren F1 to the Saleen Mustang, and tracks direct from the American IMSA championship, including the famed Las Vegas Motor Speedway. Racing teams have supplied A4 folders full of performance figures, which have been tapped into the game to make the vehicles feel exactly right.





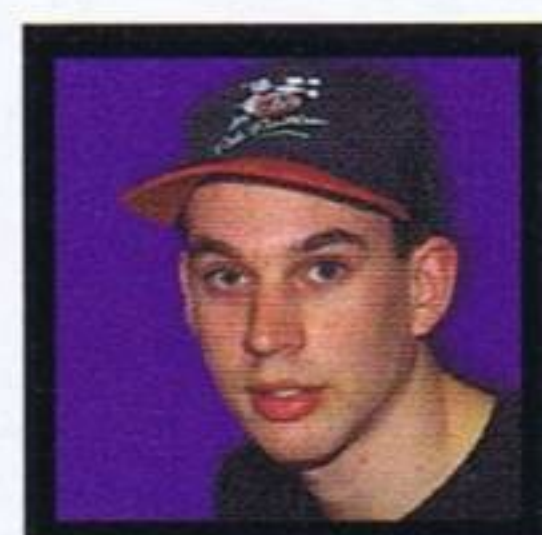
# DRINK DRIVING

PHOTOGRAPHY: MARLON RASS, CORBIS



■ Mistake videogames for reality and this could be you.

## TO MIX DRINKING AND DRIVING IS DANGEROUS AND, QUITE RIGHTLY, ILLEGAL. BUT HOW DOES AN EVENING OF ALE-QUAFFING AFFECT PERFORMANCE ON THE VIRTUAL TRACK?

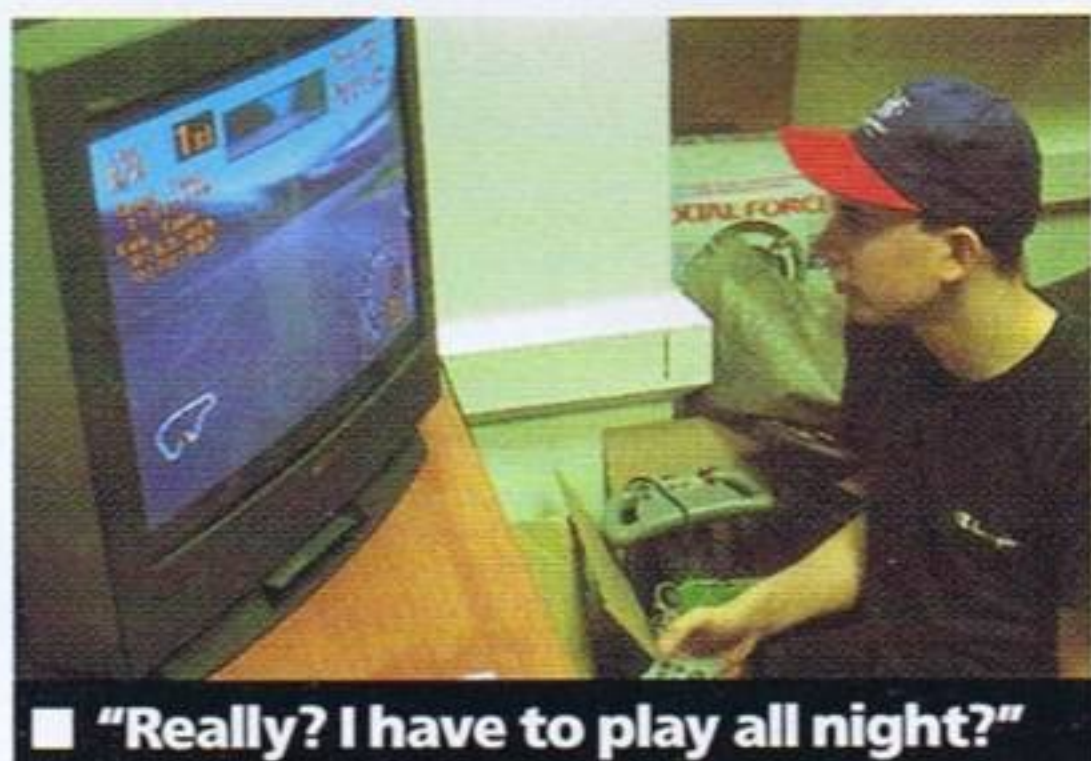


■ Sam Richards. Sober, sane, safe on the road. For the moment.

### The experiment:

■ To discover exactly how increased quantities of alcohol ingested into the bloodstream affects reactions and performance when playing videogame racers.

Mindful of all we vaguely remember from school science lessons, we created an environment where conditions could be kept constant throughout. We chose the classic PlayStation racer, *Gran Turismo*. Each test was taken on the easy Arcade mode of the High Speed Ring circuit, which our subject could finish first every time when sober. Between tests we frogmarched our subject 40 yards to the local pub where he was forced to imbibe a pint of Stella Artois lager. It's a tough job, but someone's got to do it.



■ "Really? I have to play all night?"

### 0 pints

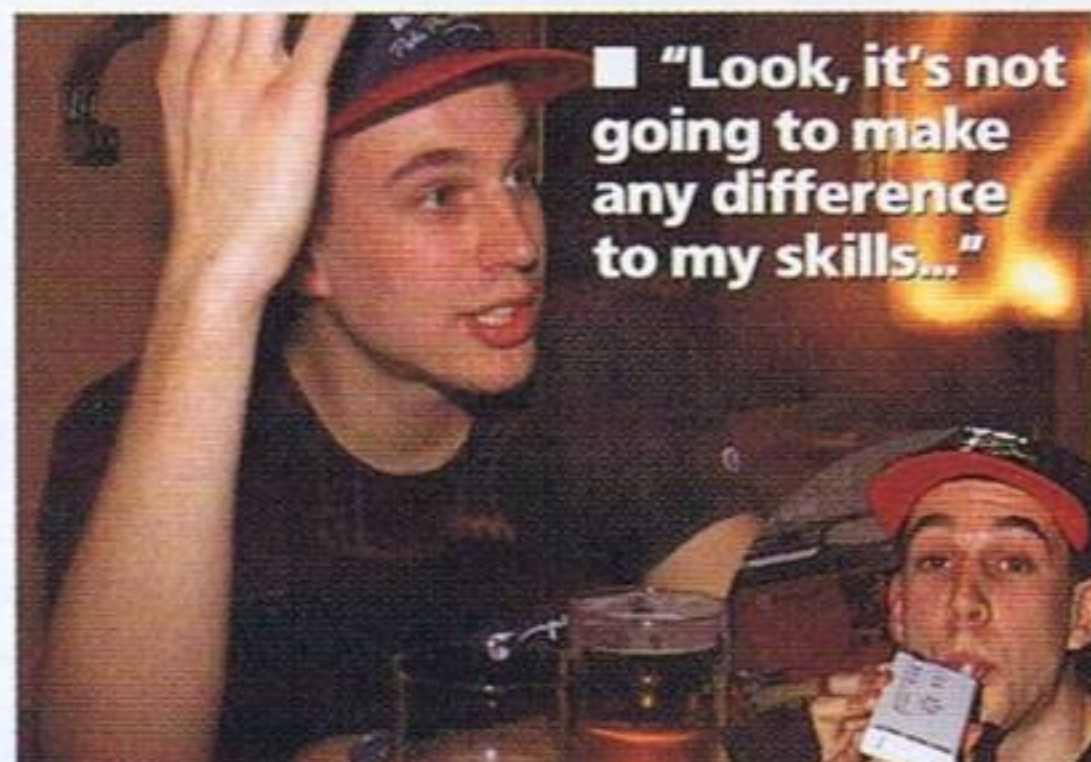
■ Our subject easily completed the two-lap race in first place on three consecutive occasions, setting a record time of 1.50.07 in the process. His car handling is solid and confident.

■ **Subject comments:** "I could do with a pint."

### 1 pint

■ This appears to have little affect on our subject, who completes the course twice with ease, placed first each time. However, he fails to beat the score set when sober, and belches a great deal.

■ **Subject comments:** "Easy. I could do this all night standing on my head. Let's get the beers in."



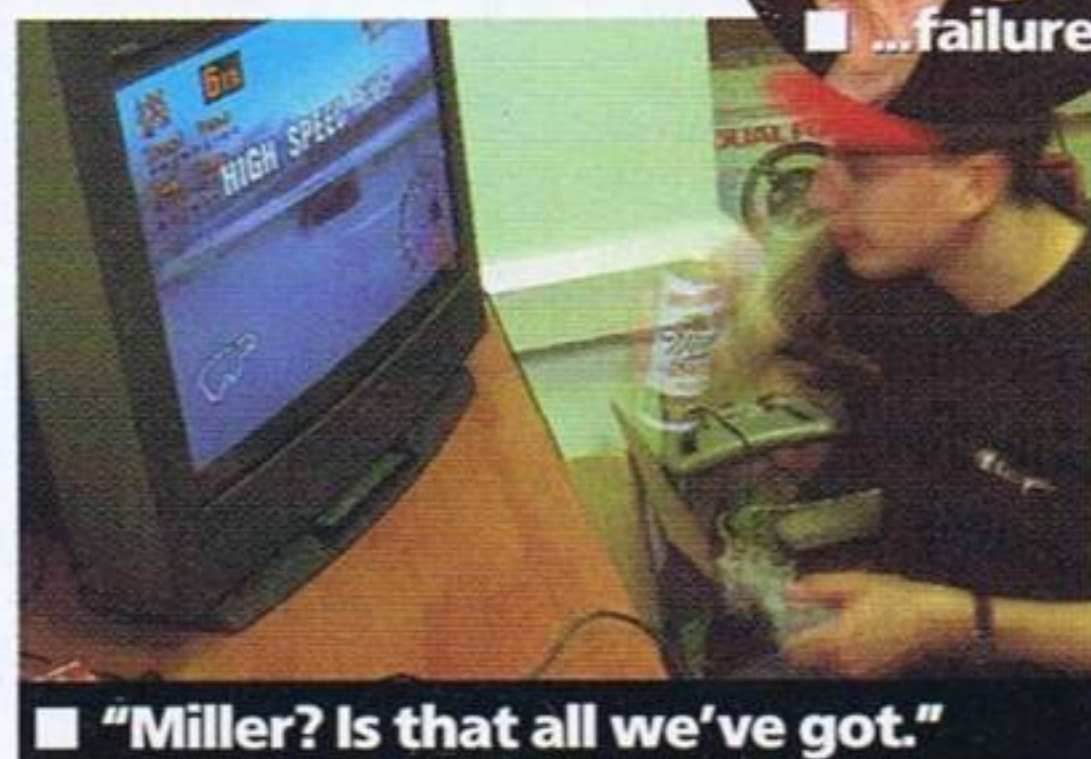
■ "Look, it's not going to make any difference to my skills..."

### 2 pints

■ An electronic breath test is taken. With no hesitation the red LED illuminates demonstrating that the subject is already over the legal limit for driving on the road.

An interesting effect of the alcohol consumption is noted. Fuelled by a couple of rapidly-drained beers, the subject displays obvious signs of complacency and inflated self-confidence. As such, his concentration is rather diminished, he misjudges a couple a bends and finishes fourth (albeit still in a good time of 1.51.49).

■ **Subject comments:** "Okay, so maybe the standing on my head stuff was a little exaggerated. I have been humbled. Full concentration from now on. Back to the pub!"



■ ...failure.

■ "Miller? Is that all we've got."

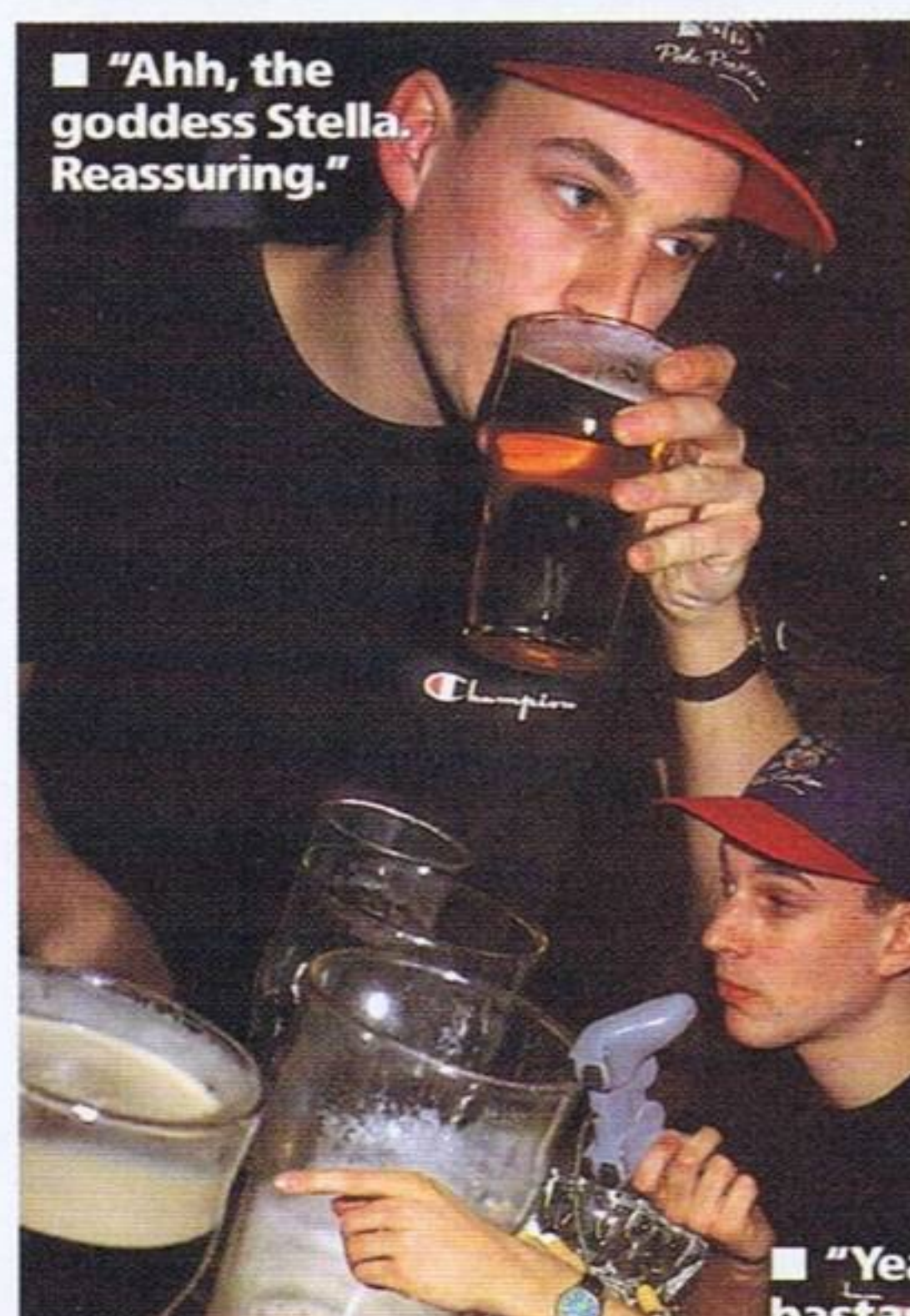
### 3 pints

■ Now noticeably voluble, the subject's topics of conversation in the pub include *Dad's Army* and "that Lauryn Hill out of the Fugees". Concentrating intensely, he again finishes the race in first place, clocking a respectable time of 1.51.10. A can of Miller is opened and consumed while racing to "move things along a bit."

■ **Subject comments:** "*Dad's Army* – it's not really funny, right, but it's better than *Are You Being Served*, yeah?"

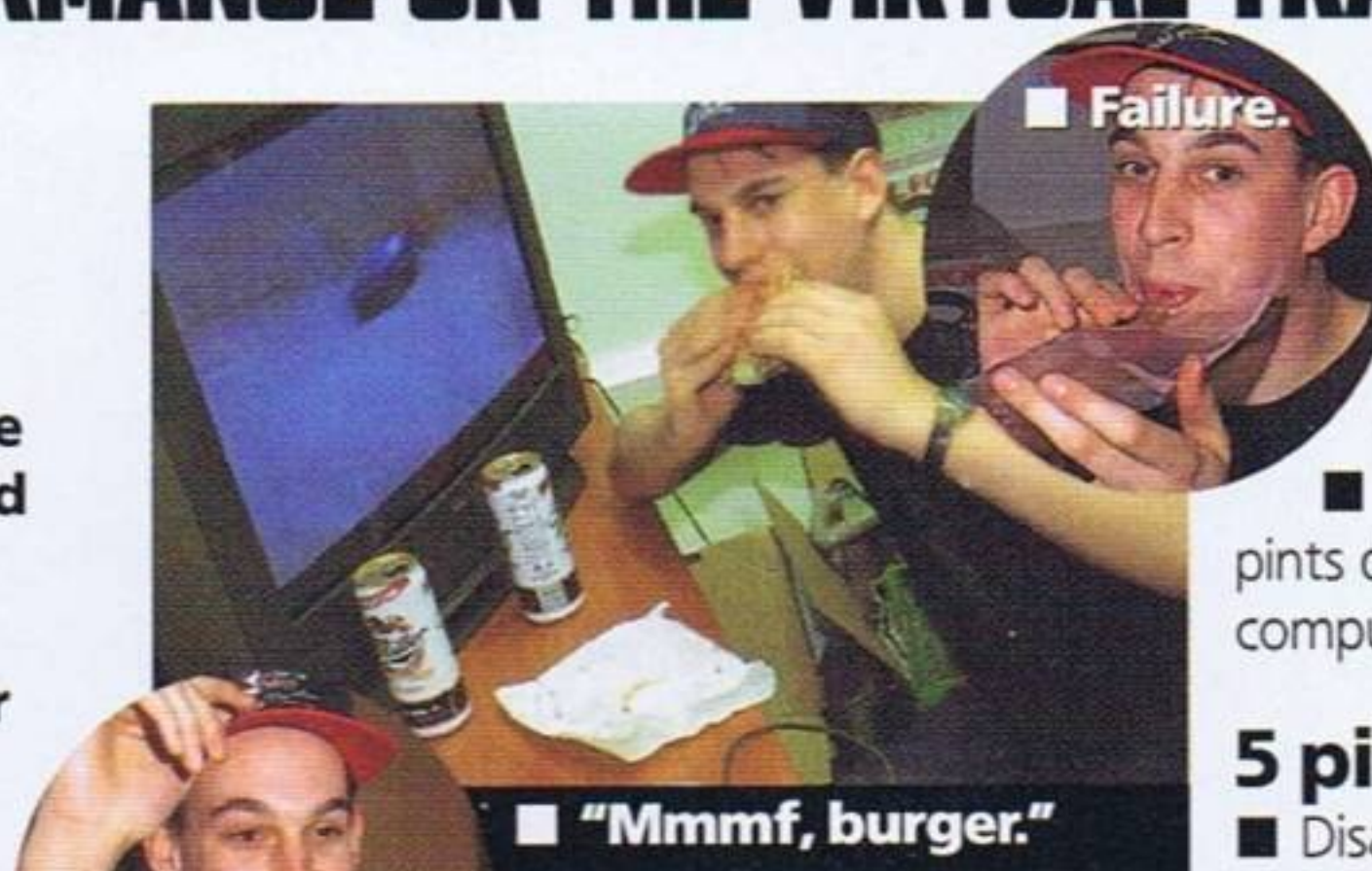
### 4 pints and 1 can

■ To refuel, the subject is lead into a local eaterie, where a cheeseburger is purchased. If the burger has "soaked up" any of the alcohol, as popular myth suggests, it appears to make no difference: another breath test is taken, this time of the blow-in-the-bag variety. The limit is marked by the level at which the crystals turn from yellow to green – when the bag is inflated, all the crystals immediately assume a deep emerald hue. If caught driving a real car at this point, his license



■ "Ahh, the goddess Stella. Reassuring."

■ "Yeah, you bastardsz...."



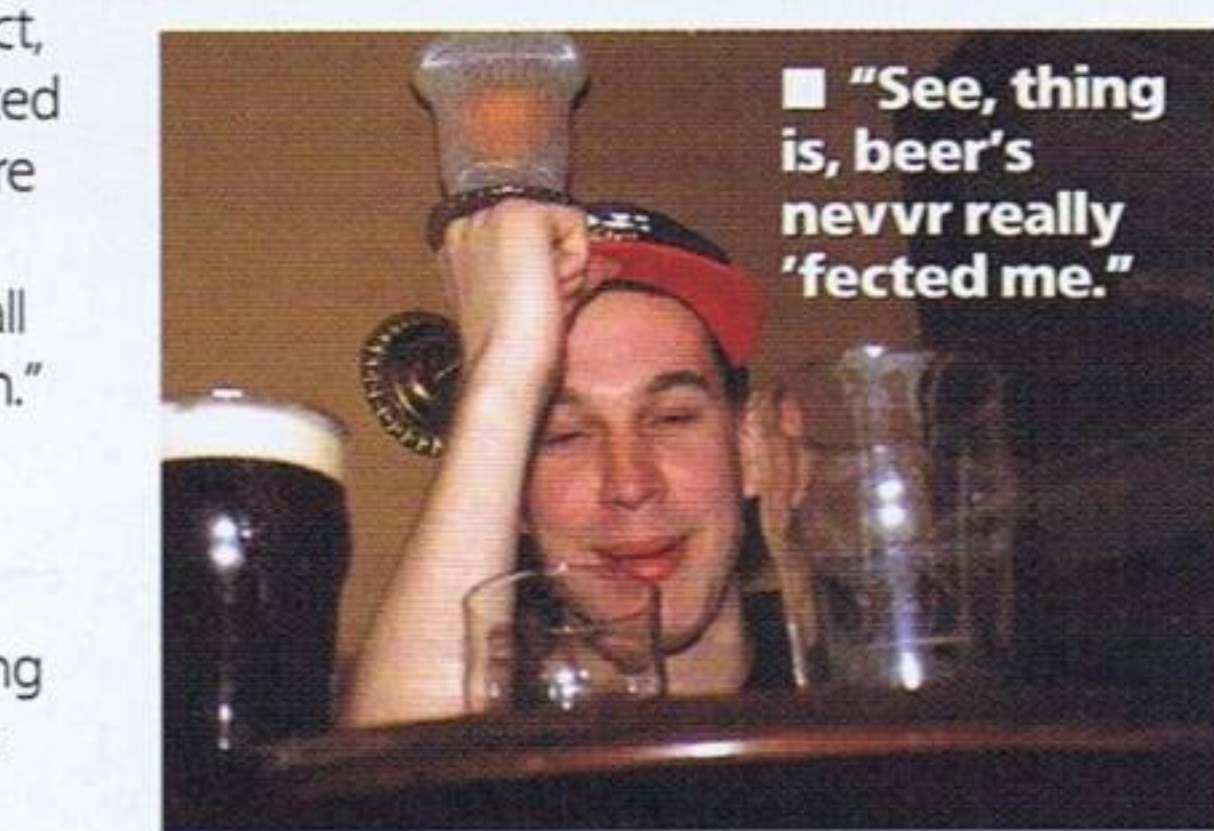
■ Failure.

■ "Mmmf, burger."



■ "Turned out nice again."

■ "Izza a piece of piss, this..."



■ "See, thing is, beer's nevvr really 'fected me."



■ "I love iss wig. Thought I'd lost it."

would be confiscated. Nevertheless, he completes the course in first place, although with a poorer time of 1.52.30. A distinctly wobbly run is aided by ramming opposing cars into the walls.

■ **Subject comments:** "Come on! Even four pints down I'm still the master of this game. The computer sucks my exhaust!"

### 5 pints, 2 cans and 1 G&T

■ Disapproving of the subject's aggressive manner and increasingly loud and profane language, most of the pub's clientele leave upon his return to the bar. In addition to his pint, the subject orders a G&T. Back in the test room, he finds some small bottles of Stella which he opens and drinks. This leads to the discovery of a large bottle of Jim Beam, from which he pours himself a ridiculously oversized measure, mixed with tap water. He then proceeds to race in a way in which, were this real life, would see him killed. This being *Gran Turismo*, however, a game where car damage isn't registered, he somehow finishes second, in a time of 1.52.91.

■ **Subject comments:** "Last orders. Now!"

### 5 pints, 2 cans, 2 small bottles, 1 G&T, 1 large whiskey & 1 triple vodka

■ This being the final test, the subject insists on wrapping up in the pub with a triple vodka. Back in the test room, he chances upon the mullet wig from last issue's retro Games Night and wears it for the next race. Perhaps it's a lucky hairpiece because – amazingly – he finishes first. However, things take a turn for the worse and suddenly our subject becomes depressed. He makes an emotional call to his ex-girlfriend, who tells him to piss off. Consoling him with another whiskey, we persuade him to try the race at an increased difficulty level. He finishes second, tries again, and finishes fifth.

Having proved you can still play *Gran Turismo* while totally steaming, our subject staggers off into the night, claiming he is "going clubbing".

■ **Subject comments:** Largely incomprehensible.

■ "But you 'n me woz speshial. No, don't hang..."

### Conclusion:

■ It's all rather worrying. While our subject would be declared unroadworthy after two pints when his confidence was boosted toward the realm of the superhuman, but for the most part, driving remained steady. Overall, *Gran Turismo* differs from actual driving in several key ways: it requires only brief periods of intense concentration; you use your hands rather than your whole

driving towards the end and a nasty dip in form after two pints when his confidence was boosted toward the realm of the superhuman, but for the most part, driving remained steady.

Overall, *Gran Turismo* differs from actual driving in several key ways: it requires only brief periods of intense concentration; you use your hands rather than your whole

body; your only field of vision is straight ahead; and it's possible to ride up against walls and other cars while maintaining your speed and direction – do this in real life and you will die.

Therefore, we conclude that while videogame driving is a healthy and enjoyable pursuit when absolutely minging, driving real vehicles is not. Cheers.

### Drive carefully

Alcohol Concern's guidelines regarding alcohol and driving:

- The legal limit for driving after drinking is 80mg of alcohol in 100ml of blood.
- This level depends on how quickly alcohol is absorbed into the blood, but it basically equates to

four or five single units.

- One unit of alcohol equals half a pint of normal strength beer or one (25ml) measure of spirits.
- Alcohol is absorbed into the blood more rapidly if you have an empty stomach.
- It takes roughly an hour for one

unit of alcohol to be processed through the bloodstream. Drink eight pints in the evening and you need to wait at least 11 hours before getting behind the wheel.

- The best advice is to drink no alcohol at all before driving, however short the distance.



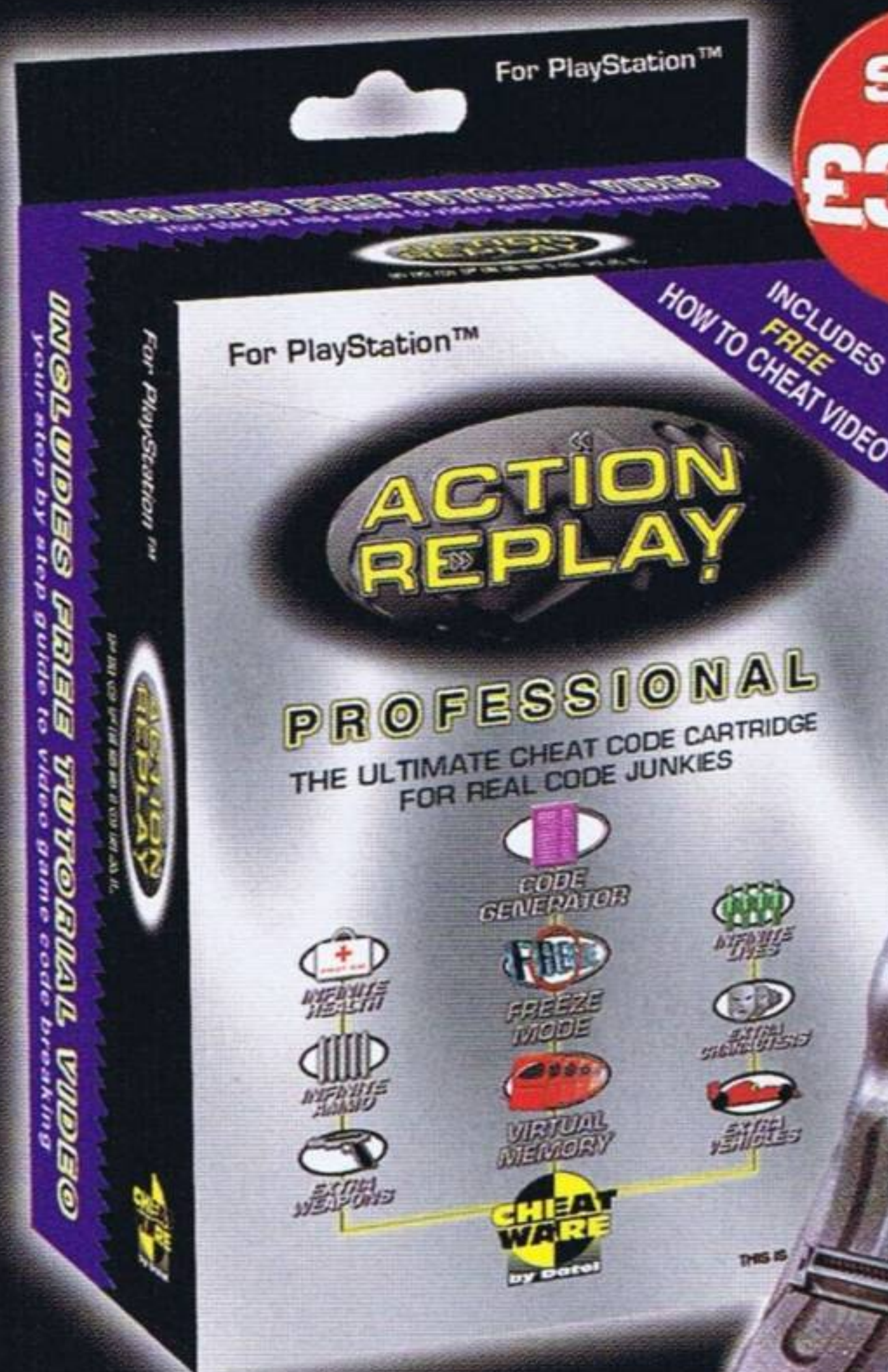
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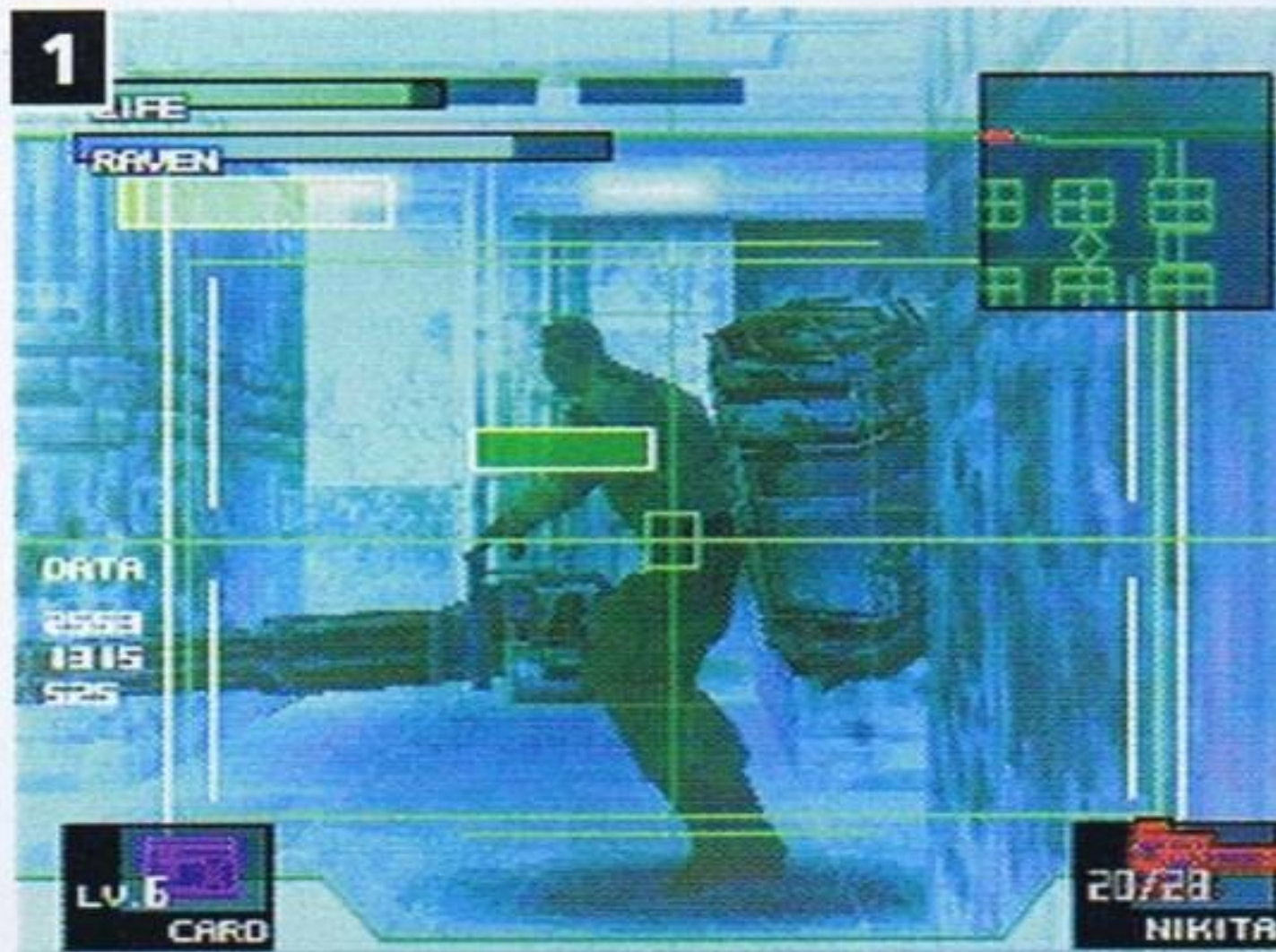
# A Charts

Edited by | Mark Green

Is that game you've been planning to buy hot to trot or rooted to the spot?

## Official Top 40

Sales information from the delightful month of March



**1** (-) **Metal Gear Solid** Konami  
The PlayStation's fastest-selling UK game ever, coming straight in at number one and quintupling the sales of the title at number two.

**2** (-) **A Bug's Life** SCEE  
The popularity of the splendid Disney movie has helped shift this lacklustre ant-based platformer.

**3** (1) **Star Wars: Rogue Squadron** LucasArts  
The Force... of gravity sends Luke and the boys plummeting this month.

**4** (-) **Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri** Electronic Arts  
The name of a man called Sid is still all that's needed to excite PC owners.

**5** (4) **FIFA 99** Electronic Arts  
It's the twilight period of this sim's career. Still, FIFA 2000 should be along soon.

**6** (2) **Sim City 3000** Maxis  
This build-a-city game doesn't look like it'll last to the end of this year, let alone 3000.

**7** (6) **Grand Theft Auto** Take 2 (budget)  
Kill the cops! Rob the banks! Run the drugs! Make crime pay!

**8** (3) **Premier Manager '99** Gremlin  
Relegation looms large for this comprehensive manage-'em-up.

**9** (5) **The Legend Of Zelda: Ocarina Of Time** Nintendo  
Oh, no! Zelda's disappearing! Quick - clap if you believe in fairies!

**10** (8) **Tomb Raider** EIDOS (budget)  
Big breasts and tight shorts can only keep gamers interested for so long.

- 11** (7) **Tomb Raider III** EIDOS
- 12** (-) **Resident Evil 2** Virgin
- 13** (12) **Worms** Sold Out (budget)
- 14** (11) **V-Rally** Infogrames (budget)
- 15** (34) **Crash Bandicoot** SCEE (budget)
- 16** (10) **TOCA** Codemasters (budget)
- 17** (-) **WCW/nWo Thunder** THQ
- 18** (9) **Crash Bandicoot: Warped** SCEE
- 19** (13) **Colin McRae Rally** Codemasters
- 20** (19) **Resident Evil** Virgin (budget)
- 21** (21) **Croc** EA (budget)
- 22** (15) **Rayman** Ubisoft (budget)
- 23** (18) **Mickey's Wild Adventure** SCEE (budget)
- 24** (17) **Delta Force** Electronic Arts
- 25** (28) **Half-Life** Cendant
- 26** (23) **Die Hard Trilogy** Electronic Arts
- 27** (24) **Baldur's Gate** Virgin
- 28** (-) **Theme Park** Electronic Arts (budget)
- 29** (33) **Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee** GT Int (budget)
- 30** (-) **Theme Hospital** Electronic Arts (budget)
- 31** (16) **Cool Boarders 3** SCEE
- 32** (-) **Tiger Woods '99** Electronic Arts
- 33** (30) **Tekken 2** SCEE (budget)
- 34** (14) **Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus** GT Interactive
- 35** (31) **Gran Turismo** SCEE
- 36** (26) **Spyro The Dragon** SCEE
- 37** (-) **Hercules** Disney (budget)
- 38** (20) **Brian Lara Cricket** Codemasters
- 39** (-) **WCW/nWo Revenge** THQ
- 40** (29) **Time Crisis** SCEE (budget)



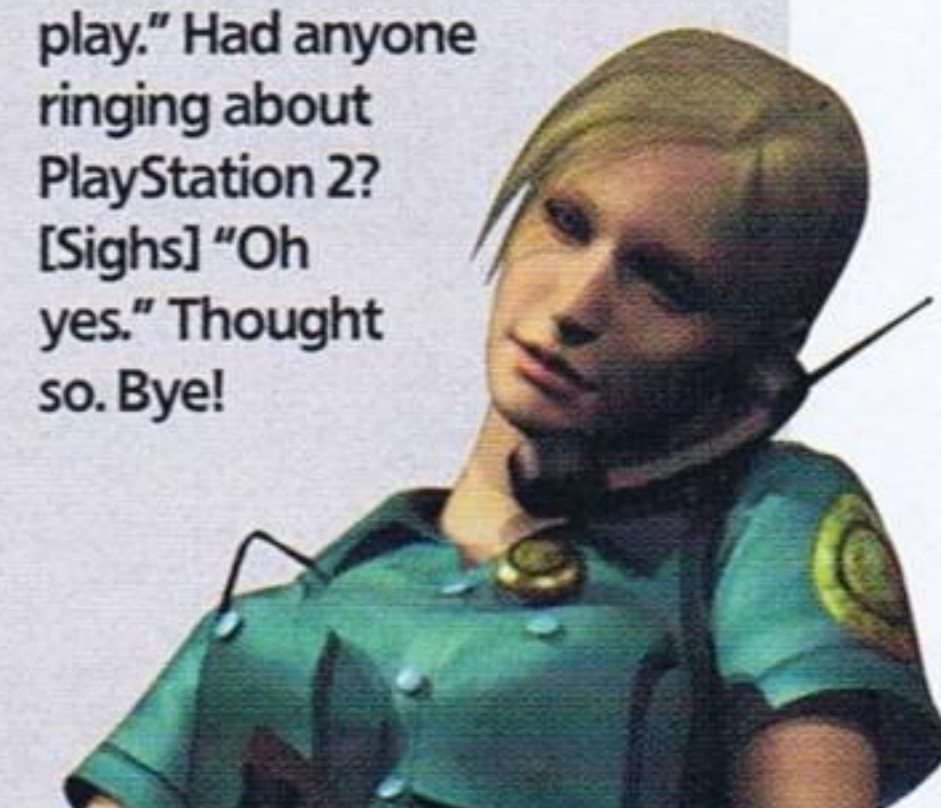
## Import Zone | With Department 1 (0171 916 8440)



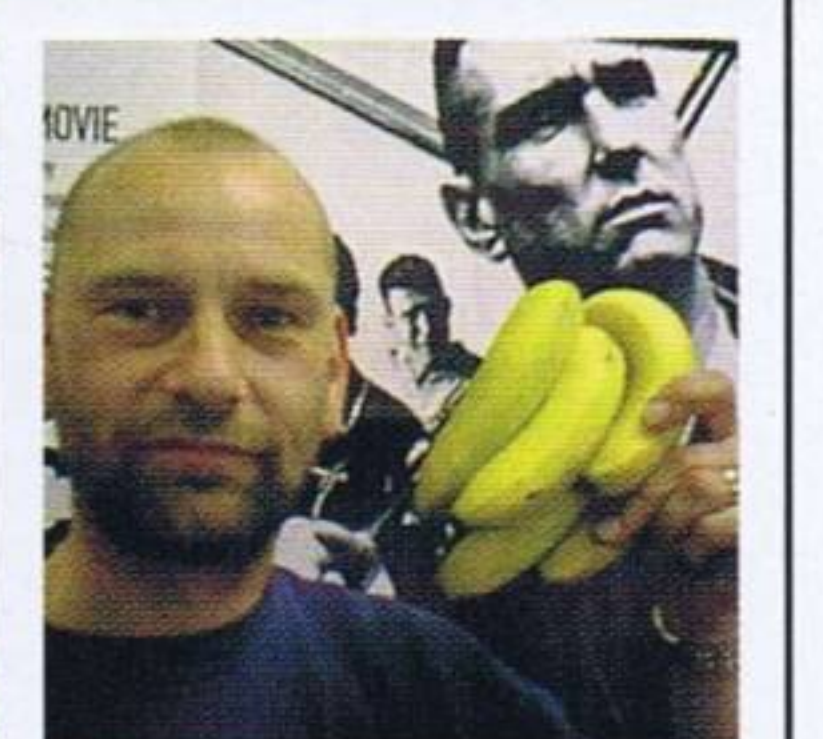
■ **Castlevania: Scary.**  
"Hello!" Who are you? "I'm Andy, and I'm your new Import Zone contact at Department 1." Well, hurrah! So tell us, young man, what Japanese or US imports have been doing the business this month? "Silent Hill on PlayStation is doing brilliantly - we're down to our last three copies - as is

**Brave Fencer Musashi.** It's a bit slow on the N64 at the mo." What about Dreamcast? "It's steady. **Sega Rally 2** and **Sonic** are going well, and we've had plenty of interest in **Power Stone**. It doesn't look great, but it's fantastic to look

but it's fantastic to look to play." Had anyone ringing about PlayStation 2? [Sighs] "Oh yes." Thought so. Bye!



## Vox-Pop | With the sandwich sellers



■ "Anyone hungry?" Hmm. Yes please. What's good today? "Hot tuna and sweetcorn's nice." When did you make these sandwiches? Won't the tuna be cold by now? "Don't be silly." Do you want a go on **Ridge Racer**? We'll give you a head start. "No thanks." Okay. Bye.

■ You look a bit like Vinny Jones actually. "Grrr." Actually you look a bit more like Zangief from **Street Fighter 2**. "Do you want a banana or not?" Can we feel them? "Tsk. Go on then." And some smoky bacon crisps, please. "That'll be 55p then please." Cheers.

## Chart Analysis | With Napoleon

■ "Hello. It's me, Napoleon Bonaparte. What a month it's been for games, eh? I'm really getting into **Star Wars: Rogue Squadron** at the moment. Phew! What a game! It's the **Star Wars**-drenched atmosphere and variety of vehicles to commandeer that does it for me. Wondered why I always



keep one arm inside my jacket? Sore trigger fingers from too much shooting, mate, that's why. Those of you who read *The Treaty of Luneville* (published 1801) will be up to speed with my concerns about how the previous **Star Wars** game, *Shadow of the Empire*, petered off considerably after the first level. I'm just glad LucasArts learnt from its mistakes and has managed to make *Rogue Squadron* an adrenaline-fuelled experience from the moment you pop it into your N64. Anyway, must be off, now. Cheerio."

PHOTOGRAPHY: CORBIS

## Japanese Top 10

- 1 (-) Final Fantasy VIII PSX, Square
- 2 (2) Nintendo All-Star Smash Brothers N64, Nintendo
- 3 (-) Banjo and Kazooie N64, Nintendo
- 4 (-) Option Tuning Car Battle 2 PSX, Jaleco
- 5 (5) Dragon's Quest Monsters: Terry's Wonderland GB, Enix
- 6 (4) Yu-Gi-Oh! Dual Monsters GB, Konami
- 7 (-) Simple 1500 Series Vol. 1 The Mahjong PSX, Culture
- 8 (-) Space Ship Yamato PSX, Bandai
- 9 (10) Pokemon Cards GB, Nintendo
- 10 (1) Sega Rally 2 DC, Sega

## US Console Top 10

- 1 (1) Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time N64, Nintendo
- 2 (-) WCW/nWo: Thunder PSX, THQ
- 3 (6) Metal Gear Solid PSX, Konami
- 4 (-) South Park N64, Acclaim
- 5 (2) Star Wars: Rogue Squadron N64, Nintendo
- 6 (-) Pokemon Blue GB, Nintendo
- 7 (-) Pokemon Red GB, Nintendo
- 8 (-) Crash Bandicoot 2 PSX, Sony
- 9 (10) Knockout Kings PSX, EA
- 10 (8) GoldenEye 007 N64, Nintendo

More charts on page 133.

# Smoke gets in my eyes

## Ten videogame characters who've blubbed like babies

■ Ahhh. Didums. Did the little diplodocus get hurt by the baby?



It took years for the stars of games to acquire anything resembling a proper face, and it's only relatively recently that their expressions suit their mood, from plain "grinning" to "orgasmic delight at defeating a boss". Despite this, most game characters keep a stiff upper lip when it comes to sadness. So we've dug out ten videogame characters who haven't been ashamed to shed a tear.

### 1. Wario

Whether he's lost a match-winning star in *Mario Party* or been hit with a red shell in *Mario Kart 64*, Mario's evil alter ego isn't afraid to express his emotions.

### 2. Dinosaur

One of the most heart-rending moments in gaming. The bald, diapered star of *BC Kid* would thwack the big green Diplodocus hard on the head, and watch guiltily as a big sad tear formed in the dino's eye. Sniffle.

### 3. Bub and Bob

The cute dinosaur stars of *Bust-A-*

*Move* take their bubble-busting a tad personally. Fail to complete a screen and they lie on the floor, with water gushing out of their eyes.

### 4. Darunia

Well, he didn't *actually* cry, but as the King of the Gorons in *Zelda 64* dances away to Link's Ocarina tune, shouting "Hot! Hot! Hot!", his face paint look like tears of joy.

### 5. Rugrats

Spoilt brats Tommy, Chucky, Angelica and the rest are as nice as pie in THQ's game of the cartoon – until you make a mistake, at which point they start rubbing their eyes with clenched fists making whining noises. Kids, eh?



### 6. Mario

Waterworks from the plumbing hero? You obviously haven't come in contact with little baby Mario in *Yoshi's Island* on the SNES, and his incessant, teeth-grinding screams for attention.

### 7. Mudokons

We never see the *Oddworld* aliens crying, but with the evil Glukkons fashioning a tasty brew from their tears, there must be a factory of Mudokons blubbing somewhere.

### 8. Kid

According to our Reviews Ed Robin, Konami's scare-a-thon *Resident Evil*

features a little girl crying at one point. We wouldn't take his word for it – he makes so many small children cry that it's all become blurred.

### 9. Pirate

Pirates ought to be a bloodthirsty lot, but you'd struggle to believe it after seeing *Banjo-Kazooie's* resident cutthroat sobbing away after losing his two pieces of gold.

### 10. Kidnapped kid

It's a matter of debate whether the imprisoned brats in *Turok 2* are truly bawling, but there's an unhappy timbre to their voices as they yell for their dinosaur-hunting hero.

## Top 10 things Mario would never say

1. "Get 'em off, Peachy."
2. "I just don't think dungarees and thick sideburns are really me."
3. "Let's get rrrrready to rrruumble!"
4. "Oh, great, more bloody jumping."
5. "Sonic, [deep breath], I'm carrying our child."
6. "Up the Arsenal!"
7. "Brother? L... have... no... brother..."
8. "Ooooooh, Matron!"
9. "Pint of Heineken, please."
10. "Piss flaps!"

# Q & A

## Write to us

**Arcade**  
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arcade.mag  
@futurenet.co.uk

With a world-weary sigh, Mark Green answers your questions.

**Q** There seems to be a trend for revamped classics peeking out from a fetid crevice in the massive beat-'em-up/comedy racing game/stealth-based first-person-shooter dungpile that is the videogames market of late. *Sentinel Returns*, *Gauntlet Legends*, *Paperboy 64* (so we're told), those *Asteroids* and *Centipede* things, *Bionic Commandos Fat Arse Adventure* (possibly)... Would you be so kind as to inform me of any other hastily polished retro baubles in the pipeline?  
**Ed Holly, via e-mail**

**A** Certainly, Ed. The Game Boy's the place to be for retro updates at the mo, with *Breakout*, *Missile Command*,



■ *Spy vs Spy*: the good ol' days? Or maybe not.

*Millipede*, *Spy vs Spy* and, er, *Monopoly* all gracing the handheld wonder with their presence – although, considering the eight-bit format, they're unlikely to do very much actual updating.

Also on the Game Boy front,

Smart Dog Software is seeking permission to produce new versions of C64 classic *Uridium* and Taito coin-op *Rainbow Islands*. Look out for a new version of *Speedball* on the PlayStation. Oh, and, er... all the others you said.

## "Gizza 10p mum!" | Name that coin-op



**Q** I remember going to Great Yarmouth in 1985 and seeing an arcade game that had amazingly colourful 3D graphics. There was a little robot on screen that had to jump between platforms, while a massive great eye looked on. It might have been called *I, Robot*, but that seems a bit philosophical for a coin-op.  
**Andy Weaver, Wolverhampton**

**A** Oddly named after an Isaac Asimov novel (it was originally to be

called *Ice Castles*), Atari's *I, Robot* was produced in 1984. Featuring full-colour 3D polygon visuals, 12 camera angles and an analogue joystick, it was way ahead of its time, and Atari only managed to shift 1,000 machines

before consigning it to the rubbish tip.

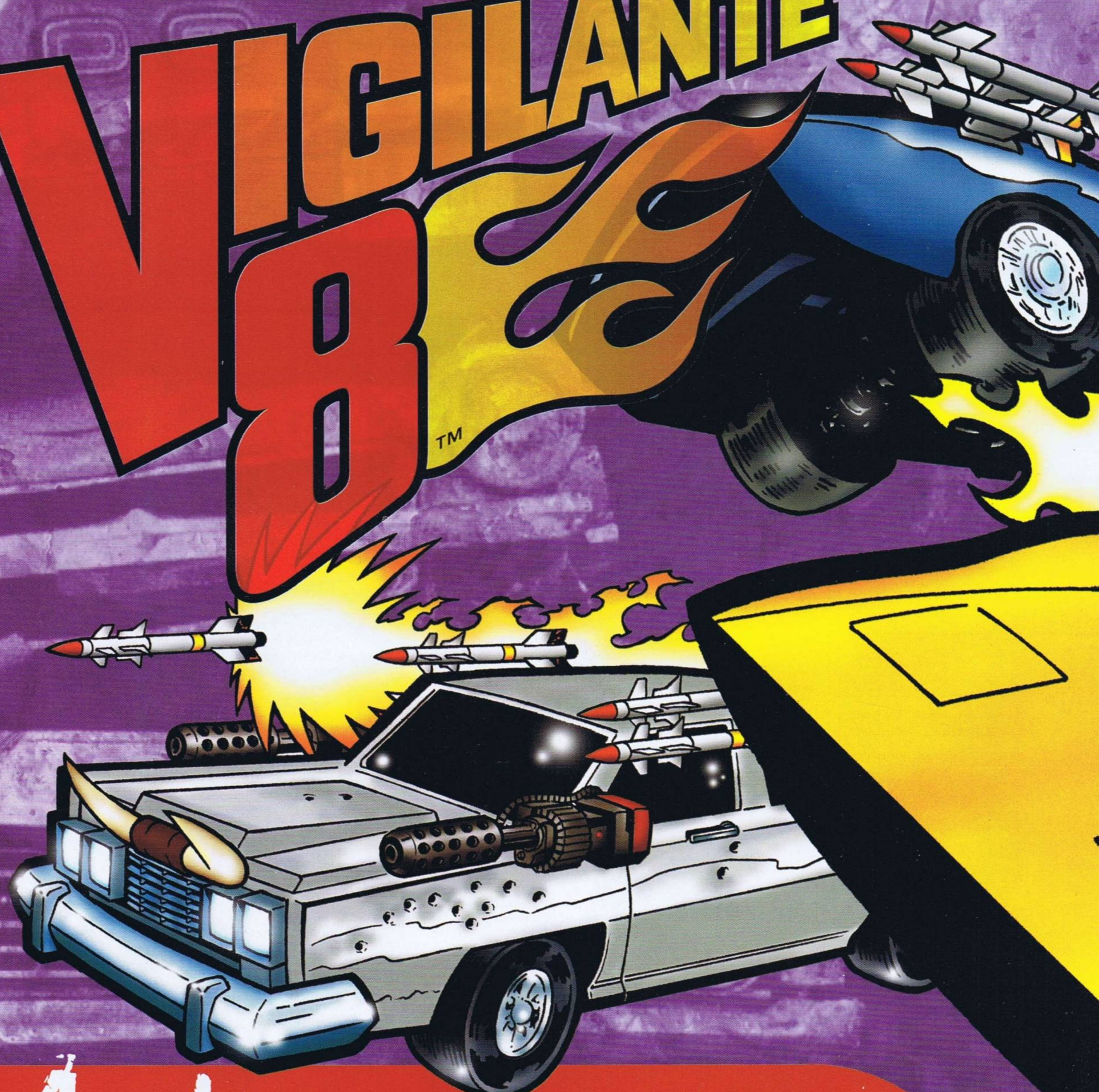
There were two main sections to the game; the first involved making

the robot colour platforms – achieved by jumping on to them, *Q\*Bert* style, while avoiding the gaze of the Evil Eye. Once you'd managed this, the robot was transported into a shoot-'em-up section,

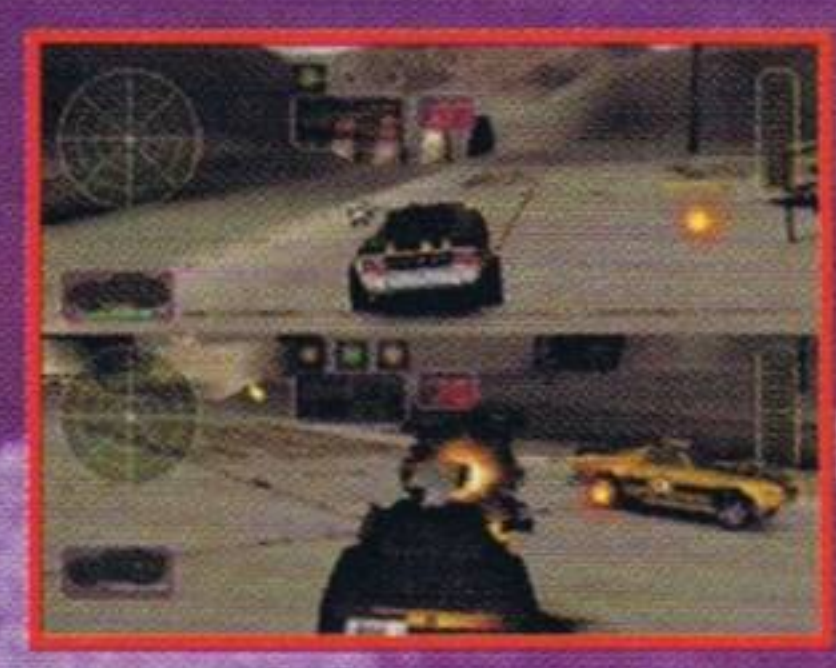
where destroying flying objects was order of the day. The massive great eye glared menacingly from the back of every level, but featured most prominently in a sub-game which cropped up every three levels.

If you want to know more about *I, Robot*, visit Jeff Anderson's Internet site at <http://idt.net/mayday19/video/irobot/irobot.html>.

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# All White on the

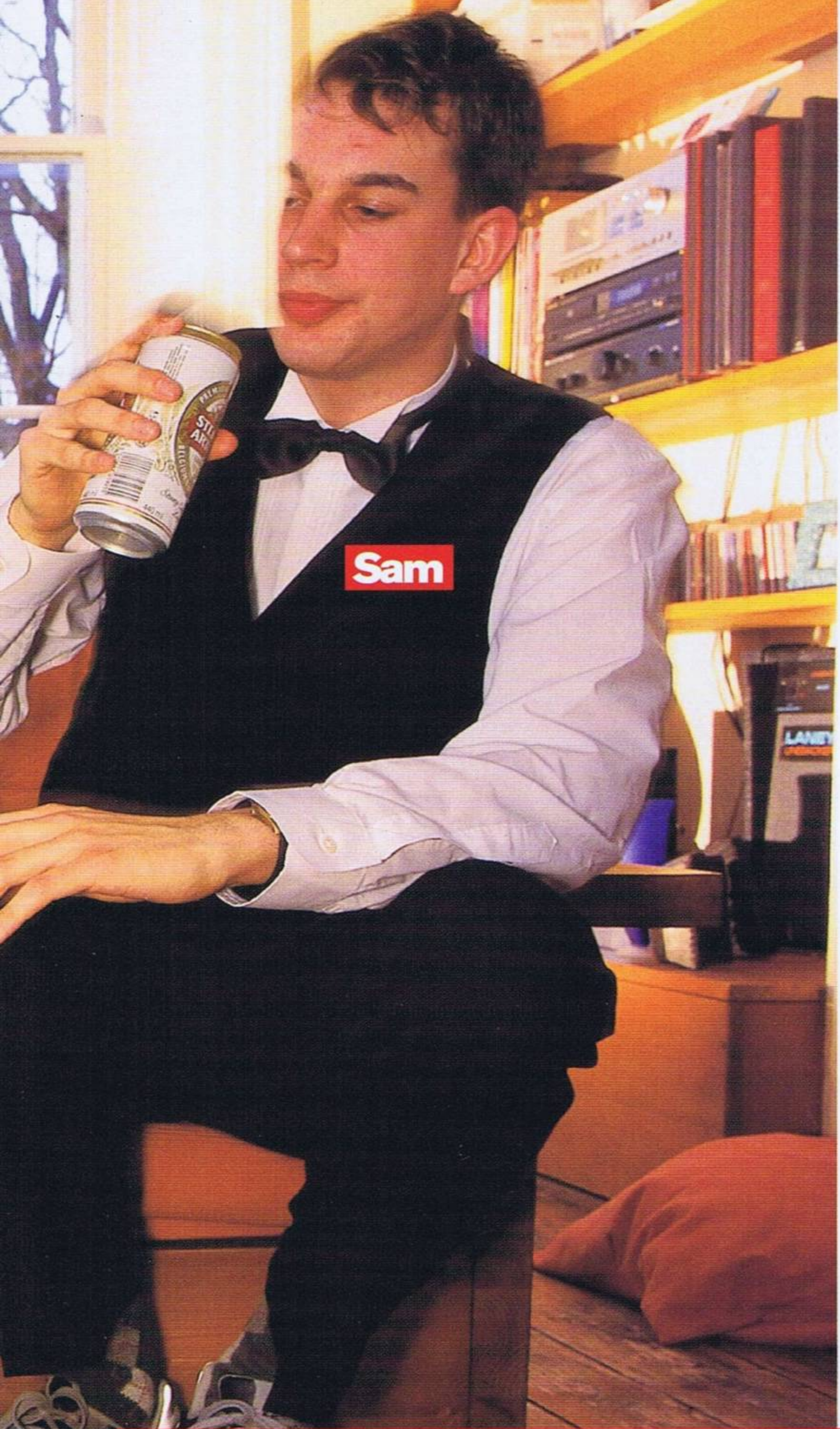


Mark

Jimmy

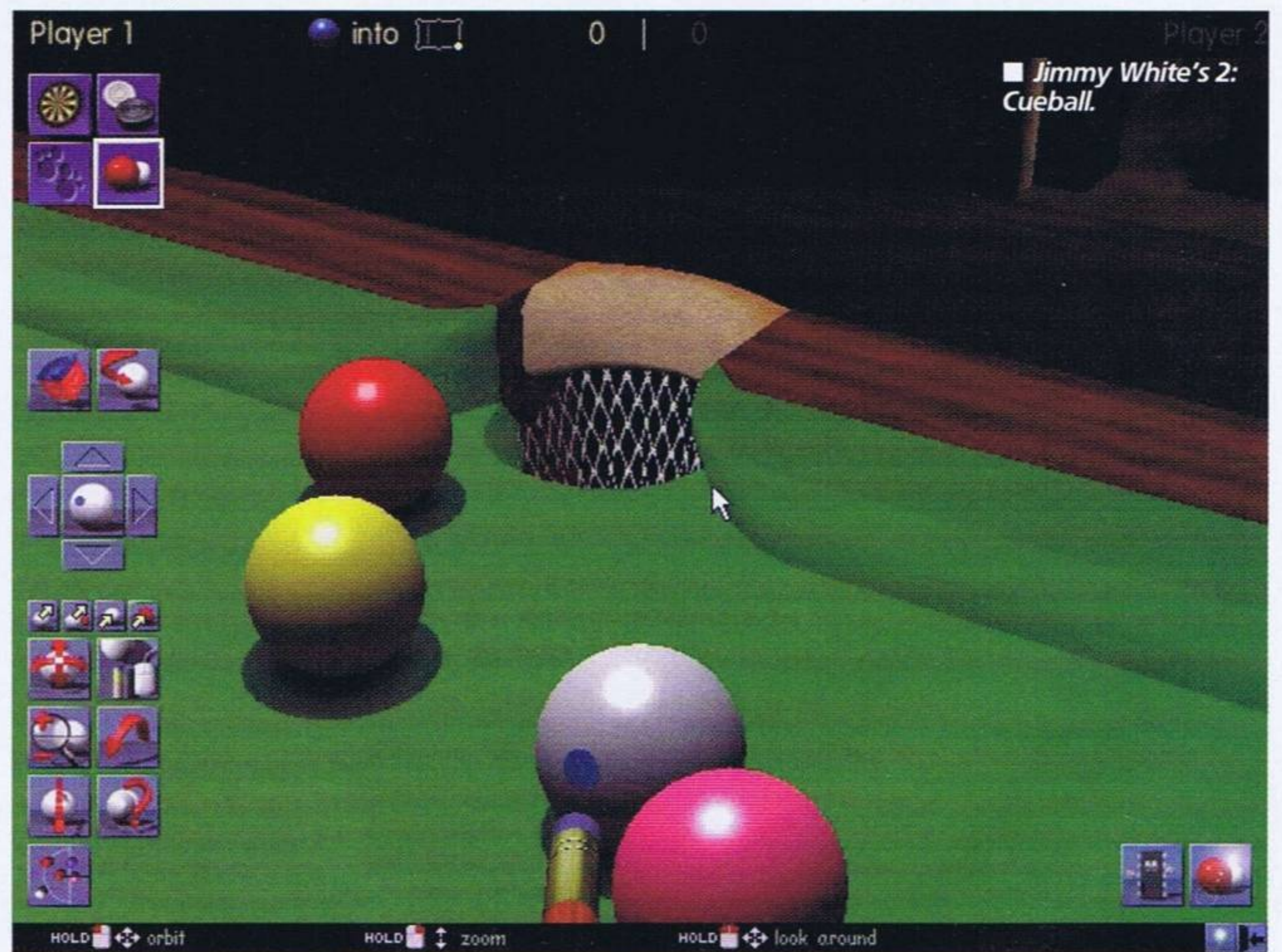
Rich

# night



## Games night

Your host | **Sam Richards**



**It was just another night playing videogames and talking crap. But then in walked Jimmy "The Whirlwind" White brandishing a copy of his latest PlayStation snooker title. "Fancy a game?" says he. "Bring it on" says us.**

PHOTOGRAPHY: JUSTIN SCOBIE

**W**hen Jimmy White's coming round for a PlayStation session, it's difficult to know how to prepare. Jimmy is, after all, a living legend. He's the people's favourite snooker pro, the greatest player never to win the world championship, and after 19 years as a professional, is still ranked in the Top 20. Could "The Whirlwind" be satisfied with the simple pleasures of Stella and Pringles?

Then again, Jimmy has always shunned ceremony. He learned his trade in the seedy snooker halls of Tooting and Brixton, which is where he still hangs out. He says he hates posh restaurants, feeling more at home in

spit and sawdust taverns with a decent pint and a plate of chips. So we stick with the lager, crisps, and a worryingly large bottle of Smirnoff (we're told it's Jimmy's favourite tipple). And thankfully, when he arrives, he couldn't have been happier.

### 3.35pm Home

Breezing into the room in a manner which befits his nickname, Jimmy is psyched and ready to play. When he first comes in he declines a drink but five minutes later he's filled a pint glass to the rim and begins hoovering the Pringles.

**Jimmy:** "I can drink today 'cos I'm not driving. Have to watch that, see, 'cos a couple of years ago I got caught four-times over the limit. I was being chased by the police and I tried to hide by driving my car into the grounds of my mate Ron Wood's house. Except Ron had been burgled the night before and I couldn't get past his new security gates. They stitched me up – said I almost knocked an old guy over, even though it was 4am and there was no-one around. Anyway..."

The game we're playing is Virgin's *Jimmy White's 2: Cueball*, the latest in a series of snooker and pool games created by Awesome Development's Archer MacLean, which began with *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker* for the Amiga back in 1991.

**Jimmy:** "Archer's a bit of a genius at making these games. He used to come and watch me play when he was a youngster and he's tried to get some of my personality into the games."

**Rich:** "I remember the first Amiga game. It

## The joypad jury

**One of these men has won millions in prize money, the others are sad losers**

■ The original idea was to play through a range of pool and snooker sims with a professional for your benefit. These are the men to blame for pissing away the feature down the pub.



**Mark**  
He may look like Stephen Hendry, but when we said pool, Mark packed his trunks. What a plonker.



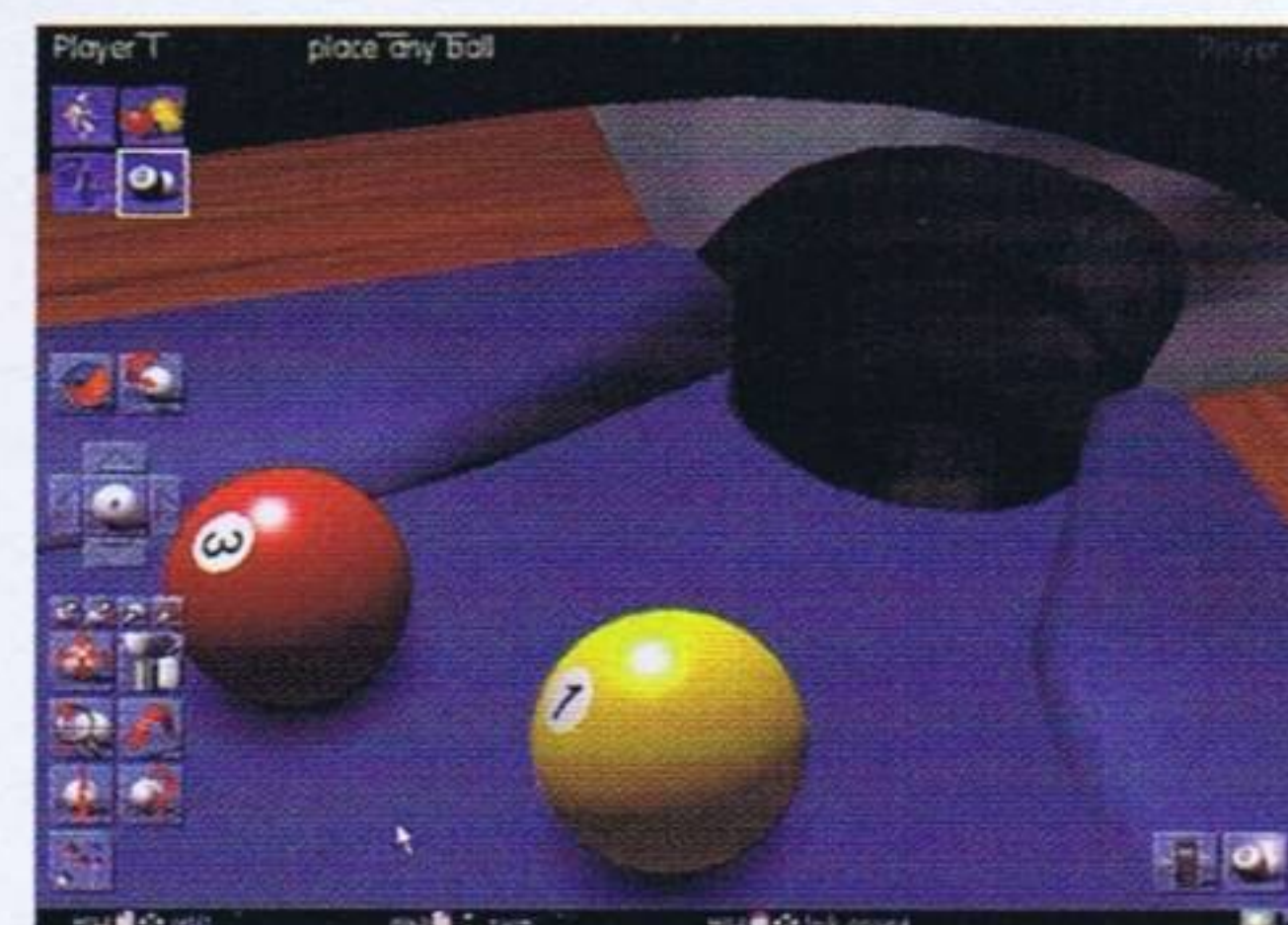
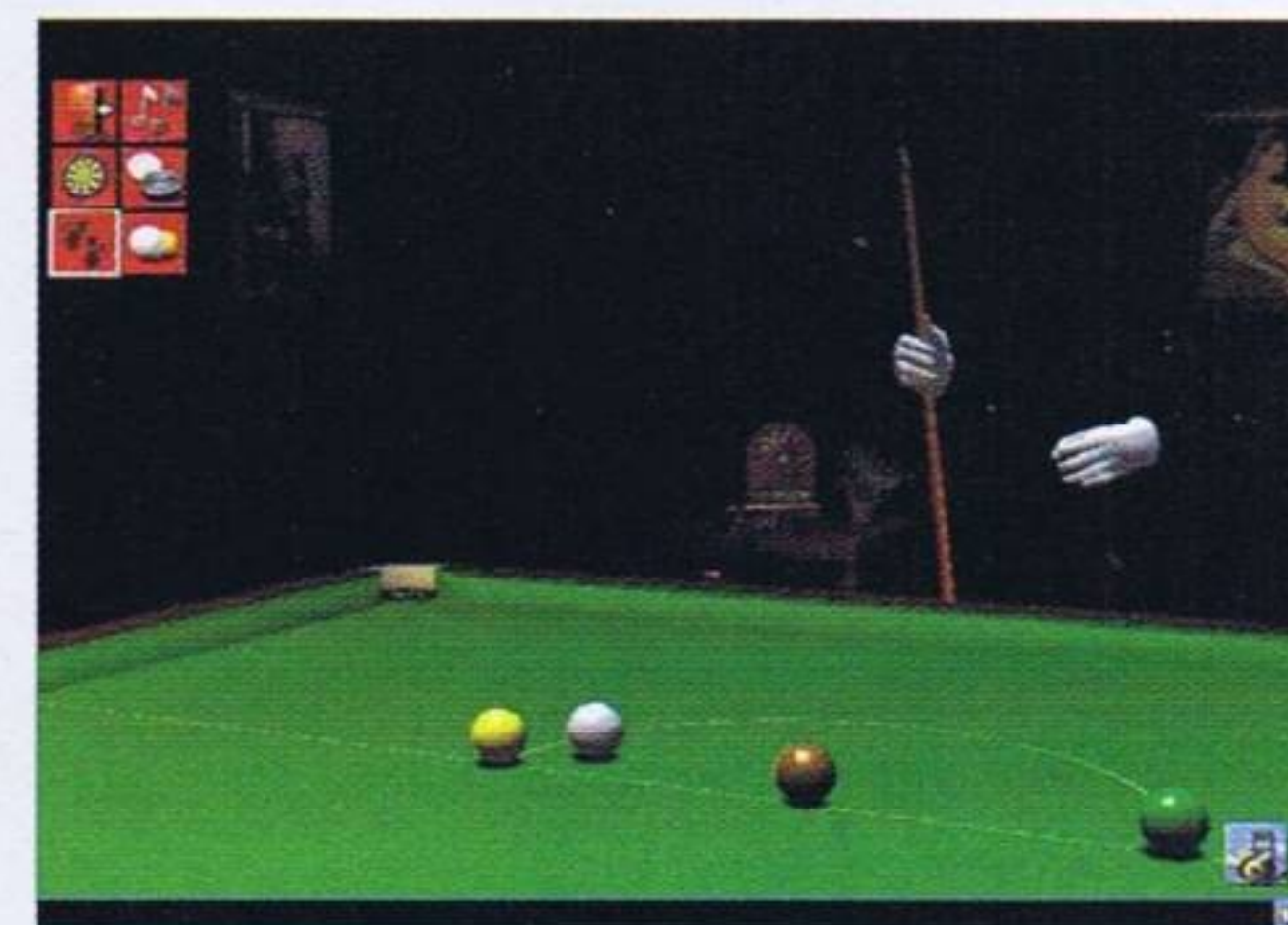
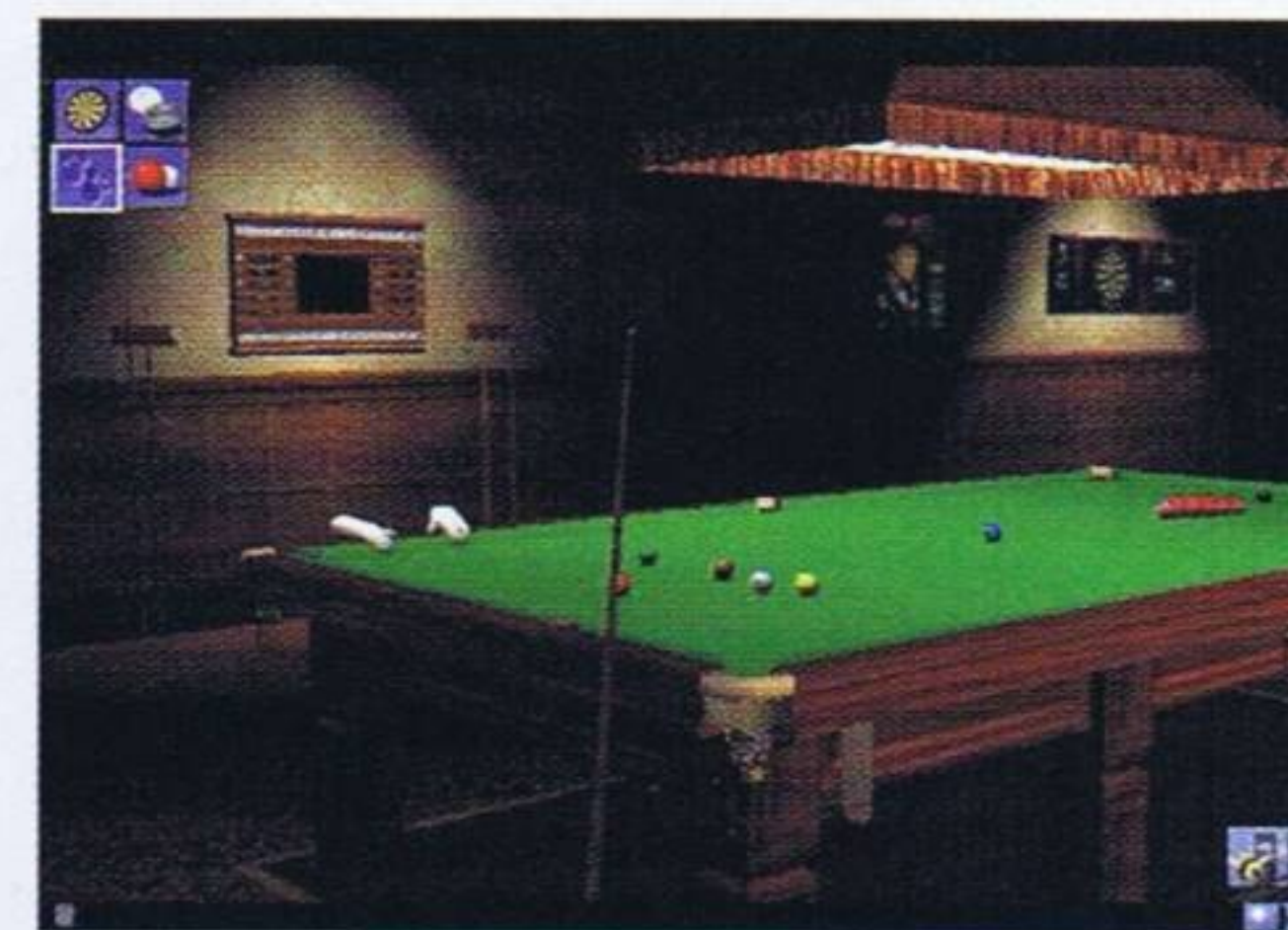
**Jimmy**  
Give Jimmy something to hold and he'll either pot it, drink it or gamble it away. *Arcade* is now clean out of joypads.



**Rich**  
Spent so long getting his dress suit right we didn't have the heart to tell him his new hair looked like the result of a nuclear leak.



**Sam**  
"Name a pocket," Sam demanded. We chose the top right corner, but it turned out the wallet was in his left after all.



was a classic. Inbetween shots the balls waved at you."

**Jimmy:** "Yeah, that was funny. People still come up to me and talk about that. Of course, in the new one there's darts and draughts and all that. Nice extra touches."

**Rich:** "Do you get on well with Archer?"

**Jimmy:** "Yeah, he's a good bloke, a bit of an eccentric. He's got about 14 cars and his best one is a Renault which is done up to be one of the fastest cars on the road. He drives around giving the finger to Porches."

But we're not here for small talk. We're here to play games. *Jimmy White's 2: Cueball* is duly cranked up and *The Whirlwind* is pitted against the collective might of the *Arcade* trio. We opt to play the UK Pool game, simply because it's the easiest to pick-up-and-play. Jimmy's not too familiar with the controls, but when it comes to working out his angles, there's nobody better. The rotational 3D cameras of the game let you get right behind the cueball and view the play just as on a real table, so Jimmy's cue placement is unerring. We toss. Jimmy wins.

**Jimmy:** "I'll set the power bar to 100% for the break. My tactic is to hit 'em as hard as you can and hope something goes in."

A red rolls in the bottom corner but his break ends there. So we're yellows, and for our first shot we call up the help of the game's aiming line. Jimmy's not impressed.

**Jimmy:** "Steady on, that's cheating. You've got to line it up with your eye."

**Mark:** "But it's a tricky shot..."

**Rich:** "Give it here, I can roll the ball in without any messing! Oh, it missed. Sorry"

Jimmy knocks in another easy red, misses his next, we reply with a bungled yellow and just avoid potting the cue ball. It's all a bit scrappy. Then Jimmy starts to get technical.

**Jimmy:** "Right, let's stop mucking about. I

need three-quarters here, a bit of right-hand side and a touch of bottom."

After adjusting the spin on the cue ball, he whacks it, misses, only for his red to rebound into the left middle. His resulting smug grin says "played for and got" but we don't believe a word of it. "The Greatest Natural Talent To Ever Play The Game Of Snooker"? Spawny git, more like.

**Jimmy:** "Ah, well that's not *my* fault – the game didn't work properly. 95 per cent of the time the angles are perfect, but occasionally the balls can be a bit strange."

**Rich:** "That's a terrible excuse. Normally it's our Editor's preserve to blame his ineptitude on the computer, but you've stepped straight into his shoes."

**Jimmy:** "Okay, no more excuses. I'll just get on and clear the table because there's no way I'm losing to a man with yellow hair."

The game progresses in haphazard fashion until, with one ball each left on the table, Mark plays a poetic snooker (he's as amazed as everyone else) which Jimmy escapes from with a stupendous massé shot (the ponce). With Jimmy's last red sunk, his black hovers over the middle pocket. Without even glancing at the top view, he nonchalantly rolls it in.

**Jimmy:** "Classic!"

**Rich:** "That was all your fault, Mark. Other than that one fluke, every time you tried to cut a shot, you screwed it like an idiot."

**Mark:** "I blame it on Sam. He's the one who's played this before. I just wanted to play the draughts game anyway."

Calming my fellow team members, I remind them that at least we've lost to Jimmy White, which isn't nearly as embarrassing as losing to Neil (who's "doing important Editor stuff" tonight). Still, it's undoubtedly the last time we play as a team

■ **There's no shame in losing to a man whose face is printed on the game's box. Even if he fluked it.**

for Games Night. Jimmy, meanwhile, parades around as though he's just won that elusive World Championship, and is wearing a grin that now stretches far beyond smug. Then Mark says something very foolish indeed. **Mark:** "Okay then 'Whirlwind', if indeed that is your real name, enough of your posturing. Let's see what you're like at the real thing."

Yes, *Arcade* has just challenged Jimmy White to a game of pool. Beers downed it's off to the pub, fearing the worst.

## 5.51pm Pub

We're stood at the bar, waiting for a pool table to free up, and while the pints are slipping down we take an opportunity to prod the man White for some dirt on his

## "Hit 'em as hard as possible and hope something goes in."

fellow snooker professionals. We try to find out just how sane Higgins really was (well...), if Stephen Hendry is a robot (well...) and if he would give Dennis Taylor a character reference (well...). People in the pub are looking at us a little funnily.

**Mark:** "By the way, how come we have to sit here wearing these stupid outfits?"

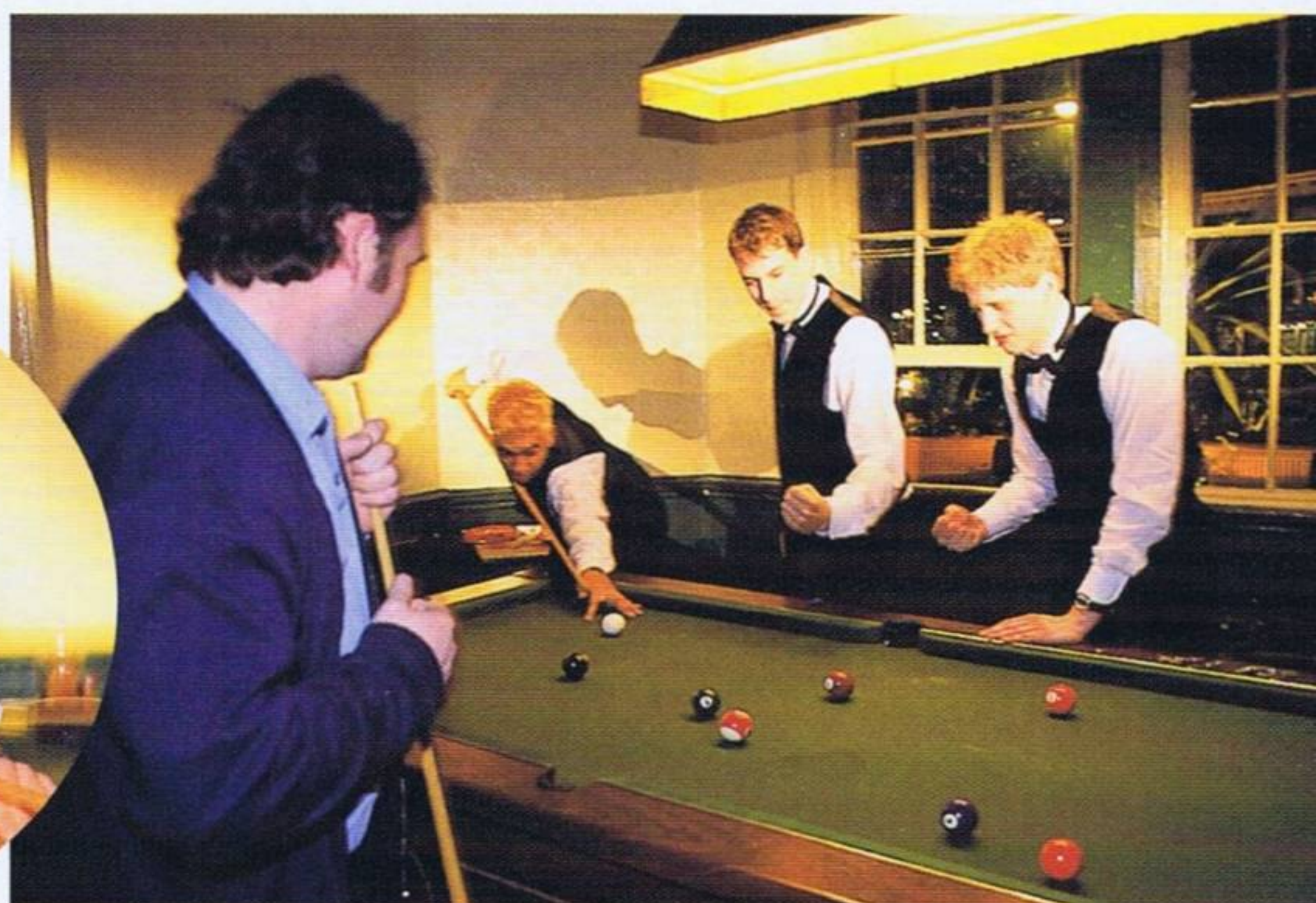
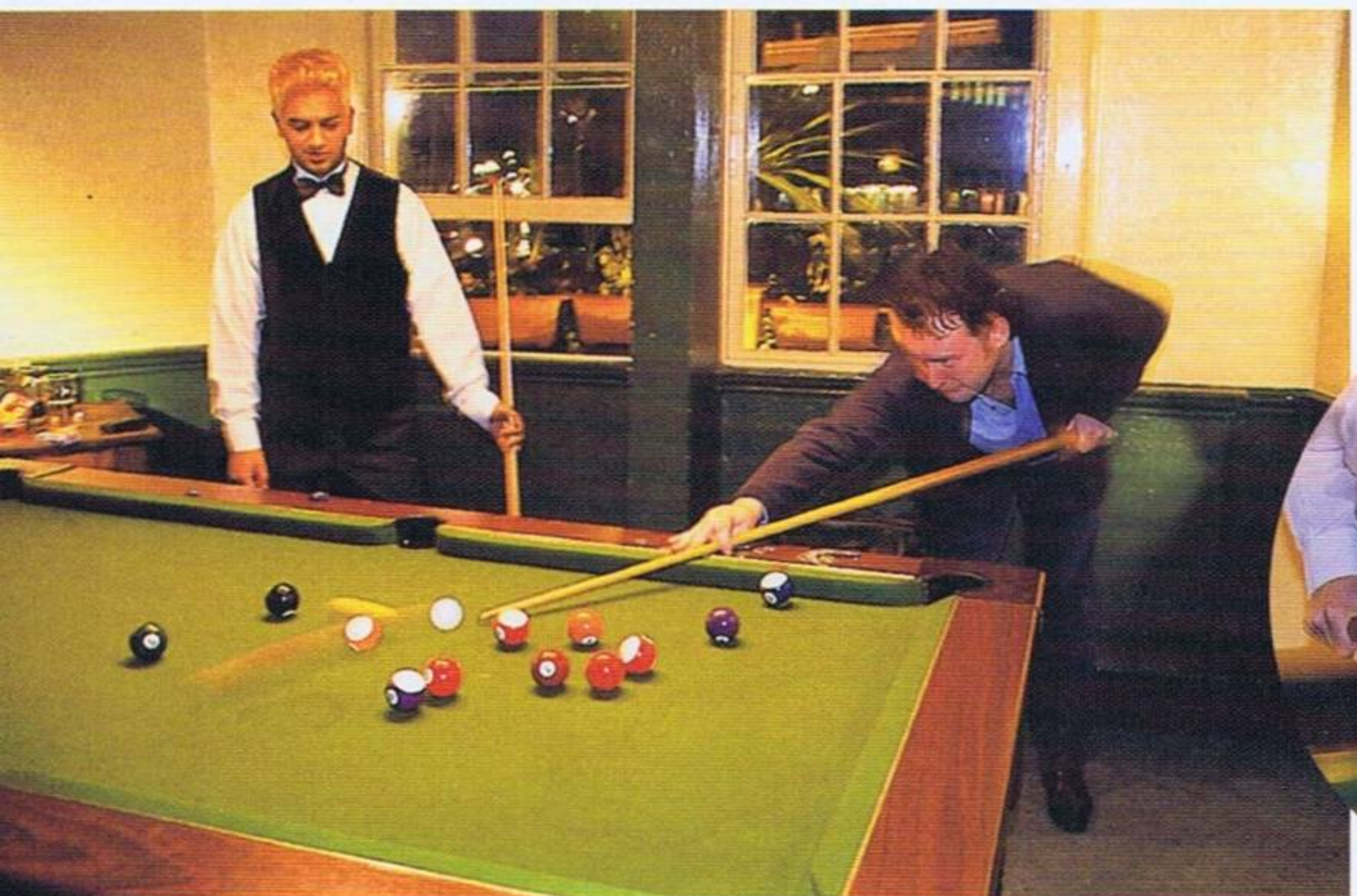
**Rich:** "Neil made us do it."

**Jimmy:** "I think that's funny. You look the part. You could get mistaken for pros, you know. Me, I only wear the dress suit when I have to, get it on five minutes before my match. There are always ways around the restrictions. Alex hated wearing the suits, so one day he turned up with a doctor's note saying that the bow tie gave him a neck





■ Can you guess who here is a professional snooker player and who isn't? Clue: you can tell by the relaxed expressions of quiet confidence on the players' faces.



rash and he was allowed not to wear it."

**Mark:** Why are there no American players?

**Jimmy:** "Snooker's never caught on in America because they're used to the showbiz of nine-ball pool, blue tables, jazzy waistcoats, guitar riffs going after every pot and all that. Snooker's a bit slow for them. A few years back they sent over some snooker pros on an exhibition tour to try and add a bit of excitement. But who do they pick? Steve Davis and Terry Griffiths!"

**Rich:** "When we're playing and someone's taking hours over a shot, we always say, 'Who do you think you are, Steve Davis?'"

**Jimmy:** "Right, Richy, right! The authorities have cut down on players boozing when playing, but whenever I'm up against Steve I wish I had a whole pub with me. By the time he's hit the first red, I'm asleep."

**Rich:** "So snooker's cleaning up its act?"

**Jimmy:** "Yeah, but you can never hide the game's roots, which means players like Ronnie O'Sullivan learning the game in the city snooker halls, just like I did. Snooker players will always like a drink, but the drugs problem was just blown out of proportion in the '80s. Neil Foulds got done for using betablockers, when he only took them for his heart condition. He dropped from number four to number 4,000 in the world rankings overnight after the drug was banned. But drugs won't help you. Have a smoke, say, before a game and you'll be taking years over every shot."

**Rich:** "Hmmm. Oh, look, the table's been free for ages."

And so it has. So with a mountain of coins on the side the *Arcade* team is poised to take on one of the best snooker and pool players in the world. But we're on home turf and we fancy our chances. Mark's first up.

Sadly, it has to be noted at this point, if

you remove Mark from his familiar environment (in front of the screen), he tends to whimper like a young child separated from its comfort blanket. Subsequently he's about as good at pool as a blind yak and despite his desperate attempts to alter the rules mid-game (Sample: "The white ball touched a cushion before it hit the red, I think you'll find that's a foul"), Jimmy gives his arse a good hiding.

**Mark:** "Jimmy, do you mind playing on knackered tables in dodgy pubs?"

**Jimmy:** "No, I love it. I'll play anywhere. There was a time when I owed quite a lot of money to Ladbrokes, so they sent me out on an exhibition tour of little local pubs where I had to play drunks for £25 a night. It was chaos. They were meant to collect a list of players two weeks beforehand, but people would just turn up on the night and scratch other people's names off. Word got around that Ladbrokes were giving away a free cue to every girl who turned up to play so at some places we found whole pool teams dressed up as women."

Next to rack 'em is the boy Pelley, who profits from Jimmy kindly stroking the balls gingerly around the table before finally trying to pot the black off four cushions while simultaneously sipping a large vodka tonic. The cue ball goes down and Rich (in the absence of a circle, placing the white inside the "official" beer stain) uses his two shots wisely and clears up. We chalk that up as a victory for *Arcade* and it's 1-1.

As I gingerly fumble with the 50ps for my go, Jimmy regales us with tales of how he spent his wedding night in the cells after being nabbed with looters during the Brixton riots, and how he went AWOL in Dublin for seven weeks and hid from his wife in a cupboard.

■ "What kind of a stance is that? You look like you're changing a tyre. Sort it out."

**Jimmy:** "Are you ready yet? Let's play."

I break pretty well, but Jimmy's soon in amongst the yellows. Sneakily covering a few pockets, he steadies himself for a four-ball finish leaving me scraping baize with three balls left on the table. Such is the ruthlessness of a master.

2-1 to Jimmy then, but it's time to play our wild card. Neil has turned up for a game after practising in his local all evening (that "important Editor stuff" he spoke of). With everyone (Jimmy included) already having hurdled the booze barrier, his chances of taking a scalp will never be better.

After a fearsome break, Neil takes the initiative and although Jimmy fights back, his balls are all bunched together along one cushion, forcing him to consider a safety shot to a chorus of boos from the *Arcade*

## Jimmy tries to pot the black off four cushions, simultaneously sipping a large vodka tonic

ranks. Jimmy responds with a couple of spectacular plants, but he's starting to lose it, complaining that the table is "pissed". Its roll is indeed unpredictable, but fortune favours the less beveraged. With two of Jimmy's balls left on the table, Neil nominates a dangerous double for the black. It hits one, two, three, four cushions before tumbling in. It may be a fluke, but it's *our* fluke.

It's celebration time for the *Arcade* team. A 2-2 draw against *The Whirlwind* is definitely a result. Jimmy's not too disconsolate either and there's a little glint in his eye suggesting he was just toying with us. We'll never know for sure.



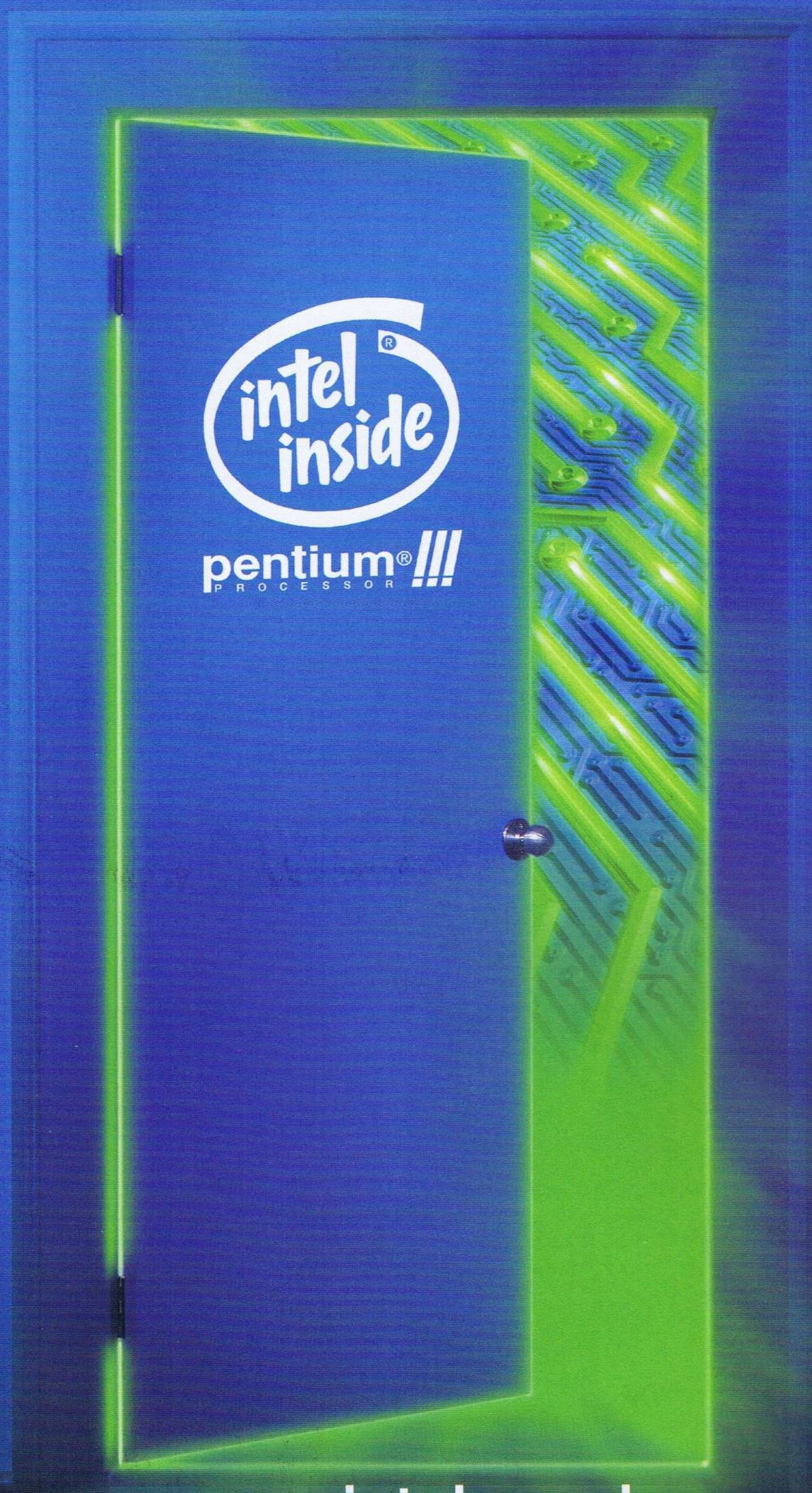
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# KICK ASS

## BECOME A DEMON GAME PLAYER OVERNIGHT

### HOW TO PLAY DIRTY AT...

Words: | Andrew Collins

# RIDGE RACER 4

Format: PlayStation | Publisher: SCEE | Developer: Namco | Price: £44.99 | Players: 1-4 | ★★★★★

■ Unlike the early days of the *Ridge Racer* series, which required a knowledge of driving tantamount to diddly squat, *Ridge Racer Type 4* requires that you demonstrate rather more

driving expertise. So, for if you're too young to have ever climbed behind the wheel of a car or are preparing to take your third driving test, here are a few pointers that will enable

you to get your car around the courses with the minimum level of stress.

## DRIVING GUIDE



■ Keep as close to the edge of the corner as possible – it makes straightening up much easier round the bend.

## POWERSLIDING

■ If you're a long-time *Ridge Racer* then powersliding should be second nature, but if you've yet to learn the Namco knack, then here are a few pointers to help you acquire the most valuable skill in the game.

Since *Ridge 4* features both Grip and Drift cars (powerslide specialists) there are two very different ways to powerslide. We'll deal with the Drift cars first. Make sure you follow the instructions to the letter.

### Drift cars

#### Method 1

1. Release the accelerator button.
2. Turn.
3. Hit the accelerator immediately after the direction button.
4. Steer warily out of the corner.

#### Method 2

1. Turn.
2. Release the accelerator button.
3. Hit the accelerator just after pressing the direction button.
4. Tap left or right to align.

■ With Drift cars you should try and take the corner as early as possible. When you feel like the nose of the car is about to scratch the side of the track you know you've got this system sussed. Remember, though, just because you can powerslide doesn't mean you should do it every time. It's easy to waste too much time on breaking, so use it only on the really tight corners. To practice these we recommend that you have a go or two on the

first corner in Heaven and Hell; it's perfect for wannabe 'sliders.

### Grip cars

1. Turn.
2. Press the brake making sure that you keep the accelerator held down.
3. Now constantly jab the brake until your motor is happily all the way round the bend.

■ With a Grip car you shouldn't try and turn too early as you'll

end up smacking into the side of the corner as soon as the tyres start to bite. Once you've got the car round the bend and are starting to straighten up, drop down a gear and the car will accelerate quicker out of the bend. Again, use the first corner on the Heaven and Hell course for practice.

# 20 GAMES TIPPED THIS MONTH

Welcome to another Kick Ass; that little yellow section that gives you the big gaming edge. Want to know how to thrash the opposition in *Ridge Racer 4*? Beat the bad guys in *Resident Evil 2*? Get more out of your little purple wonder? (We mean your Game Boy.) Then come on in.

## PLAYSTATION

- P74 Ridge Racer 4
- P78 Resident Evil 2
- P83 Crash Bandicoot 2
- P83 G-Police
- P84 Akuji the Heartless

## PC

- P78 Resident Evil 2
- P83 G-Police
- P83 Sim City 3000
- P84 Carmageddon

## NINTENDO 64

- P82 Castlevania
- P83 Virtual Pool
- P84 Twisted Edge

## OTHER SYSTEMS

- P82 Tomb Raider II (Mac)
- P85 Sega Rally 2 (D'cast)

## COLOR GAME BOY

- P80 Harvest Moon
- P80 Zelda: Link's Awakening
- P80 A Bug's Life
- P81 Tetris DX
- P81 Mortal Kombat 4
- P81 Wario Land 2
- P81 Oddworld Adventures
- P81 Frogger

## NOW PLAYING

Finished with a game? Squeezed every ounce of enjoyment out of it? Pah! There's more.

- Including
- P82 How to play *Legend of Zelda* with a Link's-eye view.
- P83 Tips, straight from the maker of *Micro Machines 64*.
- P84 Our gameplay challenges – can you top them?
- P85 The making of *Max Power Racing*.

## CORNERING

### Powering out

There are a number of different ways to get round a corner but this is the one we recommend you try most of the time. The basic idea is to slow into the corner in a straight line, then as you get past the middle of the bend (the vertex) turn the steering wheel and accelerate out and away. The principle behind this system is that the car should slow down just enough to get maximum traction on the course, meaning a quicker turn

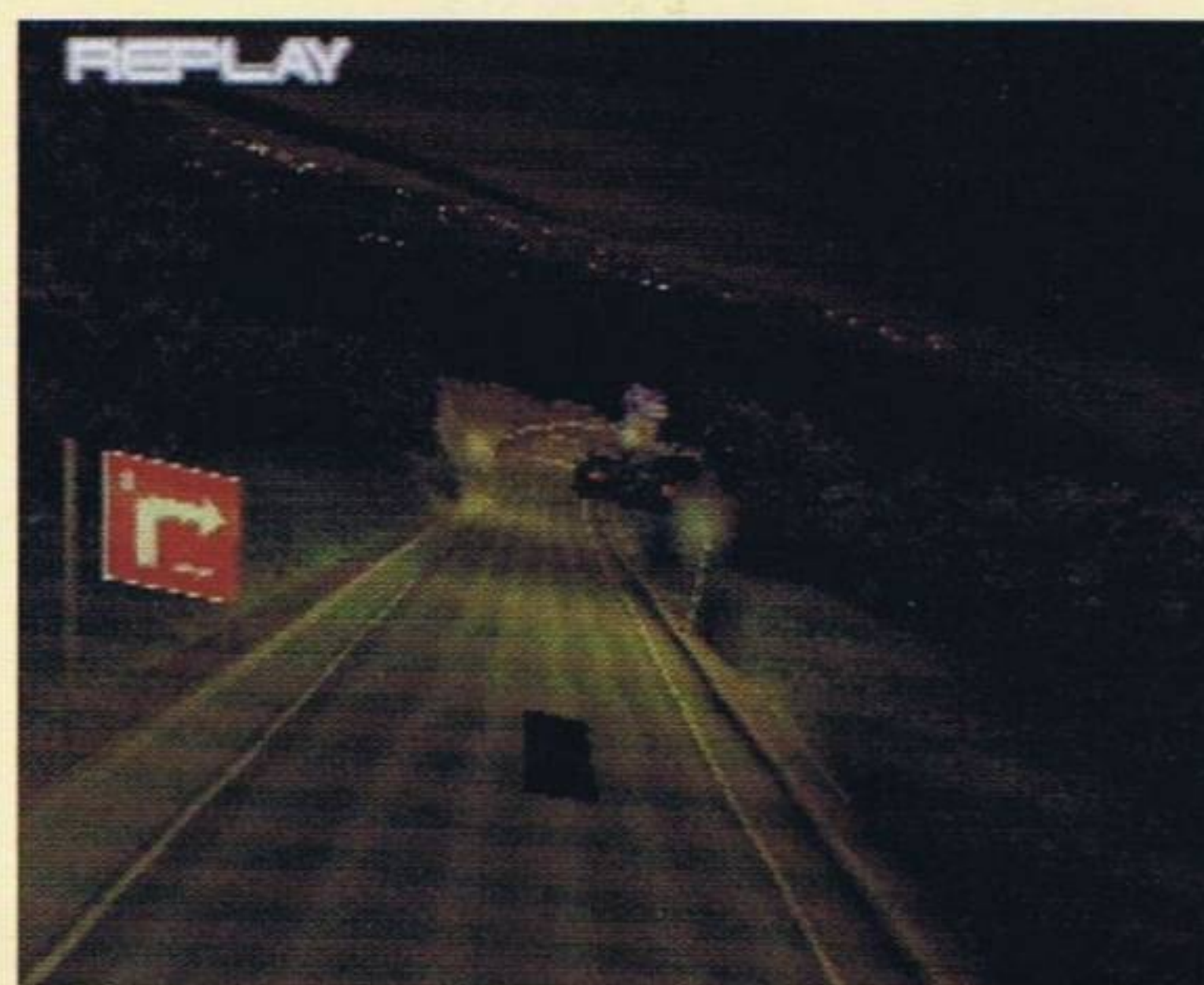
and better acceleration. Be warned though, that this style of cornering does take a few goes to get right – expect to smack into a lot of concrete. Try to imagine yourself sat in the driver's seat and wait until the vertex gets level with your shoulder to time it just right.

### Clipping the apex

The most efficient way to get your car around a corner is to try and square off as much of the corner as is possible. To do this

you should approach the corner from the opposite side of the track and then aim right for the middle of it, trying to ride over the vertex then head out for the opposite side of the course again. Using this method reduces the dramatic change of angle required to complete the corner, so reducing the need for you to slow down.

## FOUR-WHEEL DRIFT



You can achieve a four-wheel drift by oversteering during the deceleration on the way into the corner. As the back of the car starts to break away, the rear wheels start to skid and the nose of the car heads towards the inside of the corner so neutralise the steering and press accelerate. This will take the car through the corner with all wheels sliding. The more powerful the car, the better it is for this trick.



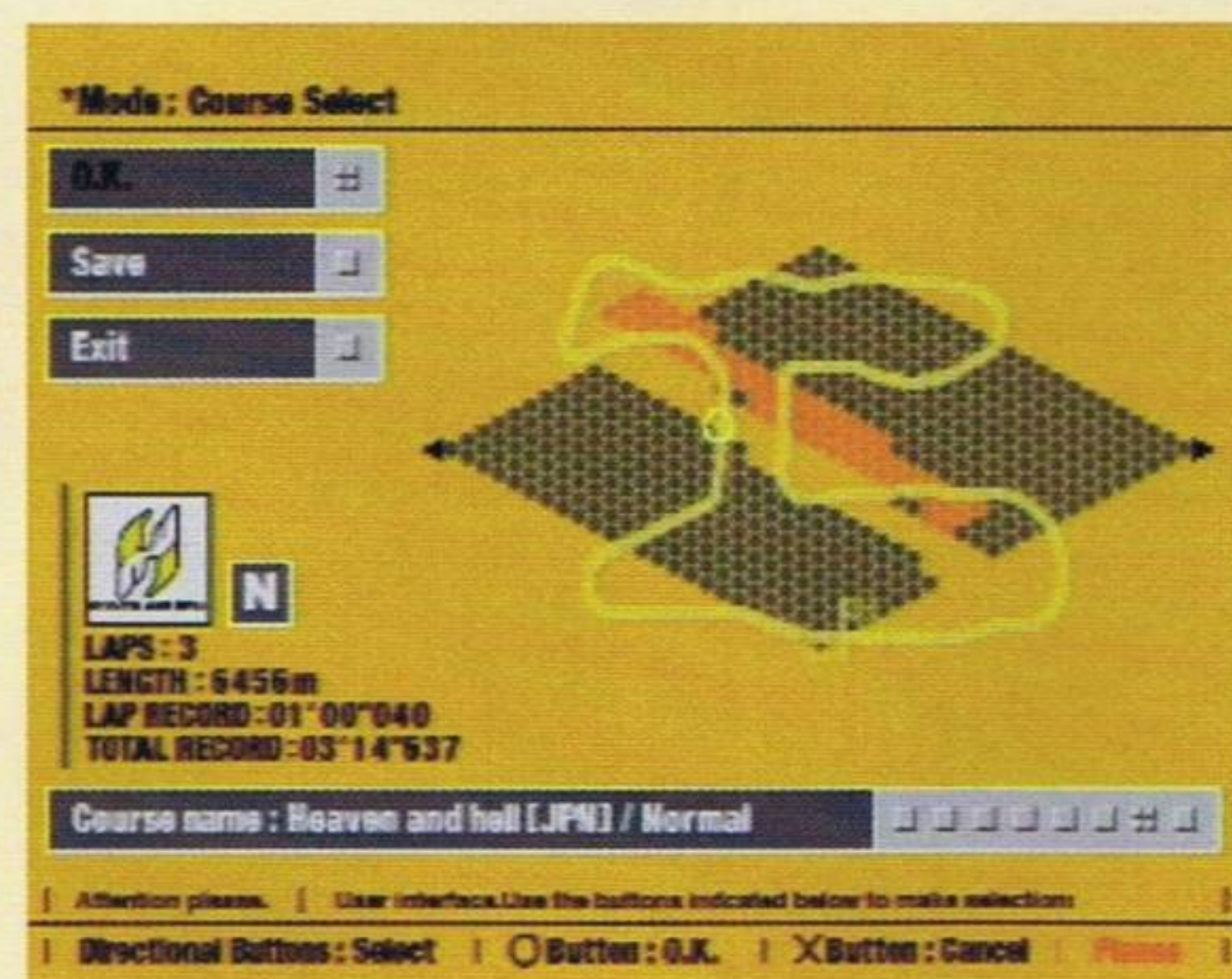
## GETTING OUT OF A SKID



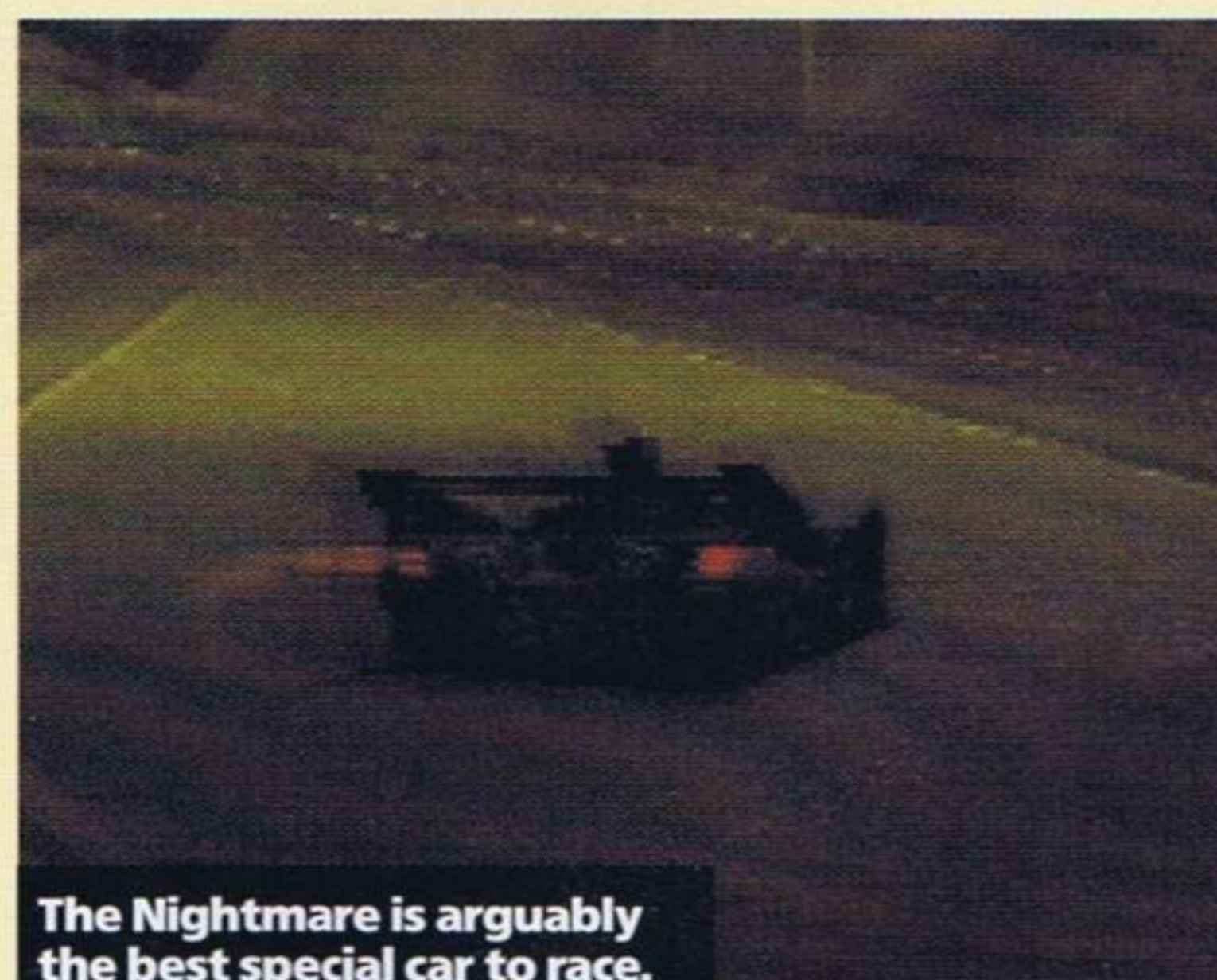
When you fall into a skid there is a foolproof way to get out of it, provided you can start turning quickly enough. If your car enters the corner too fast, the rear wheels will start to skid, causing a spin. To stop this, steer into the direction of the skid. This should stop the car from skidding out and will leave you with a much better chance of getting round the track in good time.



Heaven and Hell (right) is a great course for testing out all your new-found driving skills. Try the reverse version when you're feeling confident.



## SLIPPY GEARS



The Nightmare is arguably the best special car to race.

In the faster cars, usually the 04-level ones, there is a tendency for the car to slide right up to the top of the gear range if you overskid on a corner. You'll know immediately when this happens, as the car engine will start to scream and the power will go out of the car. You can either simply wait to slow down or dip the brake button a little bit to bring the revs down low enough to drop into a lower gear and accelerate away. We recommend the second method, as this will help you regain control of the car at the same time.

# HOW TO PLAY DIRTY AT... RIDGE RACER 4

## TWO-PLAYER TACTICS

Now you've read through all the normal driving techniques we reckon you're going to need, here are a few slightly more, well... *underhand*, methods you can use. These tricks might not make you the most popular player around, but don't worry; you'll finish the day with an armful of trophies to polish.

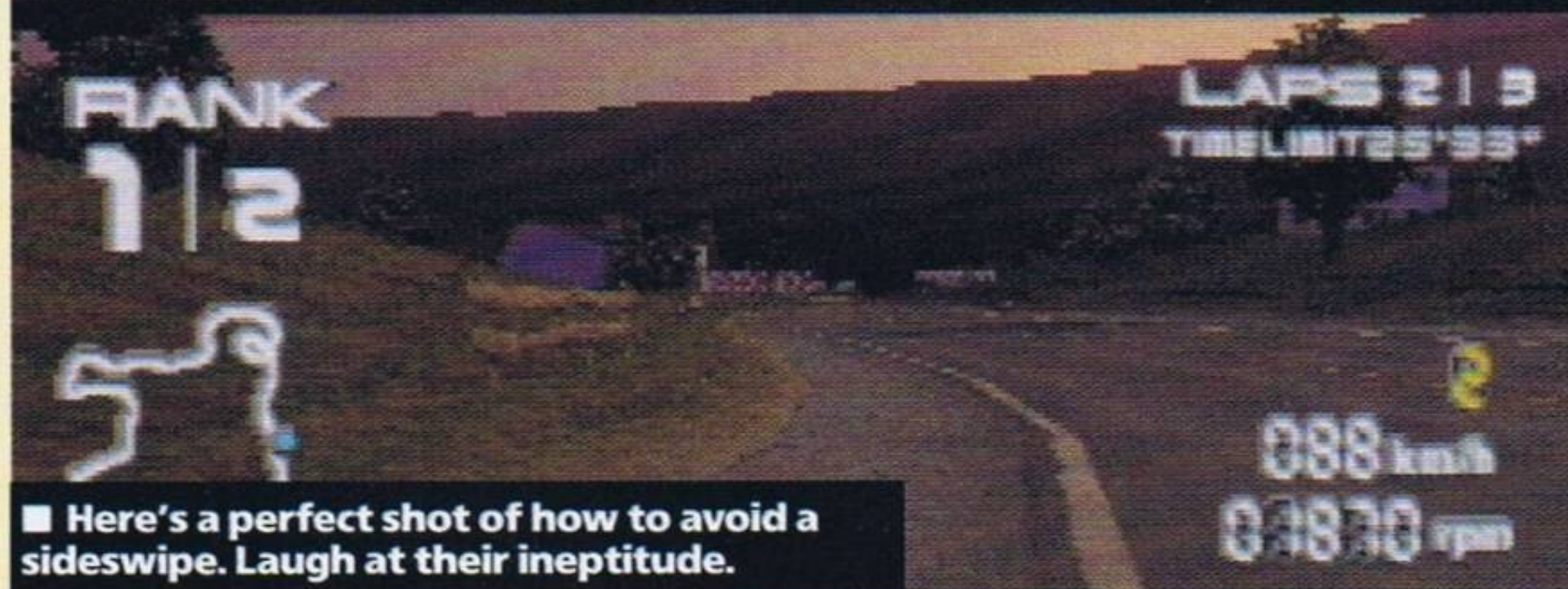


### SMACK 'EM

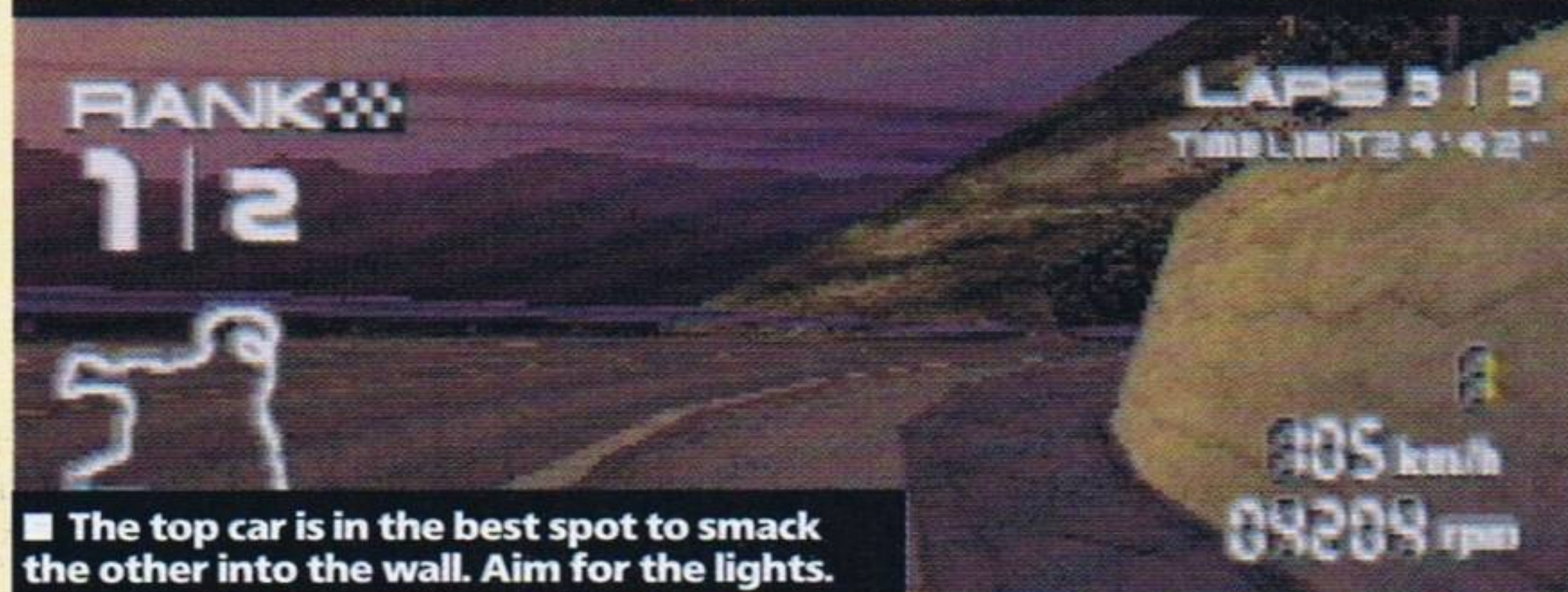
When you're driving neck-and-neck with the other racer there's a tried and tested method that are almost guaranteed to put a few yards between you and the opposition. First switch to the outside view (it's not as good for racing, but much easier for cheating), then edge as close to the opposing car as you dare (until you're right next to them).

From here you have two options. For the easier one, push violently in the direction of the other car, which should almost certainly peel away in shock. If you've been sneaky enough you should have caught the driver by surprise, making their reaction even stronger and probably throwing them into a skid for good measure. If someone tries this against you, jab on the brakes and steer into them just before impact. If you time this correctly the other car will fly across the front of you and crash into the side of the course, dramatically reducing their momentum.

The second option requires a much greater knowledge of the courses, as you're going to use them for maximum damage. When you've pulled level with the car keep right along side it until you see a bend in the distance. Now all you have to do is take the tightest racing line possible through the corner and the other driver will have no option but slam on the brakes or hit the wall. Just make sure you stay on the outside of the bend, otherwise your opponent could try this trick on you.



Here's a perfect shot of how to avoid a sideswipe. Laugh at their ineptitude.



The top car is in the best spot to smack the other into the wall. Aim for the lights.

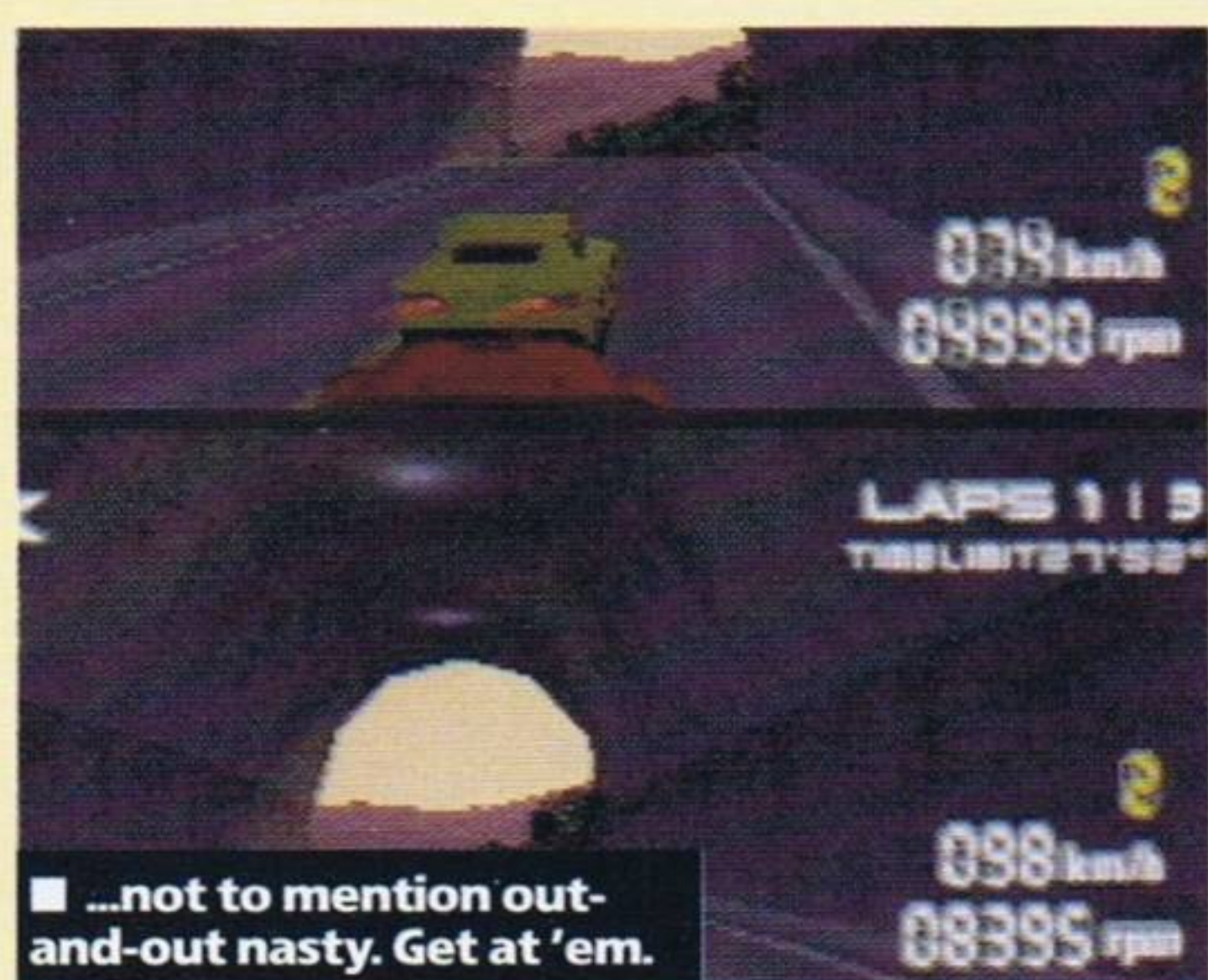
### GET YOUR MATES IN

## FOUR-PLAYER FUN

Namco hasn't made much of this feature, but if you connect two PlayStations together (via the link-up cable) and pop two copies of Ridge 4 in the machines you can play a four-player time trial game. Go on and try it!



Four-player games are often very close...

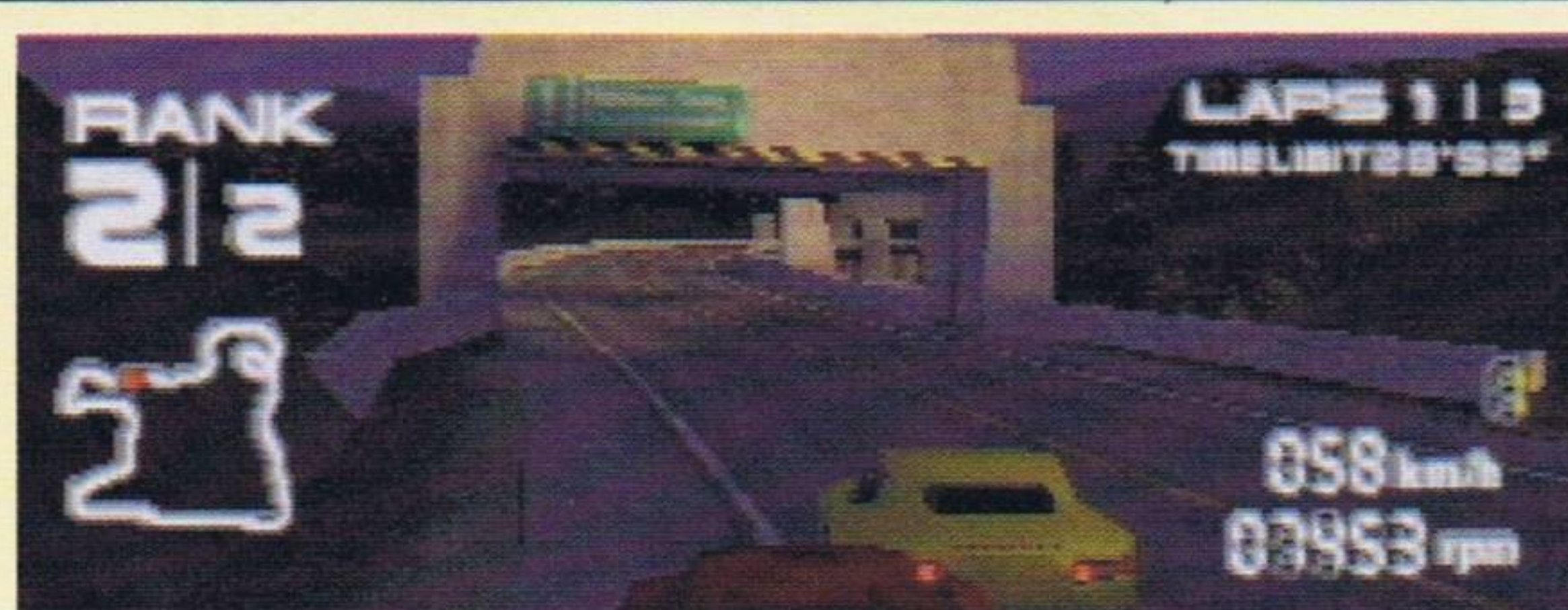


...not to mention out-and-out nasty. Get at 'em.

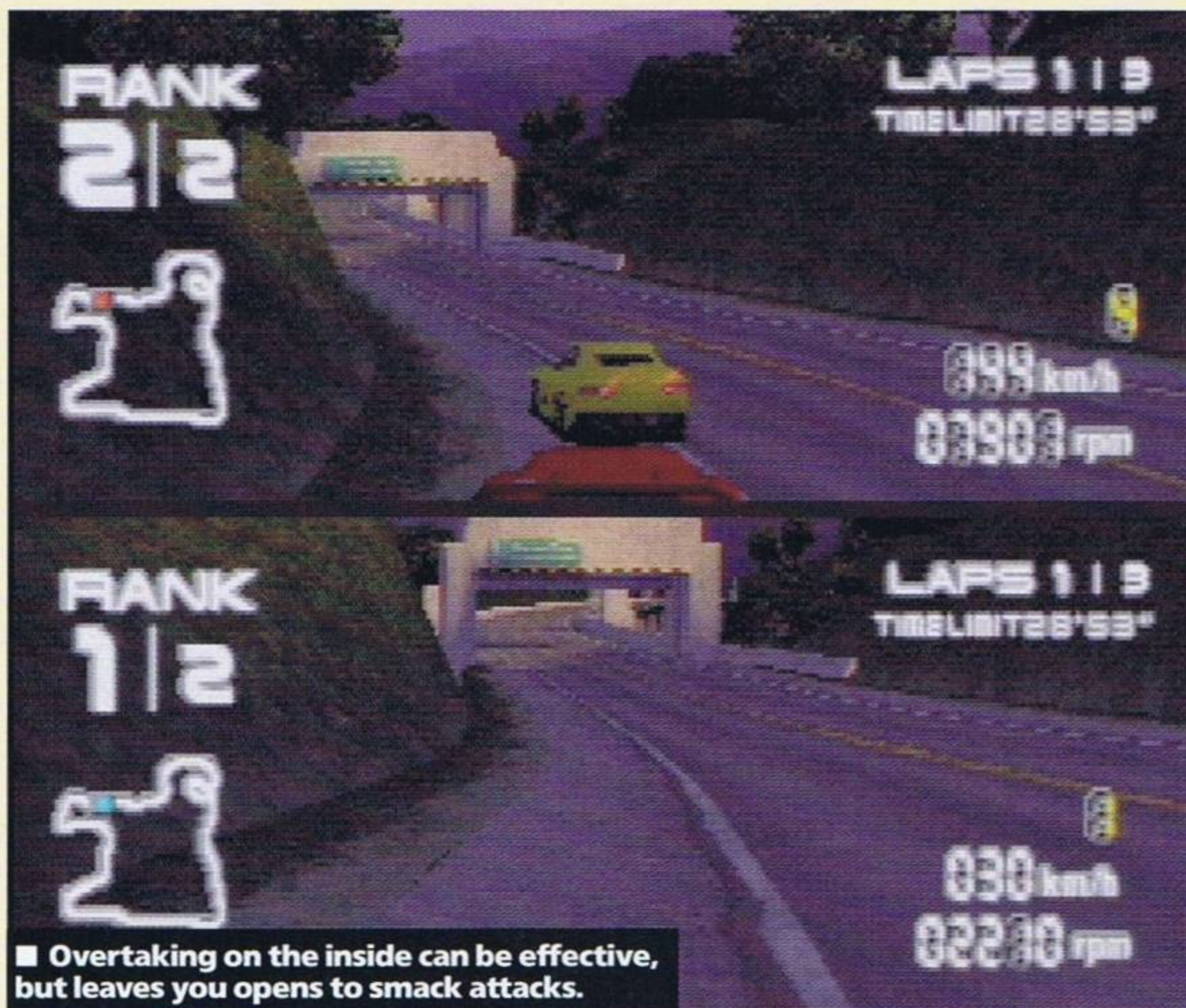
### GETTING OUT OF A SKID

If the unthinkable should happen and you find yourself following your mate there are a couple of tricks you can use to get in front. The first one is pretty simple. As you go to overtake, give the leading car a quick bash on the rear (either the left or the right brake light) and the shock will knock them sideways. Try this a couple more times and your friend should be so edgy that you should easily be able to overtake them without any challenge.

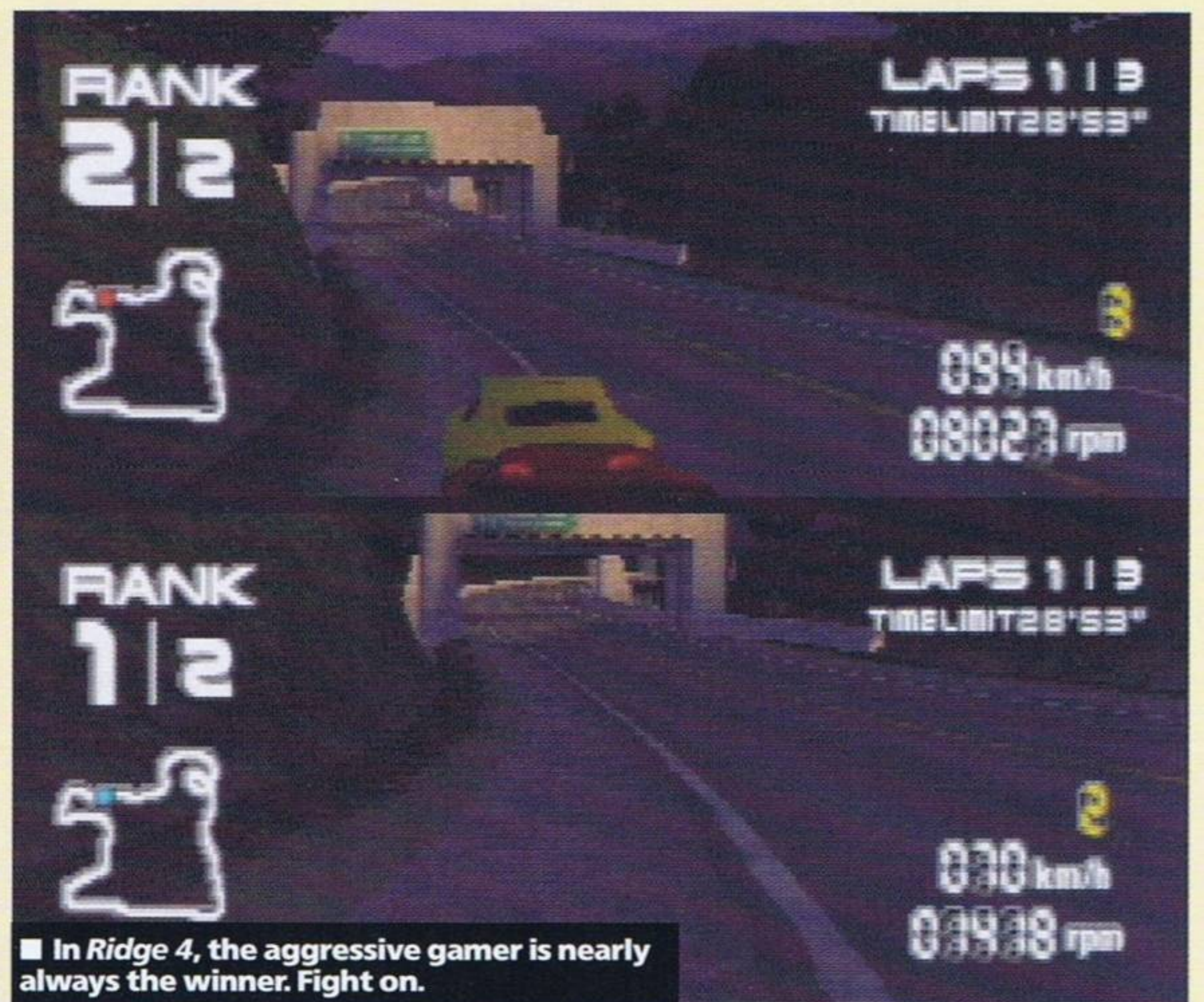
For a more sinister version of the trick, try it when you're following a car over jumps. If you catch it just right (when they are airborne) your opponent will have serious trouble trying to get back on the racing line in time to stop you taking the lead.



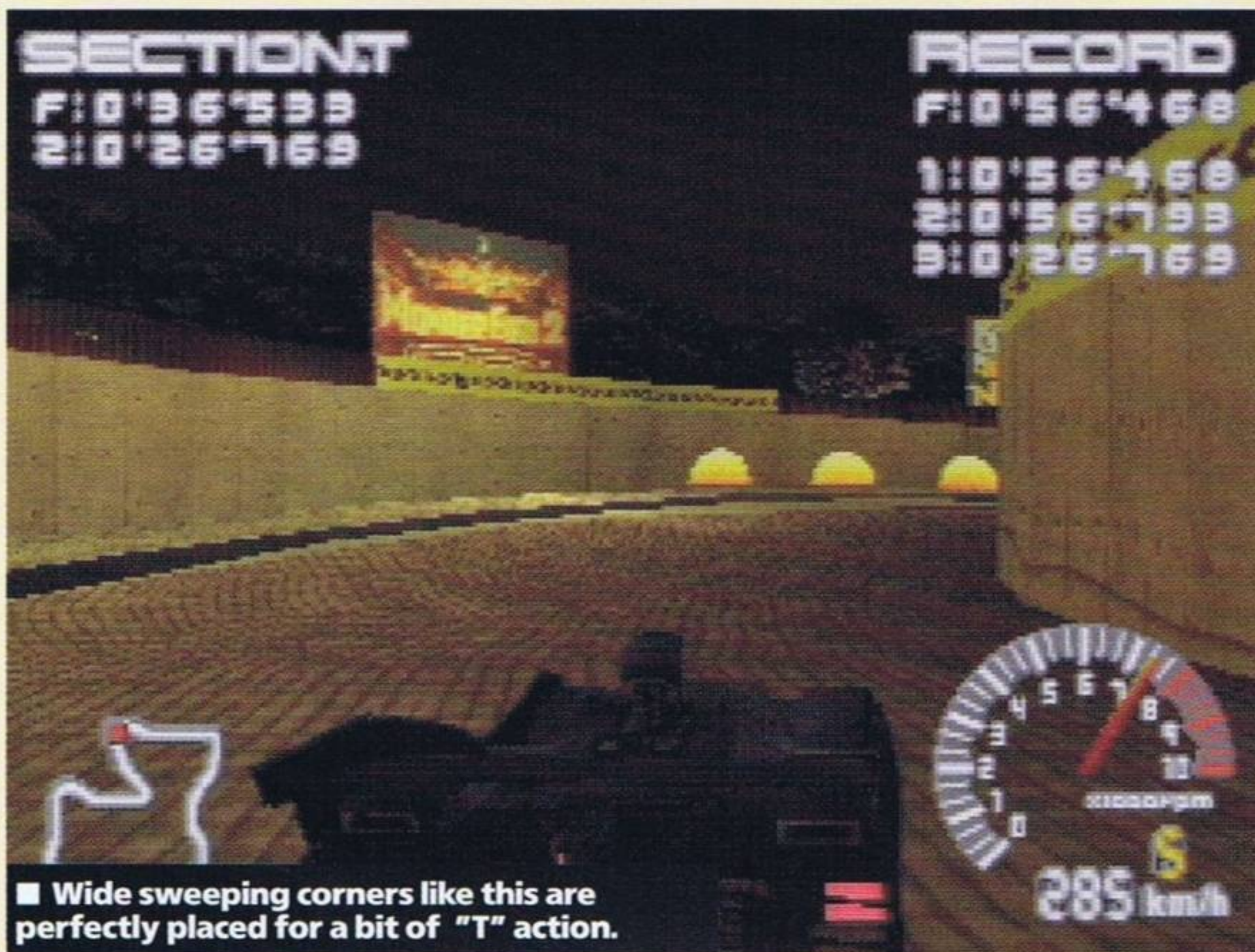
If you are following the leader, pay attention to where they take the bends then try and take them that little bit later. After two laps of this you should be neck-and-neck with them, ripe for you to overtake and win.



■ Overtaking on the inside can be effective, but leaves you opens to smack attacks.



■ In Ridge 4, the aggressive gamer is nearly always the winner. Fight on.



■ Wide sweeping corners like this are perfectly placed for a bit of "T" action.

### CROSSING THE T

■ If you don't mind, we'd like to teach you a little something about naval history. This might not be exactly what you were expecting, but please bear with us, there's a point to it. Stop shuffling at the back there!

During the two World Wars one of the most effective battle techniques used as part of ocean warfare was the principle of "Crossing the T". The aim of this was to force an enemy ship into a series of manoeuvres that would bring it sailing right across the bow of the chasing ship (hence the T shape). When this happened the gunners had the entire enemy ship to aim a broadside at, from their own, relatively safe, end-on position, and it wasn't long after this that the defending ship started to

sink. This was a very effective technique and, incredible as it is to believe it, it can be easily adapted for use in R4.

If you're chasing a car and the driver powerslides round a corner, don't bother braking, just slam straight into their door (you won't suffer any damage). This hit will knock them off course and will slow you down enough for you to turn the wheel and take first place. As we're sure you can imagine, this is the most dastardly trick in the book, so use it sparingly if you want keep your friends. Use it every time you play and you'll soon find that you're a very lonely fellow.

■ Perhaps a more kind method of employing the "T" technique is to get right alongside your

opposition then slowly push right into their car. Hit them two or three times then turn right into them, aiming for the front doors. Try this on a thin part of the course and the lack of reverse button in R4 means that your victim will have to spend far too long bashing against the sides to even think about being able to catch you up. Expect to be called a bastard. Several times.

## GAMEPLAY CHALLENGE NOW PLAYING



■ Absolutto makes some of the finest machines in the game. They're also some of the fastest, and recommended for the Time Trials.



# FAST TIMES

Keep up with the competition.

With Ridge Racer 4 firmly ensconced as one of our favourite games of the last few months we've had enough time to get some incredible high scores. Not that we're boasting or anything, but to give you some clue of the sort of times you should be looking to get, here are the fastest we've scored so far. Can you beat them?

Track Name	Lap	Race
Helter Skelter (Japan)	36:819	1:53:383
Wonderhill (Japan)	51:720	2:37:843
Edge of the Earth (USA)	43:124	2:10:279
Out of the Blue (Japan)	42:952	2:10:824
Phantomile (Japan)	22:694	1:08:617
Brightest Nite (USA)	45:671	2:18:579
Heaven and Hell (Japan)	49:758	2:30:516
Shooting Hoops (USA)	23:609	2:24:834



# HOW TO SCORE GRADE A IN...

Words: | Arron Taylor

# RESIDENT EVIL 2

Format: PSX and PC | Publisher: Virgin | Developer: Capcom | Price: £39.99 | Players: 1 | ★★★★★ (PSX), ★★★ (PC)

■ Contender for the title of the Most Frightening Game Ever, *Resident Evil 2* is now available for the PC. Once more there will be trousers filled all over the country, but to make sure you find all the secrets as well as all the scares, *Arcade* brings you this superb guide. These tips work with both the PlayStation and PC versions.

## GET YOUR HANDS ON THE SECRET WEAPONS



Will you take the R. Launcher?  
Yes No

■ Get your gore-drenched hands on the rocket launcher and kiss those mutants goodbye.



■ Hi honey, I'm home!

■ *Resident Evil 2* comes complete with three secret weapons, each awarded when you fulfil certain criteria. Time is very important, but the hardest thing to achieve is the Grade A rating. To do this, you must finish the game in under three hours; save less than 12 times; use no special weapons (weapons that take two spaces in your inventory, like the Flame Thrower or Spark Shot); and, finally, ensure that you don't use any F-Aid sprays (it's completing the game without the aid of these that's the hardest part to achieve).  
Completing all of it is a

tough undertaking. Oh, and one more thing. To get any of the weapons below you have to play the game on Normal difficulty setting. You won't get additional munitions if you breeze through, completing it on Easy.

■ The first secret is actually a weapon you can get during the game; the secret bit comes in the form of unlimited ammo. The infinite sub-machine-gun is great against zombies, but is too weak against any sort of boss. To get your hands on unlimited ammo, simply finish the first scenario in under two and a half hours.

■ The second weapon sees the return of an old favourite from the first *Resident Evil*. The rocket launcher has infinite ammo, and is just as powerful as before. To get this beauty in your box, you just need to finish the first scenario in under three hours.

■ The final – and most deadly – secret weapon of the lot is the Gatling gun. This baby fires bullets at an amazing rate, and is capable of killing anything that moves. The only downside is that it takes a while to power up. To acquire the Gatling gun, you must

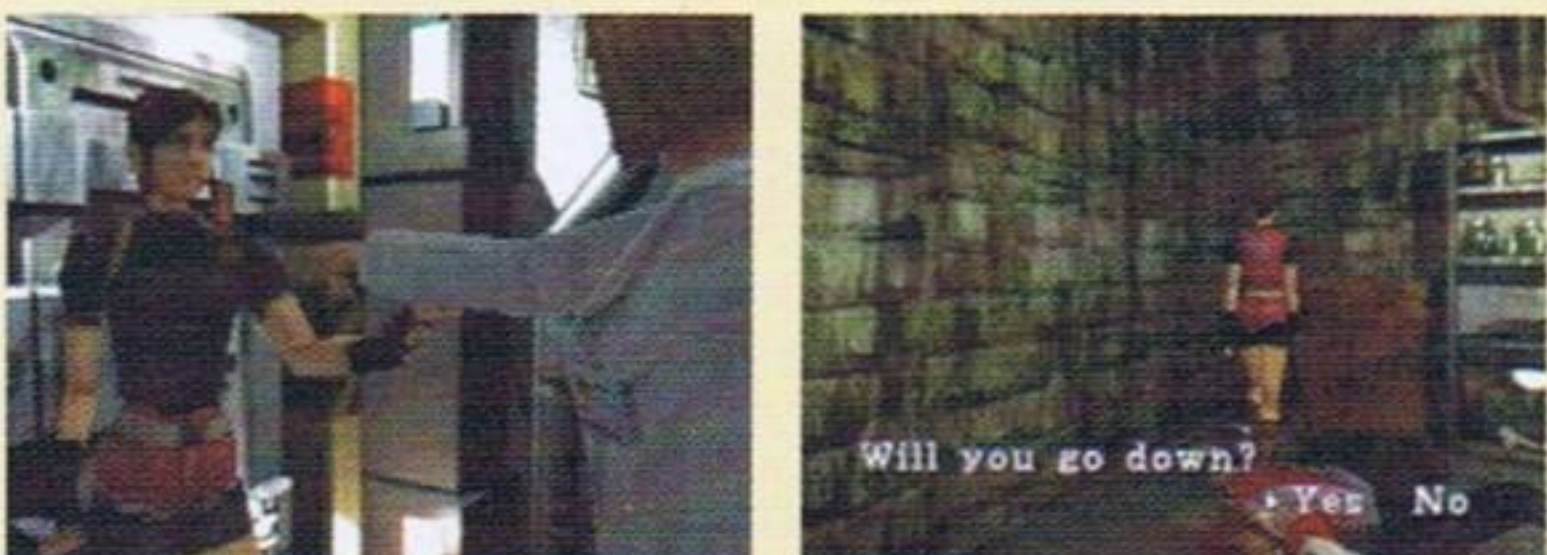
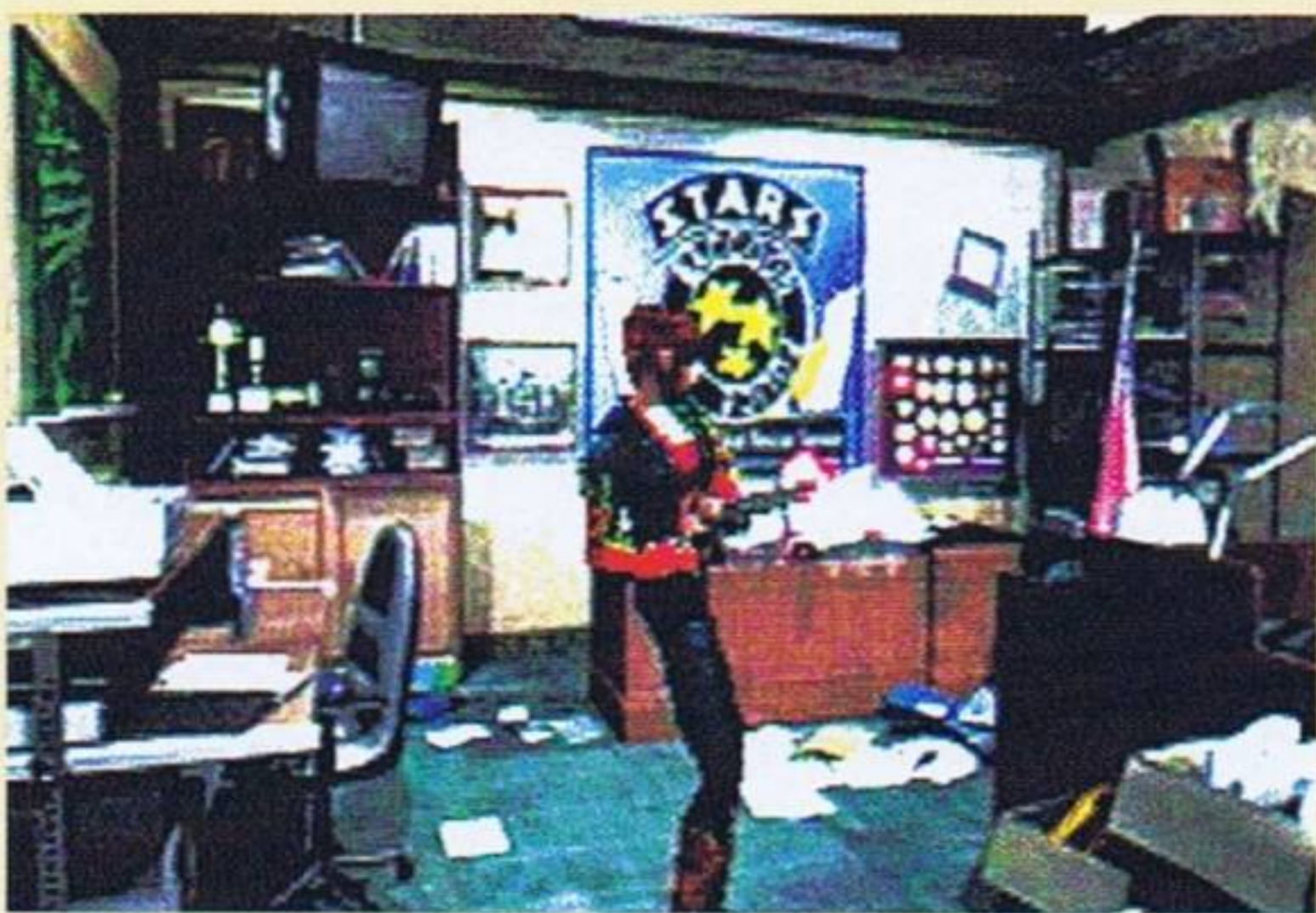
finish the second scenario in under three hours.

■ For the ultimate in weaponry try to finish the second scenario in under two and a half hours. This will give you all three of the weapons that we've already mentioned at the same time. It's a hard task, but the results are well worth it.



■ When the floor's covered in zombie blood, a girl really needs a stout pair of boots.

## FIND YOURSELF A SECRET COSTUME



■ There's no reason to look dowdy as you dispatch zombies by the score. Get your new threads here.

■ First, set the difficulty to Normal, then when you start make your way to the Police station without picking anything up. No bullets, no weapons, no herbs. Nip into the station and pick up the bullets from the desk, then go back outside and under the subway. Here you'll see Brad Vickers, the helicopter pilot from the first game, only in zombie form. It takes about 15 shots to kill him through his flak jacket. Once he's dead, search his body and get the special key. Now make your way to the Save room that has the photographic darkroom behind it, and use the key on the locker behind the door. And there you have it – new togs.

## TOP FIVE "THERE GO MY Y-FRONTS" MOMENTS



1 After meeting T-90 in the room with the G Cogwheel, you leave the room and run round the corner, only for him to – quite gittishly – burst through the wall again right in front of you. Scary enough once, but to see him twice in as many minutes is terrifying.



2 When you're by the pool, and suddenly from out of nowhere the crocodile bursts out. Forget Red Alert, we're talking Brown Alert.



3 Run upstairs in the library, follow the path, and suddenly you will fall through the floor. Well, it made all of us jump.



4 Get the King Plug from the room with the Magic Mirror, and the Licker will burst in. If you've got a pulse, you'll jump every time.



5 The first time you see T-90 in the Crow corridor. But it's not so much his evil looks as the diabolical music that scares you.



## THE RED GEMS



■ **Shove the statues to find the gem.**



■ **Time to employ your pyro skills.**

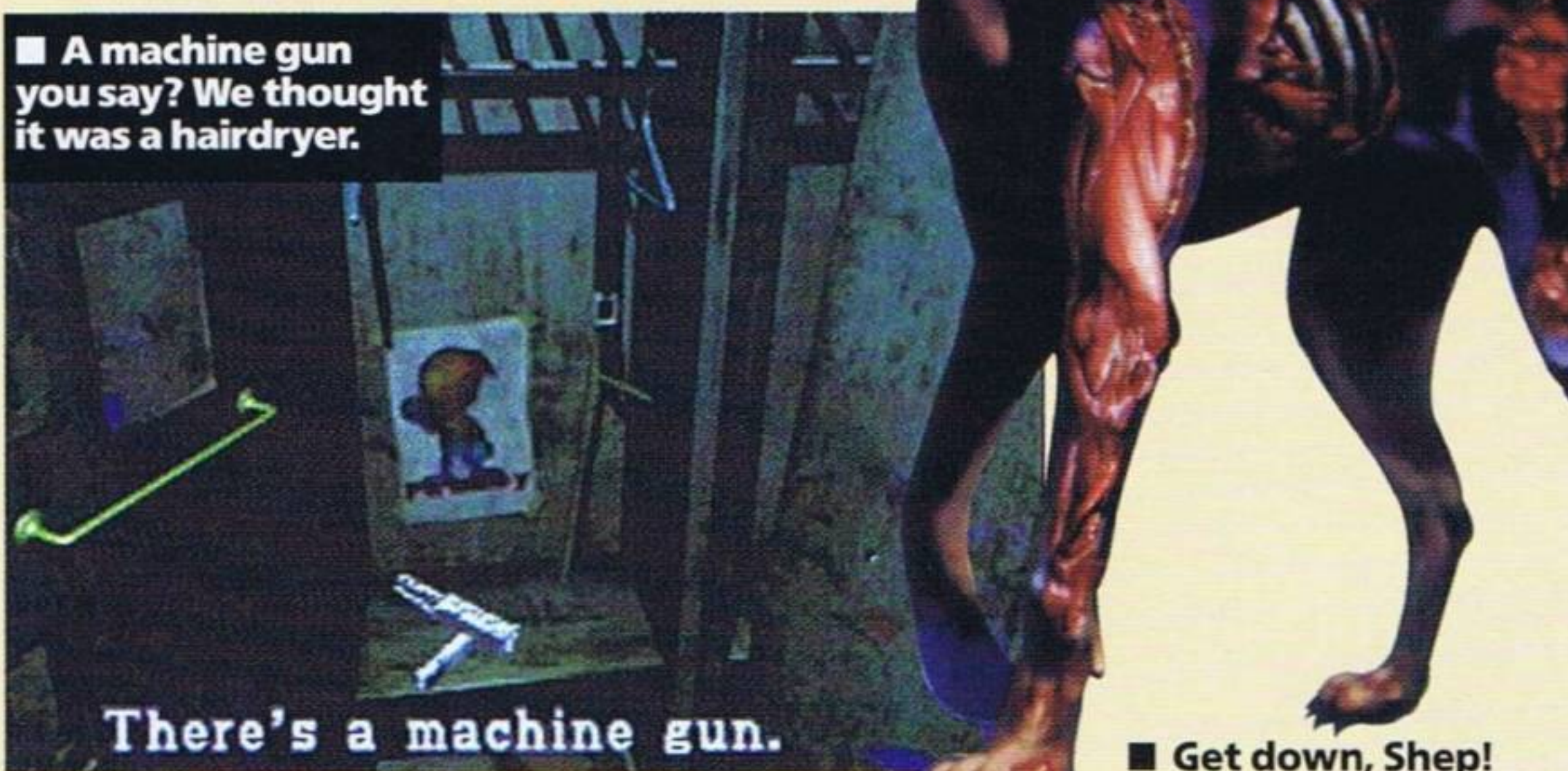
■ You need to find two red gems to insert into the statues' sockets. You'll get the first as a reward for solving the Statue puzzle. The thing to remember on this one is that the statues start off facing the wrong way. You have to push them to the opposite wall to where each one is initially facing, so their gaze falls directly on to the statue in the middle.

You'll find the second red gem in the lecture theatre; the room with all the desks. Go into the storeroom at the back, and use the lighter on the fire. This will burn the painting above the mantelpiece revealing the second gem.

## TAKING 'EM ON THE SECOND TIME AROUND



■ **Decisions, decisions. Do you clear out the armoury or leave stuff for later?**



■ **A machine gun you say? We thought it was a hairdryer.**

There's a machine gun.

■ **Get down, Shep!**

■ *Resident Evil 2* has a rather unusual feature. The game remembers what you did on your first scenario, and then changes parts of the second scenario, depending on your previous actions. There are three main examples of this:

### The Armoury

In this room is a locker, containing a backpack and a sub-machine gun. The first time around you can take them both, take one or leave them both. Leave them behind on your first scenario and they will still be here when you arrive for the second. If you take them now, however, they won't reappear when you come back. The best advice we can give you is to leave the backpack, but take the machine gun. This way you can get safely through the first scenario – the backpack will make it rather easier to get a faster time on the longer second scenario.

### The Crocodile

When this wee beastie pops up from the water for the first time you're excused for being a little bit perturbed. Well, okay, let's be frank here, it makes you soil your undergarments. And how much ammo does it

take to kill the little blighter? And even then it's not dead, it just scarpers, only to return in the second scenario.

There is, however, a much easier method of dispatching the monster. When you run back from the crocodile, look for the canister on the left-hand wall. Try to use it, and it will drop to the floor. The croc will pick the fallen canister up in his mouth, and then all you have to do is fire one shot. This will blow up the canister, along with half the crocodile's head. Not only does this save you ammo, but also means that the evil reptile won't put in a life-threatening appearance in the second scenario.

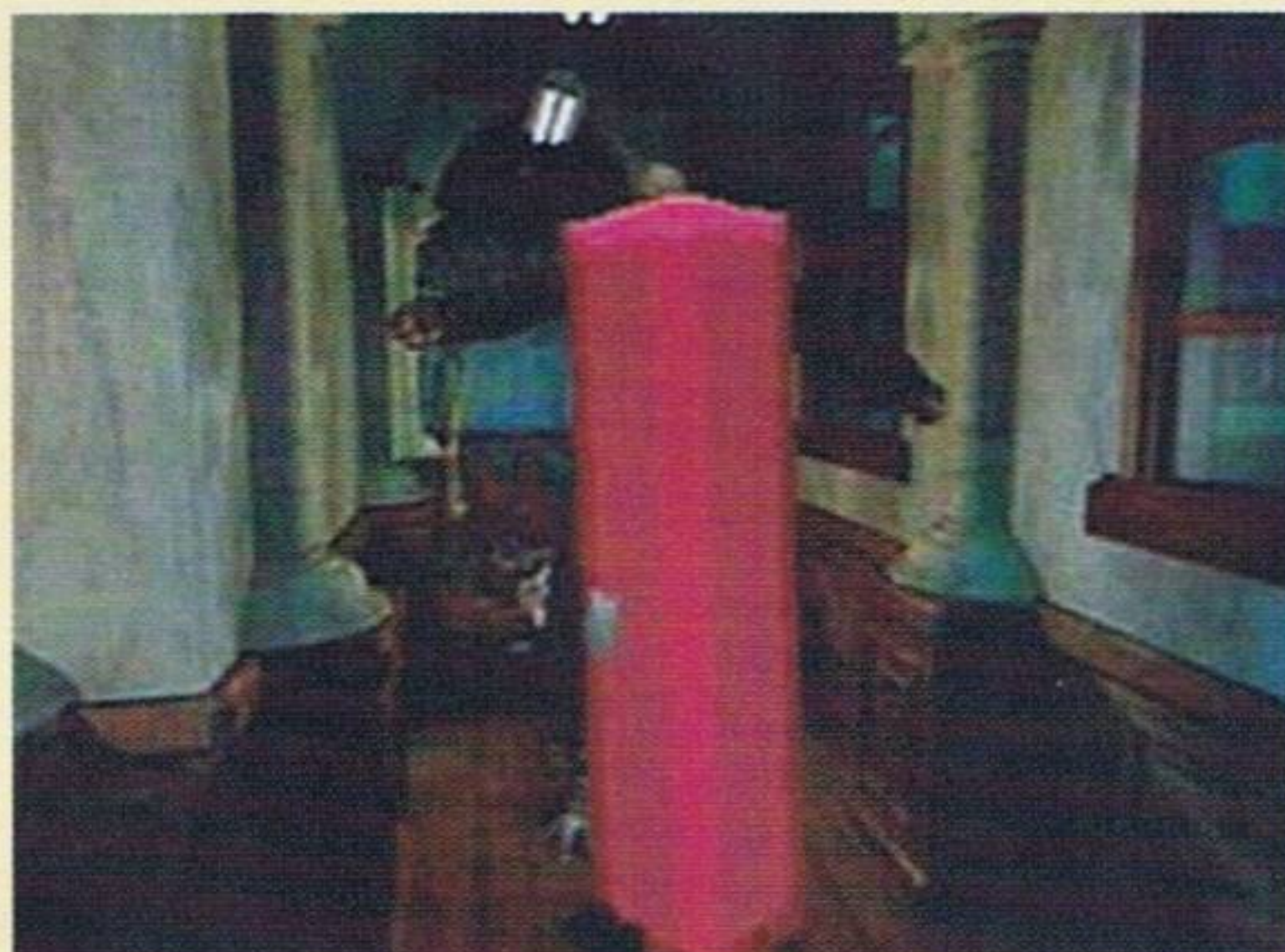
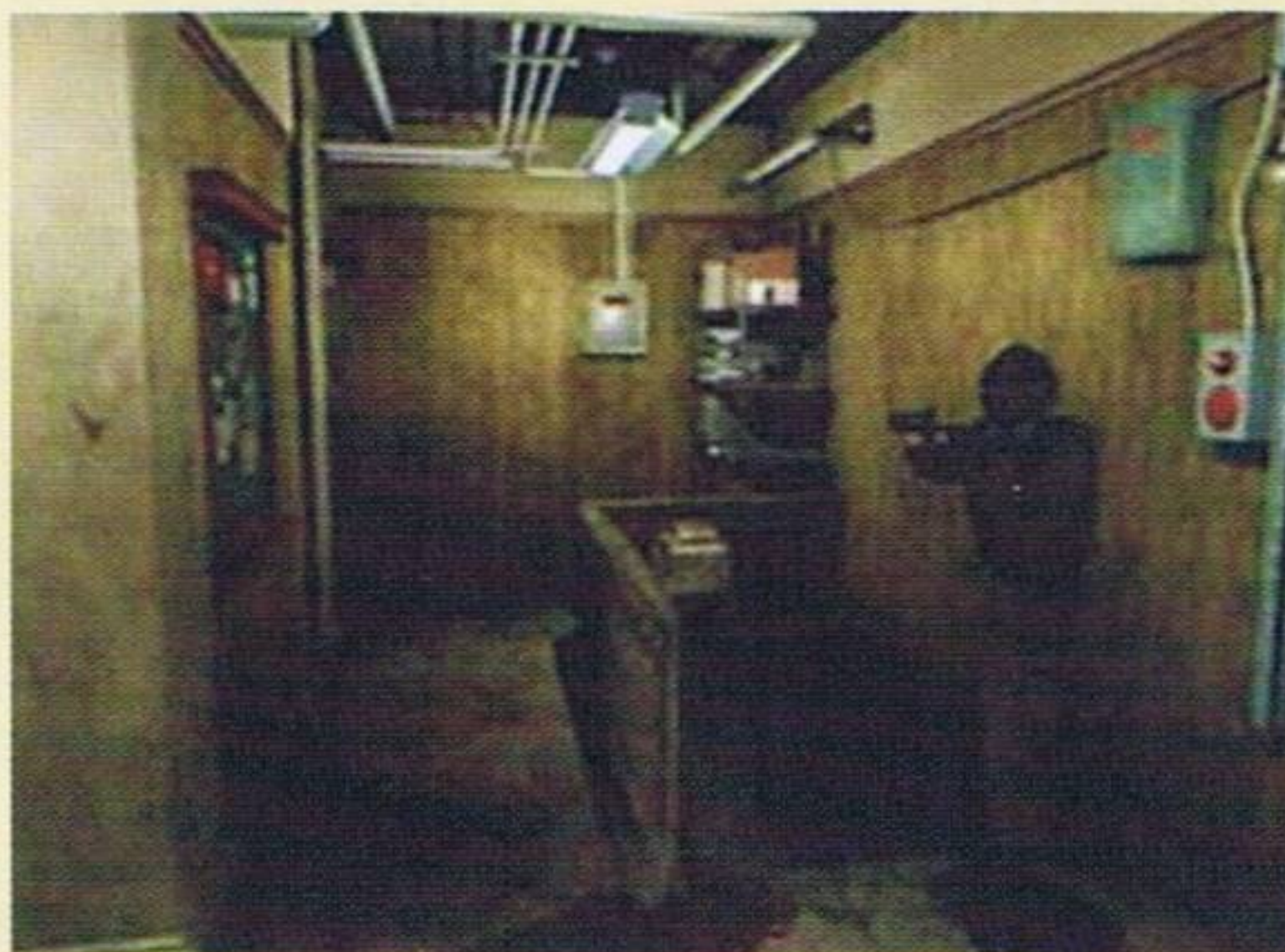
### The Test Room

When you get to the Lab area, you'll come across a door that requires two sets of authorised fingerprints. The first set is yours. After killing the moth boss, and logging on to the computer as GUEST, come back here, and activate the machine. The second set of prints belong to the other character you play, who has to log on to the computer as GUEST again, but on the second scenario. These fingerprints enable you to gain access to the room, which contains a sub-machine-gun, and the remains of a failed experiment.

## GET YOURSELF A SECRET CHARACTER

■ There are two hidden characters in *Resident Evil 2*, and both of them are very tricky to get. The first is a SWAT team soldier called Hunk. Hunk's mission is to get from the sewers, where he starts, up to the roof, where he's aiming to get to the crashed helicopter. He has only a limited amount of ammo and health restorers, and there are tons (and we mean tons) of enemies scattered en route. To access Hunk you have to finish the first scenario with a Grade A, then load this save and finish the second scenario, again with a Grade A. Hunk will then be saved on to your memory card.

■ The second secret character is called Tofu, and is, well – there's no easy way to put this – a huge lump of tofu. His mission is exactly the same as Hunk's, only much, much harder, since he has only a knife and three herbs to see him through. That's all. And yes, it is almost impossible. To access Tofu you have to play the game six times, finishing missions A, B, A, B, A, B, each time getting a Grade A, and acquiring all the secrets along the way. You have to have all eight saves on your memory card for Tofu to be released.

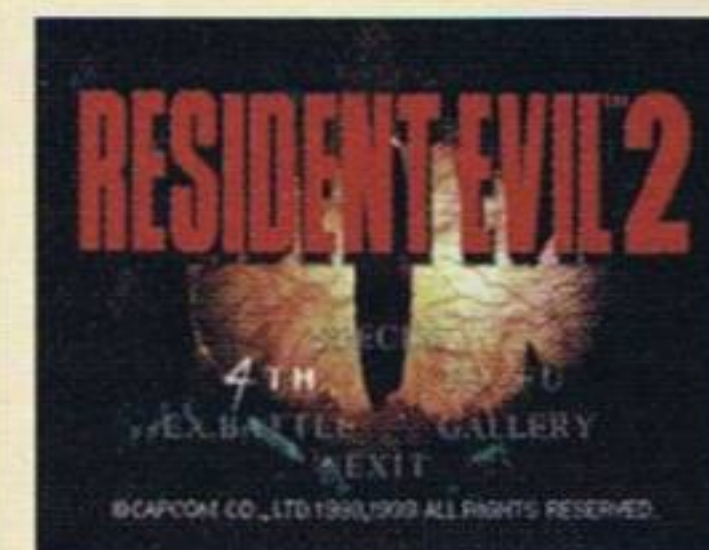


■ **It may be mildly uncomfortable to think about, but that giant pink thing is you.**

## PC-ONLY IT'S THE SPECIAL MENU



■ **Chris Redfield is our favourite – he starts with the custom shotgun. What a guy.**



■ Unique to the PC version of *Resident Evil 2* is the Special Menu. This enables you to access Hunk, Tofu, an art gallery and the Extreme Battle Mode. This latter option is far more enjoyable than the Fourth Survivor modes, since you can pick up extra ammo and herbs. Extreme comes in



three different difficulty levels, and you have a set goal to achieve in each. You can choose to play Leon, Claire, Chris (from *Resident Evil*), and Ada Wong, all of whom have different weapons.



■ **Leon's fringe, earlier.**

# HOW TO AVOID SEEING RED WITH YOUR... GAME BOY COLOR

■ No matter where you are, the train, bus, Tube or toilet, there's always time for a quick round of Game Boy fun. And with the release of the Game Boy Color, things are even better – now everything's in glorious, rainbow, how-come-we've-had-colour-telly-since-the-sixties-but-it's-taken-ten-years-for-the-Game-Boy-to-catch-up?-Technicolor. The games are better, too. But are you stuck? Maybe. In which case why not see if our tips can help you out?



■ Everyone needs a bit of colour in their lives and in their pocket, too.

## GAME BOY COLOR

### HARVEST MOON

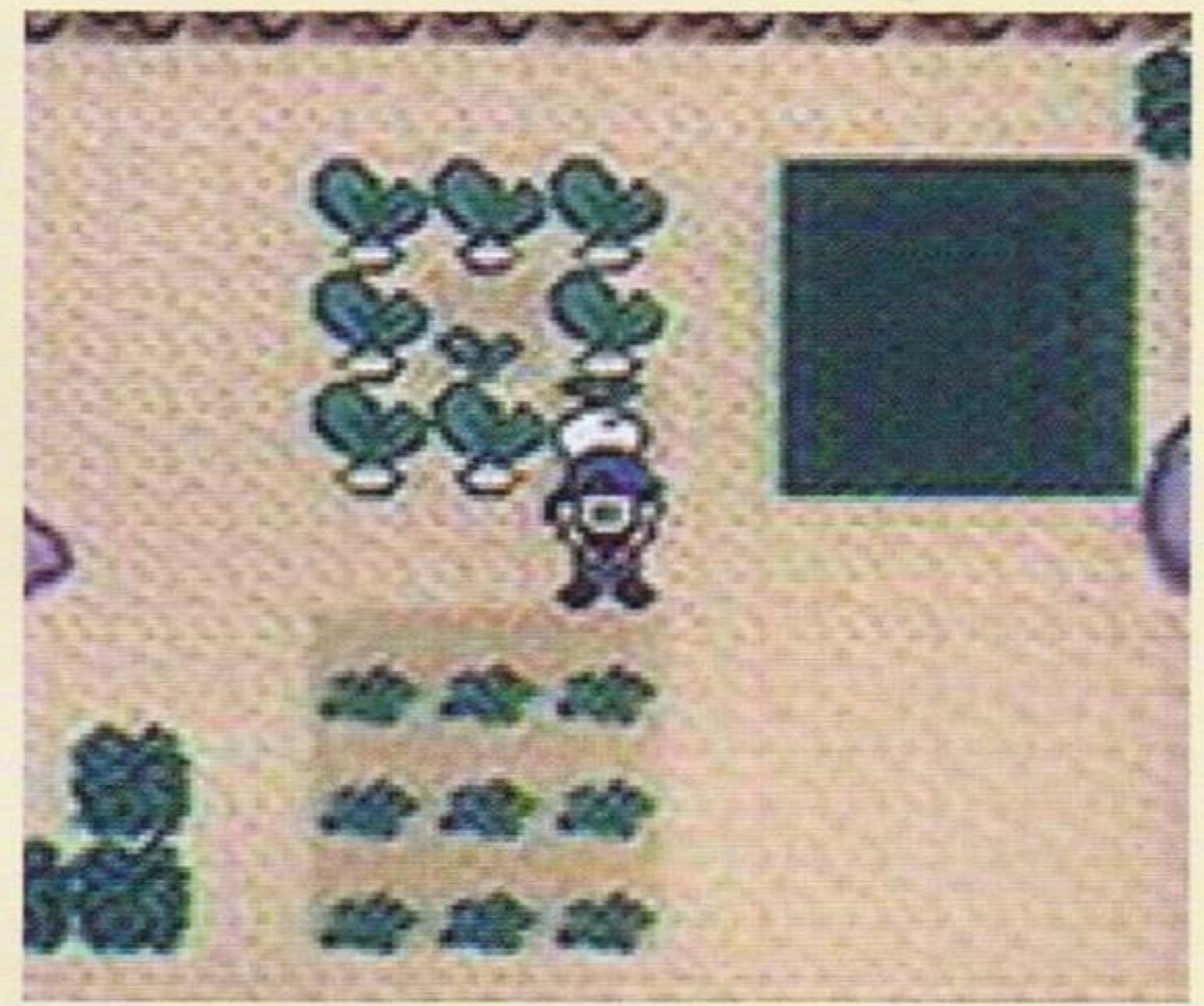
■ To earn an **extra 200 dollars per day**, go into your tool shed and out of the back door. You will be in a cave. The rocks in front of you will hold mushrooms. Pick the fungus up and put it in the cave's shipping box.

■ To get the **Super Hammer**, upgrade your house once and you will get it from the carpenter as a gift.

For the **Axe**, wait until the earthquake takes place and then use the axe in the dwarf's cave – second screen up, on the now-open pond slot (the one that was blocked by the rock).

For the **Hoe and Sickle**, from the start of the game, give a mushroom a day to the first dwarf you see until the earthquake takes place. Free the crushed dwarf, go up one screen in the cave (where you get the axe) and talk to the dwarf in there. When he asks if the hoe and sickle are working alright, say yes. He will upgrade them.

■ To **grow the plant** in the left of the cabin by the bed, you must eat the power berries. To get them give the elf



in the first room of the caves one mushroom a day for between ten and 30 days (but don't talk to him).

■ For **unlimited eggs**, water the egg by the shipping box in the chicken coup and it will turn into a fence-like object. If you then pick up the egg its image won't disappear. You can keep picking up the same egg and re-shipping it.

## GAME BOY COLOR

### ZELDA: LINK'S AWAKENING



■ Struggling with the diminutive version of *Zelda*? We've got lots of tips that will make your game easier.

■ Reach **Level Three** and the boss will taunt you and say that you'll never find him. To get to him, ram the wall with the Pegasus boots.

■ To get **infinite rupees**, get to the boss, but don't ram the wall. A bunch of little blobs will start falling out of the sky. Kill these for as long as you want for easy money.

■ **Want to fly?** You must have the Boomerang and the Rooster. Throw the Boomerang and pick up the Rooster. Then the Boomerang will hover below you.



■ As you approach the edge of any screen, watch carefully. Just before the screen scrolls to a different section **press Select to warp** you to the other side of the screen. This trick makes it easy to bypass some obstacles.

■ After the first three levels you can **get Marin**, your luvver interest, to follow you (just go to the beach and talk to her – girls can't resist a bit of romance). When she follows, try doing some of these things to get unexpected results.

1. Beat a chicken with your sword.  
2. Search a chest or break a pot.  
3. Go down the well in Mabe village.  
4. Go into a dungeon and



come out when you are almost dead.  
5. Talk to the Chief Bear in Animal village.  
6. Play your ocarina and ask Marin what she thinks of it.

■ You can **turn Marin into a ghost**. When she follows you, use the screen warp to go to Level Four and beat it. When you come out Marin will be a ghost. When you get back to the ghost's house, she will tell you where to look for a jar and then will be herself again.

■ To **keep Marin with you** for the entire game, get her to follow, then take the warp to the Animal village. Walk to the left. When you are about to go to the next screen, push Select and you should warp

across the screen. Marin will follow you from now on.

■ When you go to the Animal village and can't pass the whale, use the screen warp. Now continue the game as normal until you get the **flying rooster**. Go to the sea shore and get Marin. She will be a rooster, but after a while you'll find her head gets messed up.

■ You know all that trading you have to do throughout the games? Well here's a way to **beat the system**. You can only do it once, so be wise about it. Go into the Mysterious Forest. Enter the cave with the sign out front. Go up one screen and over left one screen. Now go back to the screen you just came from to the right. Before the screen changes, use the screen warp. This will put you on a roof with several cracks. Now go over one screen. You will drop into a room with several enemies. Go up one screen. On the podium, you'll find the next trade item. But don't use the stairs – you'll get stuck on the statue.

## GAME BOY COLOR

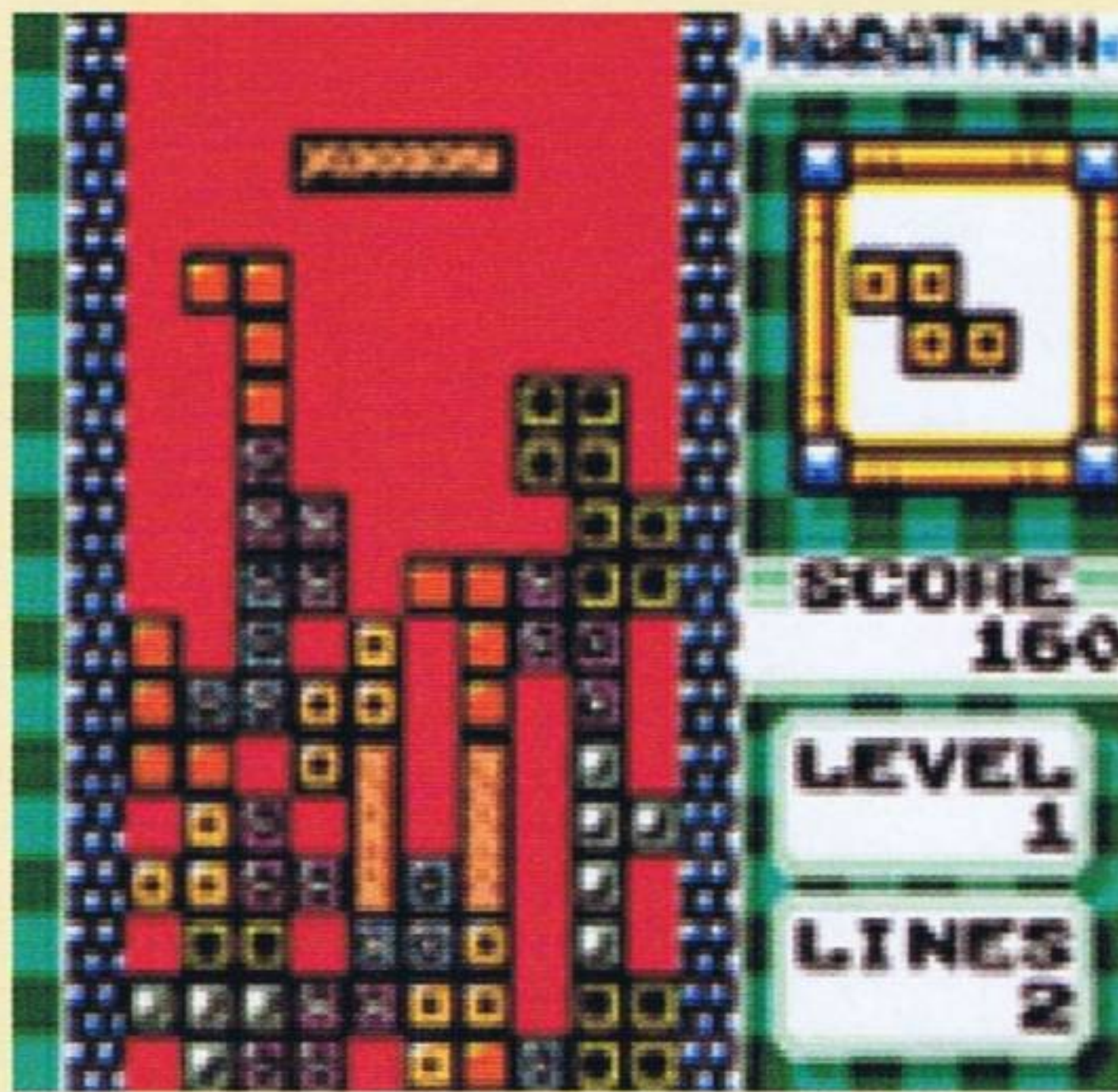
### BUG'S LIFE

■ Level codes? Suits you, Sir.

Level 2	9LKK
Level 3	BL26
Level 4	5P9K
Level 5	6652
Level 6	BKK2
Level 7	2PLB
Level 8	6562
Level 9	L59B
Bonus	BL26

GAME BOY COLOR

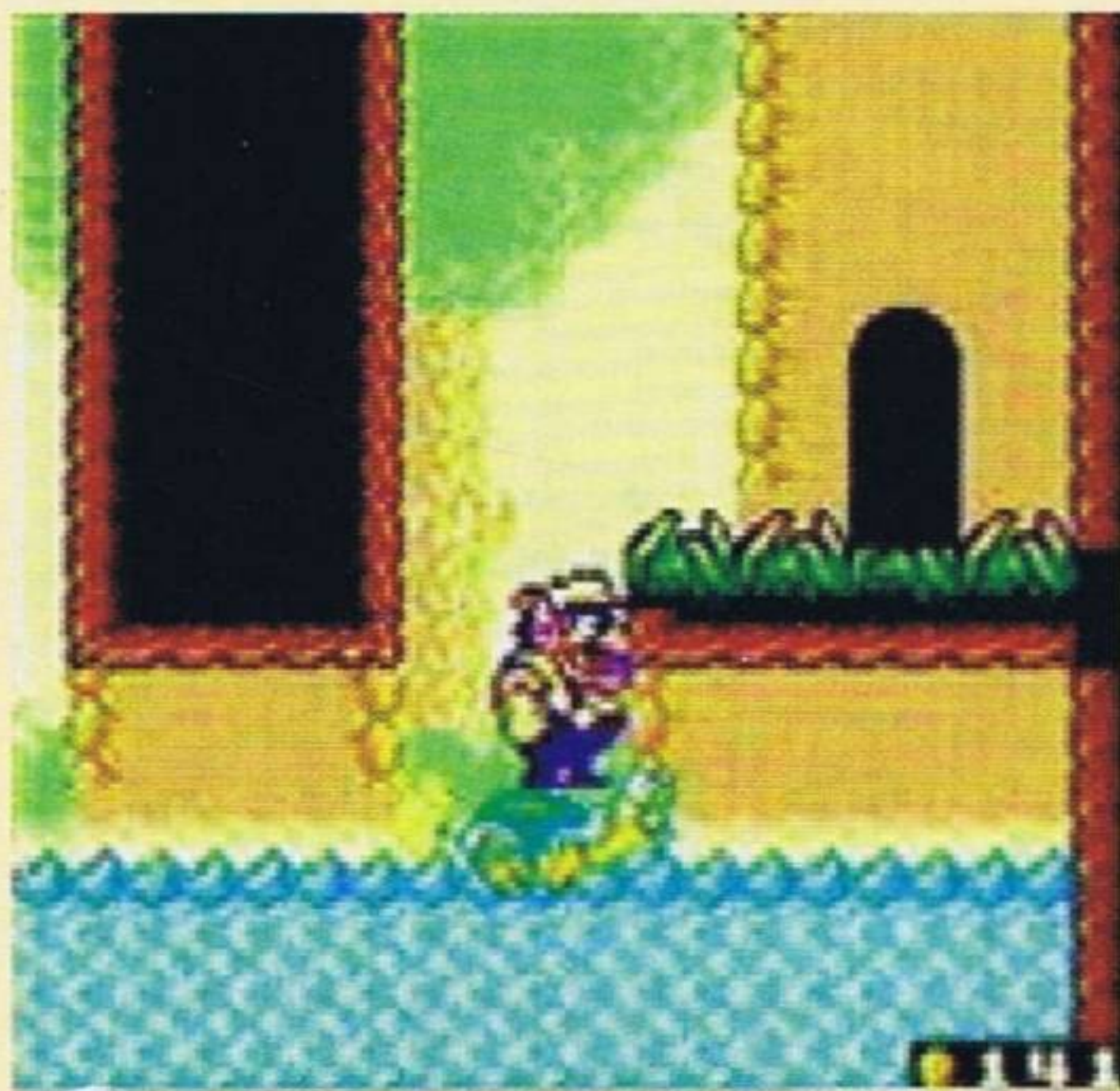
# TETRIS DX



When any piece except a straight bar or a block is falling, hold **Left** (even after it's against the wall, keep holding) and keep pressing the **A** button as rapidly as possible. The piece will actually start moving back up. You can do the same thing on the right-hand side wall, but you have to hold **Right** and keep pressing the **B** button instead.

GAME BOY COLOR

# WARIO LAND 2



Scoot around like this and you could find yourself some of the secret exits.

### Drop the anchor

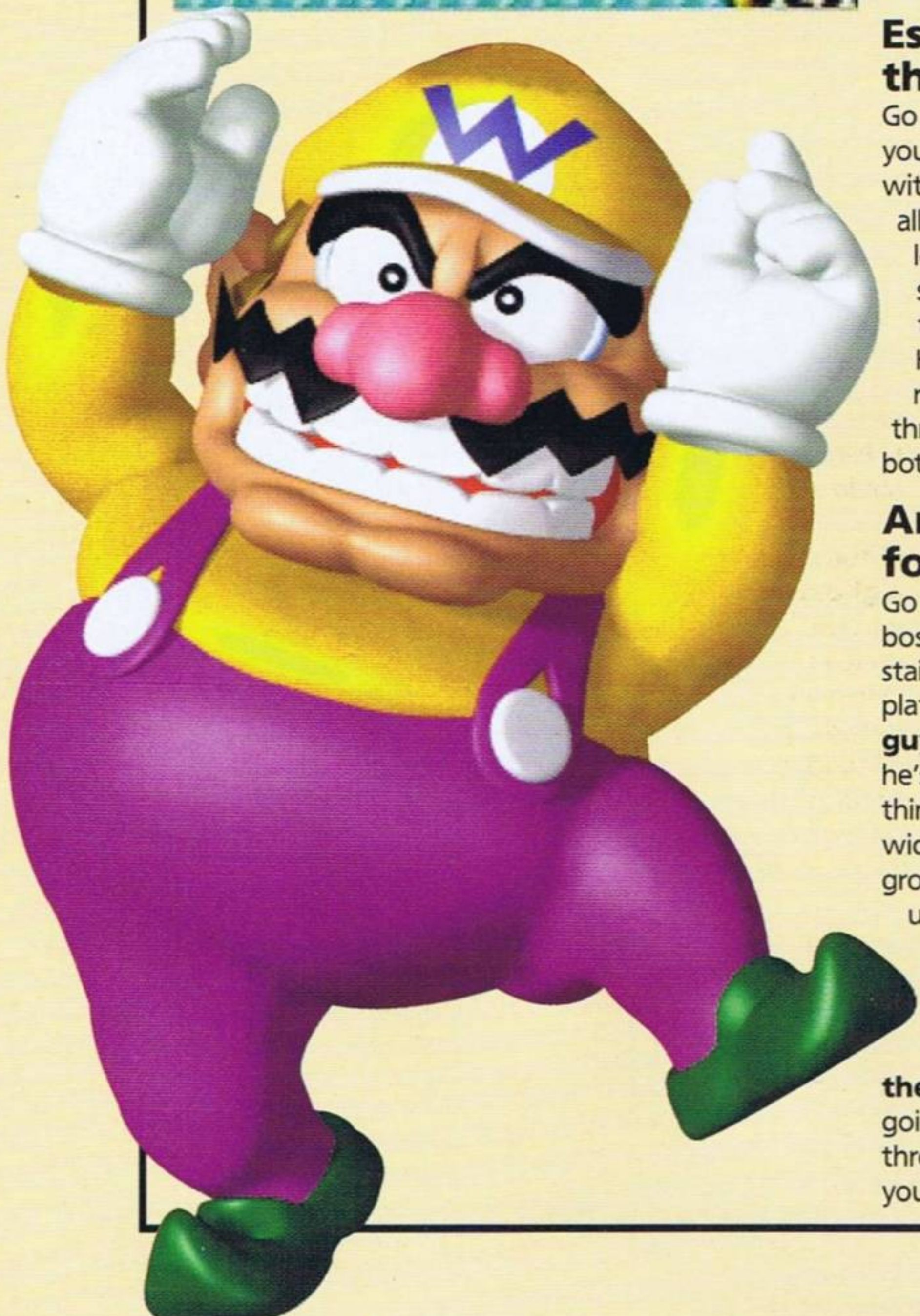
Go through the first room. In the second room, **break the blocks** on the floor and fall down the long shaft. Clear out all the walls (especially the wall on the left). Pick up the guy that walks around and punches, and **throw him at the left wall** until you come to a door. Go through this room and you will find the exit. The *SS Teacup* will sink and the game goes a different route.

### Escape from the ruins

Go through the level until you come to the long shaft with **ducks on both sides** all the way up it. Behind the lowest duck on the right side is a breakable wall. On the other side is a switch. Hit it and the blocks will rearrange. Then go back through the door on the bottom and find the exit.

### Anyone for b-ball?

Go to the room with the boss door. Go under the stairs on the left, to the platform that's right over the **guy with the spear**. When he's under the little platform things that are two blocks wide, jump up and stomp the ground and he should come up a little. Keep doing that until you can stomp him and pick him up. Go over to the wall by the boss door and **throw the bad guy at it**. Keep going until you break through two walls and find your way to the exit.



GAME BOY COLOR

# MORTAL KOMBAT 4

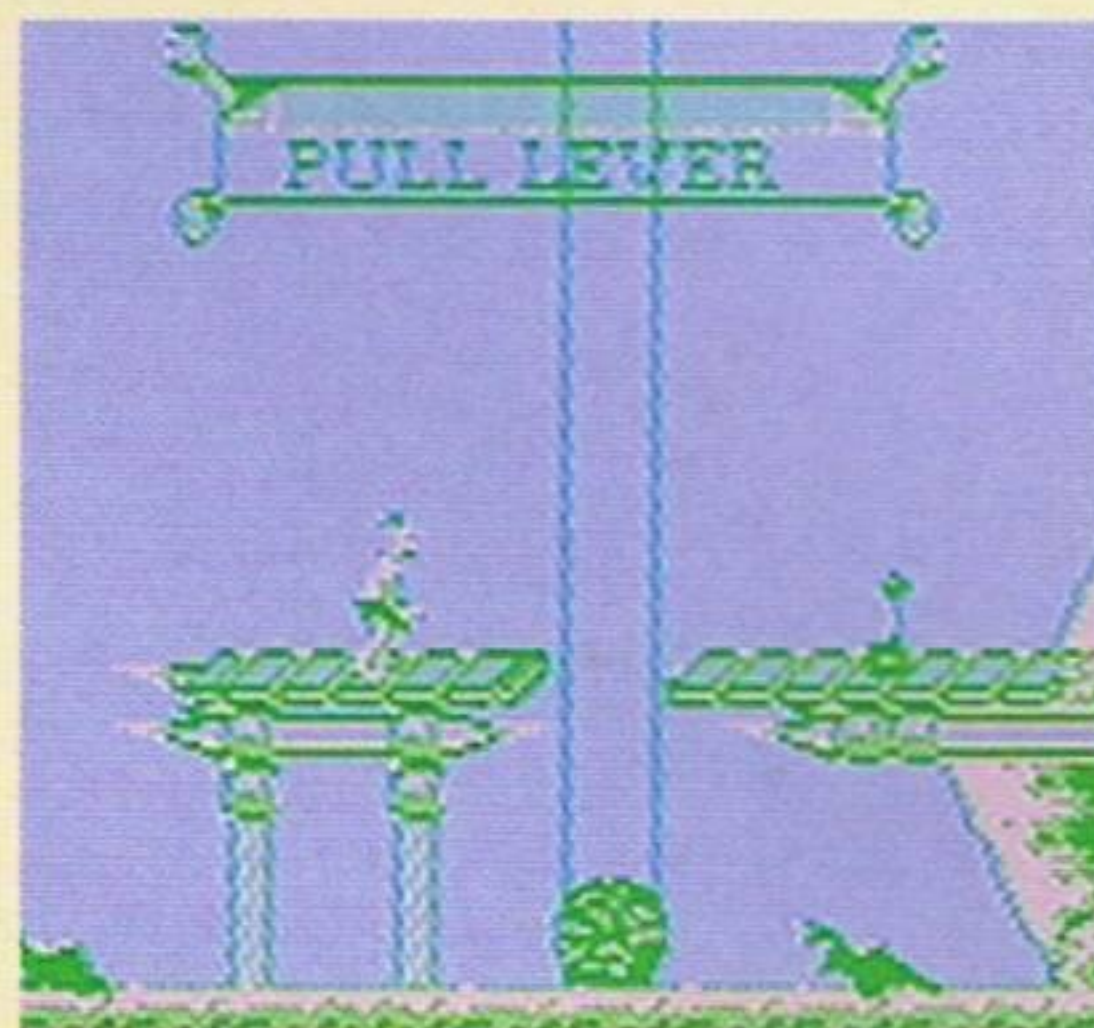


Enter these numbers at the code screen before a match:

192234	Play as reptile
100100	Throws disabled
205205	Fight reptile
460460	Swicharoo
688422	Dark Kombat
987666	Message1
123926	Message2
985125	Psycho Kombat
020020	No blocks
033000	Player 1 half life
000033	Computer half life
707000	Player 1 quarter life
000707	Computer quarter life

GAME BOY COLOR

# ODDWORLD ADVENTURES



When you're playing the game, jump **Left, Right** or **Up**. While you're in the air press **Pause**. Unpause the game and you will jump again in mid air. You can keep doing this and every time you do you'll get higher and higher.

GAME BOY COLOR

# FROGGER

On the High-score screen after you run out of lives type **A, B, A, B, Select, Start**. Return to the main menu and you will now be able to access the new **Cheat** menu.

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# HOW TO BITE BACK IN... CASTLEVANIA

Bite-sized tips for the N64 vamp romp.



■ If you press the **Action** button when standing in front of most statues you will receive a roast meal. Sometimes reading the **clues on the statues** will tell you of other surprises. You can access ledges containing secrets by just jumping straight up and pulling your character to the top.

■ When you are climbing the stairs toward Dracula's lair, you pass through two towers before reaching the final tower. At the last tower, jump on to either of the two torches and shimmy around the ledge. On the other side you'll find a breakable torch with a **Red Jewel** and a floating platform. Walk to the platform on thin air by heading to it from the torch with the Red Jewel; you'll find a Healing Kit there.

■ In the **Castle Courtyard** wait until midnight and a platform will rise from the fountain so you can get to the items on top.

■ At the entrance to the **garden maze**, turn right and look up. You'll see a platform. There is an invisible ledge in front that you can pull yourself on to. This is a particularly good place to fire at the hounds, released after you have opened the gates.



■ In the Villa, Renon tells you there is a **part of his contract you can't read**. It says you can visit him when you like, but if you spend more than 30,000 during the game he will fight you.

■ To **talk to Rosa**, a vampire who waters the roses in the villa, enter the room with the red roses in it and wait until 3am.

■ The ending you get depends on two things. First, how many **Sun and Moon** cards you use throughout the game. Using too many will turn Vincent into a vampire, and you'll face him in the second chamber on your way to the battle with Dracula. If you encounter Vincent you will get the "okay" ending. The other ending depends on how much money you spend. If you buy around 30,000 worth of items from Renon, he'll appear in the first chamber on your way to Dracula, and you will be forced to fight him. By doing this you get to fight more versions of Dracula, and get the "supreme" ending.

MACINTOSH

## TOMB RAIDER II



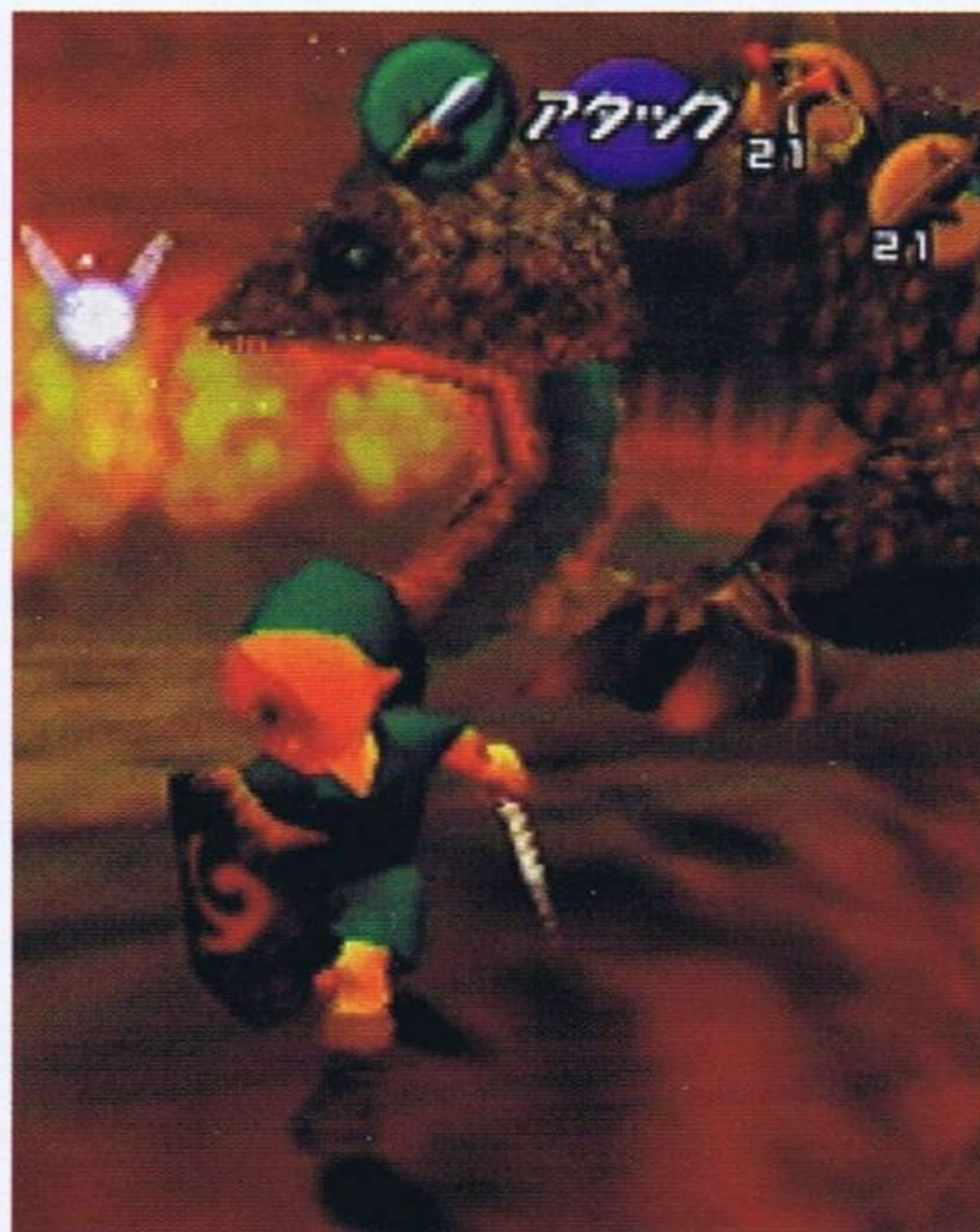
■ To get your hands on **all the guns**, pull out a flare and (while holding **Shift**) take one step forward then one step back. Then turn around three times and jump backwards.

■ To **level skip**, pull out a flare and (while holding **Shift**) take one step forward then one step back. Then turn around three times and jump forwards.

IT'S EASY WHEN YOU KNOW HOW

NOW PLAYING

# LEGEND OF ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME



Play the N64's finest game from a Link's-eyes view.

**D**id you know that you can play the entire game through the eyes of Link, viewing everything from a first-person perspective.

To pull this off this neat trick, you need to make sure that you're swordless. You can **shed your weapon** in one of two ways. The first is to go to the second battle against Gannondorf, to the bit where he swipes the Master Sword out of your hand. Immediately after he has done this, save the game, then reset.

The second way of losing your sword is a little more long-winded. First you need to do the **Fishing Trick**, which you can only do if you are adult Link and have the Hover Boots. Pay the man to go fishing, then put on the Hover Boots. Walk up to the

edge of the water, take a few steps into the water and press **B** before the boots stop hovering. This will cast the bait but you will still be able to walk around. Now **cast the line** into the lake and hook a fish. Reel in the fish a little then just go to the door and exit the pond using the **A** button in front of the door. The **Action** indicator will say "Reel" as if still you're holding the fishing rod, even though you're not. Now go across the narrow part of the lake to the right of the fishing place. Go to a spot between the fence and the wall (where the scarecrows are). Pull out the fishing rod and cast. Link will sit there like he's fishing. **Save your game**. Now there should be a Deku stick in the place of your sword. In the menu the Master Sword will be gone. Don't try and pull out a

Deku stick because the game will freeze. The way to get your sword back is to put the stick back in the **Temple of Time** and then pull it out again (don't do it with Biggoron's sword. If you do it will still be in the menu but you won't be able to select it and Biggoron won't give you another one).

Still with us? Right, so now you should have got rid of your sword, by either of the two methods outlined above. The next thing to do is the Epona Trick. **Ride Epona** and use a Deku nut, a bottle containing an item, a magic spell or your ocarina. You will fall off your horse. Now you can control Epona even if you aren't on her. Run away from her. The **Action** indicator should say "Faster", but if you press **A** you will saddle nothing and will all of a sudden

appear on Epona. Take out either your hookshot or bow, and shoot. Then throw a Deku nut and you will find yourself viewing the world from Link's perspective. You can now see the bangs bobbing about on the top of your head as you run around Kokiri and Hyrule.

■ That was a bit of a long explanation, so to recap, here's what you need to do:

1. Divest Link of his sword using either trick.
1. Ride Epona.
2. Throw a Deku nut.
3. Shoot your bow or hookshot.
4. Throw one more Deku nut.

Still here? Then play up and play the game, *Zelda* fans.

# CRASH BANDICOOT 2

That wily bandicoot can do more than you might think.

■ To warp between the bosses you've already fought, press and hold **L1, L2, R1, R2** and **Ⓐ** when you're standing on the middle platform of a Warp room.

■ When you die, hold **Up** and **Ⓞ** then when you come back you will have an extra shield.

■ When you are on the fourth floor with the vortices, get into the level with the bees. Instead of going underground to avoid the bees, hit all five of them away. You should receive two lives. If you do this again, you'll

get one more life. You can repeat this as many times as you want, gaining another life every time.

■ For more extra lives go to the secret level in **Unbearable**. At about the halfway point there is a bouncing box and an arc of fruit. Go to the highest step and super-jump up to find two extra lives. Get both of them and kill yourself. You can then return to that spot where you will be awarded two more lives. Repeat this whole manoeuvre as many times as you want, re-entering the secret level each time.

■ And if you haven't got there yet, here's the whereabouts of the elusive hidden Warps:

### Air Crash

Head to the second river. Don't jet ski, but instead jump on to the boxes on the platform.

### Bear Down

Go to the small ice floe at the end of the stage.

### Diggin' It

Near the end there's a Spitter plant on a circular platform. Bellyflop on to it.

### Hangin' Out

Drop down a hole into some eel-less water and then drop down a hole in the foreground, using **R1** to make Crash pull up his legs.

### Turtle Woods

When you find the Stone Face in the ground, bellyflop on it to enter a bonus-type level. Be careful, though – it's possible to die in this one.

### Unbearable

When the cub bucks you off, go back until you see him again.



# G-POLICE

### On the PlayStation

For **all the weapons**, at the Weapons Loadout screen hold **L1 + L2 + R1 + Ⓞ + Ⓐ + Ⓞ** and press **Left**. For unlimited shields, at the Briefing screen hold **L1 + R2 + Ⓞ** and hit **Left**.

### On the PC

Enter **MRTICKY** as the password for for infinite weapons, and **DOOBIES** for infinite shields.

■ Meanwhile, on both formats, try entering these passwords:

Level 2	OLEFLPI	Level 19	QSDHARDB
Level 3	WDZWTYQI	Level 20	WRRJJDHB
Level 4	STXGIDEA	Level 21	ISNEASLB
Level 5	WZKVOFFA	Level 22	YWGTTQCK
Level 6	GRXJTYGA	Level 23	YCNHYJEK
Level 7	IMWGTDXI	Level 24	AUJOMXFK
Level 8	YMPCUZYI	Level 25	CZHXMGBV
Level 9	YWVFHNAJ	Level 26	EUANLEC
Level 10	WNLUJSBJ	Level 27	EDFIRE
Level 11	UGSIBPNA	Level 28	STUBOMB
Level 12	QEJUXFDJ	Level 29	THONBOY
Level 13	UGWHVEQA	Level 30	JIMMAC
Level 14	SFMEZGGJ	Level 31	PUGGER
Level 15	QSBSSITA	Level 32	ROSSCO
Level 16	WDGSSFFJ	Level 33	CAKEBOY
Level 17	USWIIQYA	Level 34	NIKNAK
Level 18	OJFXQEAB	Level 35	SAGLORD

■ And at the Password Selection screen, enter:

BENIHILL	Faster back-up cars
WOOWOO	Sirens
SUPACAM	Different camera angle
ALSECRET	All the secrets
PANTALON	Secret stages

# SIM CITY 3000

■ Is your gorgeous metropolis not going to plan? Press **Ctrl, Shift, Alt** and **C** at the same time. This will bring up a window where you can type the following codes:

GARBAGE IN, GARBAGE OUT	Makes all garbage buildings available
POWER TO THE MASSES	Makes all power buildings available
WATER IN THE DESERT	Makes all water buildings available

SALT ON	Changes the sea to salt water
SALT OFF	Changes the sea to fresh water
TERRAIN ONE UP	Raises the terrain
TERRAIN ONE DOWN	Lowers the terrain
TERRAIN TEN UP	Raises the terrain
TERRAIN TEN DOWN	Lowers the terrain
PAY TRIBUTE TO YOUR KING	All rewards becomes available
I LOVE RED TAPE	All ordnance becomes available
LET'S MAKE A DEAL	Neighbour and business deals offered
NERDZ ROOL	High-tech industry

I AM WEAK	Makes buildings, utilities, zoning and transportation; plants trees and makes the area surface water free.
CALL COUSIN VINNIE	A new Petitioner item will appear in the Meet window, announcing a "Local Fund-Raising Event." This, um, "businessman" will offer you cash, no questions asked. Should you choose to accept, you'll notice a little extra cash in your coffers.
ZYXWVU	First use the "Call Cousin Vinnie" cheat, but refuse his immoral offer. Then use the "ZYXWVU" cheat and the beautiful SimCity Castle will appear in your Rewards menu. The castle boosts Land Value and Aura, and does other wonderful things to the surrounding area.

# VIRTUAL POOL 64

■ Did you know you can re-power a shot against the computer should you overshoot or undershoot? While the computer is taking its turn press **Left** for instant replay. Before the replay starts hold **R** to view the shot from above, then hold **A** to re-cue the shot. While holding **A** you may retake the shot using a different level of power. This trick enables you to re-power a shot but not change your angle.

■ To simulate nudging the computer while it's taking a shot, switch to the overhead view (with the **R** button) while your N64 is taking its turn and then you can sneakily rotate its cue stick.

# MICRO MACHINES 64 TURBO

The N64 game's designer on his own work.

**C**odemasters recently produced this updated N64 version of its splendid PlayStation diddy car racer. We asked Senior Imperial Game Designer Alex Darby to comment on his masterpiece.

### Q. What was the hardest bit to get right?

**A.** Because the PlayStation version was so successful, we had the luxury of a tried and tested formula to work from. From a design point of view, the hardest part was trying to work out what we could do to make that formula better, without changing it too much.

### Q. What bit of MM64 Turbo are you most proud of?

**A.** Definitely all the graphical effects like explosions, skids and

the Fireball pickup – the team did a brilliant job and the guys deserve full credit for the work they did. As far as I'm concerned, I'm most proud of the difficulty settings – they're a lot fairer than they were in the PlayStation version, and it took a lot of balancing to do without making it too easy.

### Q. Is there room for improvement?

**A.** I would have liked to have had the chance to tweak the handling of all the different vehicles more, and taken more time to better balance all the prize cars you get to drive in Keepsies' mode. But

there are so many, it could've taken forever.

### Q. Which game do you see as the main rival to MM64 Turbo?

**A.** Mario Kart 64 and Diddy Kong Racing are the only two titles that are even slightly similar to MM64, and they're both more than a year old now

### Q. Go on, give us a tip.

**A.** Make sure you use your brakes a little – slowing down wastes far less time than falling completely off a table. The most important thing is not to forget Keepsies' mode, because there's loads of fun to be had winning your friend's cars from them.



# HOW TO GET POWERED UP IN... TWISTED EDGE EXTREME SNOWBOARDING

Snowboarding culture's about bucking the system, so here's how to cut some corners.



Follow these directions to find the short-cuts.

### Easy Slider

Right after the first pinwheel, turn a sharp left to **find a short-cut and a jump**. Keep going until you get to the train overpass. Jump the bump behind the truck that is off to the left for another short-cut and jump.

### Twisty Canyon

Keep heading to the right whenever you meet a fork in the road. After the second fork, carry on until the roads merge. You will **get to a big jump**. At

the bottom of the jump there is a blue fence; jump that too.

### Polar Paradise

Go straight until you see a little bump coming out from the right side (it has two little jump arrows on it). Just at the bottom, to the right are a set of arrows telling you to go left. Go right up next to the arrows. There is a **jump immediately after** (but with no jump signs, though). You will see two trees at the bottom. Go between them. After a few seconds you will see a **tree that you can grind**. So grind it! You will land back on the path.

Keep going until you see a jump surrounded by an **arched rock**. Use it then follow the left wall until you see two trees. Go between them and jump the fence. Go slightly right and you will **land on a rock** (this takes lots of practice). At the bottom you will land on the normal path.

### Funky Town

Race as normal until you get to the bridge. Whatever you do, **don't jump the hole**, instead go down through it. Follow the mining tunnels and you should find yourself home free.

PC

## CARMAGGEDON

Try these cheat codes out for size:

TILTY	Pinball mode	MRMAINWARING	Pedestrian panic	STICKYTYRES	Wall climber
WATERSPORT	Underwater ability	BIGDANGLE	Mutant tail thing	GOODHEAD	People with silly heads
LEMMINGIZE	Stupid pedestrians	WETWET	Credit bonus	EVENINGOCCIFER	Drunk driving
STIFFSPASMS	Mutant corpses	TINGTING	Free repairs	TIMMYTITTY	Time bonus
WOTATWATAMI	Greased tyres	STOPSNATCH	Timer toggle	ZAZAZ	Pedestrian annihilator
SMARTBASTARD	Completes the race	MOONINGMINNIE	Lunar gravity	POWPOW	Opponent repulsificator
		CLINTONCO	Hot rod	FRYFRY	
		FASTBAST	Turbo pedestrians.		Pedestrian gets a flamethrower

PLAYSTATION

## AKUJI THE HEARTLESS

For invincibility, pause the game, hold **L2** or **R2** and press **Right Right Left**, **△**, **⊗**, **Up**, **⊙**, **Left**

For unlimited Spirit Spells, pause the game, hold **L2** or **R2** and press **Left**, **△**, **Left**, **Left**, **⊙**, **Left**, **△**, **Right**, **⊙**, **Up**, **Up**, **Down**.



### GAMEPLAY CHALLENGE

Just because you've finished a game, it doesn't mean that there's no more fun to had from it. If you need convincing of this, then try out our challenges and see if you can beat your mates at them. Top entertainment.

## NOW PLAYING



NINTENDO 64

### SUPER MARIO 64

Challenge: **acrobatic fantastic**

Go to Tall Tall Mountain and find the section, shortly after the start, where a series of red and white mushrooms are just begging to be jumped on. What we want you to do is leap on them all using flying cartwheels and triple jumps for maximum artistic merit. Don't stop to adjust the camera angle (hold it still with the **R** button if necessary) and try to get plenty of variety in your floor show. Get a friend to judge the best stumps.



NINTENDO 64

### F-ZERO X

Challenge: **knock 'em dead**

Race the Big Hand track on master difficulty and bash at least 20 opponents off the course. You'll have to get most of them on the first lap, because the course is so hazardous that there probably won't be enough computer racers left if you leave it too late. Get in among the pack on the first open corner and use side attacks to whack several craft off together. Spin attack and slam on the brakes to hit the rest of them.

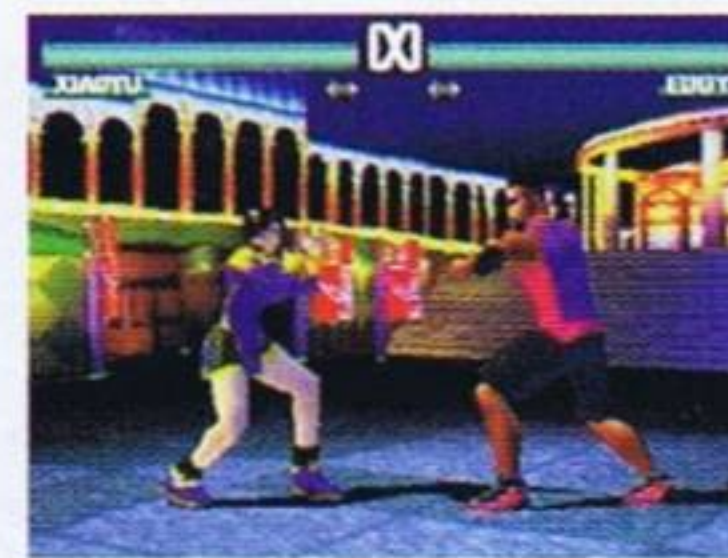


PLAYSTATION

### F1 '98

Challenge: **lap it up**

A harsh test of racing ability, this. Choose the Montreal track on Arcade mode, and attempt to win in just three laps. Easy? Well, yes, but the other condition is that you have to lap at least one of the computer cars in these three laps. In this mode, the racing line is for dummies – keep your eye out for short-cuts and other opportunities to stitch up your competitors. It's very tight – keep your swearing quiet, now.



PLAYSTATION

### TEKKEN 3

Challenge: **throw up**

Try to beat your opponent using only the Throw moves. If that's too easy for you, try to do it without losing any energy in the process. You'll be lucky to pull this off at the first time of asking and if you find yourself still desperately wiggling your arms and legs after a full ten seconds, you won't be impressing anyone. 5.2 seconds is the time of champions.



PC

### HERETIC II

Challenge: **lord it over**

This challenge comes directly from Brian Pelletier at Raven Software, the company who developed the game. He challenges you to play through the two Mine levels killing every Overlord, *without* murdering a single Ogle as you do so (even inadvertently). Done that? Brian also lays a ten-spot on the table and challenges you to play through the entire game using only the staff as a weapon.



PC

### WORMS: ARMAGEDDON

Challenge: **minimalist mayhem**

We want you to defeat the computer at least three times using only the bungee rope and the machine gun. You'll need to be super-accurate with the rope to clamber up on to cliff faces, and you must know where to leave your Worms safely if you don't have time to wipe out an opposition Worm. No picking up crates and using the goodies within, either.

# MAX POWER RACING

From concept to scouting, to sketching, to completion. A blow by blow account of the birth of a racing stage.

Infogrames' *Max Power Racing* is a driving game through and through – lots of spanking good cars, splendid tracks and some of the best night-time driving

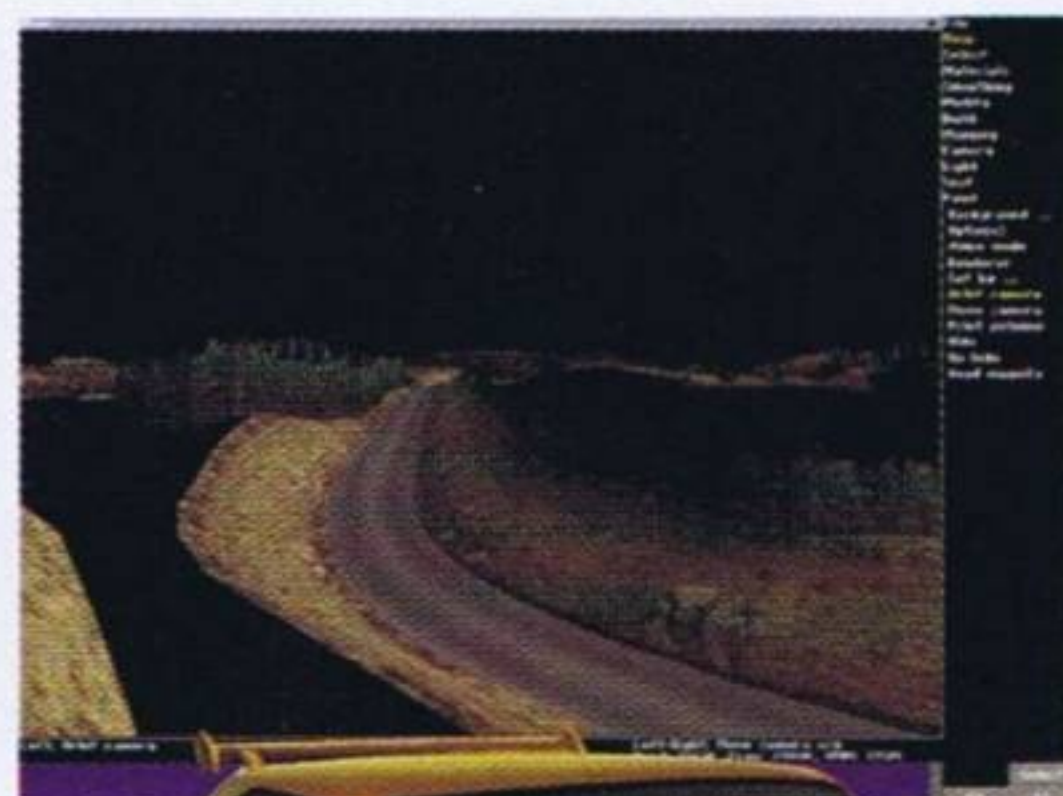
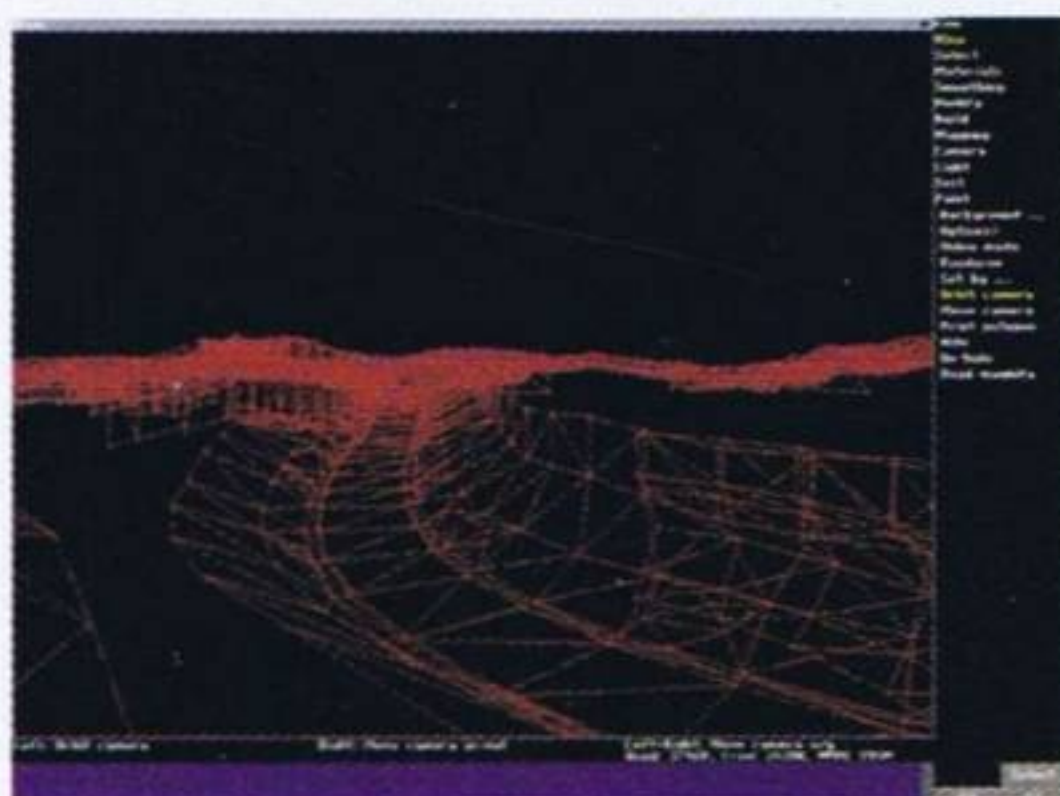
we've ever seen. Happily, the developer has peeled back its curtains to give us a glimpse of the game's development. So here, for your pleasure, is the official Eutechnyx Guide to Building Tracks.

CLIMBING HI ABOVE TREE LINE WITH GRAND TETON IN VIEW AS LANDMARK.



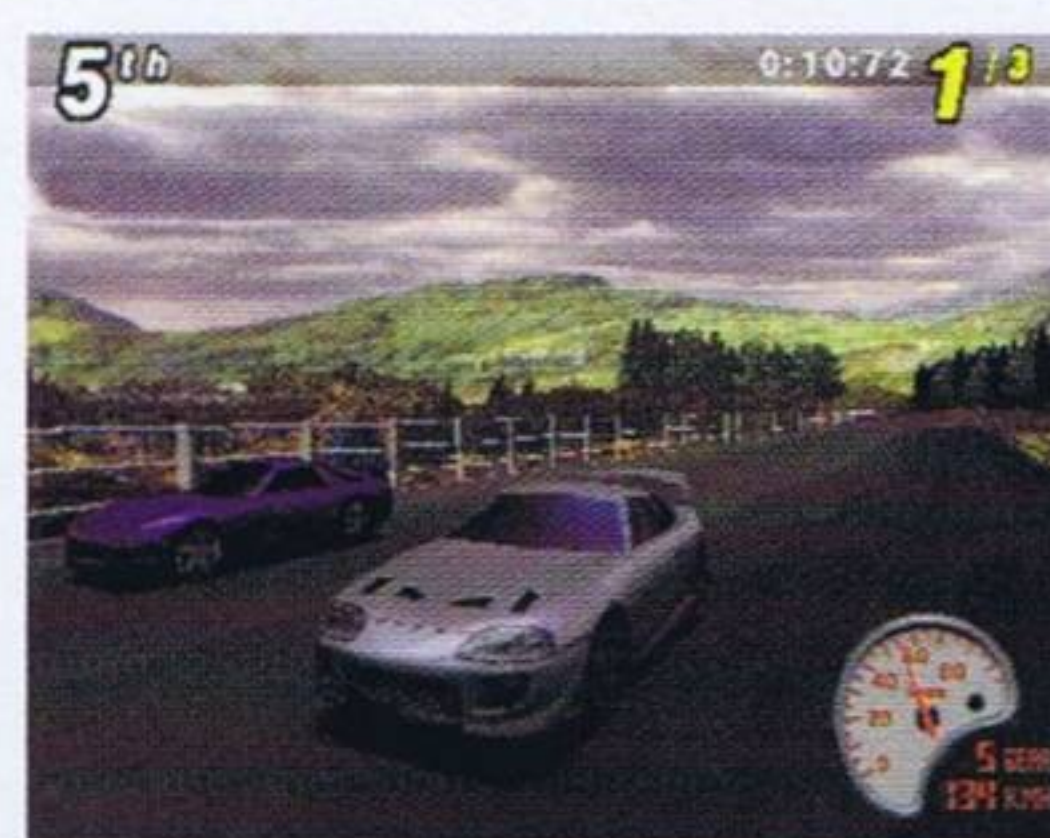
Whenever we begin to design a track, we start by deciding where we want it to be set. Some locales may initially sound interesting, but then become impossible for us to produce as tracks. For example, we looked at putting together an Australian track for *Max Power Racing*, with visions of players shooting through the rugged wilderness of the outback. However, after some initial tests, we realised that the scenery was simply too brown, barren and monotonous to offer a visually exciting race location.

Once we've decided upon our location, we start to gather reference material. Although we use a number of text books, we also send our staff to each location to shoot roll after roll of film (no wonder everyone wants a Hawaii level in the next game!) We then use this reference material to create the basic look for the level. As well as taking photos of the general area, we also photograph the minute details, such as the road surface, rock faces, local landmarks and so on. We then scan these to use as the textures of the scenery in the game.



The next stage is designing the level. The artists sketch a map and storyboard the entire race to see how it would appear on screen. When we're happy with it, we then built in *3D Studio*, a three-dimensional drawing program. We also use an in-house tool called *Mapper* to apply textures, light sources and so on.

These tracks are turned into game code and tested by the artists. This means that we can fine-tune each level as we build it, and if something doesn't work, the artists can adjust the map, put it back into the game and test it again.



Finally, the level proper is tested. Our Q&A department will play through each level making comments, offering observations and grading the difficulty of the level, so that it fits neatly into the rest of the final game.

DREAMCAST

## SEGA RALLY 2

At the title screen, press:  
Up, A, Down, Down, Left, Right, B, B, Down

60-frames-per-second mode

Up, A, Down, Down, Left, Right, B, B, Up

30-frames-per-second mode

Up, Down, Up, B, A, Left, B, B, Down

To get all the cars

Up, Left, Down, Right, B, A, B, Right, Down

To get all the tracks

To get **alternative car colours** hold the Left shoulder button when selecting the Lancia Stratos, Corolla WRC or Lancer Evolution.

There's a **bonus section** in the Riviera stage, too. Select Arcade Mode and choose either Practice or Championship. When you reach the Riviera stage, take note of the final 90° turn in the track (just before the last straight). There should be **two red cones**. Knock both of them down. After you have knocked them

down, you will hear two distinct tones, informing you that the hidden sections of the track have been opened.

Turn your car around, then **look carefully** on its right. An entrance will have opened. Drive right through, and you will enter a special "points" stage, where you need to drive your car around and knock down cones to gain points.

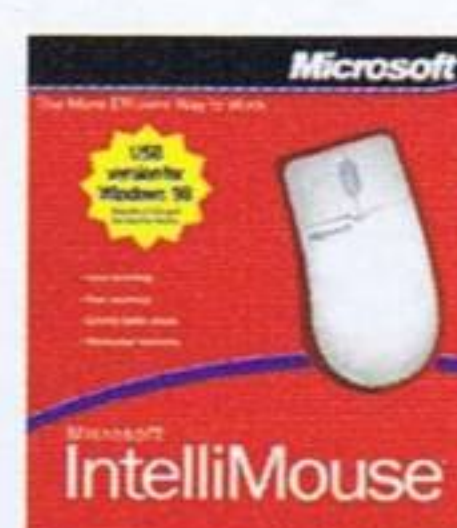


CLOCKING OFF

## Arcade

That's the inside line from across the rather colourful videogame spectrum for this month. The horse's mouth has talked itself hoarse again. But if you've got any wisdom of your own that you want to impart on a videogame, any tips the world should know about, or there's a game that you'd like us to spill the beans on, then write to us at the usual address.

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Microsoft Flight Simulator 98
Microsoft Age of Empires Gold Edition
Microsoft Close Combat III: The Russian Front
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May 1999



# A Review

## The Ultimate Game Guide

### INSIDE...

- Ridge Racer Type 4
- Aliens vs Predator
- Silver
- Racing Simulation
- Monaco GP
- Beetle Adventure
- Racing
- UEFA Champions
- League 98/99
- Gex: Deep Cover Gecko
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- R-Type Delta
- Grand Theft Auto:
- London
- Civilization 2
- Rollercoaster Tycoon
- Brian Lara Cricket
- Jimmy White's 2:
- Cueball
- Warioland II

# ALIENS VS PREDATOR

PLAY HARDER THAN THE MARINES AND SLAP ABOUT GRUESOME ALIEN SCUM IN THE MOST TERRIFYING FILM LICENSE OF THE YEAR. PAGE 98.

**50**  
**GAMES**  
**REVIEWED!**

**PLUS!** VIDEOS/BOOKS/MUSIC/COMICS/INTERNET/TOYS/BOARD GAMES/GAME ACCESSORIES/FILMS/CD-ROMS/GADGETS

#### Star ratings

- \*\*\*\*\* Simply the best. A game you really must play.
- \*\*\*\* Excellent. Definitely worth your money.
- \*\*\* Good stuff. Not a world-beater, but fine within its genre.
- \*\* Strictly average. We say: don't buy it.
- \* Awful. Avoid at all costs.

# New PlayStation Games



■ Win enough races and you get this monster. Then go show the XR3i boys in the McDonald's car park a thing or two.

**Arcade**  
PlayStation  
Game of  
the Month

# DRIVE TIME

A RIDGE TOO FAR? NOT A CHANCE



■ Last again. R4 is all about overtaking one car at a time.



■ Big bend coming up. Are you going to steer it or slide it?

## Ridge Racer Type 4

■ Publisher: **SCEE** ■ Developer: **Namco** ■ Price: **£39.99**  
 ■ Release date: **April** ■ Players: **1-2** ■ Extras: **memory card**

**Back in 1995 when PlayStation launched, the first Ridge Racer was king of the road. Now, can the fourth in an ever-improving series steal its crown back from Gran Turismo?**

In a recent interview *Ridge Racer Type 4's* director, Motomi Katayama, said "We made a racing game, not a simulation. When you drive a real car you can feel things like G-force, speed increasing, tyres gripping and so on. At the moment it's not possible to simulate this feeling, so R4 had to be a game." And that sums it up exactly. *Ridge Racer Type 4*, the fourth in Namco's famous *Ridge Racer* series, isn't worried about pesky real world inconveniences. It's an "arcade racer" through and through. It's fast, it's frantic and it's painfully cool.

Namco has always been keen on presentation and R4 does the business. Welcome to a perfect, not-too-distant alternative reality, where skyscrapers of impossible beauty lie only seconds away from winding mountain passes and traffic only ever goes in one direction. The intro, menus, animations and lightly tripping drum 'n' bass rhytmix compound the purity and chic of the experience yet further, making *Gran Turismo's* Ash-powered, brashness seem clunky and forced in comparison.

Like its predecessors, R4 features entirely fictional cars and tracks that are even more hair-brained. Each is a sublime combination of straights, bends that you can take at full speed, and bends that you must negotiate sideways in order to escape without a knock. The scenery zipping past is absolutely gorgeous hi-speed, hi-res, polished perfection

and once again *Gran Turismo* comes off worse; its realistic loops of Tarmac are dull by comparison.

There are eight tracks to race, each best enjoyed via the superb Grand Prix mode (but two players can enjoy an excellent split-screen race with a choice of cars on any tracks in a trice). At the start you must choose which one of four teams you would like to drive for (which correspond to four different difficulty levels) and each is hilariously owned by a different boss who'll brief you via a series of drawings, like leftovers from SNES *Pilotwings*. Next comes a choice of four cars to drive: two drift models (powerslides a-go-go) and two grip models (brake, slow down and then make the turn).

And so begins the process of playing through the game in every team, with every basic car and earning every possible variation as you go. Beat everything dished up and you'll eventually own 320 different sets of wheels, all of which you can pore over via the Garage option. While examining your motors is fun, there's nothing like the near-infinite tuning options and meaty car-fan satisfaction available in *Gran Turismo*. Also, the eight tracks (as per all *Ridge* games) are only around 80% unique, borrowing corners and straights from one another. When it comes to sheer quantity of cars and tracks *Turismo* wins.

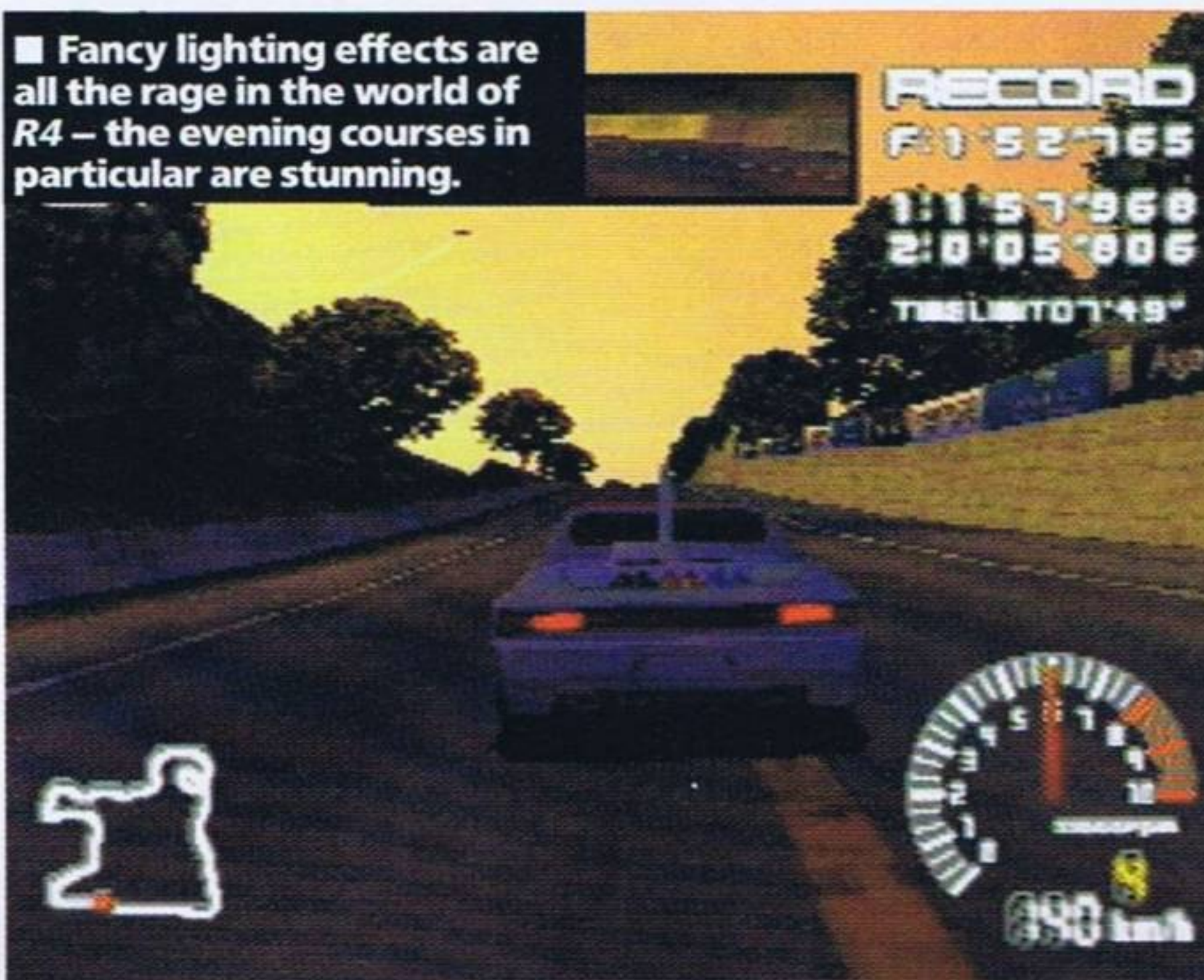
But R4 is competing in a whole different race. Bends loom up from the far distance and tease you in a blur of chevrons. Like all the *Ridges* before it, mastering R4 is not a matter of actually negotiating a car around a track, but taking cues from the passing scenery and executing perfectly timed "ons" and "offs" of the D-pad. Your knowledge of how long a bend is is not gleaned from watching the screen, but from pure extended-play experience. Drive on each track for the first time and you're ricocheting around and arriving last. Learn to separate the full-speed bends from the powersliders, however, and you're on the way to victory.

So R4 is a fantastic experience but absolutely nothing like actually driving a car. Send your ride full-tilt into a corner, dab the brakes and you'll produce the famous, preset Namco powerslide, with all the artificial feel and sudden, unrealistic kickback and bite that you're used to. In short, play R4 while you're still in love with *Gran Turismo* and you're going to hate it. But this is an arcade racing game – the hippest, snappiest, sexiest arcade racing game ever created – not a driving sim. ★★★★★ **Dan Griffiths**

Or you could try...

**Gran Turismo**  
SCEE ★★★★★  
The best driving game on PlayStation, and quite possibly the best driving game ever made.

**Rollcage**  
Psygnosis ★★★★★  
Identically scoring to RR4, but beaten in terms of arcade cool and steadfast playability.



■ Fancy lighting effects are all the rage in the world of R4 – the evening courses in particular are stunning.



**BEAT EVERYTHING DISHED UP AND YOU'LL EVENTUALLY OWN 320 DIFFERENT SETS OF WHEELS**

### ↑ Uppers & Downers

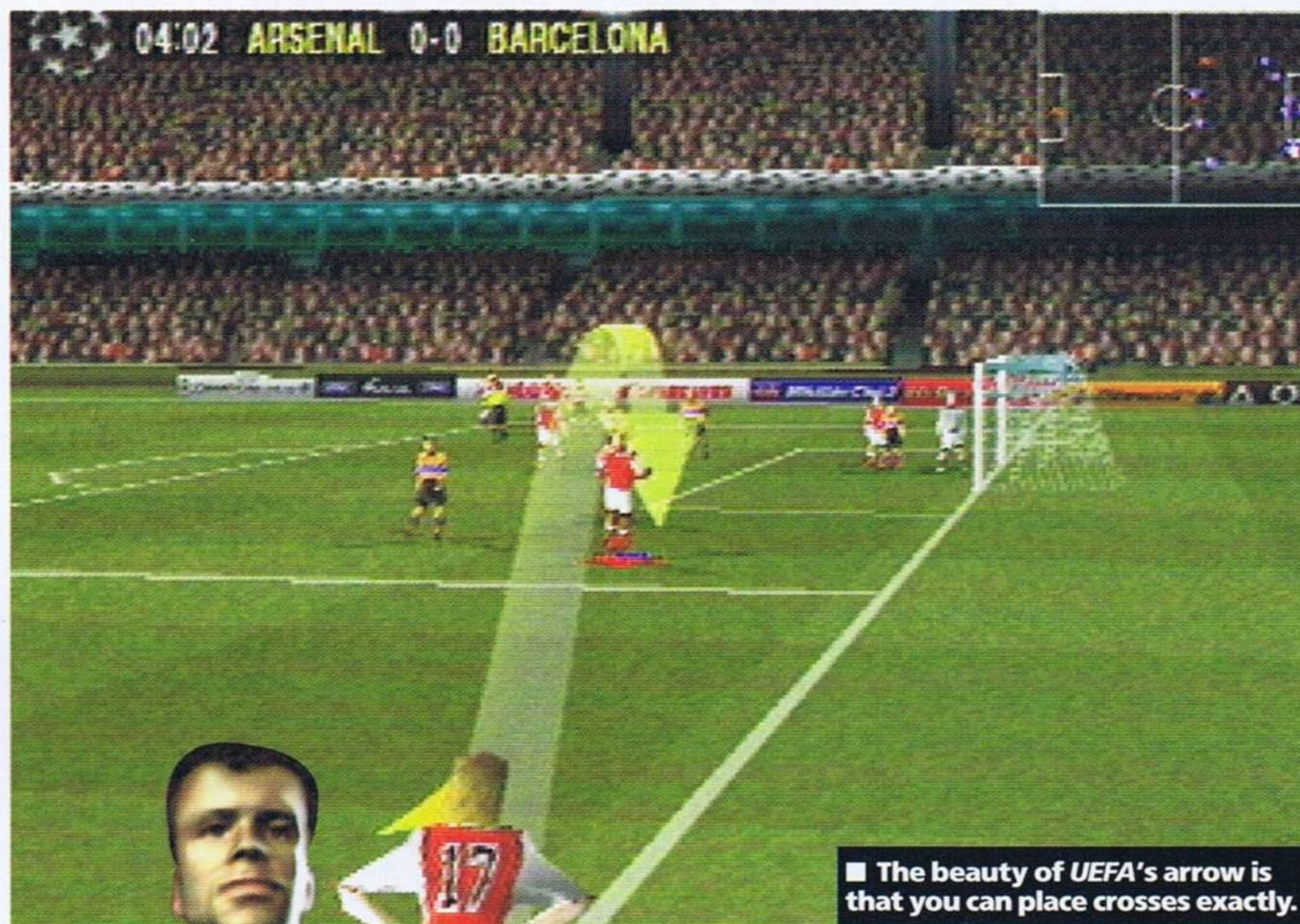
**Ridge**  
 ■ It's gorgeous  
 ■ You'll be grinning throughout

**Hump**  
 ■ Not realistic  
 ■ Only eight tracks  
 ■ Ultimately, if you absolutely have to compare the two, *Gran Turismo* is better



# SUBSTANCE OVER STYLE

## IT'S SOCCER, NOW WITH ADDED BOB WILSON



■ The beauty of UEFA's arrow is that you can place crosses exactly.

### ↑ Uppers & Downers

- Lobs**
- Breathtaking marriage of combos and standard moves
  - Great licence
  - Spectacular goals and great 40-yard passes
  - Big Ron. Oh yes
- Bobs**
- Some dodgy motion capture
  - Slow in places
  - Shabby visuals

combos and the variety of play options is still the game's most outstanding feature. Almost anything is possible: splaying 40-yard passes to feet, drifting a ball to the wing, looping a shot from outside the box or volleying home from an acute angle. The beauty of it is that the playing and control systems are completely flexible.

Becoming Beckham-like in the passing department or being able to bury Owen-style half-volleys home from inside the penalty area always relied on one thing in the *WLS* games: perseverance. And *UEFA* is the same. In-game brilliance doesn't just

fall at your feet. Instead, you need to play and play – probably even more so this time round, as the advent of European football's most talent-heavy competition ever has resulted in an even harder football game. Every team is packed with creative and individually gifted players. Even average teams like Helsinki are brilliant.

If there's a problem with *UEFA*, it's that it seems less refined than ever. Admittedly the *WLS* games have never been visually special – despite the fact that everything appears in hi-res – but *UEFA*'s motion capture seems worse than before. Watching matches flow from end to end it soon becomes apparent that something's not quite right. But, more than that, *UEFA* just doesn't quite fit together. Hopefully Silicon Dreams will roll their sleeves up for a general tidy-up and sort it all out for next time round.

More annoyingly, and visual paucity aside, the minor in-game niggles are not glaringly obvious as you play. This means that *UEFA* is still a crackling game of football, but just not quite up to the majesty of *WLS*. Despite being built around the same engine. Odd. ★★★★★ **Tim Weaver**

## UEFA Champions League Season 98/99

- Publisher: **EIDOS** ■ Developer: **Silicon Dreams**
- Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now**
- Players: **1-2** ■ Other formats: **PC**

**All the ingredients are in place. It's borrowed *WLS99*'s awesome engine and boasts the *UEFA Champions League* license. So why isn't it perfect?**

Despite its origins as the fantastic *WLS99* (a five-star feast of football that took even the mighty *ISS Pro 98* to the wire), *UEFA Champions League* feels different to its predecessor. And it's difficult to explain why. The goals are just as special, the moves flow as freely, the tactics are all in place but, well, there's... something.

The UEFA licence has enabled Silicon Dreams to make some changes in the structure of the game's tournaments. Out go *WLS*'s national leagues and international teams, and in come the European Cup itself (including the option to replay encounters using famous teams from yesterday) plus an *ISS*-style Champions League scenario and a customisable league competition. To tie in with ITV's coverage of the European Cup, Silicon Dreams has also enlisted the help of Bob Wilson and Brian Moore, a twosome that defies belief on TV, but that comes relatively free of disaster here, even if they are both dull throughout. Still, Ron Atkinson provides some respite, machine-gunning some absolute corkers as he sums up everything from counter attacks to cross-field balls.

To play, *UEFA* is much the same as *WLS*. Strangely, in places it does feel a little slower – perhaps because the pitches seem a little "stodgier" – but the genius of move-

### Or you could try...

**ISS Pro 98**  
Konami ★★★★★  
The best football game available for the PlayStation. Full stop.

**WLS99**  
EIDOS ★★★★★  
Better predecessor to *UEFA*. Plays a simply sublime game of football.



■ Proceedings might seem a little bit visually underwhelming, but they're more than made up for by the dazzling moves and finishing.



# LAPPING IT UP

## IT'S FORMULA ONE, BUT NOT AS YOU KNOW IT



### Racing Simulation Monaco Grand Prix

■ Publisher: **Ubisoft** ■ Developer: **Ubisoft** ■ Price: **£39.99**  
 ■ Release date: **April** ■ Players: **1-4** ■ Requires: **memory card, Multi-Tap**

**Taking advantage of Psygnosis F1 series' slowing pace, Ubisoft has sent its own sim into the fray, albeit without FIA-approved drivers, cars or tracks.**

Psygnosis' officially endorsed F1 series appears to be stuck in first gear, with little discernible difference between the recent '98 edition and the original game of two years back. Spotting an opportunity to snatch the top step of the podium, Ubisoft has nipped in on the inside with an unofficial take on the Formula One season, offering a host of altered driver names and ambiguous worldwide courses. What it lacks in expensive (and recognisable) licences, though, the drearily titled racer does try to compensate for with an expansive array of options and real-life physics to ensure the cars' handling is as realistic as possible. Even so, it still fails to move on from the spot where Psygnosis stalled.

Monaco Racing Simulation offers users three varying levels of gameplay. The bare bones Arcade mode is, as you'd expect, a pared-down racer where you select one of the game's 22 cars and simply race for glory. There is also a Championship mode wherein you can participate in a 16-race tournament across the globe and a Time Attack that gives you the opportunity to race a ghost car in an attempt to smash lap times – with your spectral opponent updated every time a new record is broken. It's all stuff that you should be more than familiar with, and it is this lack of innovation that keeps the game from pulling out a lead.

Despite the differing levels of control afforded by the

three game modes – the Championship mode being by far the most realistic – there is nothing in *Monaco Racing Simulation* we haven't seen dozens of times before. Realistic handling is hardly an original basis for a Formula One title, and while the Psygnosis series may indeed have become stale, there was still an undeniable buzz to be gained by racing as Schumacher or Coulthard in cars that you've seen on TV. *RSMGP* attempts to compensate for this deficiency with a series of gruelling and challenging courses, clearly based on the real GP circuits.

The familiarity of the content is also highlighted when the rather rudimentary graphics fail to offer any advance over the many other PlayStation racers. While Ubisoft has crammed in the genre's regulation car views, the unimaginative vehicles and barren backdrops conspire to create a dated-

looking game. Mainly this is down to a lack of the Day-Glo colours of car and trackside sponsors normally splashed around the circuits but it's compounded by a lack of finesse.

Considering *RSMGP* uses the PlayStation's hi-res mode, it completely fails to capitalise on the extra level of detail it could attain. There are no sparks as the racers change gear, for example, and the cars are all much of a muchness.

At its heart, then, *RSMGP* is a solid racer, but it just retreads the same old racing line. The car handling within the Championship tournaments will keep ardent F1 fans busy, but there's little here Psygnosis hasn't already thought of. The result is another adequate but uninspired racing title to add to the PlayStation's list. ★★★ **Steve Merrett**

**↑ Uppers & Downers**

**Pole position**

- Challenging Championship mode
- Adaptable difficulty levels
- Ghost mode

**Pole axed**

- Looks dull
- Little new to drool over

### UBISOFT HAS NIPPED IN ON THE INSIDE WITH AN UNOFFICIAL TAKE ON THE FORMULA ONE SEASON

#### Or you could try...

**F198**  
 Psygnosis ★★★★★  
 Officially endorsed by the FIA, and featuring real life tracks, cars and drivers. Dated, but authentic.

**Formula One**  
 Platinum ★★★★★  
 As above, but a good 20 quid cheaper. And that's the only real difference.



■ The physics are realistic and the racing's as it should be. But F1's just not the same with the wad taken out. Money talks.

# GEXY BOY

## THIRD STRIKE AND NOW IT'S OUT

■ All dressed up and nowhere to go?



### Gex: Deep Cover Gecko

■ Publisher: EIDOS ■ Developer: Crystal Dynamics  
 ■ Price: £39.99 ■ Release date: on sale now ■ Players: 1

Gex's third outing, and this time his voice is provided by Red Dwarf's Cat, Danny John-Jules.

**G**ex: *Deep Cover Gecko* is a bit like that bloke at school, university or work who, for no discernable reason, no one really likes. Let's, for the sake of argument, call this bloke "Rich". Everyone agrees Rich is alright, but he doesn't actually have any real friends. It's certainly not through lack of trying, indeed most would probably say that he tries too hard.

Like Rich, *Deep Cover Gecko* does, perhaps, try too hard.

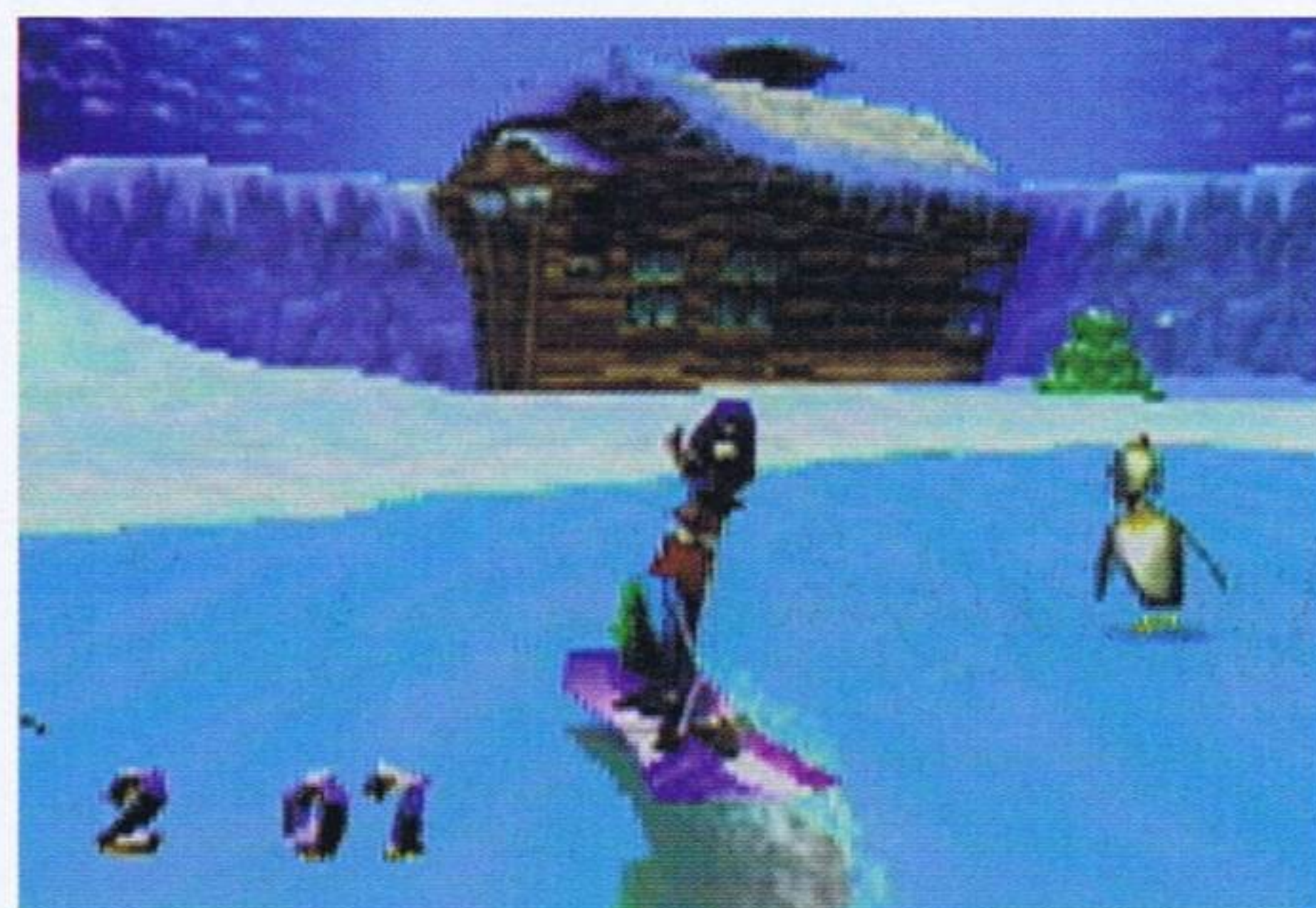
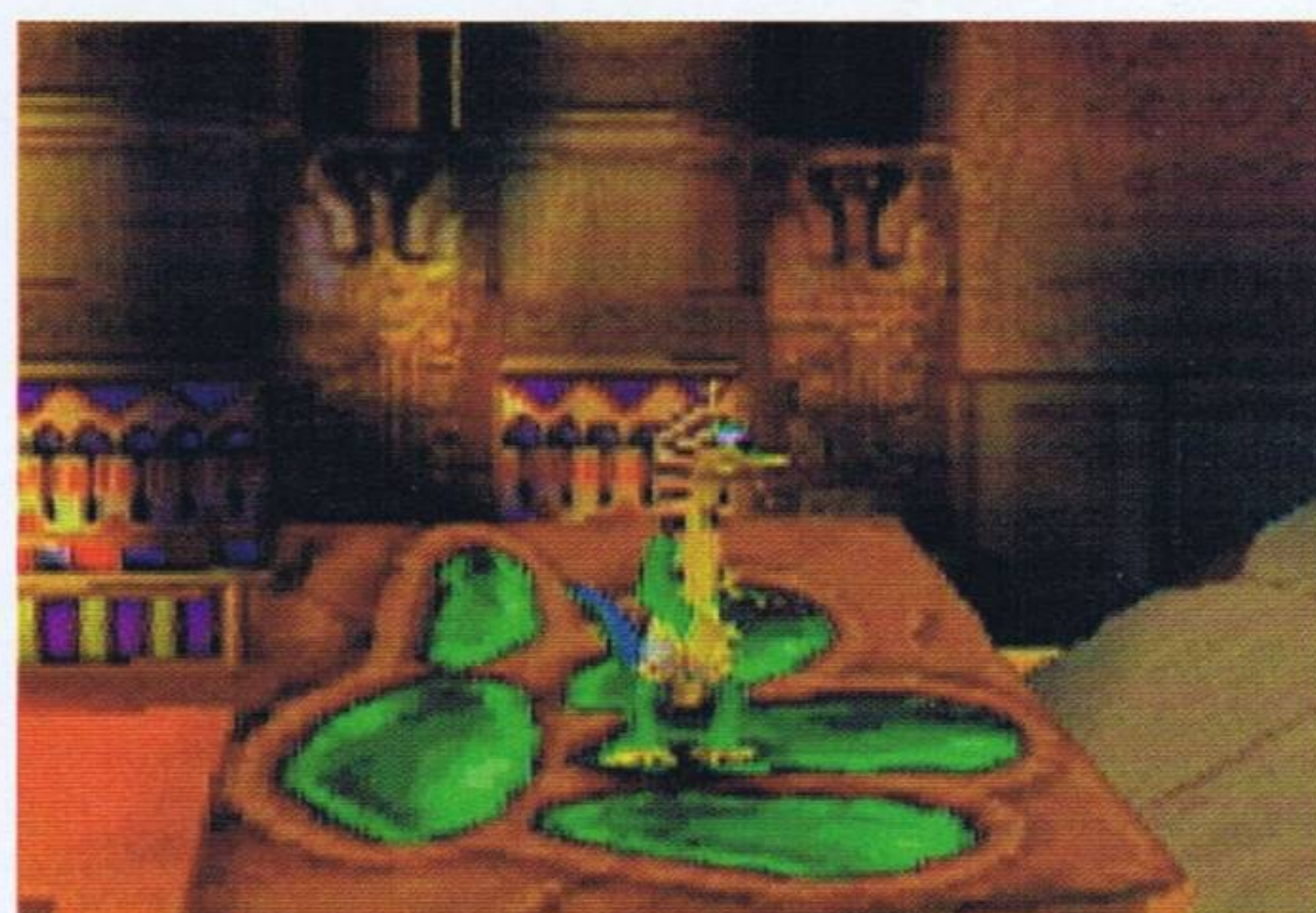
It aims to keep your attention via the constant array of amusing graphical touches, like Gex's changes of costume and the silly bonus sub-games. Yet somehow, when you're

stuffed inside the pouch of a kangaroo trying to ring ten bells within a given time limit, or clinging on to the reigns of a crocodile while you use him as an impromptu skateboard, you can't help but feel that you're being distracted from the basic aim.

The crux of the game is a mix of navigation, defeating baddies, locating things and an increasingly annoying array of timed jumps. The levels are interconnected through a main starting room and television teleporters. Complete tasks and you will be rewarded with a remote control that gives you access to a specific television. This is an odd way of doing things and, since the levels do not necessarily expand in a wholly logical order, you often find yourself having to backtrack through a lot of ground you've already covered. This isn't helped by a confusing layout.

The scenery is beautifully detailed and colourful, and is helped along with vastly improved camera angles from *Enter The Gecko*. Even given these factors, however, the 3D still doesn't feel right. The overall impression remains one of a two-dimensional platform game with a limited field of vision and camera that you can only swivel. Next to *Spyro the Dragon*, a game that created an entire 3D world for you to explore, *Gex* feels a little inferior.

Like Rich, you *might* take a shine to *Gex*, but it's unlikely. Which is a shame, because there's a decent concept hidden beneath all its problems, one of which is the Cat's hugely irritating voiceover. We guarantee you'll have the volume turned down to zero in minutes. ★★★ **Rich Pelley**



■ Hiding in a kangaroo's pouch and ringing bells, skateboarding on a crocodile's back... there's plenty of visual slapstick, but what's it all about?

**NEXT TO SPYRO, WHICH CREATED AN ENTIRE 3D WORLD TO EXPLORE, GEX FEELS A LITTLE INFERIOR**

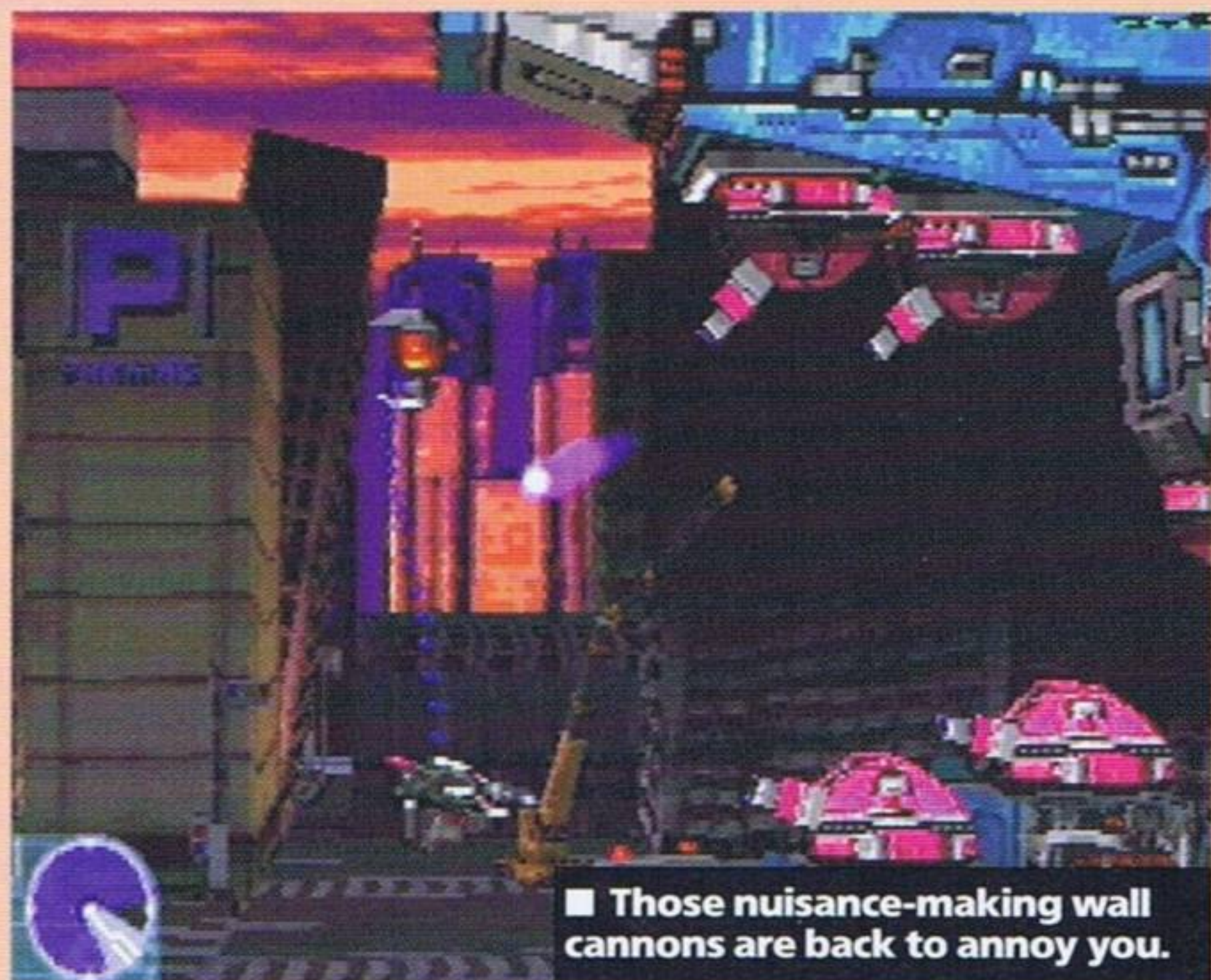


■ I'm too sexy for my trousers.

Or you could try...

**Gex 3D: Enter the Gecko**  
 EIDOS ★★★  
 Just like the title says: introducing the gecko for the first time in 3D.

**Croc**  
 Electronic Arts ★★  
 Yup, it's a "croc" alright. A croc of what, we can't bring ourselves to mention.



■ Those nuisance-making wall cannons are back to annoy you.



■ Now that's big. It's time to wield The Force, we reckon.



■ The Force: Quite obviously the most gratifying power-up ever.

**Uppers & Downers**

**Blast**

- Extensive and impressive weapons
- Great end-of-level bosses
- Instant gratification

**Past**

- Sprite/backdrop confusion
- Drab, uninspired levels
- Ignores classic R-Type elements



### Player Manager: Season 98/99

■ Publisher: **Infogrames**  
 ■ Developer: **Anco** ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1** ■ Requires: **memory card, mouse**  
 ■ Other formats: **PC**

**Step into the shoes of Hoddle and Keegan with Infogrames' stat-packed interpretation of soccer management.**

■ All credit must go to Anco, as it has certainly done its homework. *Player Manager: Season 98/99* represents a huge step forward for its previously flawed series and is an incredibly comprehensive management title. If something is within the remit of the football manager, this game covers it. Sadly, there is a price to pay for such total coverage, and an unsuitable control system cripples the game's potential.

The basis of *Player Manager* is a series of option screens, within which you can alter every aspect of your team. And the potential is obvious. You can rework or alter any part of the game, with the tactical side of play almost infinitely flexible. If your 4-4-2 system isn't working, the game will explain who is under-performing or playing out of position, so you can make immediate changes. There is also a tactics designer so you can check out your squad members and give them specific attacking or defensive instructions. Add to this a huge player roster incorporating every team in the UK, as well as a wealth of foreign talent, and you have a game with serious stamina.

With so much promise, though, it is a pity that fundamental control problems let the side down. Although Anco has made the game mouse-compatible, the majority of PlayStation owners will balk at the clumsy pull-down menu system. The preponderance of options within the game means *Player Manager* can become a chore as even simple tasks are hampered by the irritating menu system.

There is so much to recommend in *Player Manager: Season 98/99* that it's tragic to see the game stumble because of such an obvious flaw. Patience always pays dividends in football management titles – and perseverance with *Player Manager* does bring rewards. But this time Infogrames' title is asking a little too much of would-be Big Rons. ★★★ **Steve Merrett**

# OPPORTUNITY KNOCKED

## THE SPACE-TIME CONTINUUM KEEPS CONTINUUMING

### R-Type Delta

■ Publisher: **SCEE** ■ Developer: **Irem** ■ Price: **£34.99**  
 ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**  
 ■ Requires: **memory card**

**Remember R-Type? Now Irem's vintage blaster is back, and reworked for modern tastes. But can the fancy new 3D aliens match the menace and sheer gittishness of the 2D sprites of 1985?**

One of the reasons the original *R-Type* coin-op was so successful was that everything in the game slotted together beautifully. It was a tightly designed blast where the brevity of the levels was countered with the intricacy of their design. The result was a game that truly tested your reflexes while demanding a serious think about the best way to clear a path through to the end. While *R-Type Delta* borrows a few of these qualities from its illustrious predecessor, it is a far less disciplined blast and suffers because of it.

Considering *R-Type Delta* is an update of the 1985 classic, its nods to its heritage are almost subliminal. The original weapons systems are recreated lock, stock and barrel and the "Force" add-on that you can send ahead or to the rear of the ship has been retained and expanded slightly with three variants on offer. These are enough to establish the game as part of the *R-Type* family, but seem totally at odds with a level design that throws heritage to the wind in a bid to wow you with pointless graphical trickery. It's all a bit disappointing.

With the original arcade game so packed with memorable villains – who can forget the embryonic first boss, the third level's huge warship, or the walls of yellow dots? – it seems strange that Irem has not taken the chance to update them within *Delta's* pseudo-3D worlds. Instead, polygonal baddies sweep in and out of the screen, exploiting the PlayStation's 3D capabilities, as you pass through cityscapes indistinguishable from those seen in countless blasters before. What change there is seems to be merely for change's sake: there's precious little of the innovation expected of an *R-Type* game.

That's not to say *R-Type Delta* isn't a good shoot 'em up. In fact, it is a great deal better than many available for the Sony machine. However, it could have been so much more. The level design is perfunctory and unimaginative, the screen often becomes unbearably cluttered with aliens and the backdrops merging to create messy and hard to negotiate levels. The admittedly well-designed end-of-level bosses indicate how good everything could have been with the use of 3D, but are just one strong point within what is otherwise a lacklustre title.

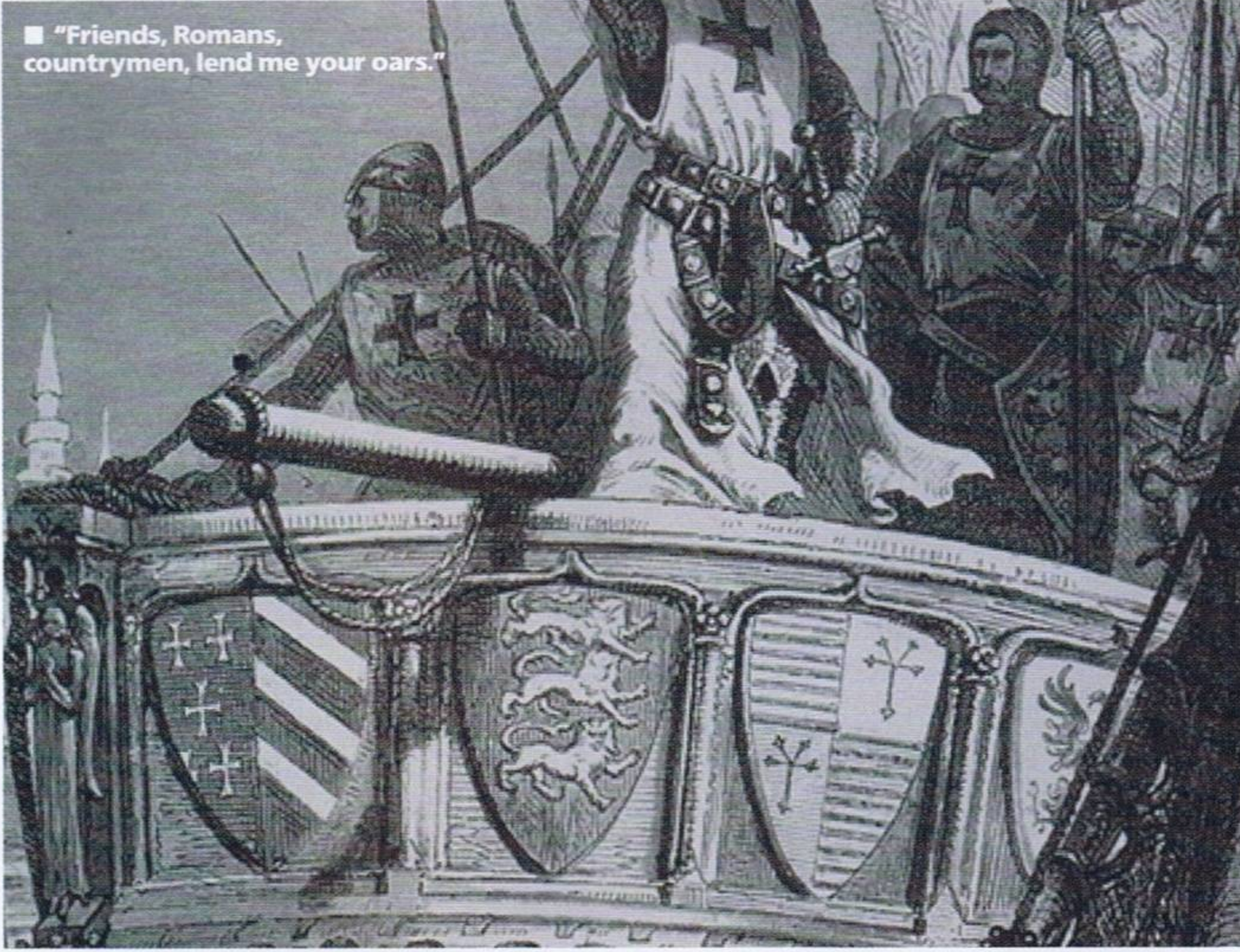
Ultimately, then, *R-Type Delta* misses the point. The original succeeded because Irem concentrated on its tight gameplay and rigid level design with the aesthetic side of things a secondary concern. *R-Type Delta*, on the other hand, puts the cart before the horse and proves that, as far as vintage blasters are concerned, impressive graphics are mere icing on the cake, and what really counts is the blasting action beneath the gloss. ★★★ **Steve Merrett**

**Or you could try...**

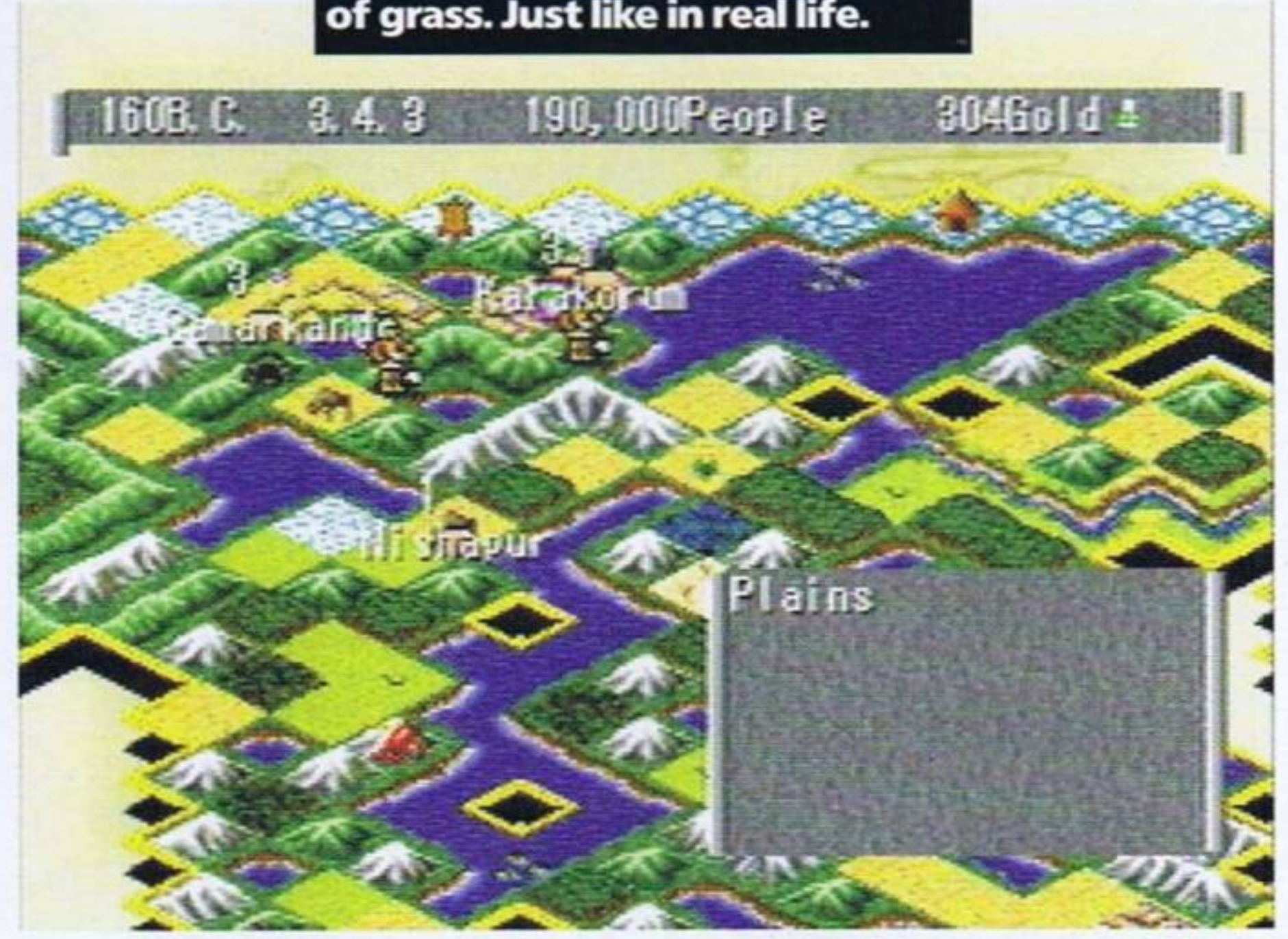
**Raiden Project**  
 Ocean ★★★  
 A real old-school blaster. A vertically scrolling shooting gallery as seen in kebab shops.

**Tempest X**  
 Interplay ★★  
 An update of Atari's dated coin-op. Shows its age, but is still a mental experience.

■ "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your oars."



■ From tiny acorns... this conurbation started as a patch of grass. Just like in real life.



# PEOPLE POWER

## BE THE MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE

### Civilization 2

- Publisher: **Activision** ■ Developer: **Firaxis**
- Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**
- Requires: **memory card** ■ Other formats: **PC**

**Rome wasn't built in a day. But take your phone off the hook and you'll probably be able to knock up a fairly good approximation in a few hours.**

It isn't often that PlayStation gamers are afforded the opportunity to exercise their little grey cells. Even Hercule Poirot tires of *Tekken* now and again, and the first console release of Sid Meier's epic strategy game *Civilization* provides a welcome relief from the proliferation of driving and sports games. Already a staple diet of all those PC types, *Civilization* was a big hit on the home computers some six years ago and, during the intervening years (and inevitable upgrades and sequels), the premise has remained much the same: you have to build an empire from scratch, from ancient times through to the near future. Deploying a cunning combination of smart decisions and extreme violence, you rule the world. Or at least some of it. You are the Grande Fromage, a leviathan figure who imperiously strolls the Earth, building cities, putting the inhabitants to work, taxing them mercilessly, eating grapes and generally lording it over lesser mortals.

But while you're busy acting all tyrannical (and no, it isn't clever), other despots are hell bent on constructing their own empires. And hey, guess what? You're in their way. As each of these nascent empires grow, so do the number of

**↑ Uppers & Downers**

**Democracy**

- Enormous gaming world
- You control your own destiny
- Multiple strategies

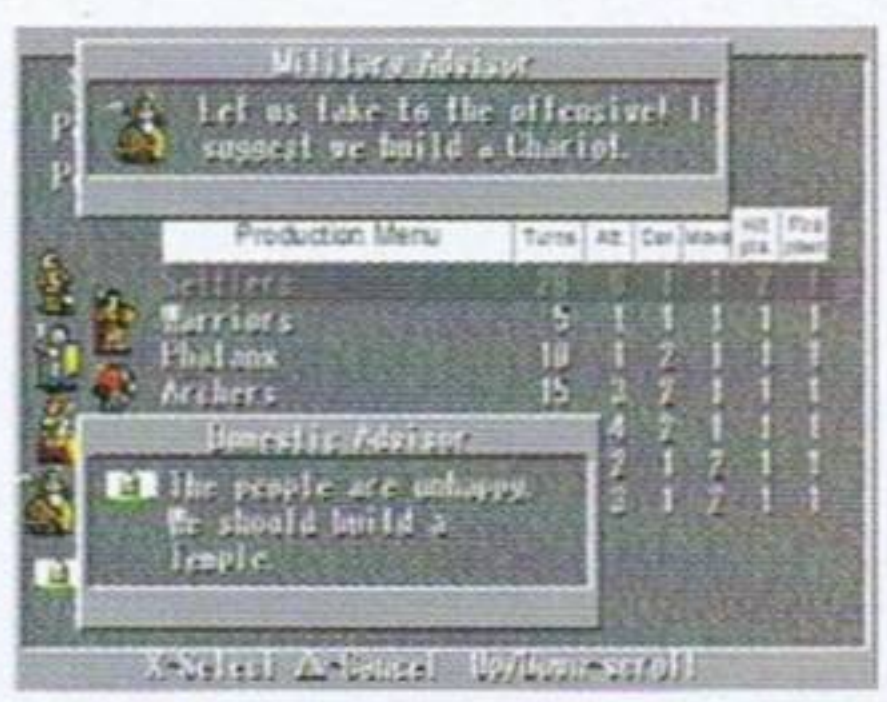
**Hypocrisy**

- Hardly eye candy
- Slightly fiddly controls
- Very time consuming

balls you have to juggle, and this is where *Civilization 2* gets really interesting. You start with a tiny plot of land on which you have to build a city. Unfortunately, it's a few thousand years BC, and your small tribe doesn't have the keys to a JCB. But from tiny acorns... The long and winding road ahead of you takes in exploration, politics, military decisions, trading, and research and development. Most importantly, you need to ensure that the people are happy, so remember to bring in the sheaves; a happy

worker is one with a full tum. You also need to ensure you're constantly developing new technologies, because rival tribes are doing the same. However, every decision you make has both an up-side and a down-side, so you'll always be treading on someone's toes. This is the joy of *Civ 2*.

Although you can fumble your way through the early years, there's a fantastic learning curve that ensures you'll only get two hours sleep a night, so desperate will you be to expand: developing a civilisation requires your rapt attention. The control system involves clicking through a variety of menus and inventories, and the joypad deals with them reasonably well. This task would be easier with a mouse, but the game isn't PlayStation mouse-compatible. Equally, should you wish for polygonal finery you'll be disappointed. *Civ 2* is a strategy game and as such its visuals are basic. Look beyond the grey visage, though, because this is one fine strategy game. ★★★★★ **Steve Bradley**



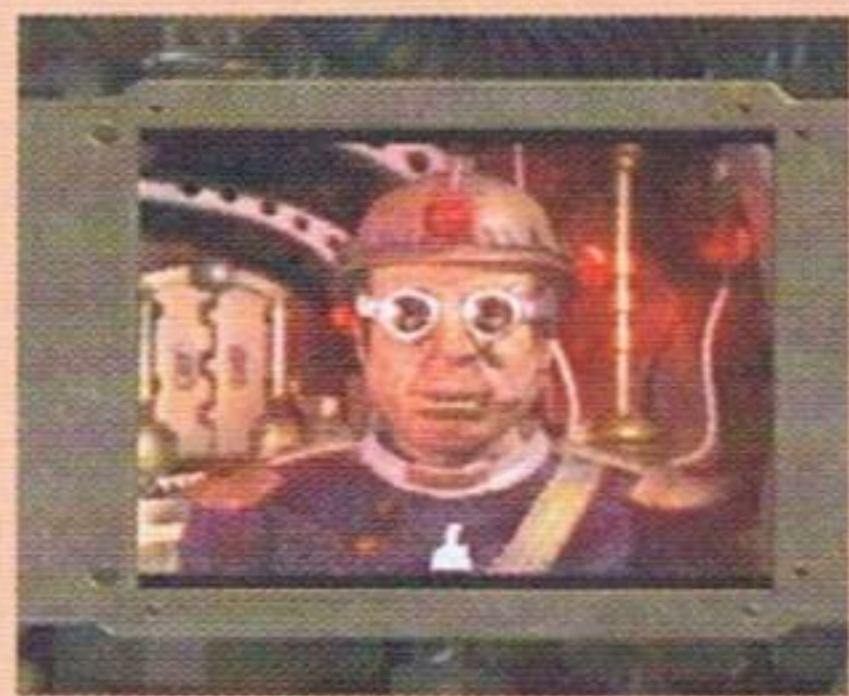
■ Okay, so it might not look like the most exciting of games, but *Civilization 2* is the best PlayStation strategy game available.

**Or you could try...**

**Constructor**  
Acclaim ★★★★★  
A glorious, sociological experiment in building cities. But look out for the Battersbys moving in.

**Populous: The Beginning**  
Electronic Arts ★★★★★  
Create armies, take over the world, then be worshipped as the supreme being.





■ While the two-player option is nice, strategy games are all about you versus cunningly designed levels. Unfortunately, the levels demand trial and error rather than any real brain-work.

# KROSS PURPOSES

## YOUR BOSS WANTS TO KILL YOU

### KKND: Crossfire

■ Publisher: **Infogrames** ■ Developer: **Melbourne House** ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now**  
 ■ Players: **1-2** ■ Requires: **memory card, Dual Shock-compatible** ■ Other formats: **PC**

**Action. Strategy. Together this pairing can be unbeatable as *Command & Conquer* proved. But does *KKND: Crossfire* get shot by both sides?**

Like a man with a comb-over, the creator of *KKND: Crossfire* seems to be deluding itself. The company has come up with a *Command & Conquer* clone whose major selling point is a split-screen two-player option. Nice move – you might think – the designers certainly stole a march with that one. Unfortunately, in the mistaken belief that this *wasn't* C&C with knobs on, the team then decided to tinker with both the controls and the difficulty curve that made Westwood's game so appealing. Oh dear.

It's no surprise that the setting of *Crossfire* is a world ravaged by nuclear conflict, where desperate groups of mutants and cyborgs fight it out over civilisation's still radioactive corpse. You join one of three tribes (Survivor, Evolved or Series 9) and can choose one of two

#### ↑ Uppers & Downers

**Kreamy**  
 ■ Wage two-player war  
 ■ Tough missions that last  
 ■ Looks like C&C

**Krap**  
 ■ Frustrating for beginners  
 ■ Annoying, useless briefings  
 ■ Doesn't play like C&C

start-up missions. A rendered talking head outlines your objectives, the screen dissolves and you're left with a small group of units in the middle of nowhere. So, what now?

If you've played strategy games before, you'll immediately try and select a portion of your troops by pulling the D-pad diagonally and keeping X held down. Nothing doing. This is because *Crossfire* uses a new selection system based around groups that you scroll through using the shoulder buttons. Okay, a bit odd, but we'll do our best. Your men move out and then you're presented with another puzzle. You've been asked to find an enemy weapon or a bunker, but at no point are you shown what it looks like. Is it past that turret? Nope, ow, ow, ow! How about the installation up ahead? Ouch! Your map and cursor pointer offer no clues, as your attack force is whittled down to a couple of cyborgs on push-bikes.

The trouble with *Crossfire* is that it assumes you'll stubbornly keep plugging away replaying the same mission until you've uncovered enough of the map to work out a solution. One wrong turn or over-hasty engagement will see all your troops obliterated and you back at square one. After several ignominious deaths, you begin to wonder if your real enemy isn't the other tribes but your own top brass who keep sending you on these suicide missions without even the most basic intelligence.

Unlike both *C&C: Red Alert* and *Warzone 2100*, *Crossfire* is all stick and no carrot. Only buy it if you're gagging for a split-screen strategic scrap. ★★

**Pete Wilton**

#### Or you could try...

**Command & Conquer: Red Alert**  
 Virgin ★★★★★  
 Still the gold standard for strategy, even if its two-player mode is strictly link-up. Lethal.

**Warzone 2100**  
 Eidos ★★★★★  
 Original 3D strategic tank-'em-up. Build your own units and then wreak merry havoc.



### Swing

■ Publisher: **Software 2000**  
 ■ Developer: **Software 2000**  
 ■ Price: **£34.99** ■ Release date: **April** ■ Players: **1-2**  
 ■ Extras: **memory card**

**Orbicular match making, so oft the preserve of the puzzler, returns in yet another guise.**

You're probably familiar with Taito's *Bust-A-Move* games and already know what a bubble-popping festival of fun they are. You simply cannot dislike the idea of propelling coloured bubbles on to the screen, then watching them pop as they join up with globules of similar hue. When losing in a head-to-head, your armpits might perspire and your palms might sweat. And after a particularly long and gruelling session of busting, you may even dream of bubbles when your head finally makes contact with a pillow. It's addictive fare.

Similarly, *Swing* contends that you fire coloured balls into an arena. It also asks you to colour co-ordinate them, in order that they should disappear and gain you points once you've matched three. Again, your ultimate task is to clear the screen of unwanted coloured balls. However, all associations with *Bust-A-Move* end here. In *Swing* the balls are weighted, and the bottom of the playing area bears some resemblance to a grocer's scales. And this is where it gets complex. Although you're attempting to match up horizontal lines of three, the scales go up and down like see-saws depending on the weight of the balls. And darn it all, if there aren't some 30 "special" balls, which all have a different effect when they land.

Fortunately, time is not of the essence – if it was, you'd be devoid of hair within minutes. The head-to-head two-player game in particular offers a thoughtful, beard-stroking challenge with no time limit to pressure someone to take their go. This has its drawbacks. If you've ever played pool, say, with someone who takes an age to set up a shot then you can imagine the frustration of waiting for them to *get on with it*.

So where does this leave us? You should only apply here if you have the patience of Job – don't expect the electric blast that is *Bust-A-Move*. So the appeal of *Swing* is hardly immediate, but it has the addictive qualities of a decent puzzler for those who's brains have been fried by Bub and Bob. ★★★ **Steve Bradley**



## Tank Racer

■ Publisher: **Grolier**  
 ■ Developer: **Glass Ghost**  
 ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now**  
 ■ Players: **1-2** ■ Requires: **memory card, Dual Shock**  
 ■ Other formats: **PC**

**Armour-plated vehicles and a large gun where your windscreen should be. It's the world's first dedicated tank driving game.**

You might not believe it, but this isn't the first time tanks have been raced in anger on a PlayStation. That rather dubious honour goes to one of the levels in *Micro Machines*. A meaningless aside? Hardly. Two or so minutes with what is, after all, only one of the hundreds of levels on Codemasters' brilliant baby racer and it's clear why *Micro Machines*' tanks have earned a place in PlayStation folklore. A few minutes with *Tank Racer*, however, and it becomes clear why this game should be flushed down the toilet of PlayStation history.

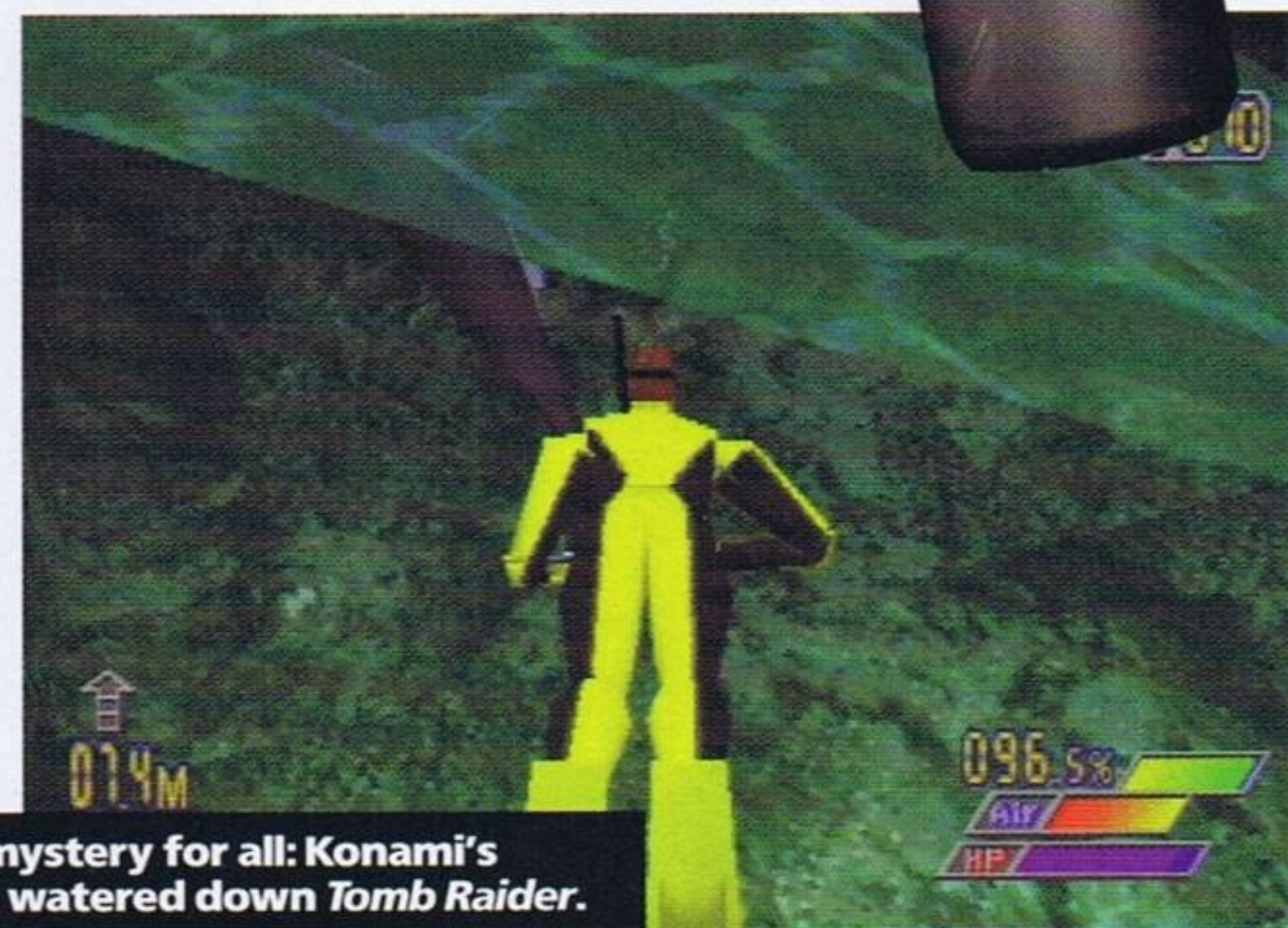
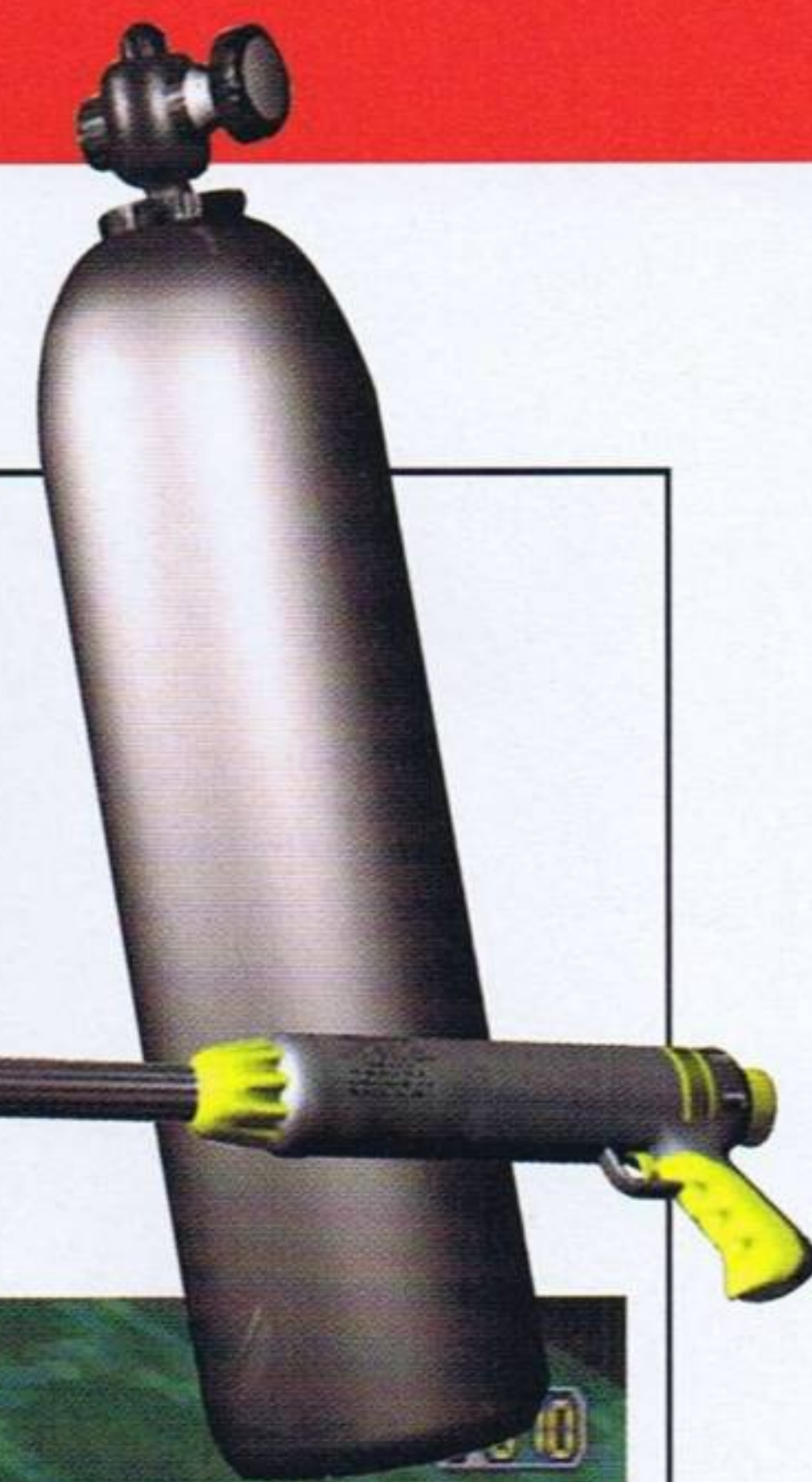
The game idea is exactly what you'd expect. You have to beat a human or computer opponent over 22 races while blasting or running over anything that comes in your way. This is a scheme that would work just fine if the tank wasn't so jerky but not once do you ever get past the feeling you're 'Driving A Tank In A Computer Game'. There's no kind of believability, be it futuristic or contemporary. The situation is not made any better by the ridiculous shells the tanks fire. They look like sweets, only not as tasty.

Racing's not the be-all and end-all though; you also get the Battle Mode. We'd like to be able to say that it's just like *GoldenEye* deathmatch, only in tanks. But it just isn't. Sorry.

Okay, so *Tank Racer* is never going to beat your *Ridge Racers* or *Gran Turismo*s to the chequered flag, but it can at least hold a candle to those racing giants in terms of presentation. The menus are among the best you'll see and the tunes are well above the usual Big Beat dross we've come to expect. So why mention the presentation at this late stage? Because it sums up *Tank Racer* rather nicely: making the best of a bad lot. Breakneck, destructive racing has its place – as *Psygnosis' Rollcage* proves – but when that racing involves manoeuvring big wacky tanks on garish tracks, then it's all a bit of a waste. ★★ **Duncan Forbes**

# DIVING AMBITION

## SUB-AQUATIC TREASURE QUEST



■ Sub-aqua adventure and mystery for all: Konami's *Diver's Dream* is essentially a watered down *Tomb Raider*.



### ↑ Uppers & Downers

**Wetsuit**  
 ■ The missions are extremely varied  
 ■ Plenty of intriguing puzzles  
 ■ Genuinely scary encounters with big fish  
**Wet pants**  
 ■ Sub-*Tomb Raider II* graphics engine  
 ■ Sluggish, waterlogged gameplay

■ What's behind the rectangular door? Puzzles-aplenty in *DD*.



## Diver's Dream

■ Publisher: **Konami** ■ Developer: **Konami**  
 ■ Price: **TBC** ■ Release date: **April/May**  
 ■ Players: **1** ■ Extras: **memory card**

**The thought of finding sunken treasure is pretty inspiring. But is the reality of having to swim slowly around in a rubber suit to find it going to sink this game?**

Strap on your snorkel for a quick dive inside Gigantica Matilda. Calm down. This isn't a reference to some horrific sexual nightmare. The large lady in question is an old sunken luxury liner and she's got a tempting cargo of treasure locked away inside her.

Now, tawdry though that opening gag was, it's sort of relevant, given that *Diver's Dream* is not without its own moments of innuendo. Via the plot-revealing dialogue screens (not unlike those often seen in RPGs) you get to meet Roberto, Enrico, Basilio and Olivia. The former three are a one-time

passenger of the Matilda, a diving shop owner and an antiques dealer respectively. The latter, Olivia, is the game's token bit of fluff.

The game is, in reality, a fairly well assembled action/adventure. The developers at Konami are clearly impressed by the sub-aquatic sections in Core's *Tomb Raider* series of games and *Diver's Dream* is, essentially, an underwater *Tomb Raider*. Sadly, though, the graphics fall somewhere short of *Tomb Raider II* and the second-hand concept inevitably suffers from trying to squeeze round pegs into square holes.

The game's strength is an intriguing and atmospheric plot progression comprised of a series of clever missions.

Most of the areas are teeming with hazardous pondlife. Dragonfish that poison you, slicing razor fish, stinging jelly fish and a huge hermit crab that moves faster than any crustacean has a right to, are notable inclusions. There's also a degree of forward planning to be done. Have I enough harpoons? Do I really need to buy those quick flippers for this mission? It's a warm day, maybe I won't piss in my wetsuit this time out.

Unfortunately, the game's underwater setting is its undoing. Swimming back and forth with a limited air supply can be tiresomely slow.

Add some unresponsive controls and the odd screwy camera angle and the game gets relegated to the Average league. It's a shame because if it were slicker, this nicely structured offering really would have been a diver's dream. ★★★

**Andy Dyer**



**Or you could try...**

**Tomb Raider III**  
 EIDOS ★★★★★  
 A spectacular, atmospheric adventure. Not solely sub-aqua.

**Treasures Of The Deep**  
 SCE ★★★★★  
 A tidy, mission-based sub-aqua adventure. More playable than *DD*.

# DEEP-PILE SHAG

## TINY TOTS WITH ATTITUDE



### Bloodlines

- Publisher: **SCEE**
- Developer: **Melbourne House** ■ Price: **£39.99**
- Release date: **on sale now**
- Players: **1-4**

**Bound around to drum 'n' bass lite, clad in punk finery, in this future-sports/playground-favourite combo.**

■ Combining sport and sci-fi ought to be a winning entertainment formula, but *Rollerball*, the best film example, is more than 20 years old and when it comes to games nothing has come close to the brilliance of *Speedball 2* on the Amiga, a game that's approaching its ninth birthday. That new games based on *Rollerball* and *Speedball* licences will be appearing on a console near you soon is proof enough of the success of the formula, but until they arrive, we'll have to make do with *Bloodlines*.

The story behind *Bloodlines* is from the post-apocalyptic, "it was a time of war and war produces heroes" school, but for all its cheesiness, it sets the scene well. Certain members of this future society – a bunch of *Mad Max* devotees and Tank Girls sporting cyberpunk skater chic – are forced into a posh game of tag.

Each of *Bloodlines'* tag arenas is littered with coloured vortices, and the first of the participants to pass through one such vortex becomes "it". Should you gain this honour, you have then earned the right to leap through the other vortices on the course until you have gained the requisite number (generally no more than five). The only way your opponent can regain the initiative is to grab the right to be "it" from you, in the time-honoured fashion of giving you a sound chinning, after which they can vortex-jump for themselves. Only one player can be "it" at any one time.

And apart from a few power-ups and trampoline-style platforms, that's about it. In fact *Bloodlines'* main asset is its simplicity. What also strikes you after a few minutes is the sheer speed of the game. The rounds are over before you know it, so an early mistake can leave the course wide open for your opponent to clean up in less than 15 seconds. The two and four-player options lend some longevity, but all *Bloodlines* really amounts to is a lot of running and jumping through pretty swirly lights. This kind of thing is probably best left in the playground. ★★ **Simon Garner**



■ Jump the fences and collect the bones before the time runs out. Such is the nature of *Rugrats*. Hmm... Anyone for a game of *Ridge Racer 4*?



■ Angelica, Tommy, Chuckie. All you're *Rugrat* favourites are here. Hooray, then.

## Rugrats: Search for Reptar

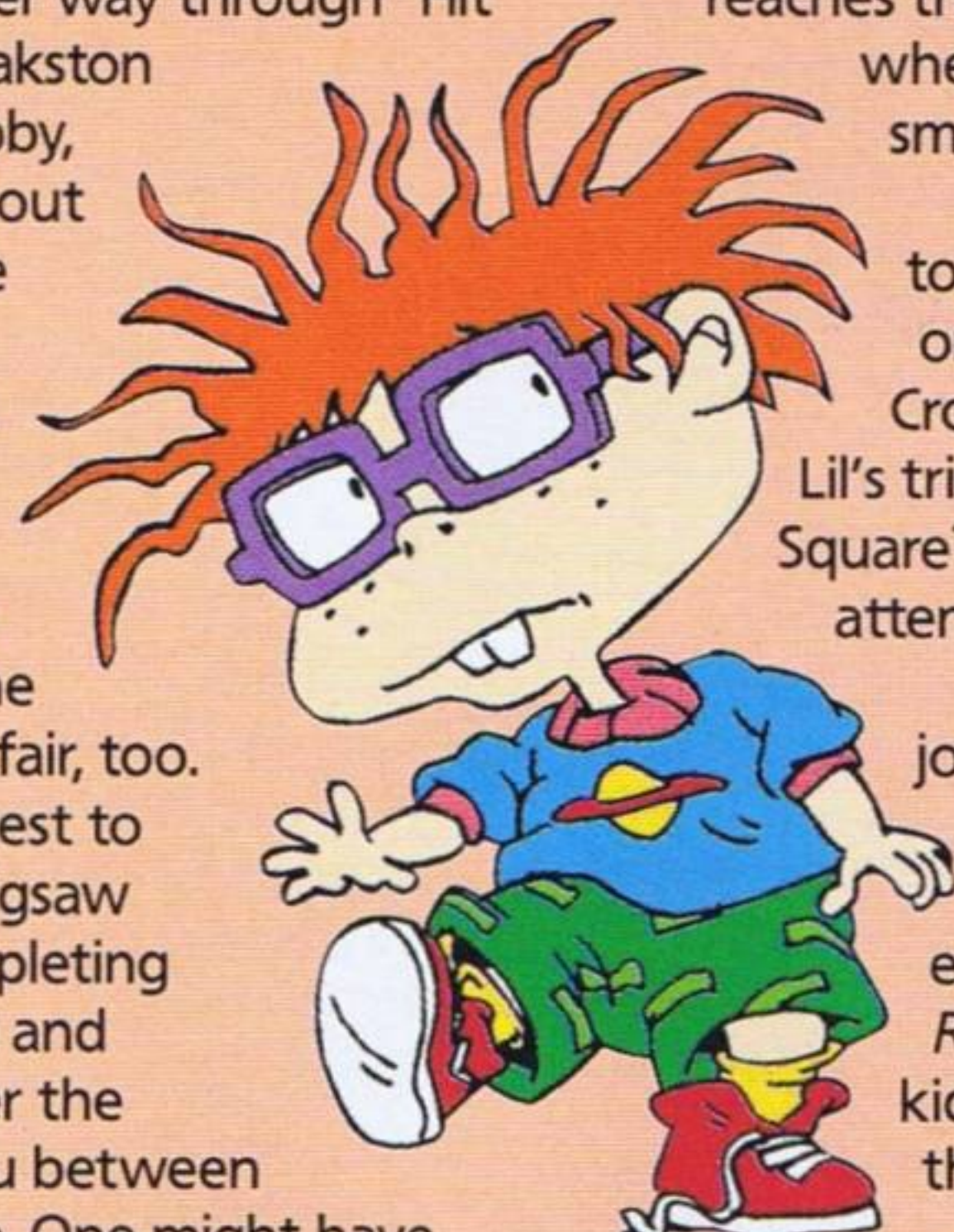
- Publisher: **THQ** ■ Developer: **THQ** ■ Price: **£39.99**
- Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**
- Other formats: **Game Boy Color**

**Nickelodeon-endorsed game based on the chaotic kinder-cartoon series of the same name.**

As Saturday morning's *Live and Kicking* reaches its peak with Zoe Ball shrieking her way through "Hit Miss or Maybe" and Jamie Theakston wrestling around with Mr Blobby, it comes as a relief when at about 10:30am a cartoon about some talking babies hoves into view.

*The Rugrats* has achieved the cult status generally saved for cartoons like *The Simpsons* and *Beavis and Butthead*, while still clinging on to its "for children" roots. Hence *Rugrats* the game is very much a "for children" affair, too.

The game centres on Tommy's quest to recover the pieces of his lost Reptar jigsaw puzzle. You gain these pieces by completing sub-games littered around the house and beyond, and you can roam freely over the whole area. The sub-games swap you between characters, and are of a simple nature. One might have you as Tommy racing Angelica down the stairs to the playpen. Another might have you as Chuckie lobbing



### ↑ Uppers & Downers

- Chuckie**
- Big, bold characters
  - Great cut-scenes
- Chuck-up**
- Instructions and controls too complicated for children
  - Too easy for anyone else

pucks at a goose to save Tommy from being pecked, or taking part in Angelica's impromptu circus.

*Rugrats* feels like it's based entirely on the cartoon, rather than having the characters tacked on at the last minute, and this is certainly a good thing. The snag, though, comes with the way these

sub-games are explained to you or – more likely – your young child. They are simply too confusing. For example, how much sense does this make to you? "Press Triangle to start the jump meter. Press Triangle a second time when it reaches the smaller left line. Press Triangle a third time when the meter moves back down to the smaller right line." Eh?

The control of the sub-games requires you to use of all four Fire buttons, in no logical order. Why, for example, do you have to press Cross at the top of the ramp to lump Phil and Lil's tricycle on to the landing pad? Why not Square? Or Circle? What if you weren't paying attention properly, and forgot what to press?

As a visual treat, *Rugrats* the game does its job fantastically, thanks to the well thought-out sub-games and superb cut-scenes. Unfortunately, the poor camera angles, explanations and controls suggest that *Rugrats* is too flawed to be played by young kids, while anyone older will be busy playing the likes of *Metal Gear Solid*. ★★ **Rich Pelley**

### Or you could try...

**A Bug's Life**  
SCEE ★★  
Looks just like the film, but flawed and overly clumsy, even for kids.

**Croc**  
Electronic Arts ★★  
Again, nice graphics, but a lack of decent puzzles pushes it into the "for kids" category.



■ Come any closer and you're going to get a right mouthful, you filthy Alien scum.

Arcade  
PC  
Game of the Month

# HEAD HUNTERS

## DON'T LOOK NOW - THE BITCH IS BACK



■ The Alien Queen is a truly worrying sight - a knowledge of the film is your best chance of survival.

## Aliens vs Predator

■ Publisher: **Fox Interactive** ■ Developer: **Rebellion**  
■ Price: **£40** ■ Release date: **April** ■ Players: **1-8** ■ Requires: **P166, 32Mb RAM, Win 95** ■ Recommended: **3D accelerator card, modem for Internet play**

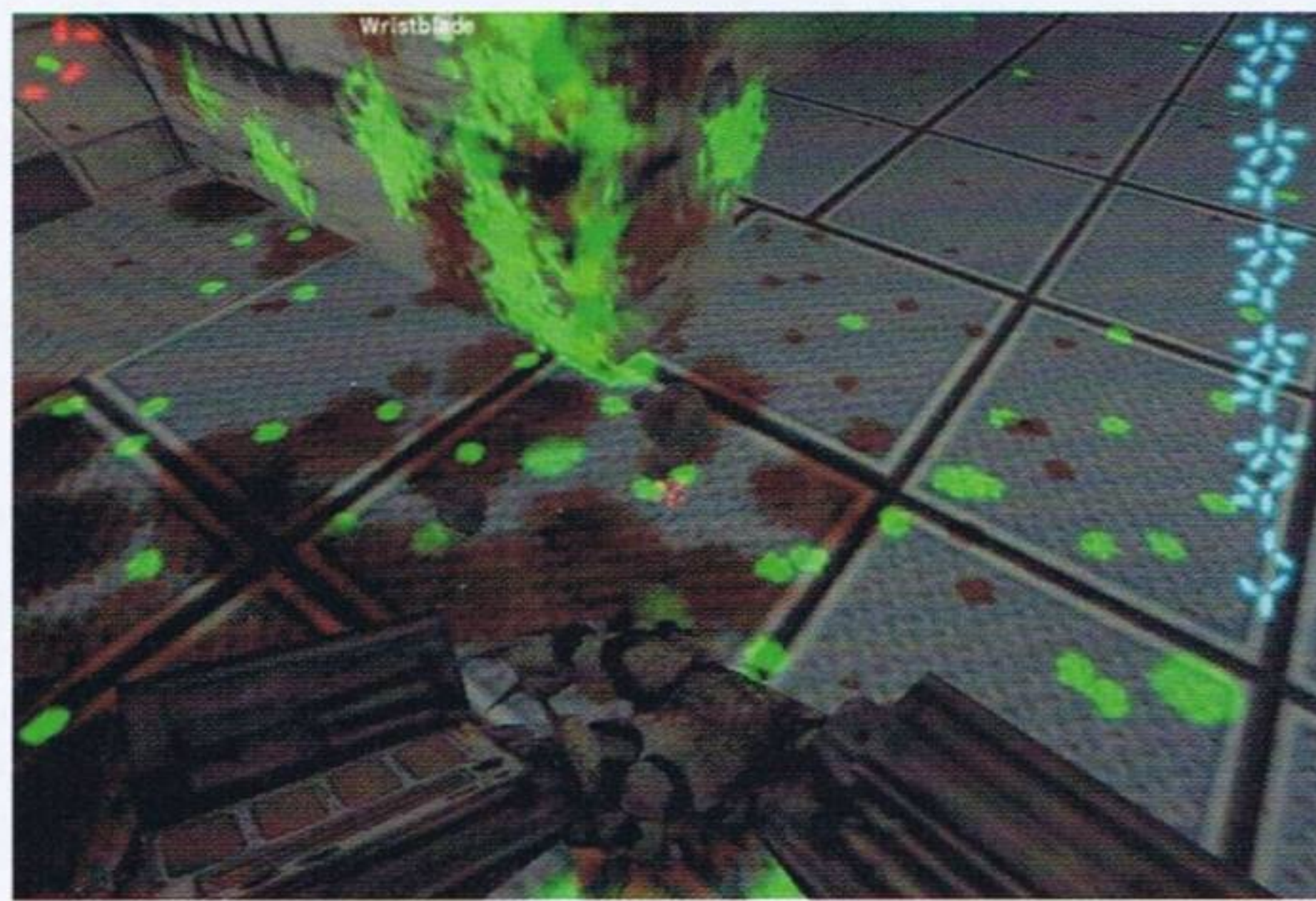
**She's a bitch, he's invisible and they're expendable. You just knew that this was going to get messy.**

**H**ow long have we waited to settle this argument? The one in the pub, where you talked (drunkenly) about who, in a fight, would win between a Geiger Alien, the Predator and a fully tooled-up Marine? Oh, you never had that argument? You're not that sad. Okay.

Well, assume for a second you had that kind of alcohol-fuelled discussion, and that you never owned an Atari Jaguar (a fair assumption, that). Because while the Jaguar had a version of this game in the mid '90s, it's taken a few years for the game to turn up on the PC.

Originally planned and then dropped for the consoles, *Aliens vs Predator* has been hungrily anticipated for at least two years. It's been created by Rebellion, a small team based in Berkshire who has had free reign with two of the finest film licenses in existence and a great opportunity to create one of the scariest first-person shooters available for the PC.

Obviously, something so valuable can't just be chucked out as a *Quake* clone (although that's exactly what Acclaim



■ Fantastically, the Predator fires goo from his arms, like this.

did two years ago with the risible *Alien Trilogy*). Instead Rebellion has melded a new story heavily influenced by the films (um, the *Alien* movies and *Predator*, obviously) that you can experience from three distinct angles.

You can play the game as any of the three races, and your choice determines where you start. The Marines, for instance, are ready to invade the planet of the Aliens but crash, possibly because some of their captured specimens have broken free. The crash releases an imprisoned

#### ↑ Uppers & Downers

**Acid**  
 ■ Plenty of atmosphere  
 ■ Suitably gruesome  
 ■ Well-balanced character features

**Flaccid**  
 ■ Too hard, with no Save Game  
 ■ Some levels are too repetitive  
 ■ Sorry, but *Half-Life* is better

Predator, who uses this as his chance to escape. The Aliens, meanwhile, are clearly unimpressed by the invasion and make haste to do something about it.

This three-way action means that each character's story runs for five or six levels before reaching a sudden conclusion. While this initially may seem like bugger all, most levels are huge sprawling affairs, and so incredibly difficult that you'll spend hours on each. Also, once you have completed a story, you get a further five bonus levels for each character. One of the

Predator bonus maps, for instance, might have you exploring Alien levels, but from a new perspective.

It's because the game is so closely based on the films that it is so difficult. As an Alien you will be dead with just a few bullets from a Marine. As a Marine you can have your head whipped off by one Alien swipe, or by one shot from the Predator's shoulder cannon or spear gun. Or by his razor sharp disc. In fact only the Predator seems to have it easy, with a range of powerful weapons and a built-in first aid kit. But of course there's only one of him, and each time you round a corner you'll face multiple Marines or Aliens.

As well as your basic weaponry you also get extras to help in your quest. Play as a Marine and you have the motion tracker, which beeps at you in constant panic. You'll recognise the tension this generates from the films. As the Alien your view is wide-angled, you can walk on anything and you can charge at high speed. You're trying to sneak up on people, but they nearly always spot you in time.

The level designs are generally excellent, although some elements of the story might see you in too many similar locations for too long. The lack of a Save Game option can be hugely frustrating, too, but it does add to the intense atmosphere. The graphics engine – Rebellion's own, interestingly – is extremely fast considering the amount of detail that it's moving around, while the modelling and texture of the characters is stunning.

But, like we said, the game is hard. Sure, if it was easier it would be too short and as it is there's immense challenge here. But it is still going to piss too many people off. A month from now, and you could still be playing the first three levels again and again. Wait for multi-player games to start on the Net, though, and this game will really fulfil its ambitions. ★★☆☆ **Steve Owen**

#### Or you could try...

**Half-Life**  
 Sierra ★★★★★  
 Great 3D action and suspense. It's an unfamiliar world, but the story is unsurpassed.

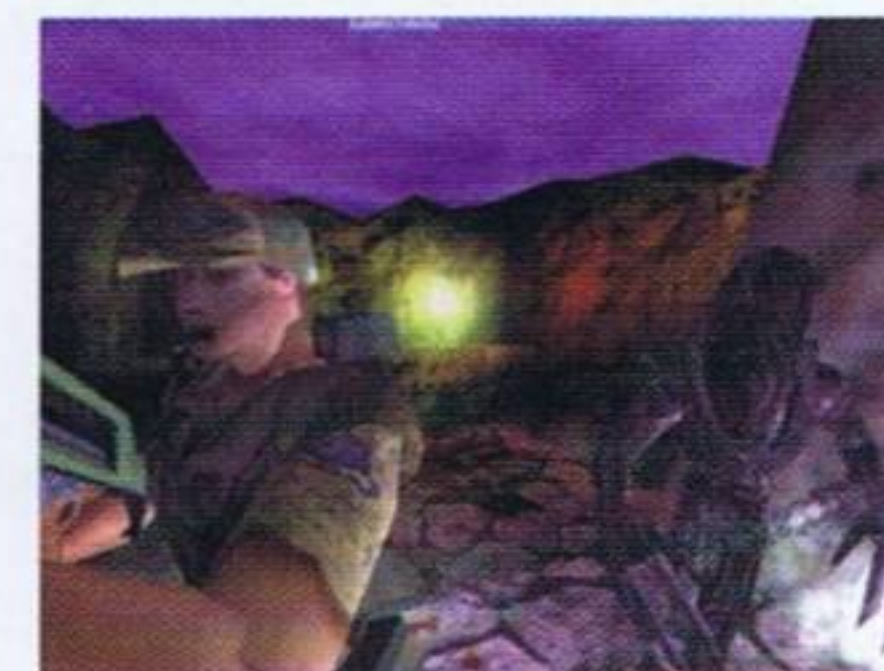
**Alien Trilogy**  
 Acclaim ★  
 Dreadful attempt to create a first-person game. A terrible waste of a license.

## PLAY AS A MARINE AND YOUR MOTION TRACKER WILL BEEP IN A STATE OF CONSTANT PANIC



■ 5, 6, 7, 8. Gettin' Jiggy With It, *Alien vs Predator* stylee.

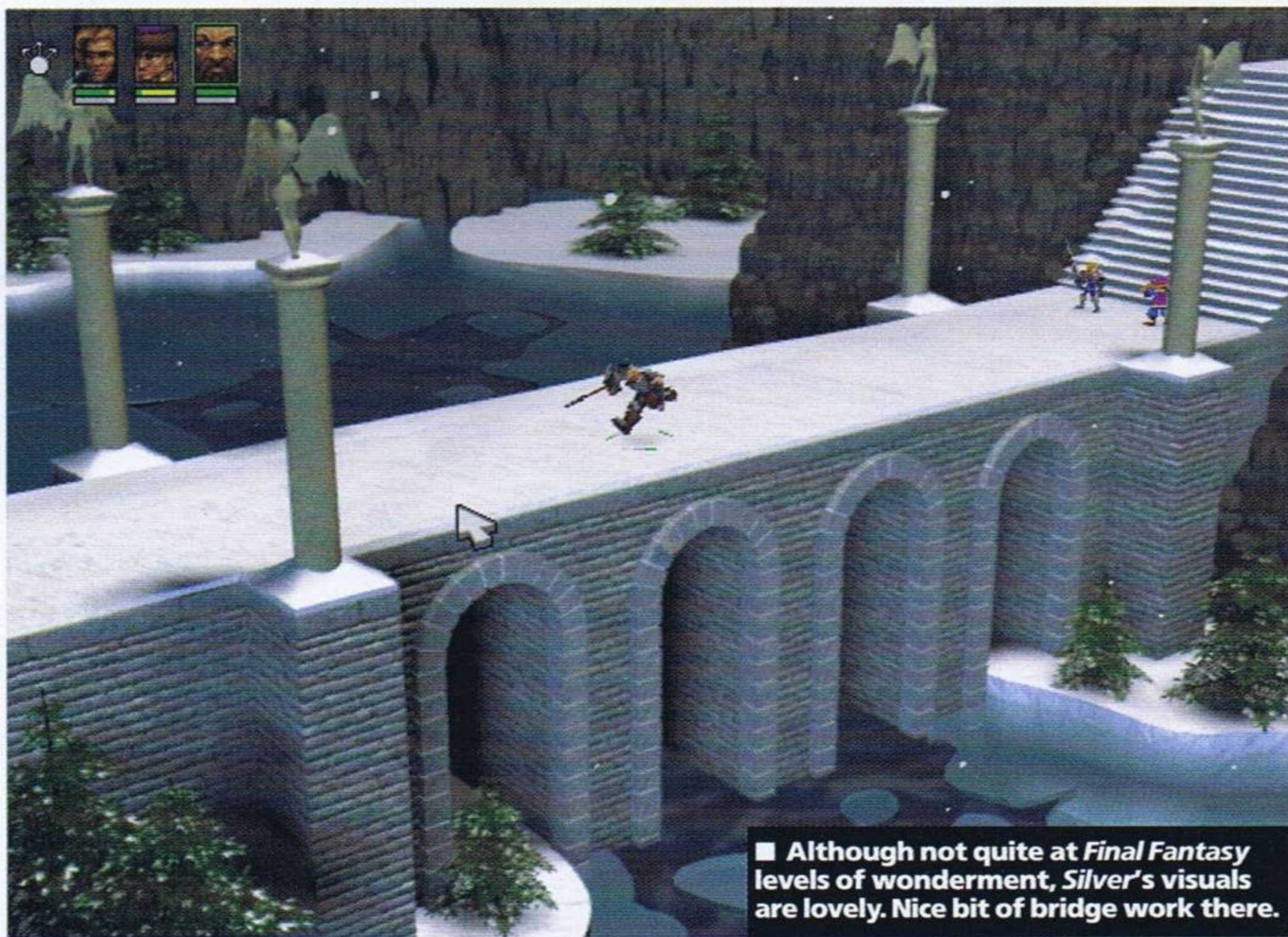
■ It's probably about time you shot him. Yes, shoot now. NOW! NOOOOW!



■ There's no point standing round and admiring the real-time lighting. This game is a matter of surviving long enough to see another day.

# PRECIOUS

## WORTH ITS WEIGHT IN GOLD?



■ Although not quite at *Final Fantasy* levels of wonderment, *Silver's* visuals are lovely. Nice bit of bridge work there.



■ Combat's real-time rather than turn-based and features splendid effects.

### Silver

■ Publisher: **Infogrames** ■ Developer: **Infogrames**  
■ Price: **£35** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**  
■ Requires: **P166, 32Mb, 200mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, soundcard, Win 95** ■ Recommended: **clean, reliable mouse; good mouse mat**

**The *Final Fantasy* series has struck the motherlode with an excellent and engrossing adventure. So can *Silver* pan out to be more than a fool's paradise?**

**S**ilver is not, contrary to expectations, a genre-defining RPG. It's a lamentable, yet irrefutable fact. What it *is* is an eminently playable, challenging and, in places, innovative. But a classic? Sadly, no.

In design, *Silver* appears to owe a debt of gratitude to a certain Squaresoft opus. Yet, according to its designers, it was conceived over four years ago, long before *Final Fantasy VII's* arrival. It's unfortunate, then, that so many parallels can be drawn between the two games.

You see, *Silver's* plot – and story is the core of any RPG – is a workmanlike, generic affair. When the titular sorcerer decides to find himself a bride, he sends his men to the pleasant forest of Verdante. At his behest, they gather all women of marriageable age, including a girl by the name of Jennifer, wife of David. David, understandably, is mightily pissed at this intrusion, and sets off with his grandfather on a quest to rescue his spouse.

### SILVER'S PLOT IS A WORKMANLIKE, GENERIC PIECE OF STORYTELLING. FVII OUTSHINES IT COMPLETELY

When *Silver* attempts to build upon the shaky narrative foundations this premise offers, it is resolutely ham-fisted. Its dialogue, too, is largely arbitrary exchanges or basic directions. The voice track is well produced, and the acting adequate. But, by forsaking entirely text-based conversations, *Silver* can't offer the sheer depth and amount of vocal intercourse that so typified *Final Fantasy VII*. Thus, its story appears paper-thin by comparison. This isn't to say that there's no satisfaction to be derived from reaching the next cut scene. *Silver* may resolve its many missions and sub-plots with alarming, excitement-quelling alacrity, but that's not to say you won't enjoy moving forward.

The game's main strength is its real-time combat system. At any point, David can be accompanied by two or less companions. Should he (with or without





■ That rug ties the look of the room together. Unfortunately there appears to be some dead soldiers lying on it.

friends) encounter an assailant, combat is initiated via keyboard and mouse commands. It's a daunting, unwieldy system at first, but its worth becomes apparent after a hour or so of play.

By holding Control and clicking the left mouse button, David initiates a basic attack. If he's in possession of a sword, this will be a generic forward slash (he can also perform slashes and stabs). If he's holding a projectile weapon, the mouse is used to direct and fire it. Finally, the right mouse button can be used to dodge or use a shield.

It's important to understand that *Silver's* combat system works. It's not perfect, of course. There are instances where you are forced to fight while your characters are at a distant point on the screen. These encounters can only be resolved with mindless button-bashing. Other occasions, however, allow David to use the scenery to his advantage. At a later point in his quest, for example, he returns to his home. A group of creatures appear and rush to attack. If David positions himself on the bridge, he can tackle the half-dozen foes one or two at a time. If he stands in the open, he can be attacked from any angle.

Such battles are commonplace as David labours to locate eight orbs necessary to defeat the sorcerer. Like all good RPGs, progression through its lands is carefully measured. Each sub-quest challenges you just a little more than the last, and new areas are made available as existing locations are completed. There's a definite

#### ↑ Downers & Uppers

##### Gleaming

- Great combat system
- Looks lovely
- The music is excellent
- Can be genuinely atmospheric

##### Tarnished

- Bad storyline
- Never really develops its characters
- Hero David lacks charisma
- Lacks the grand scope of *FFVII*

format for most areas, though. On reaching, say, the location of the next magical orb, David and companions have to fight through several rooms. Each contains assailants, and the exits remain locked until these are dispatched. Eventually, David reaches a boss, the defeat of which allows him to collect the object he's searching for.

*Silver* is very linear – far more so than *FFVII* or *Ocarina of Time* – but this is to its advantage. Occasionally, it fails to give adequate clues as to where you should travel next. Naturally, the obvious response is to travel through previously explored locations in order to find the next port of call. It's at this point that the maze-like structure becomes oppressively apparent. As attractive as its backdrops are, they're surprisingly barren, so outside the confines of plot-based progression, your adventure can seem bland and featureless. Find the story thread once more, though, and it entertains once more.

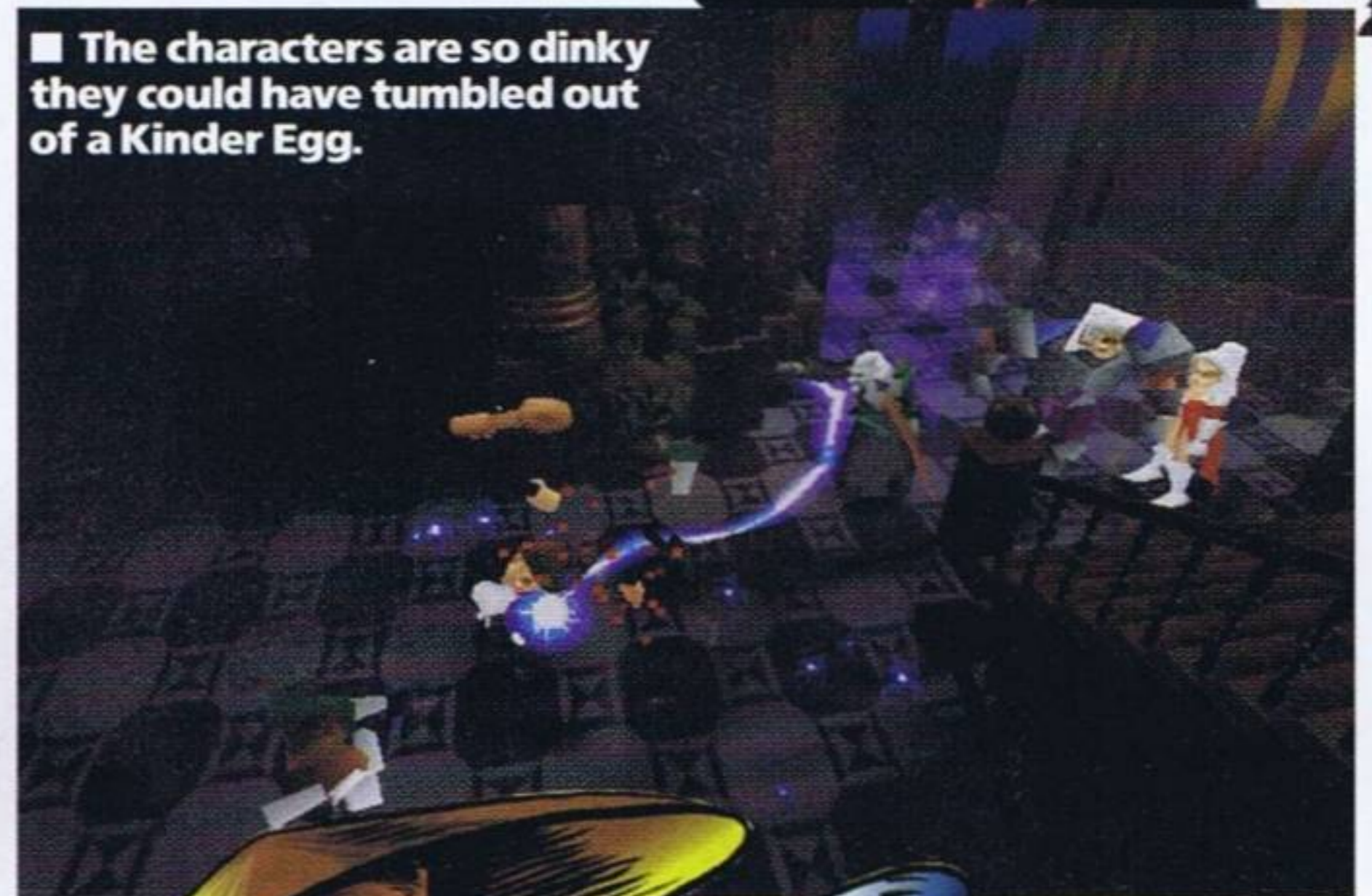
So as a game *Silver* varies in quality from moment to moment. It's possible to pour scorn upon its combat system one minute, yet hugely enjoy a ten-man brawl the next. Similarly, the shortcomings of its narrative may lend a hollow feel to a victory or event, yet this can often be followed by a game section notable for its atmosphere.

So even if Infogrames had released it before *FFVII*, it wouldn't quite be a classic. ★★★★★ **James Price**

#### Or you could try...

**Final Fantasy VII**  
EIDOS ★★★★★  
An adequate conversion, but a superb game. If you like adventures, you must own this.

**Fallout 2**  
Interplay ★★★★★  
It's a pretty basic reiteration of its forebear, but *Fallout 2* is still an enjoyable RPG.



■ The characters are so dinky they could have tumbled out of a Kinder Egg.



■ Bloke with green hair prepares to hit man in extravagant trousers. RPGs, eh?



## Saga – Rage Of The Vikings

■ Publisher: **Cryo** ■ Developer: **Cryo** ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **30 April** ■ Players: **1**  
 ■ Requires: **P166, 32Mb RAM, 8x CD-ROM drive, 2Mb graphics accelerator card**

**Real-time strategy gets all Nordic, with a dose of hot Viking action. A call to arms, certainly, but don't forget your brain...**

■ Never the kind of software publisher to take the road well travelled, Cryo is world-renowned for its, um, quirky approach to the games it develops and markets. So, when confronted with the task of creating an involving strategy/management sim, what does the company do? They get the fairer sex involved in the bloody business of peasant-hacking and pillage.

It's a simple, yet inspired concept. The entire system of creating foot-troops and workers revolves around coaxing Mr and Mrs John Doe Viking into a warm little hut with each other, and getting them to procreate for all they're worth. They'll automatically stock up on essentials, such as food and wood, and when enough time has passed, you get a pair of fresh siblings to march off and do your dirty work for you.

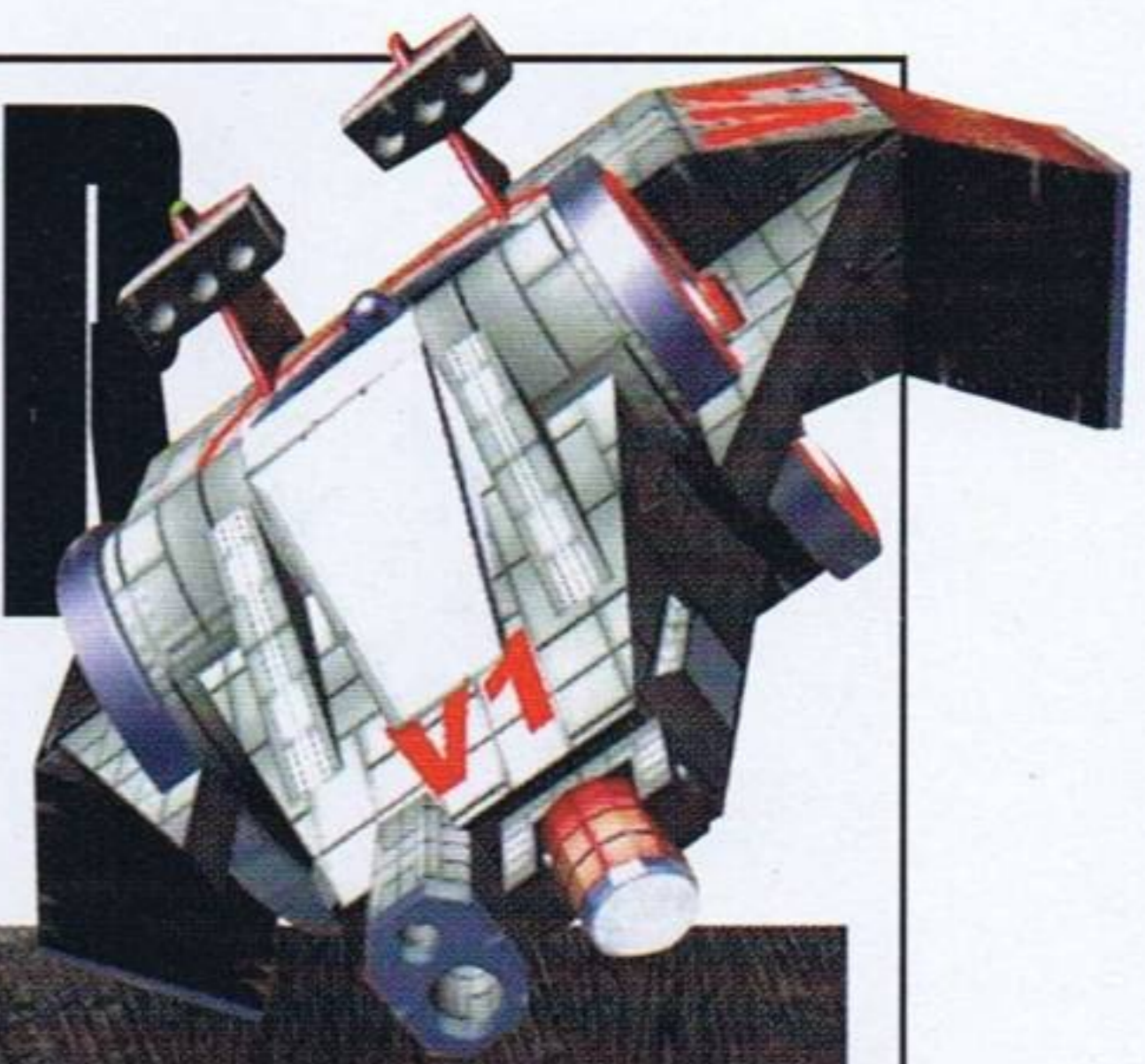
But it's not merely a case of harvesting resources and pumping out troops (if you'll forgive the expression). *Saga* boasts a heavy management element, and it's a facet of the game that may turn you away if you're more of a tank-rushing armchair Eisenhower. You don't just plop yourself down and have a quick game of *Saga*; it takes some real commitment to learn the ropes. The game boasts so many features capable of affecting gameplay, such as alliance-making, "subjugation" of enemy clans and the changing seasons, with all the harsh realities of winter. And that's just for starters.

All in all, *Saga*'s not a bad romp, but it's spoilt by a few very basic problems. The combat's relatively unexciting, the point-and-click control is a touch too unresponsive, and the units feel too damn jerky. Ignore these traits, though, and you'll enjoy *Saga* for what it is; a real-time strategy game that taxes your grey matter considerably more than the average C&C clone.

★★★ **Alex Bickham**

# ARMOUR BELIEVER

## TANKS FOR THE MEMORIES



■ Check out the gratuitous light-flaring, polygon-shattering explosions. Nice.

### ↑ Uppers & Downers

#### Tanked up

- True 3D graphics
- Explosive action
- Varied missions
- Brilliant interface

#### Pissed off

- C&C in a new dress
- Unremarkable AI

## Warzone 2100

■ Publisher: **EIDOS** ■ Developer: **Pumpkin Studios** ■ Price: **£40** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-8** ■ Requires: **P166, 32Mb RAM, 180Mb HD space, 8x CD-ROM drive**  
 ■ Recommended: **P233, 16x CD-ROM drive, 4Mb graphics accelerator card**

**Command tanks and conquer the world. We've been here before, but it's never looked like this.**

**S**ome games are so good that it's worth making them again and again. So what if *Warzone* is really C&C in heavy make-up? It's also breathed new life into the real-time strategy genre by dragging it into the third dimension, blasting it with intense tank-busting graphics, and reinforcing the gameplay with numerous delightful touches and long-awaited tweaks.

At its simplest, *Warzone* puts you in charge of a small taskforce sent deep into enemy territory in a post-holocaust wasteland. Your mission: to stealthily construct a base and harvest resources while fending

off marauding attackers. Once the cash is flowing, you can build up an assault force of tanks, gunships and cyborgs. Send this army into battle and you'll conquer more land, control more resources, be able to research new military technology, build more potent forces and eventually wipe the enemy off the face of the map, in the most apocalyptic battles this side of Doomsday.

And it's those battles that really set *Warzone* apart from the C&C-wannabe pack. A cunning control system coupled to a powerful graphics engine enable you to manipulate the action in true 3D. You can zoom, rotate, and move the camera through any angle you like, making *Warzone*'s combat the most exciting and realistic the genre has seen – particularly as the action is beefed-up with gratuitous light-flaring, polygon-shattering explosions, plumes of smoke belching from stricken tanks, and vapour trails moseying after incoming missile fire. RTS fans will chafe their chins on the carpet.

But *Warzone* is more than just a looker. For one thing its range of units and technologies is unrivalled. What's more you can even customise your entire army by using the DIY unit design system.

Then there's the huge campaigns, in which one mission runs seamlessly into the next so you don't have to keep building your base from scratch. These will last you for weeks. And then there's the astonishingly slick interface, which makes sure the game doesn't overwhelm you, even though it's stuffed with more features than the best of the rest.

Yet beware, if you're sick to death of C&C-type games, you won't find anything new here. *Warzone* hasn't transformed the genre, but what is conclusive is that it has won the Clone Wars. ★★★ **Matthew Pierce**



■ Yes, *Warzone 2100* is visually unrivalled in the RTS genre.



**Or you could try...**

**Total Annihilation**  
 GT Interactive ★★★★★  
 Older but simpler version of the same thing.

**Myth 2**  
 GT Interactive ★★★  
 Jaunty RTS with dwarves, goblins and buckets of blood.



# WHITE-KNUCKLE RIDE

## SCREAM IF YOU WANT TO GO FASTER



■ Get 'em in and then rip 'em off. This could be a moto for Saturday nights, but actually it's how to make a success of *RollerCoaster Tycoon*.

## RollerCoaster Tycoon

■ Publisher: **Microprose/Hasbro** ■ Developer: **Chris Sawyer** ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now**  
 ■ Players: **1** ■ Requires: **P90, 16Mb RAM, 4x CD-ROM drive** ■ Recommended: **P200 MMX**

**It's another get-rich-quick game. But this time the idea is to make tiny people scream. Ah ha ha ha!**

Opting for an old-school PC game look – isometric 3D, limited palette, ne'er a texture-mapped polygon to be seen – *RollerCoaster Tycoon* uses standard Windows dialogue boxes to further compound the feeling that you've accidentally loaded a spreadsheet or a C compiler.

But if you look closely there's terrific attention to detail: you can see your guests eating candyfloss, jumping up to see over maze hedges and dropping chip wrappers. The sound effects reflect the area you're looking at – techno music on the dodgems, toilets flushing – and you can zoom in and out and rotate à la *Sim City 3000*. What you should really be doing, though, is building rides.

Merry-go-rounds, haunted houses and so forth are the most straightforward. But what the public are really yelling for are white-knuckle rides. *Rollercoasters*. And here's where the fun starts.

And, to be honest, stops. Building your first rollercoaster is highly entertaining. The pieces slot together like *Scalextric*, except in 3D. Once you've managed to join the ends up – and here *RollerCoaster*

### ↑ Uppers & Downers

#### Big dippers

- Meticulously detailed
- Huge variety of rides possible
- All seems to work as it should

#### Chip wrappers

- Fiddly land raising-and-lowering
- A bit old-fashioned-looking
- Ultimately not that interesting

ones that dangle you in the air, suspended by your armpits. And the pre-prepared scenarios show what can be achieved, including superb double rollercoasters with two trains running alongside one another. But the building of rollercoaster number two tends not to hold quite the same joy as number one, and by the time you get to number three it's all starting to feel more like hard work.

There are other small pleasures to be found: seeing how many people you can maroon on a single square of land in the middle of a lake; increasing the slope of your rollercoaster to the point where the cars roll backwards into the following train; and installing a monorail and private army of security guards. But they are small.

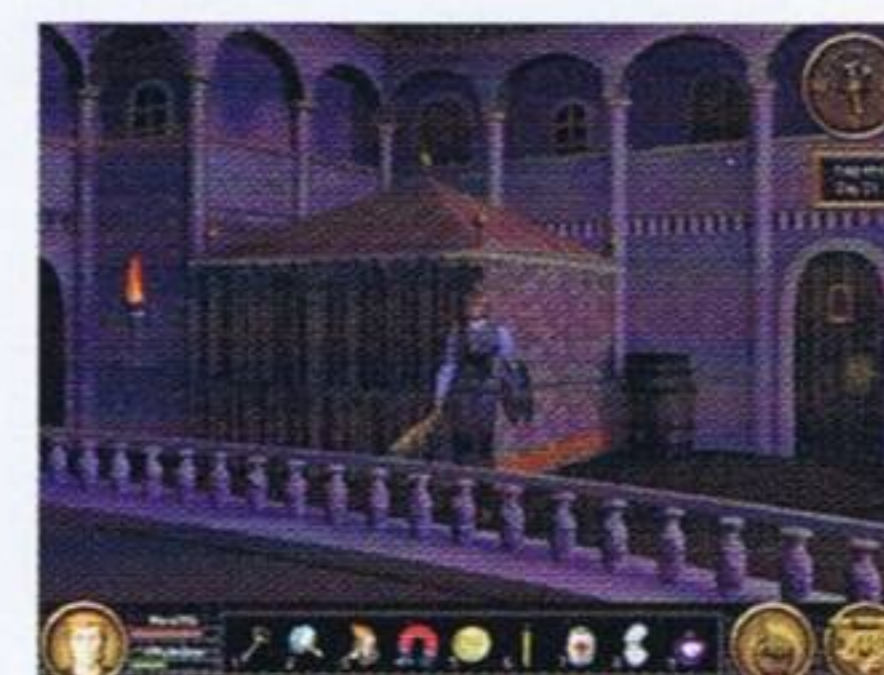
It's admirably detailed, then, but with the ultimate effect of making you want to turn it off and head for Alton Towers. And, yes (you can put your hand down at the back now), *Theme Park* did do most of this five years ago and theirs let you put extra salt on the food to make everyone buy drinks. ★★★

**Jonathan Davies**

### Or you could try...

**Sim City 3000**  
 Electronic Arts ★★★★★  
 Less screaming, but less feffing about with bits of track too.

**Theme Park**  
 Bullfrog ★★★★★  
 Had the same idea years ago, complete with a subversive twist.



## Quest for Glory V: Dragon Fire

■ Publisher: **Sierra**  
 ■ Developer: **Yosemite Entertainment**  
 ■ Price: **£34.99**  
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**  
 ■ Players: **1** ■ Requires: **P166, 32Mb RAM, 350Mb HD space, 6x CD-ROM drive**  
 ■ Other formats: **Mac**

**Bored with fighting? Fed up with racing? The old reflexes starting to let you down? Why not try a nice adventure game instead?**

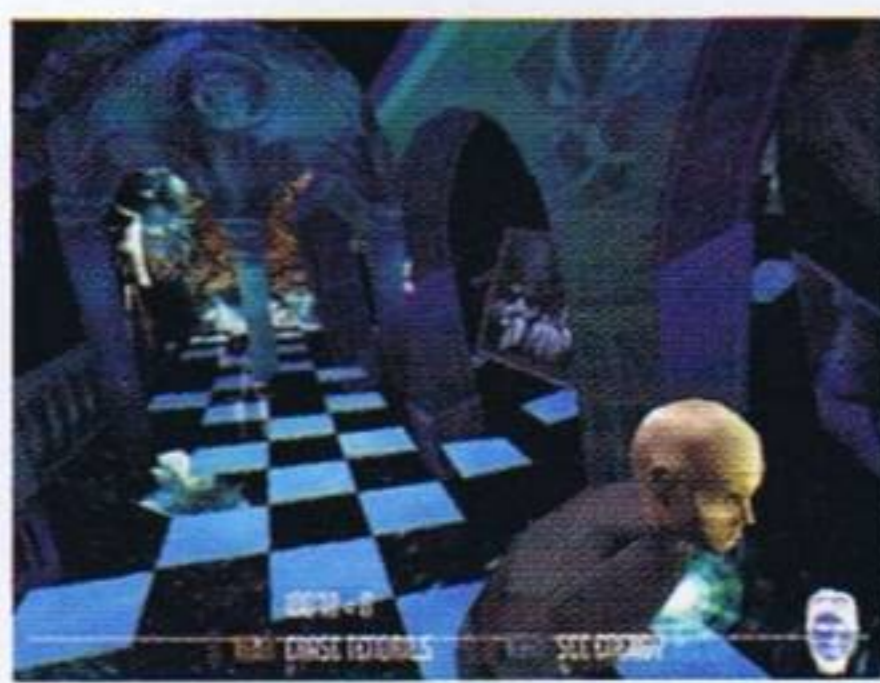
■ "The world needs a hero!" says the intro. So did you remember to put your Lycra jumpsuit and sturdy red underpants on today?

Heroic pants aside, the main qualification for playing *Quest For Glory V* is a brain – this is an adventure game. For the uninitiated, this means wasting hours of potential telly time wandering around not knowing what the hell you're supposed to do, getting angry. For those more *au fait* with the genre, it's adventuring business as usual: villagers in Jesus sandals, dragons, battles, puzzles and the like.

Visually, developer Yosemite Entertainment has been clever. *Quest's* backgrounds are pre-rendered in 3D and pulled from memory as you move around, and very nice they look, too. This semi-3D effect certainly raises the visuals above the levels of traditional 2D cartoony adventures, and although there's a bit of blockiness and some draw-in lines as the camera scrolls around, it still creates a more believable point-'n'-click environment. The characters are real-time 3D, and besides the odd levitating-up-the-stairs movement hiccup, they mix well with the high quality backdrops.

The story? Well again, it's nothing remarkable. Just the standard stuff about dragons trashing villages and the commencement of epic quests. Conversations? You're given a set list of questions and get some predefined answers. They're in 3D so they *look* nicer than most, but that's about as far as the innovation goes.

If you believe that only anorak-clad, flask-carrying types play these games, then this isn't for you. But if you think most modern games are shallow, re-hashed toss that you've played a million times before, and want something a bit more thoughtful than *Cars 'n' Tits 4*, then give *Quest* a try. ★★★ **Gary Cutlack**



## The Guardian of Darkness

■ Publisher: **Cryo** ■ Developer: **Cryo** ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1** ■ Requires: **P200, 16Mb RAM, 4x CD-ROM drive, graphics card, Win 95**

**Ever fancied playing a smooth-headed exorcist with magical powers and a neat line in fireballs? Of course you have. You're only human.**

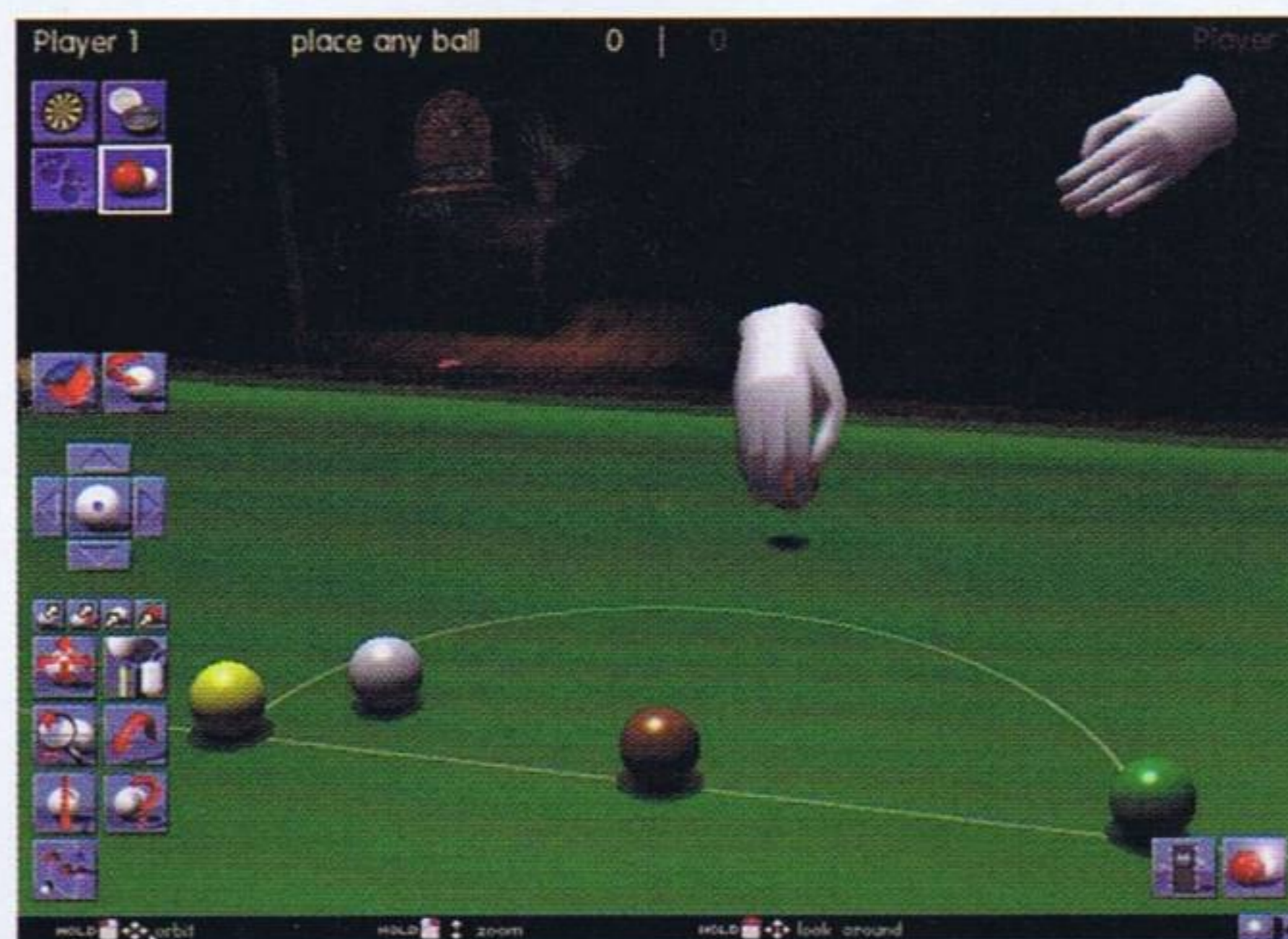
■ You've got to love Cryo; it keeps churning out the sort of quirky, original games that other companies stopped making in the '80s. And *The Guardian of Darkness* is no different. It's a 3D adventure game in which you assume the role of exorcist monk Ekna, investigating strange phenomena in an *X-Files*-meets-*Ghostbusters* sort of scenario.

As Ekna you don't just barge into the scene of a disturbance shooting fireballs all over the shop as you might expect. No, instead you have to work out exactly What's Going On.

By questioning the people you meet and examining any items that happen to be lying around, you can get a better idea of the big picture. Hopefully you may also find a clue as to how you might be able to deal with the problem at hand. If, however, some sort of paranormal ruck kicks off then you are also fully equipped with magical ass-kicking powers to defeat any ghosts and meanies in your way.

Yes, it all sounds great. Unhappily, though, the implementation is terrible. For starters the manual is incredibly vague, unforgivable in a game that is so unusual. And you'll struggle to see what's going on in any coherent manner because, despite the fact that it requires an accelerator card to run, *Guardian's* graphics are rather dingy, and none of the rooms are actually connected. This latter point means that when you open a door you're faced with a gaping black void that will stare you in the face until the next location loads up. Is this 1999, or what?

But the final nail in *Guardian's* coffin is its dreadful gameplay. Navigating around the mind-numbingly similar rooms is a pain, despite an in-game map, and even when you've got the hang of it the game remains more of a chore than a joy to play: which is a disappointment, since the initial basis for the story was a good one. ★★ **Tim Cant**



# WHITE ON CUE

## "THE WHIRLWIND" IS BACK TO SCATTER THE PACK

### Jimmy White's 2: Cueball

■ Publisher: **Virgin** ■ Developer: **Awesome Developments** ■ Price: **£35** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2** ■ Requires: **P133, 32Mb RAM, 60Mb HD space, 2x CD-ROM drive, Win 95** ■ Recommended: **P166, 3D graphics accelerator card, modem for Internet play**

**A real looker of a pool and snooker sim that's so addictive you'll be holidaying with Betty Ford after. And let's face it. Anything endorsed by where's-the-bar "Whirlwind" White has to be a winner.**

and a jukebox which pumps out endless boogie-woogie dross. The snooker room is trussed up like something out of *Cluedo: The Series* and fringe benefits include draughts and darts, which sounds like a laugh but isn't.

The main action is at the tables, where you can play against a series of computer opponents, represented by a pair of gloved, disembodied hands. The AI is impressive – as the standard increases, so does the tactical nous of your opponents, who leave balls on pockets, attempt extravagant doubles and fox you with snookers. It's difficult to fault the ball physics too – the balls roll and ricochet with exactly the speed and direction you'd expect.

*Jimmy White's 2* plays accurately, with few irritating quirks. It would be nice to have access to a fully-rotational camera when playing a shot, but a combination of top-down and cueball positions means you can work out the necessary angles. Applying the required spin and power (for which it's best to use the percentage bar) is straightforward, although when trying to cut a ball, the game can be a little oversensitive. It's also tricky to get your eye in, because odd camera angles make it difficult to see what you've done when a shot is missed. However, once you've got the hang of it, the game is impossible to leave.

Even after you've crushed all the bodiless computer opponents at pool, there's the snooker to play, which is much the same except with smaller pockets. Then you can hustle real-life foes via the Internet. But beware, expertise at *Jimmy White's 2: Cueball* is not necessarily great preparation for taking on allcomers down the Nag's Head (Jimmy himself finds the inverse is true too in this issue's Games Night, starting on page 68), but with this on your PC, you might not leave the house at all. ★★★ **Sam Richards**

**↑↓ Uppers & Downers**

**Jimmy White**

- Superb ball physics
- It's entertaining and addictive
- You can play darts!

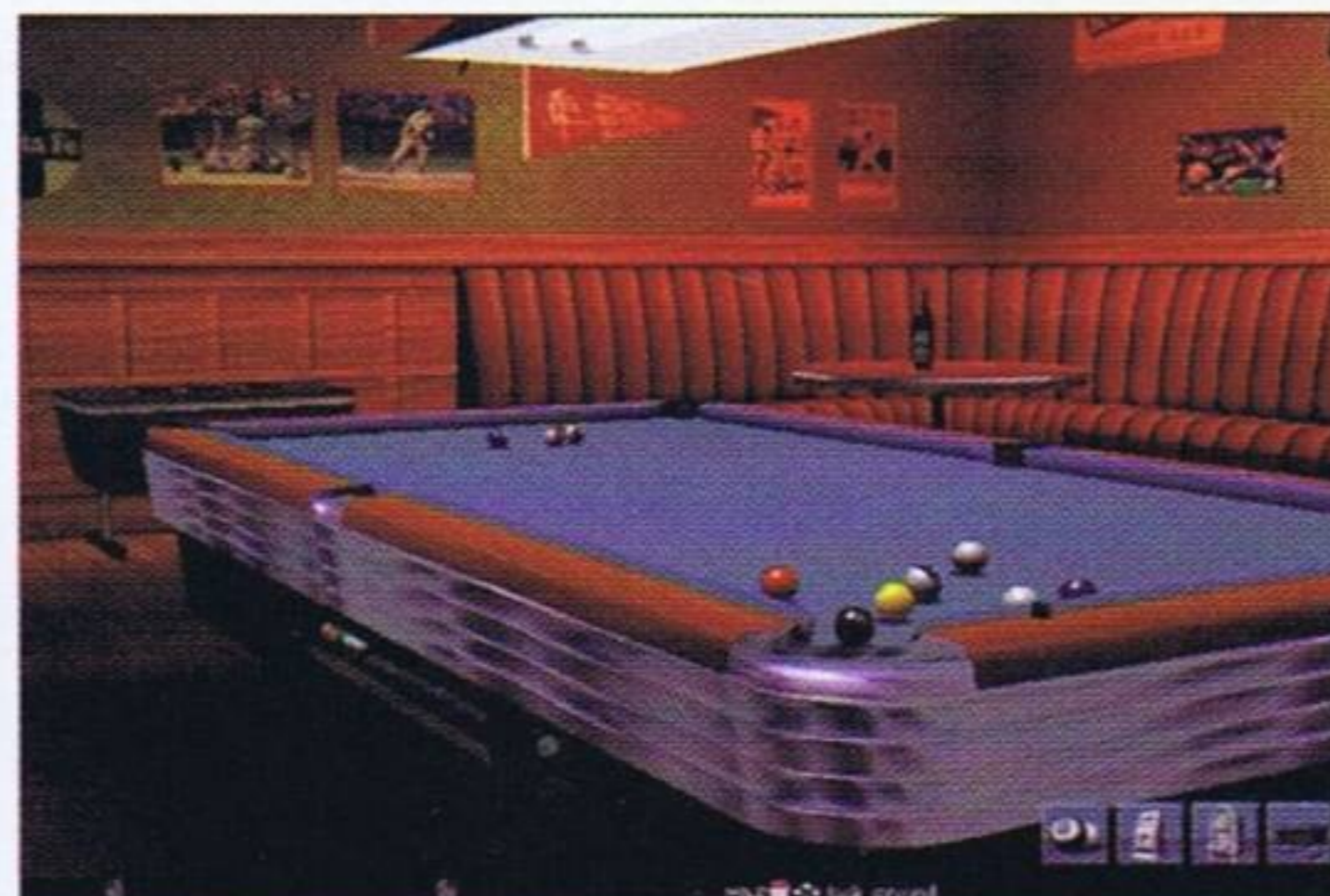
**John Virgo**

- Annoying camera angles
- Horrible pub piano music
- You can play darts – but it's crap

**B**e warned – *Jimmy White's 2* is here to rob you of your social life.

Not that this 3D cueball sim with four game modes boasts any spectacularly original features. Perhaps the most endearing aspect is the scenery, as play takes place in two large rooms which you can explore, point-and-click style. The pool room is decorated in the style of a tacky American diner and features a playable one-armed bandit (don't bother) an old-style *Dropzone* coin-op (not nearly as good as you remember)

■ Oh. And there's a playable fruity too. But it's shite.



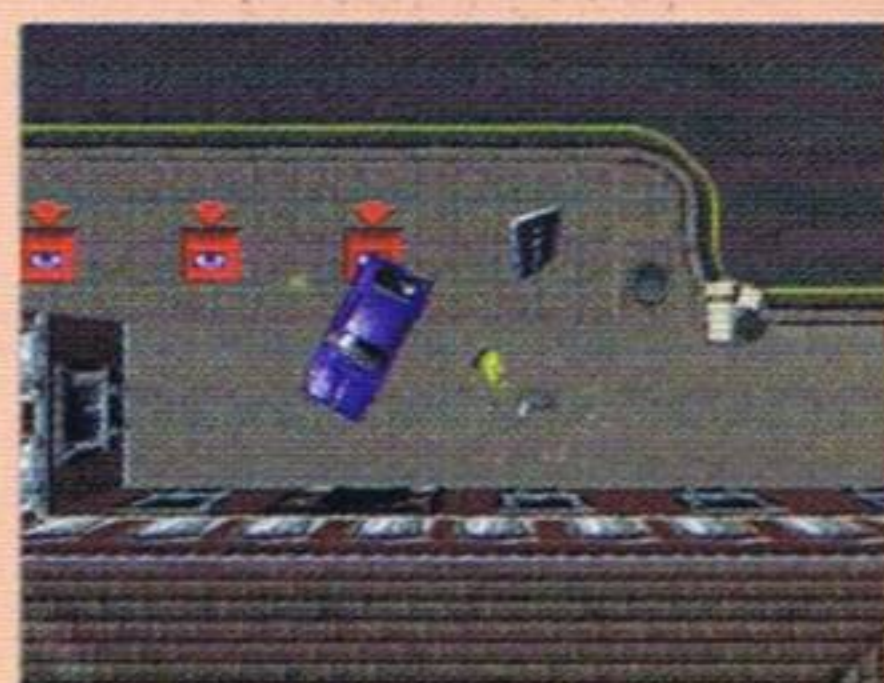
**Or you could try...**

**Pool Shark**  
Gremlin ★★★  
You get to beat leather-clad meat-heads – it can't be all bad.

**Virtual Pool**  
Interplay ★★★★★  
Looks lovely, plays smoothly. The Anna Koumnikova of pool.

# "OH NUTTER!"

## TAKE A TRIP BACK TO THE SWINGING '60S



■ Run 'em down on the football pitch or run 'em down in the streets. The cops will be on your tail either way. Ban this sick filth, says *The Evening Hypocrite*.

## Grand Theft Auto: London

■ Publisher: **Take 2** ■ Developer: **Rock Star** ■ Price: **£19.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-4** ■ Requires: **P133, 16Mb RAM, 110Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, 1Mb graphics card, soundcard, Win 95, copy of Grand Theft Auto** ■ Recommended: **3D accelerator card**

**Car crime as entertainment? Running people over for fun? It can only be Grand Theft Auto. And now the tabloid-baiter has come to Lahndon tahn.**

The original *Grand Theft Auto* sleazed on to the scene at the end of 1997 and immediately sent the moral majority into a fuss with its graphic depictions of car crime. Naturally, this was exactly what developer DMA Design always intended.

The game casts you as a gangster engaged in a series of "jobs". Violent crime is positively encouraged as killing pedestrians gains you mucho bonus points. Nicking a police car and then running over its former occupant is the ultimate kudos winner, for instance.

Of course *GTA* sold bucketloads, and for once not just because of the furore. It was a throwback to the earlier days of gaming; modest overhead-view graphics cloak a game in which you have total freedom to win as you like. Simply driving like a maniac is mindlessly engaging, and

### Uppers & Downers

**Michael Caine**  
 ■ Crime. Fast cars. Big guns.  
 ■ Open-ended structure  
 ■ Excellent soundtrack and voices

**Michael Flatley**  
 ■ Cutting-edge technology? We think not  
 ■ No mid-mission saves  
 ■ Gets repetitive

the wealth of hidden bonuses scattered around encourages experimentation.

*GTA London* is the first mission disc, though it's worth pointing out that it's not the work of the original developer. It's set in 1969 rather than the present day, giving plenty of scope for Michael Caine-style accents and a general

air of somewhat tawdry "swinging" London.

*GTA London* is about as subtle as an episode of *Only Fools and Horses*. There are 32 new missions and from stealing motors, you graduate to messing about with Big Ben, scoring drugs and even – ingeniously – killing off a football team by flattening them in their own stadium.

Each of the 30 new cars is graced with a superbly awful pun name – the James Bomb, the Crapi and the Jugular E, for instance – and each has its own characteristics. The Cockernee voices are also spot-on, bawling "Oi!", "Sod off!" and even "Twat!" among other pleasantries. And of course it wouldn't be *GTA* without a grooving soundtrack.

*GTA* is undoubtedly fun in short bursts, but it's always been criminally overrated, in this country at least. This is strictly more of the same, though stylishly so, and there still isn't a mid-mission save game facility. Given this, 20 quid seems a bit steep, especially considering that *GTA 2* arrives in the autumn. ★★★

**Ed Ricketts**

### Or you could try...

**Micro Machines 3**  
 Codemasters ★★★  
 If it's the driving you've come for, this is unbeatable for no-nonsense mindless racing.

**Carnageddon 2**  
 Sales ★★★  
 If breaking the law and mowing down pedestrians starts you up, this will do nicely.



## Dark Vengeance

■ Publisher: **GT Interactive**  
 ■ Developer: **Reality Bytes**  
 ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date:  
**TBC** ■ Players: **1** ■ Requires:  
**P166, 16Mb RAM, 50 Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, Win 95** ■ Recommended:  
**graphics accelerator card, modem for Internet play**

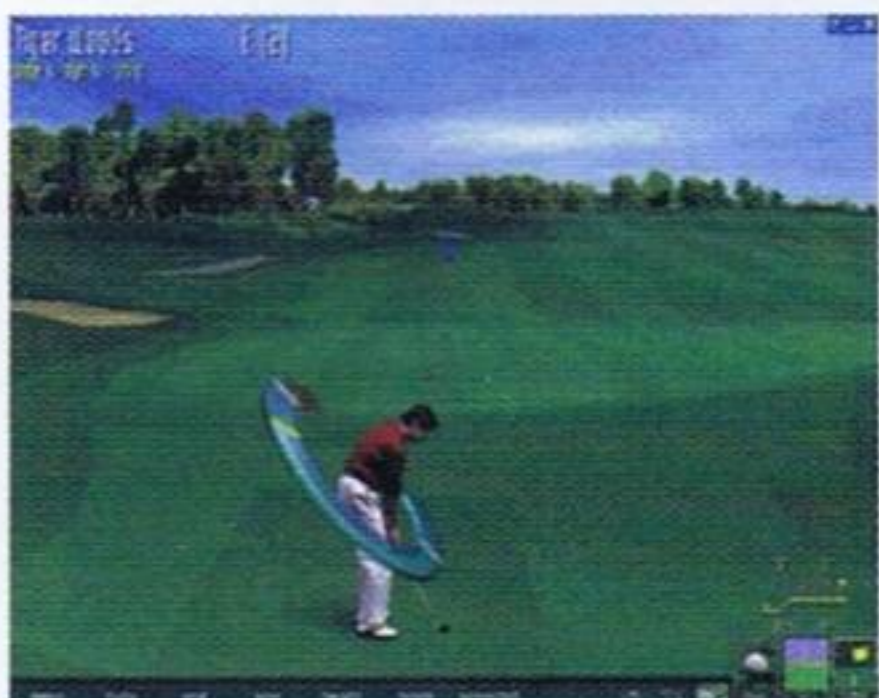
**Time of darkness, guv? Monsters roaming the land? Well try one of our heroes – we've a big one, a sporty one and a wizardly one.**

■ Meet Nanoc, Kite and Jetrel; three fun-loving adventurers who like nothing better than beating the crap out of elves and romping through dungeons and castles in an attempt to save the land of Amagar. Ever since the arrival of some Dark Elves things have been looking grim for their cliché-ridden fantasy world. Time, then, to go kill the boss Elf, and most of his minions in the process. Yes, *Dark Vengeance* is a 3D adventure with the emphasis on baddie bashing and switch flipping.

Each of the characters has their own scenario to deal with as they venture through dungeons, arenas and spooky houses. Every time you enter a new location, be it an underground tunnel or a torture chamber, you'll meet a variety of monsters who must be taken out with whatever means you have at your disposal. Jetrel the wizard starts off with a long-range magic-wand – meaning he can take out baddies from afar – but the other two must make do with their close-combat weapons until pick-ups become available. This means running up to baddies and pounding the attack button combined with the direction pad to produce a variety of assaults.

Sadly, the position of the camera means it's often extremely difficult to see what your enemies are up to, despite the number of customisable settings. Another pain in the backside is the "look" control: by holding the look key down it's possible to aim the camera in order to get a better view of, say, opponents who are on a high ledge, or something. Sadly it's too fiddly to control and, worse still, it doesn't return the camera to its original position when you let the key go.

*Dark Vengeance* is slow, the combat is tedious, and the whole thing is totally unoriginal. It has but one small, yet redeeming, feature – if an arrow should land in a character's butt it stays there. Great, but hardly worth buying the game for. ★ **Tim Cant**



## Golf 1999

■ Publisher: **Microsoft**  
 ■ Developer: **Friendly Software** ■ Price: **£24.99**  
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**  
 ■ Players: **1-4** ■ Requires: **P90, 16Mb RAM, 125Mb HD space, 2x CD-ROM drive, Win 95**  
 ■ Recommended: **32Mb RAM, 4x CD-ROM drive, soundcard, modem for Internet play**

**Even with a £10 rebate for Golf 1998 owners to upgrade, is Microsoft's latest golf sim worth it?**

■ Up until recently Microsoft's Golf series was developed by Access, authors of the best-selling *Links* series. Bringing in Friendly Software to write *Golf 1998* breathed new life into the series, so it's disappointing to see how little the game has evolved in this year's version – it's practically a doppelganger.

There may be nothing here to die for, but *Golf 1999* still manages to be above average. Graphically there's the usual eclectic mix of sprite scenery, modelled trees and bitmap backdrops, which all mesh to create six real-life courses. You get more in both *Links LS* and *Jack Nicklaus* but there's enough here for a variety of hilly, woody, sandy, and watery challenges.

Gameplay is a near mirror-image of the 1998 version. There are four methods of swing – Two-click, Three-click, Natural Swing and Sim Swing, although the chances are the latter two will be used at most twice. Natural Swing involves dragging the mouse to simulate a stroke (impossible), while the second takes the shot for you. Why bother playing at all?

There are five skill options, from beginner to champion. Course conditions such as wind and green speed are configurable, as is the type of game you play: stroke, match, skins, scramble and bingo-bango-bongo (God only knows). And there's great multi-player support courtesy of Microsoft's free Gaming Zone.

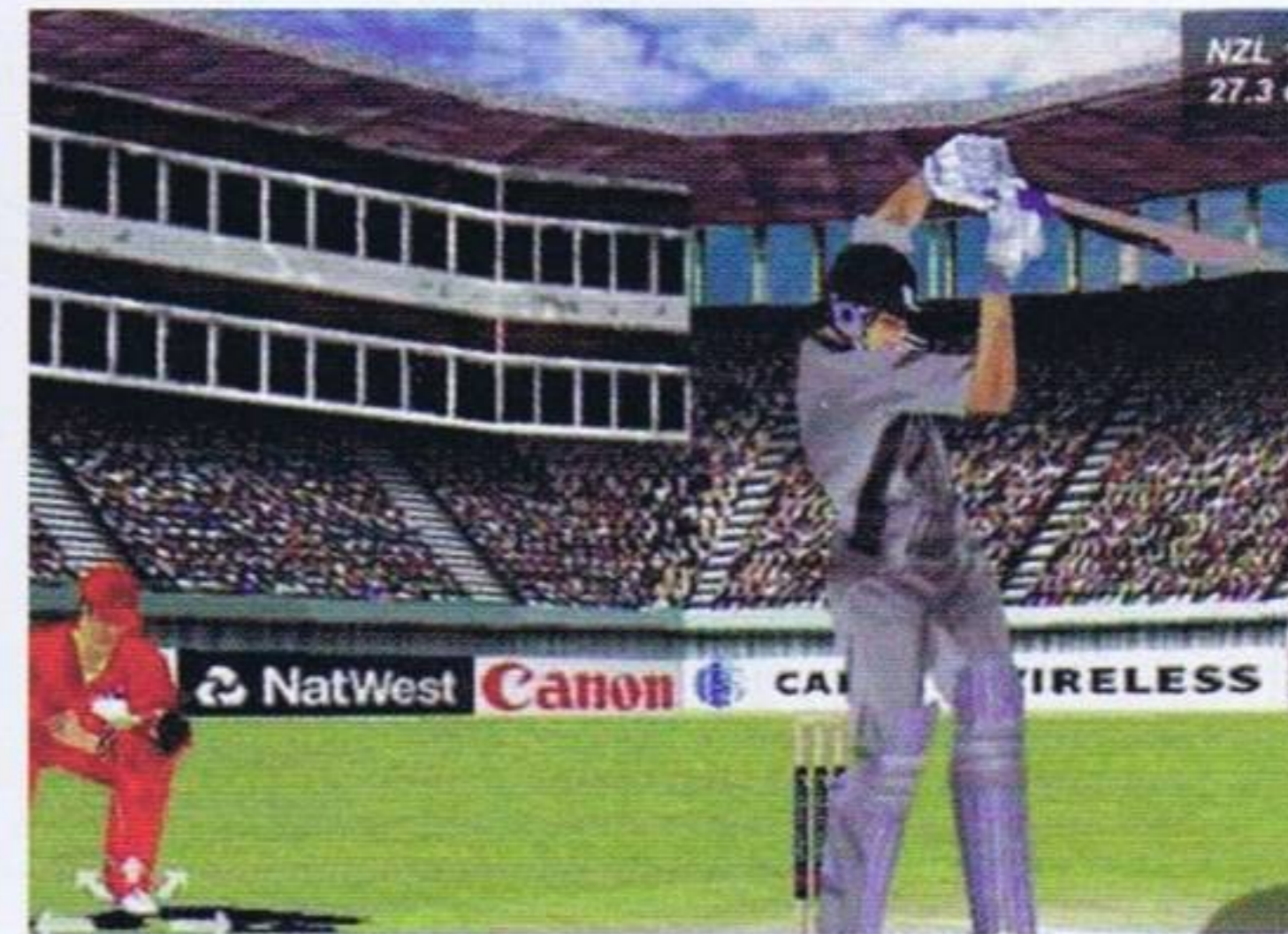
So *Golf 1999* is basically *Golf 1998*, but with snazzier menus and an extra year added to the title – a fact not even the £10 rebate to existing owners can mask. If you don't own a golf game and have never experienced the relative perfection of *Links LS 1999*, then this will satisfy. Like much of Microsoft's middle of the road offerings, *Golf 1999* isn't really aimed at the diehards, but the fair-weather fans after a quick round on their PC. ★★★ **Ian Harris**

# BOWLED OVER

## SHOW ENGLAND HOW TO DO IT



■ **Timing, shot selection and – yes – patience. These are the skills needed for success in Brian Lara Cricket.**



## Brian Lara Cricket

■ Publisher: **Codemasters** ■ Developer: **Codemasters** ■ Price: **£35** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2** ■ Requires: **P166, 32Mb RAM, 500Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, 4Mb graphics accelerator card, SoundBlaster-compatible soundcard, Win 95** ■ Recommended: **3D accelerator card, joystick** ■ Other formats: **PlayStation**

**What a comeback. After decades in the doldrums, English cricket makes a resurgence. Unbelievable? Too right. The only Englishmen any good at cricket are making videogames at Codemasters.**

**A**ttempting to simulate cricket is much like attempting to explain the wonderful game to, say, an American. The problems begin when you reach little foibles such as the fact that a match can last for up to five days.

*Brian Lara Cricket*, happily, ends the tradition of cricket game failure, and offers a plethora of game options from full test matches to knockabout ten-over thrashes. All nine of the major cricketing nations are represented, with up-to-date players and averages, plenty of real-life grounds and a range of weather situations. That said, this is

definitely a game for real fans of the sport: you're going to need patience to succeed.

Control methods have always been a major stumbling block for previous cricketing games, but *Brian Lara* has got this area pretty well cracked. When batting, you get a couple of seconds to see where the bowler will land the ball. You can choose to defend, leave, play an ordinary stroke or attempt to thrash it; the results depend, as in real life, on both your placing of the shot and your timing.

Bowling is easier – position the target to land the ball, and make an ordinary delivery, or vary it according to your bowler's abilities.

The player animation is pretty good and some of their signature actions are even recognisable, though the movement can sometimes seem a little jerky and unnatural. The commentary, by Jonathan Agnew and Geoffrey Boycott, is similarly spirited and even occasionally entertaining, but it does seem a little limited. It's all solid stuff.

Codemasters is a company that obviously relishes challenges such as this, and the team has produced what is undoubtedly the finest attempt at cricket simulation to grace the PC (or indeed any other platform). With the impending Cricket World Cup and EA Sports' tie-in game due in June, though, *Brian Lara* may have only enjoy a few months at the crease. ★★★ **Ross Atherton**

**Or you could try...**

**Cricket 97**  
 Electronic Arts ★★  
 Brave stab at full-game sim; let down by controls. Looks dated.

**International Cricket**  
 Captain Empire ★★★★★  
 Heaps of strategy and tactics. But no actual play simulation.

### ↑ Uppers & Downers

**Six into the stands**  
 ■ Precise controls allow for realistic stroke and delivery selection  
 ■ Excellent graphics, especially the lighting  
 ■ Good commentary from well-known voices

**Rain stopped play**  
 ■ Boycott worshipping the Aussies  
 ■ A few animation judders  
 ■ It's hard to judge running



**■ Brian Lara Cricket has it all: real grounds, up-to-date player stats and silly golden ducks.**



## F-16 Aggressor

■ Publisher: **Virgin** ■ Developer: **General Simulations Incorporated** ■ Price: **£39.99**  
 ■ Release date: **on sale now**  
 ■ Players: **1** ■ Requires: **P166, 32Mb RAM, 250Mb HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, 2Mb graphics accelerator card, soundcard, Win 95**  
 ■ Recommended: **P200, 32Mb RAM, 550Mb HD space, 8x CD-ROM drive, 4Mb graphics accelerator card, joystick, modem for Internet play**

**Even real F-16 fighter pilots would struggle to fault the realism of this Africa-bound flight sim. But that doesn't,**

**of course, necessarily mean that it's fun to play. So let's take this baby for a spin...**

“If F-16 were any more accurate,” gushes the box blurb, “We'd have to shoot you.” And yes indeed, accuracy is absolutely the keyword of this Virgin flight simulator. The manual explains long and often (as is the wont of so many of these books) that this game offers the most accurate simulation to date of the F-16C fighter. It even promises that the flight model will not be improved in later versions, because it's completely accurate now. Hmm.

Unfortunately, only real F-16 pilots will really be able to tell the difference between the flight

model of this game or, say, *Falcon 4*. It seems to handle very well. It's fluid and fast and packed with all the usual aerodynamic goodies that modern flight sims can offer. So, it passes the realism check then. But how's the rest of it?

The back-story isn't so hot. Instead of a heroic US Air Force pilot, fighting to halt the rapid spread of international Communism, you play an ex-USAF pilot who is flying for a mercenary squadron based in a war-torn Africa of the near future. Shades of *Strike Commander*. Of course, you're not just in it for the money: you also have your own agenda involving a fiendish drug baron.

No, aside from its realism, *F-16 Aggressor's* main appealing

feature is the outstanding quality of the graphics that shoot past your canopy. When you're using a fast PC and a decent 3D graphics accelerator, all flight sims look much of a muchness, but *F-16's* graphics have been given that extra little bit of polish to make them stand out from the squadron. Admittedly, the game takes place in Africa, so your missions involve flying a camouflage-brown aeroplane over endless dirt-brown countryside while shooting at other brown aeroplanes, but there are still enough nice touches to make even the most hardened flight simmer go “Ooh!” every now and then. Something that today's crowded skies need far more of. ★★ ★★ **Jim Chandler**

# PC budget re-releases

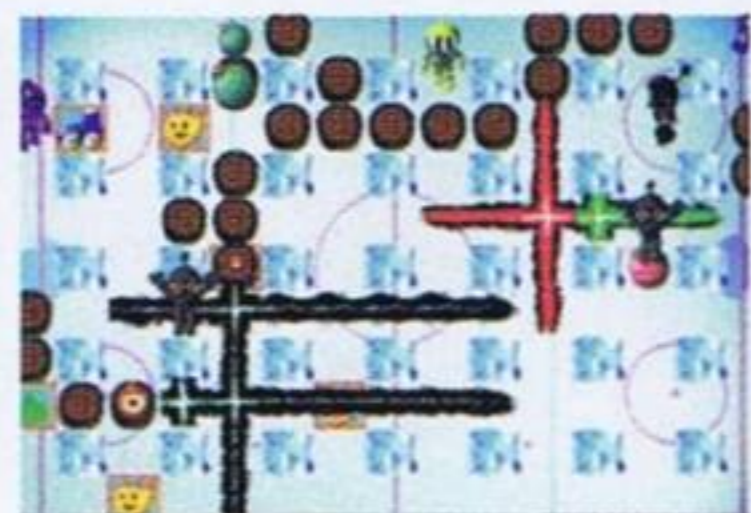
by Robin Alway and Sam Richards

**We've been playing PC games since before you were born, when all of this was all fields! Have you got no respect for your elders? Sit down – no not in the comfy armchair, on the floor, boy – and listen to our words of nostalgic wisdom regarding games that cost less than a loaf of bread.**



### Actua Soccer

■ Publisher: **Sold Out**  
 ■ Price: **£4.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2**  
 ■ The *Actua* series has lost out to *FIFA* in the last year, but this original was the game that started the football frenzy. It has a 3D pitch, polygonal players, a barrowload of atmosphere, great commentary, sweeping TV-style camera angles, the lot. Gremlin surpassed itself and back in 1986 this was the football sim to own. The control system is fiddly and lacks elements we've all come to expect – a speed-burst button for instance – and the constantly changing perspective can cause confusion as to which way you're shooting. The keepers are difficult to score past, and the visuals now betray their age, but hey! For this price you can't buy a better footy game. ★★ ★



### Atomic Bomberman

■ Publisher: **Sold Out**  
 ■ Price: **£4.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-4**  
 ■ Arguably the best multi-player puzzle game ever, the *Bomberman* concept has been kicking around the consoles for years, though *Atomic Bomberman* was its first official appearance on the PC.  
 Taking control of one little Bomberman (you can have up to four on screen at a time) you run around a top-down maze trying to blow up your opponents by placing time-bombs in their path. Power-ups include extra speed and a brilliant “kick the bomb” ability, and each level is fiendishly designed, replete with dead-ends and teleport points. The game's limited as a single-player experience, but if you've got any mates you *must* buy this for a fiver. ★★ ★★ ★



### Civilization 2

■ Publisher: **MicroProse**  
 ■ Price: **£12.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**  
 ■ *Alpha Centauri? Call To Power? Pah!* This is *Civilization* at its height, and remains one of our favourite titles. Not one to be played in the office, this is the kind of single-player strategy game that turns long, winter evenings in the spare room into marathon all-night point-and-click events.  
 You know the story by now. Choosing an ancient race you set off to conquer the world, or at least make your mark on it. You build great cities, arrange political coups, manage your crops, then stomp on neighbouring nations if they push your ambassadors around. The interface is showing its age, but this is a must-have if you're serious about your PC fun. ★★ ★★ ★



### The Curse of Monkey Island

■ Publisher: **LucasArts**  
 ■ Price: **£14.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**  
 ■ Arguably the finest point-'n'-click adventure game there is. Possibly even more fun than *Grim Fandango*, and easily the best 2D cartoon-style story around. The only minus point is that it draws very heavily on the previous two titles in the series, meaning that if this is the first time you've met Guybrush Threepwood you'll be lost by some of the jokes.  
 In this episode Elaine, the love of Guybrush's life, is rescued from the ghost pirates, but when the hapless hero proposes she turns to solid gold – part of Le Chuck's curse. Days (perhaps weeks) of amusement and puzzlement follow, as you tear around the Caribbean sorting out the mess. ★★ ★★ ★



### Extreme Action

■ Publisher: **Activision**  
 ■ Price: **£24.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-8**  
 ■ Three vehicle-based games, all of which were surrounded by hype when they first appeared.  
*Grand Theft Auto* stirred even the most sleepy of Lords with its car stealing and drug dealing plot. It is, in fact, a riotously entertaining top-down comedy crime adventure set across a fictionalised America.  
*'76 Nitro Riders* is a retro-themed *Starsky & Hutch*-style car chase sim, with a sluggish driving engine and difficult missions.  
*Battlezone* (pictured) is the best of the bunch and effortlessly makes the package a success. It's a 3D action remake of the arcade original, but with an *X-Files* plot, heaps of strategy and superbly conceived scenarios. ★★ ★★



### Heavy Gear

■ Publisher: **Activision**  
 ■ Price: **£14.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-8**  
 ■ Following its work on two early *MechWarrior* titles, Activision began *MechWarrior 3* only to find that corporate wrangling had lost it the license – the job was handed over to MicroProse. Not wanting to waste its expertise, Activision promptly bought the rights to the *Heavy Gear* RPG universe and used its 3D stomping-robot engine to build a game of the same name.  
*Heavy Gear* suffers from being over-complex, but the visuals are radiant, the physics slick enough to give a feeling of agility and the scenarios well plotted (if a little clichéd: we'd swear some of them are straight out of *Star Wars*). Well worth the budget price if you're a dedicated sci-fi fan. ★★ ★★



### Heroes of Might and Magic 2

■ Publisher: **Ubisoft**  
 ■ Price: **£9.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**  
 ■ The nation has been submerged in the murky waters of civil war following the death of Lord Ironfist. You must first choose which side to bat for, and then the rest is standard swords-and-sorcery fayre. It sounds dimly repetitive, but is actually passable fun.  
 The action takes place in a top-down map view where you explore the verdant realm and kill its least friendly denizens, while also coping with the strategic management of mines and fortresses. *Heroes* is turn-based and can feel slow at first, but this blending of RPG ambience with point-and-click army-level conflict has an absorbing and classic feel to it. ★★ ★



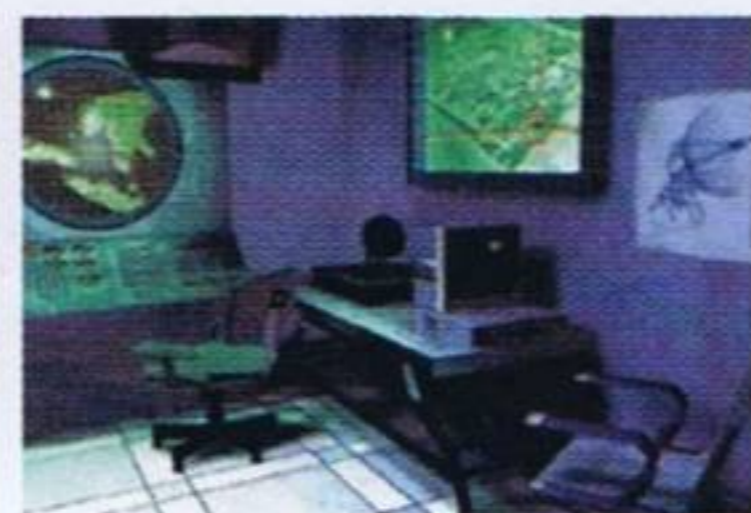
### Imperium Galactica

■ Publisher: **GT Replay**  
 ■ Price: **£14.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**  
 ■ It's a testament to good design that *Imperium Galactica* works well despite apparently being cobbled together from so many familiar ideas. You start out as a Lieutenant in an imperialistic space fleet, and your aim is to rule the galaxy. Endless strategic screens convey a sense of universal scale, and when conflicts do happen the action is fast and fascinating. There's a lot to do but it's broken up by FMV cut-scenes updating your performance.  
 It's stylish and intelligent, then, though you can't help but wish the developer had few good ideas of its own. A sequel is about to be launched into orbit, so this may be the ideal time to brush up on your *Galactica*. ★★ ★



### Outlaws

■ Publisher: **LucasArts**  
 ■ Price: **£12.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**  
 ■ *Outlaws* is a tobacco-chewing, gun-slinging, horse-riding *Quake*-style adventure, casting you as a US Marshall out to get vengeance when your family is kidnapped. It's such an obvious twist to the genre; someone should have thought of it long before LucasArts got a chance to cock it up.  
 Sadly, the levels are tediously designed, with weapons to match – you can grow bored popping a revolver at thugs in saloon doorways. The engine is colourful and faintly cartoon-like, lending the whole affair an aura of ill-fitting comedy. We would applaud any developer who managed to turn *A Fistful of Dollars* into a decent *Quake*-style game. Until then, adios amigos. ★★



### Tex Murphy: Overseer

■ Publisher: **EIDOS**  
 ■ Price: **£14.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**  
 ■ In the old days “interactive movie” was first a buzzword for mainstream CD games, and then a synonym for bad FMV adventures. *Tex Murphy* has starred in three of the later; his earlier linear point-'n'-click outings were *Under A Killing Moon* and *The Pandora Directive*, establishing him as a detective in the Fox Mulder mould.  
*Overseer* is based on a series of flashbacks revealing the early days of *Tex's* career. Starring actor Michael York, it is yet another tiresome stroll through pre-rendered locations, where all the tension is ruined by digitised speeches that reveal the plot in tiny drips. It's the gaming equivalent of Chinese water torture and should be avoided. ★



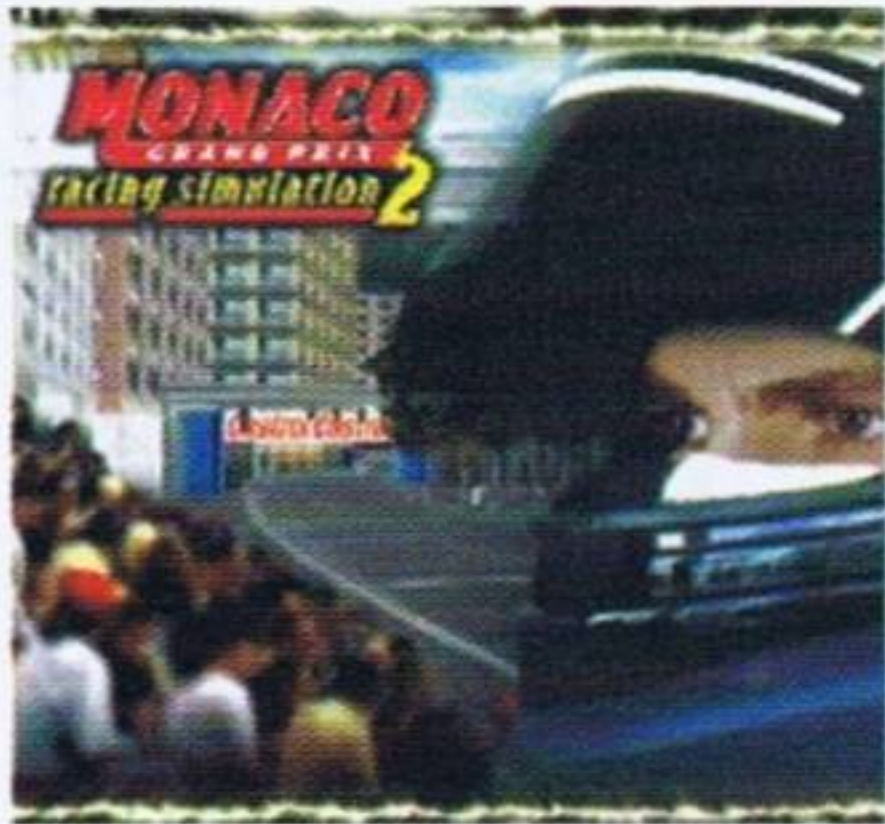
### Worms 2

■ Publisher: **MicroProse**  
 ■ Price: **£12.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-8**  
 ■ My, how we have come to tire of the invertebrates' continued re-release. So far Team 17's *Worms* concept has appeared in this budget column three times – the original popped up in *Arcade 3*, while this second version wriggled its way into compilations in issues 1 and 2. Now it's finally been let out on its own. But is it worth it? Frankly, no. It's not inadequate, and provides a certain degree of puerile entertainment, but despite a few additional weapons it's similar to the £4.99 version, and not enough like the excellent *Worms: Armageddon* newly launched by Hasbro. Buy the former or the latter, or one of the compilation packs, but steer clear of this 'un. ★★



### Zork Grand Inquisitor

■ Publisher: **Activision**  
 ■ Price: **£14.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**  
 ■ They were the grandparents of the adventure game, those Infocom *Zork* titles, and the story of the strange kingdom beneath the white cottage continues in a series of graphic point-'n'-click adventures. *Grand Inquisitor* is the most recent and takes off where *Zork: Nemesis* finished, telling you to venture back underground and free the realm of *Zork* from the Inquisitor, an evil ruler who has banned magic. The puzzles are clever and the humour of the original games makes a welcome return, although it's rather slapstick. A few FMV characters are present and the locations are atmospheric but there's something uninspiring about the whole collect-object, use-object formula. ★★ ★



■ Whose eyes are those? Unless we're very much mistaken, that's the legendary Hamon Dill.

# SECRET FORMULA

**Arcade**  
Nintendo 64  
Game of  
the Month

## NO FAG ADS, JUST FAST RACING FUN



■ The cockpit view isn't the easiest way to play at being Michael Schumacher. Still, nice ghostly hands.

### ↑ Uppers & Downers

#### Damon Hill

- Fast and smooth
- Easy to learn
- Loads of options

#### Nigel Mansell

- Blurry scenery
- Primary colours
- No official licence

## Racing Simulation Monaco Grand Prix

■ Publisher: **Ubisoft** ■ Developer: **Ubisoft** ■ Price: **£40**  
 ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-2** ■ Extras:  
**Rumble Pak** ■ Other formats: **PlayStation**

**Can a Formula One game succeed without all the familiar teams and pampered millionaire stars that get Murray Walker so worked up every other Sunday? Ubisoft seems to think so.**

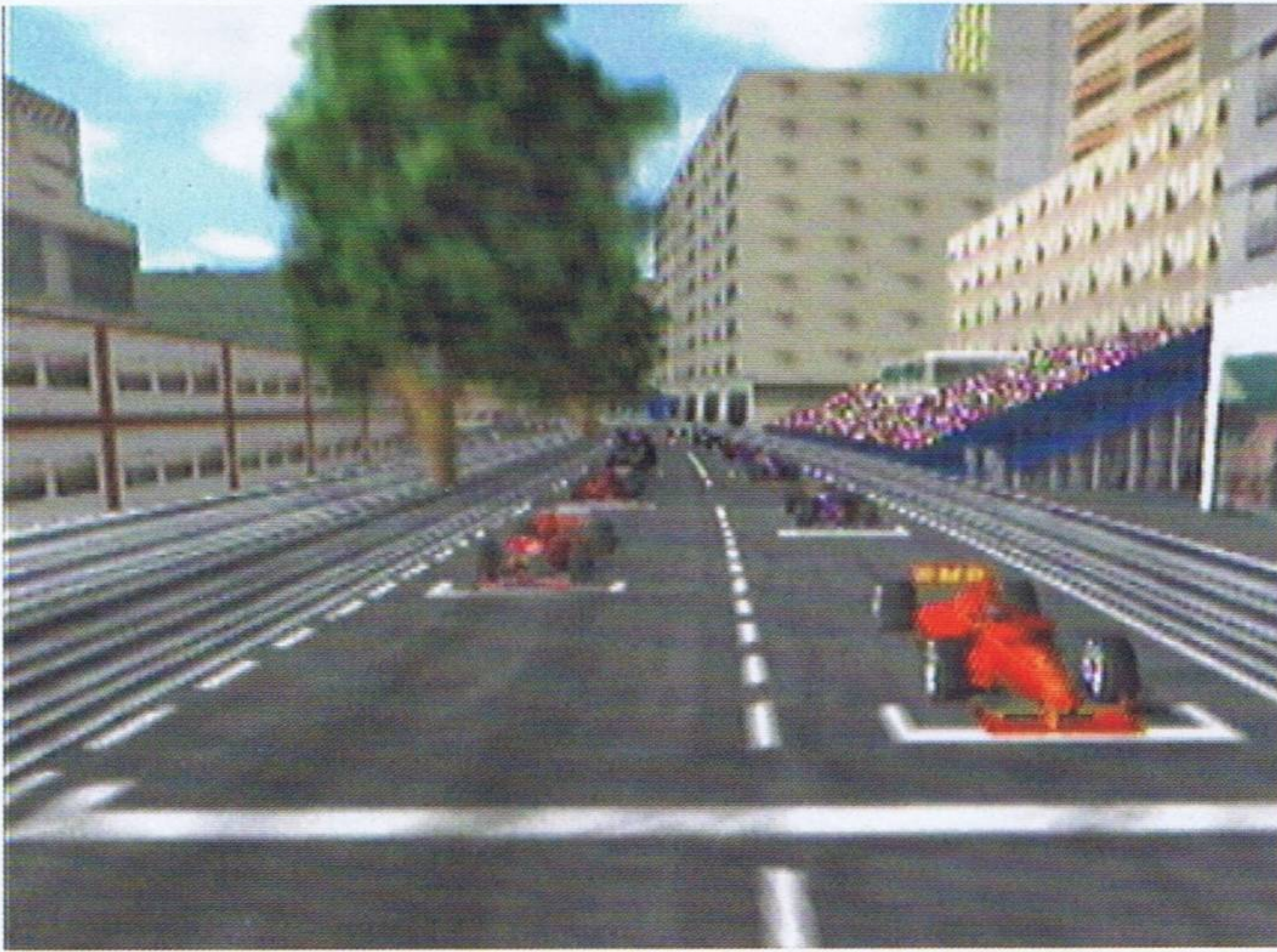
In the real world, Formula One is all about money. The team that can throw the most cash at its technicians and mechanics tends to get a one-two finish in almost every race (assuming the drivers don't do something crazy like decide to engineer a ten-car pile-up at the first corner). Money talks when it comes to making Formula One videogames, too.

The licence to feature all the current drivers and teams costs the kind of money that only Electronic Arts can afford these days (and indeed the US sports game giant has recently snapped up the exclusive PC and console rights). Which leaves other companies who want to market an F1 game with three choices: First, they can opt to use data from a couple of years ago, as Paradigm did with the highly successful *F1 World Grand Prix*. Second, they can try and buck the system by making unsubtle alterations to the drivers' names – remember *F1 Pole Position*'s Hamon Dill? Or third, they can do what Ubisoft has done with *Racing Simulation*, and simply forget all about the big business of F1, concentrating instead on creating a top-class driving sim. One that just happens to feature 22 pointy-nosed cars and 17 familiar tracks in exotic locations around the world.

So what do you get when you turn a 200mph fag advert on wheels into a 200mph anonymously coloured racing car? What happens when you no longer have drivers who earn a million pounds a race and date supermodels? Does the sport lose any of its appeal? The answer seems to be that, yes, you do find yourself missing the glamour. But



■ A zoomed out view is the best way to appreciate *Racing Simulation*'s blistering speed.



■ Sorry, but without all the fag-packet spangly sponsorship and in-your-face advertising hoardings, this might as well be Milton Keynes rather than Monaco.

## MONACO'S A BLISTERINGLY FAST DRIVE... EASY TO GET INTO, YET INFURIATINGLY TRICKY TO BEAT.

that doesn't stop the game from delivering a storming Grand Prix driving experience.

*Racing Simulation* is a sequel to an ultra-realistic PC game of last year, with much of the hardcore simulation gubbins stripped away to leave a blisteringly fast drive, that's easy to get into, yet infuriatingly tricky to beat. Choose a car, type in your name as the driver, and you're ready to head out on to the track for a spot of testing. If you're determined to get into the mechanics of the thing, the Options screen shows a cutaway view of your vehicle, enabling you to see exactly what effect tweaking each setting will have. It's a great touch, making the business of tailoring the car's performance for each different circuit much less confusing than in similar games. The handling does change quite dramatically when you alter certain settings – particularly wings and tyres – enabling the game to cater for a variety of driving styles. If you're into *Mario Kart* you might prefer a brisk, light feel to the steering. But if you're a dedicated *F1WGP* enthusiast, you'll feel more at home with some solid downforce to keep the feel "heavier".

Once you've settled on a configuration that doesn't make you spin out at every corner – or just plumped for the default settings if you're lazy – *Racing Simulation* really comes up trumps with the speed it offers. The acceleration is authentically quick and when, a few seconds after the start, the speedo tells you you're doing 170mph, you can believe it. This feeling of real velocity is enhanced by the computer car's tendency to bunch up quite a bit, ensuring that you have to do an awful lot of hair-raising weaving through the field in order to get to the front and away

from congestion.

Once you get confident enough to attempt a race without any CPU assistance for the tricky bits (like changing gears), *Racing Simulation* feels much less like an arcade game and more like the PC simulation it evolved from. Taking on a full racing season at the highest difficulty setting is probably way beyond most gamers, but it's good to know that it's there. Certainly UbiSoft's offering can't be accused of failing to offer a tough challenge for even the most seasoned of Formula 1 veterans.

*Racing Simulation* does have its faults though, and however minor they might be, they do make *F1WGP* – released just a few months ago – marginally the better option for N64 F1 fans. Weaving through a chicane using *F1WGP*'s cockpit camera, which bumps and rumbles all over the place whenever the wheels run over a kerb, remains the most exciting experience any N64 racing game has to offer. *Racing Simulation* doesn't have anything which even comes close, despite beating Paradigm's game in terms of graphical speed and ease of use.

If you're an F1 fan, chances are you already own *F1WGP*, so you should buy *Racing Simulation* forthwith. However, if it's a straight choice between the two, *F1WGP* wins by a whisker on sheer muscle power. ★★★★★ **Martin Kitts**

### Or you could try...

**F1 World Grand Prix**  
Nintendo ★★★★★  
Paradigm's official F1 game has more depth, realism, razzmatazz, and pukka cars and stars.

**V-Rally 99**  
Infogrames ★★★★★  
But if you prefer it dirty and off the beaten track, this rallying title is the driving sim to go for.



■ Replay mode – but *F1WGP*'s version is on pole position.



■ *Racing Simulation* just pips *F1WGP* in the customisation stakes. It's easier to see what you're doing and what effect it will have on the car.

# GET THE BUG

## TAKE TO THE STREETS IN REVAMPED "HERBIES"



■ To state the unavoidable; there aren't actually any beetles in the game. But there is some adventure. And a whole lotta racing.



## Beetle Adventure Racing

■ Publisher: **Electronic Arts** ■ Developer: **Paradigm**  
 ■ Price: **£40** ■ Release date: **on sale now**  
 ■ Players: **1-4** ■ Extras: **Memory Pak, Rumble Pak, up to four controllers**

**A new EA game, and one that – almost inconceivably – doesn't have the word "FIFA" in its title. So let's take it out for a test drive.**

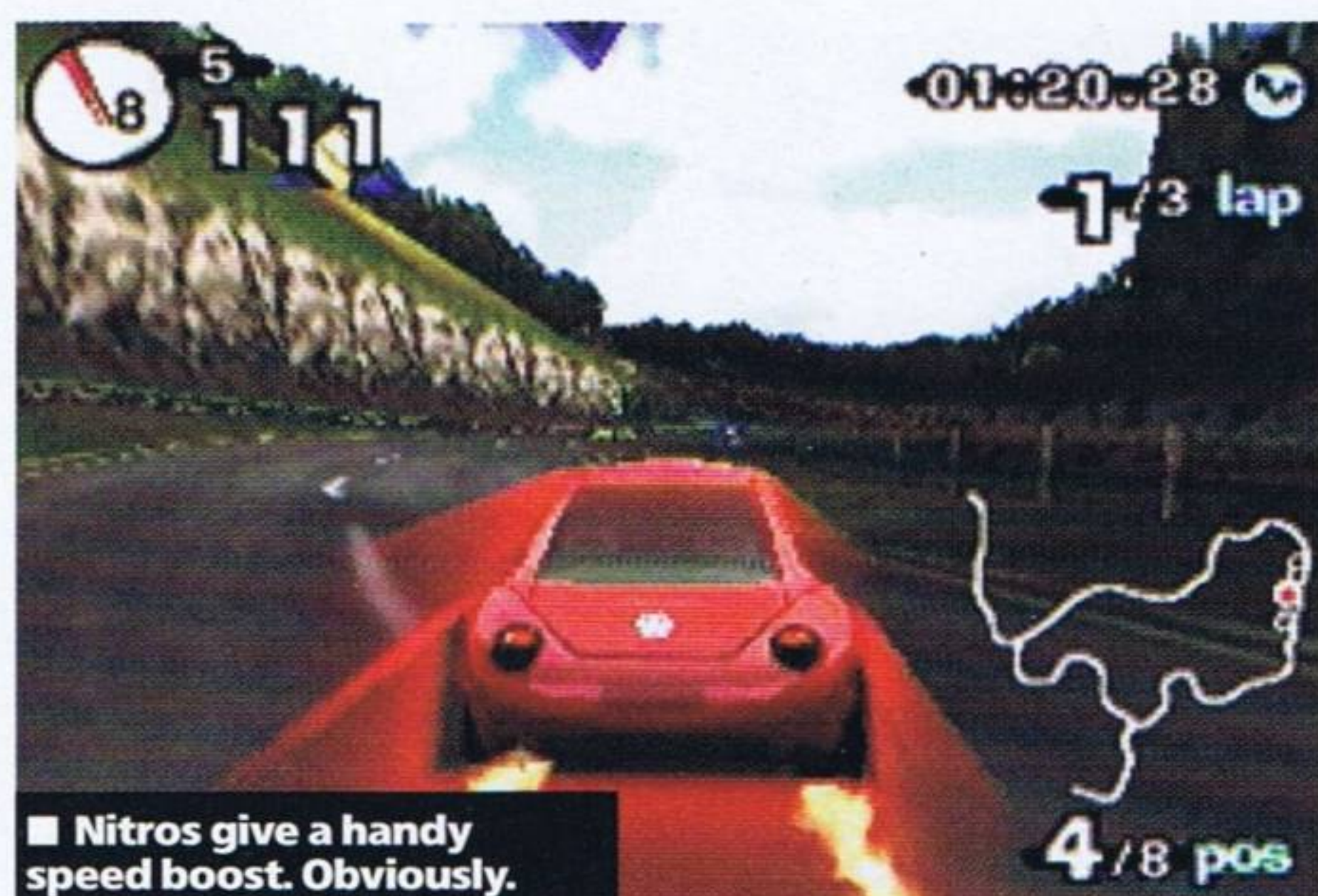
Other than it being staffed exclusively with VWs, *Beetle Adventure Racing* is a relatively simple, arcade-style racer. What's odd is that it's developed by Paradigm, a company previously known for devising vastly complicated battlefield simulators for the American military and the wonderfully judged flight models for the endlessly playable and marvellously unclassifiable *Pilotwings 64*. It also helped concoct the rigorous real-life physics and microscopic detail that exemplified *F1 World Grand Prix*. The company is currently working on a full-blown N64 Harrier simulator.

The point is that a light-hearted arcade racer isn't exactly their normal fare. Maybe someone in charge has decided that their staff need to have a little more fun. Maybe someone's put something illegal in the company's water cooler. Who knows. Either way, *Beetle Adventure Racing* is almost entirely devoid of the company's signature, which

■ Huge mad jumps abound. It's a bit like trying to hold a conversation with someone while on a bouncy castle.







■ Nitros give a handy speed boost. Obviously.

traditionally has been to bring some real-life Newtonian laws to the party.

Eschewing the physics of what it is actually like to drive a Volkswagen Beetle around (fairly sedate, we should imagine), *BAR* is an exponent of a peculiarly American type of driving game, as recently showcased by GT's *Rush 2* and Snowblind's *Top Gear Overdrive*. The emphasis is on ludicrous jumps, speed-enhancing Nitro power-ups and the ability to take thousands of different and increasingly bizarre shortcuts. You're also treated to an overly simple one-speed racing model (you'll not find a reason to travel at anything less than top whack) and the handling abilities of a large iceberg. Having made the decision to leave realism at the door, it seems Paradigm have run amok.

And it's not much fun. It's almost impossible to take a corner without smashing into the track-bordering scenery, even when you've mastered the not-entirely-complicated handbrake manoeuvre. Couple this with trying to overtake the mindless CPU opponents and *BAR*, at times, appears to shoot itself in the foot with its reluctance to provide anything approaching a skill-based cornering system. Things do eventually improve, with better cars becoming available as you progress through the game. But it's a long, long time before you get behind the wheel of anything that sports a reasonable amount of handling.

The game itself requires the usual progression through to the top-three rankings, with a view to you accumulating enough points to move on to the next track. What sets *BAR* apart from the pack, though, is the "Adventure" part of its name. And this means shortcuts.

These forays off of the beaten path are liberally littered throughout each course, and often require you to take the most absurd leaps of faith. Quite literally so, in one particular case, as a slip road ends in a jump that sees you hurtling towards a sheer ice-face, then smashing through it into a frozen tunnel. What's curious, though, is that only a small percentage of the shortcuts give you any advantage. By using them you'll frequently drop a position or two when you emerge back on to the track proper.

Your motivation for taking them, then, is your quest for numbered boxes, placed all around the tracks in hard-to-

reach positions. A lot of these are places in the shortcut sections. The idea is that if you smash into them you gain the points displayed in the box. These points enable you to buy continues and other such necessities at the end of each race. This is often the only way to progress, should you fail to make it onto each race's winner's podium.

It's an irritating system, and even more so when you consider that the computer cars all take exactly the same route each race. What's more, they are placed unfailingly and *exactly* within the same distance of each other. This means that there's no real skill involved in overtaking them, it's simply a case of judging the distance between and *always* ensuring that you're placed at least fourth by the time you reach the final lap.

Sure, the splendidly diverse tracks are uniformly graphically lovely and packed with detail. But even here Paradigm has fallen into the trap of recreating the same old standards: the forest track, the desert track, the slippery-slidey ice track, and so on. What's more, the game is marred by the worst borders we've ever seen, running along the *sides* of the screen as well as the top and the bottom.

*Beetle Adventure Racing*, then, is an unavoidably flawed affair. Ferreting out the shortcuts on each track is always an intriguing proposition, and there are a couple of reasonably enjoyable multi-player modes. It's just that the times when it is actually any real fun to play are too few and far between. ★★★

Jez Bickham

**↑ Uppers & Downers**

**High road**

- Packed with detail
- Millions of shortcuts
- Graphically lovely

**Low road**

- Non-existent handling
- Robotic opposition
- Simply too rigid

## MAYBE SOMEONE'S BEEN PUTTING ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES IN PARADIGM'S WATER COOLER

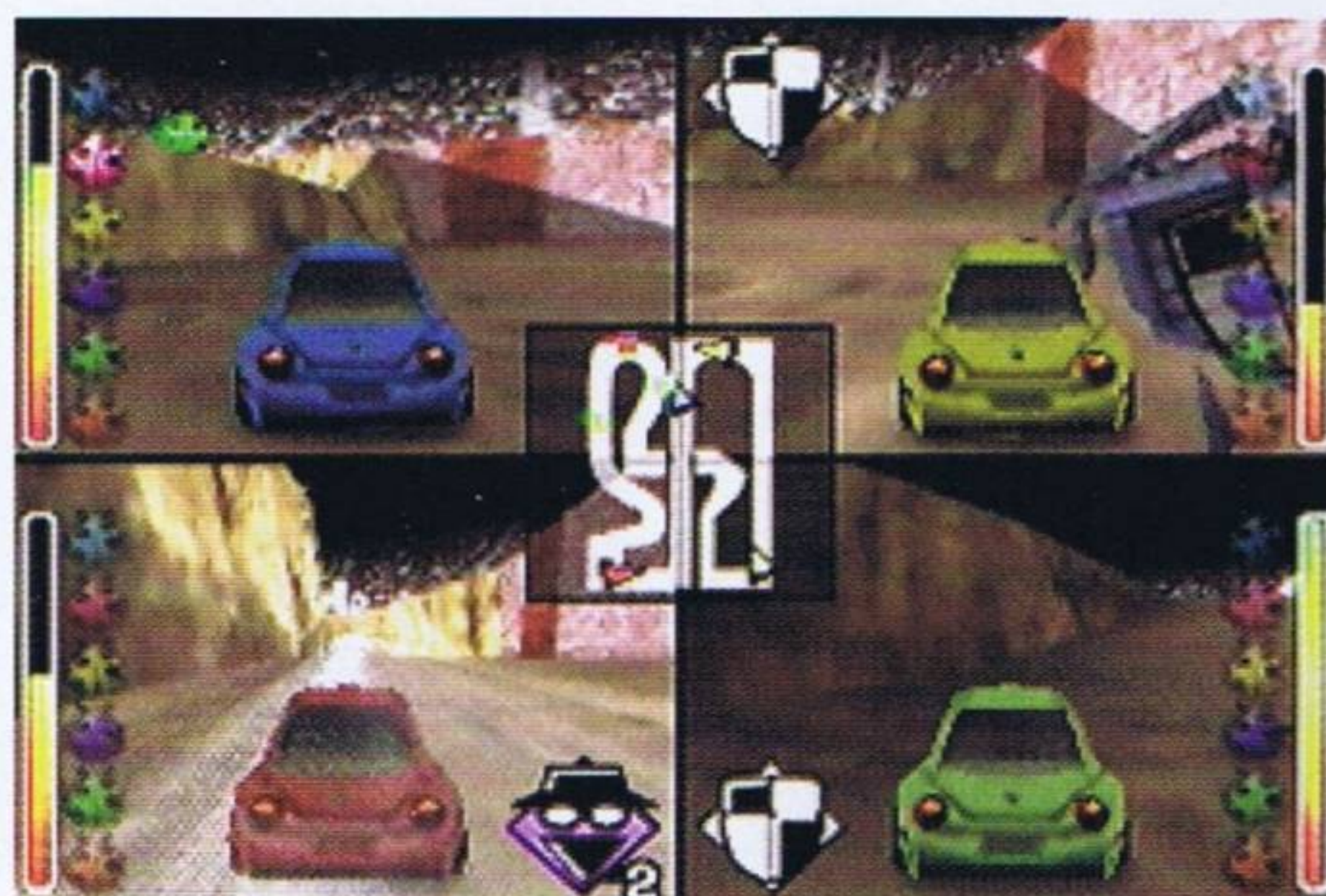
### Or you could try...

**Rush 2**  
GT Interactive ★★★  
More shortcuts, bigger jumps and similarly terrible car handling. But big buckets of fun.

**Top Gear Overdrive**  
THE ★★★  
Expansion Pak-enhanced graphics, insanely hard difficulty and, again, lots of shortcuts.



■ Unavoidably, *BAR* features a slippery slidey ice-world (left). The city track, however, is by far the best (below).



■ The cars are all VW Beetles. Every single last one. Good, eh?



## Chameleon Twist 2

■ Publisher: **Sunsoft**  
 ■ Developer: **Sunsoft**  
 ■ Price: **£40** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**  
 ■ Compatible with: **Controller Pak, Rumble Pak**

**The original Chameleon Twist was a tedious, badly-designed mess of a platformer. The sequel is... well, you can guess.**

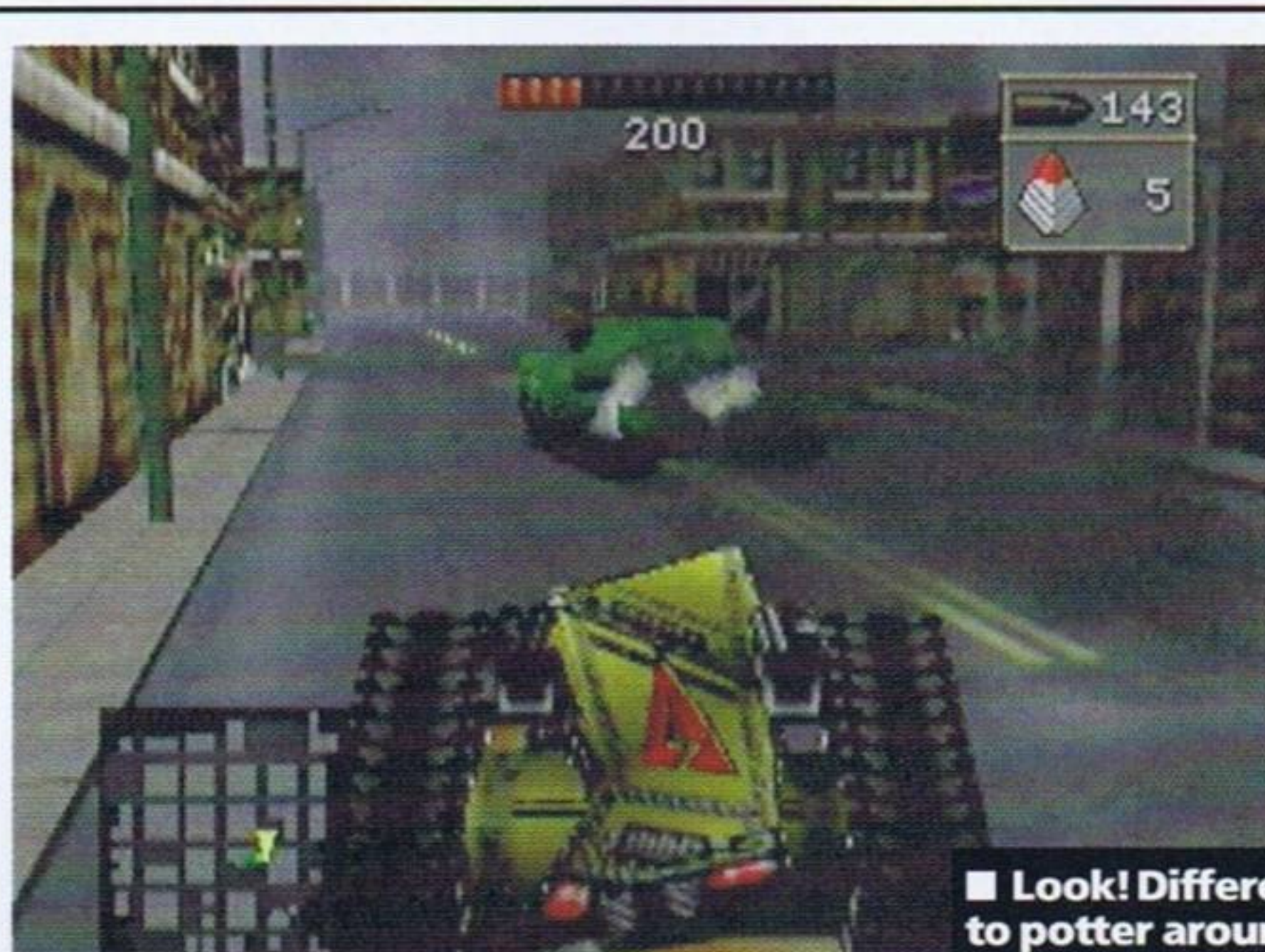
Wander into an average club in the early hours of the morning and you'll find plenty of people embarking on "tongue adventures", but they're unlikely to boast the sheer versatility of the stars of *Chameleon Twist 2*. Using their extraordinarily long, fully manoeuvrable mouth-carpets, the central characters in Sunsoft's new title can collect power-ups, gobble up surprised bad guys, and latch onto scenery to hoist themselves around each gaudy, 3D level.

Unfortunately, the scope for variety that this idea offers has been tossed neatly into the bin. The path to the end of each stage is so sparsely populated with puzzles that you spend half your time simply strolling along and admiring the scenery. The puzzles that do crop up every few minutes veer from insultingly simplistic to frustratingly random, and never graduate from the school of enemy-smacking and tongue-bungeeing.

To add insult to injury, the camera view can only be "panned" left or right, making it impossible to get a fix on the 3D dimensions of a level. Without being able to rotate the camera, your poor brain can't comprehend whether a platform is close to the screen or in the distance, which leads to plenty of "hilarious" moments where you inadvertently stroll off a platform and into thin air.

Perhaps *Chameleon Twist 2* is aimed at kids. With its walking hamburgers, funfair levels and simplistic gameplay, there isn't much for a grown-up to get excited about. This is especially true for those unfortunate enough to have splashed out on *Twist 1* – the original's multi-player game has disappeared, and, amazingly, some of the first game's puzzles have been imported wholesale.

*Twist 2* has its positive points – the visuals are crisp and clear, the controls are adequate, and it has a "polished" feel. It's the lack of originality and things to actually do that dissipates any appeal the title has. ★★ **Mark Green**



Look! Different kinds of tanks to potter around in. Top stuff.

**Uppers & Downers**

**I am a King!**

- Fast and furious multi-player
- Hefty weapons

**I am a Queen!**

- Easy one-player game
- Basic graphics
- "Queen Lords", no really.

# TANK SCRAP

## BATTLE FOR A LOAD OF OLD QUEENS

### Battletanx

■ Publisher: **THE 3DO** ■ Developer: **3DO**  
 ■ Price: **£40** ■ Release date: **on sale now**  
 ■ Players: **1-4** ■ Extras: **Rumble Pak, Controller Pak**

**In the post-apocalyptic future, the only women you're likely to meet will be known as Queen Lords. And you'll have to have a massive tank if you're ever going to pull one.**

It's all down to some crazy jungle virus that kills only women. At least, that's as much as we could make out from *Battletanx*' hand-drawn cut-scenes, which are the worst we've seen since *Shadows of the Empire*. Not to mention the appalling music. Just as well there's a decent game lurking behind this facade, then. As a one-player

game, *Battletanx* doesn't require a PhD to get the hang of. You drive your tank around bombed-out American cities, shooting at other tanks who all want to steal your woman (or "Queen Lord") away from you. Give them a taste of some impressively heavy weaponry and they'll soon get the message: you mess with a man's Queen Lord at your peril.

You can flatten pretty much every building by emptying wads of firepower into it, a feature that makes finding your way around the levels child's play. In fact, the solo game is shockingly easy to complete, offering little more than a weekend's entertainment.

Luckily, the multi-player Battle Mode is very good indeed. It's full of original touches, not least in the way you get to take care of two different killing machines. Most of the time, you drive around looking for enemy tanks and their bases, but when your own base comes under attack, a tap on the top C-button switches you to controlling a gun turret as your last line of defence, fending off the opposition. In this mode, your tank is unprotected, so you have to find a balance between keeping your base intact and doing unto others before they do unto you. Equally, attacking someone else's base takes on a new urgency when you know that at any moment their gun turret might shred your tank. If you're *really* desperate to nail the opposition, you can even pick up a nuclear bomb, which flattens every building and tank within range.

*Battletanx* isn't a classic but the multi-player game saves it from being disappointingly brief. It's well worth renting, then, and spending a weekend employing an alternative method of killing your mates. ★★★ **Martin Kitts**

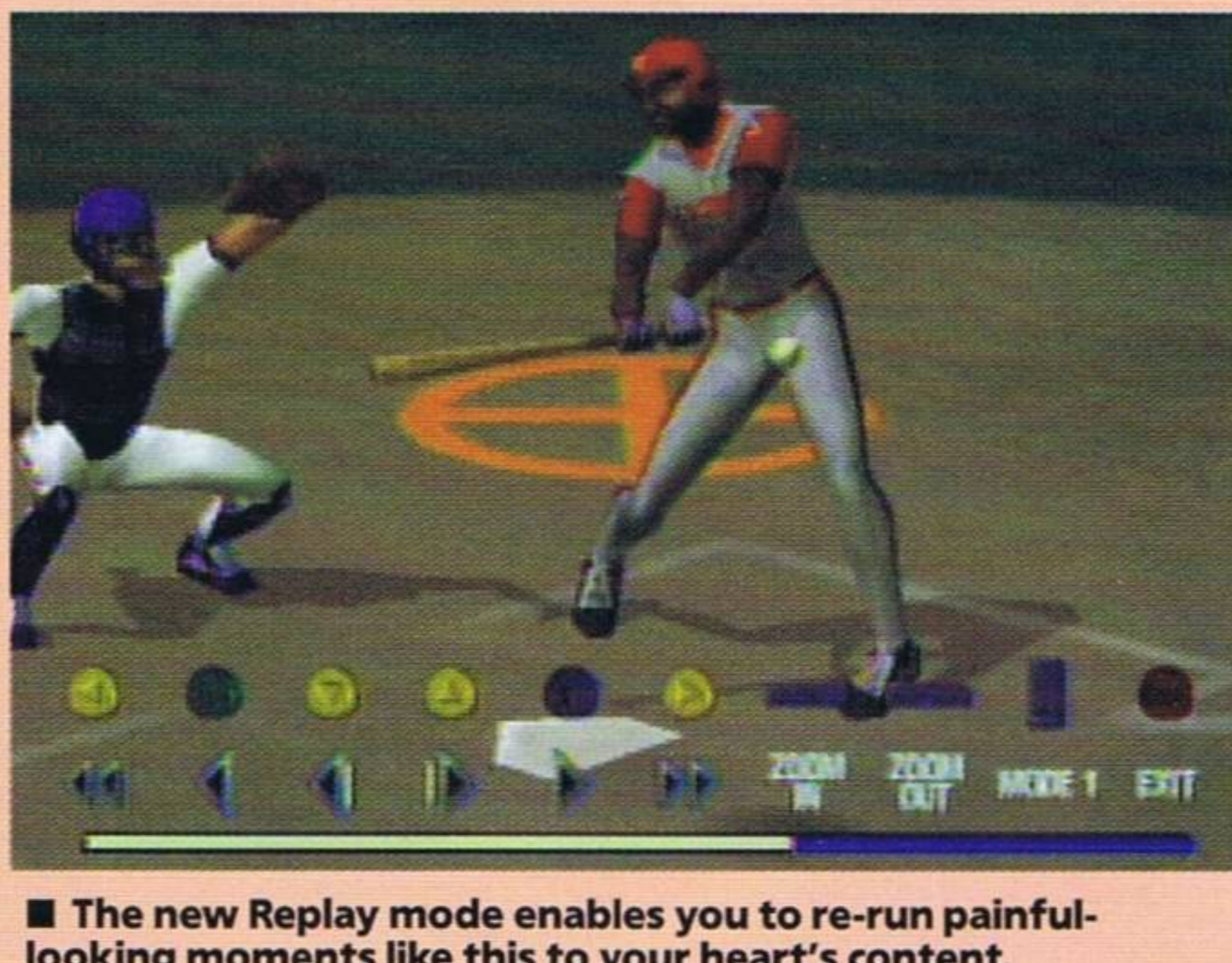
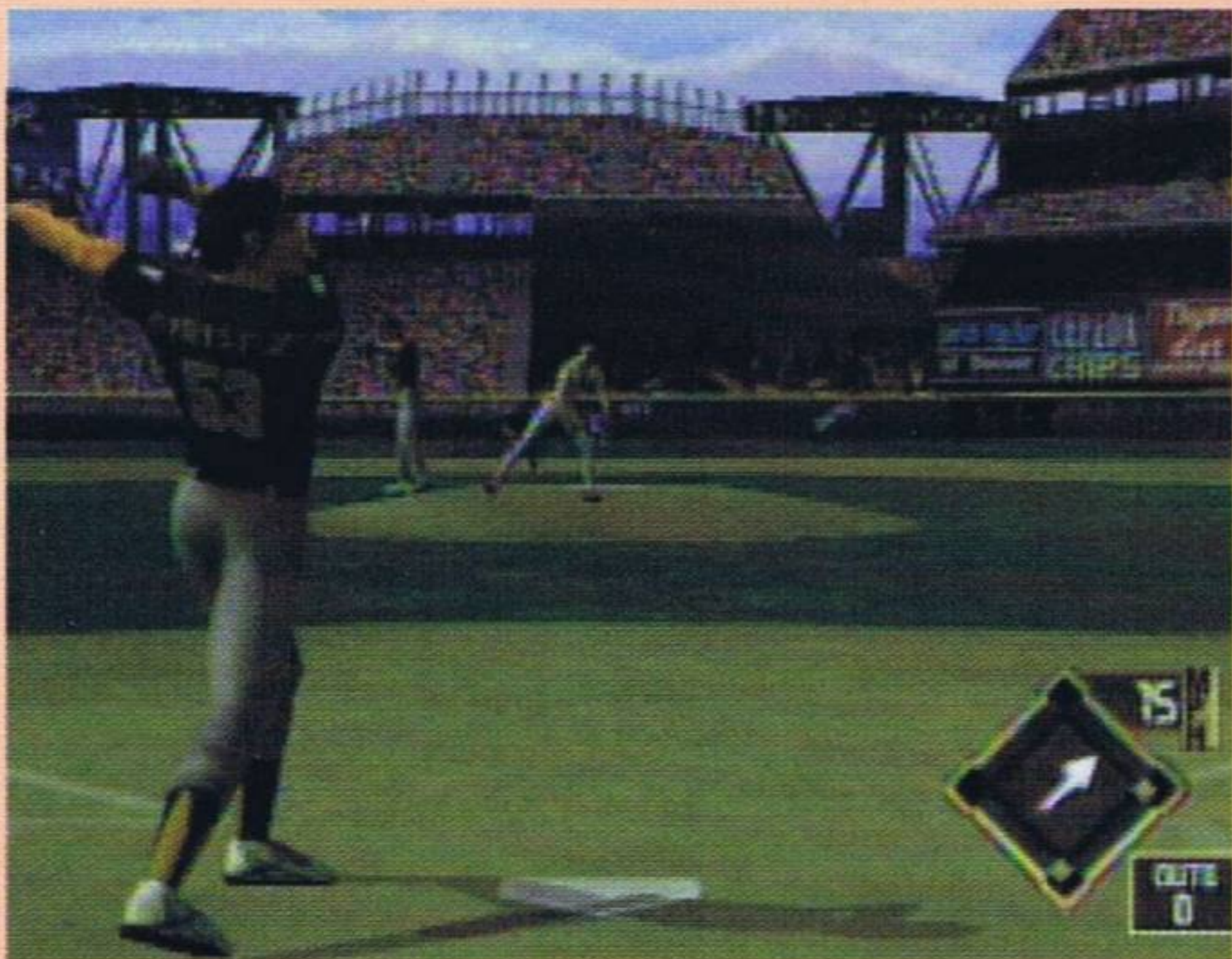
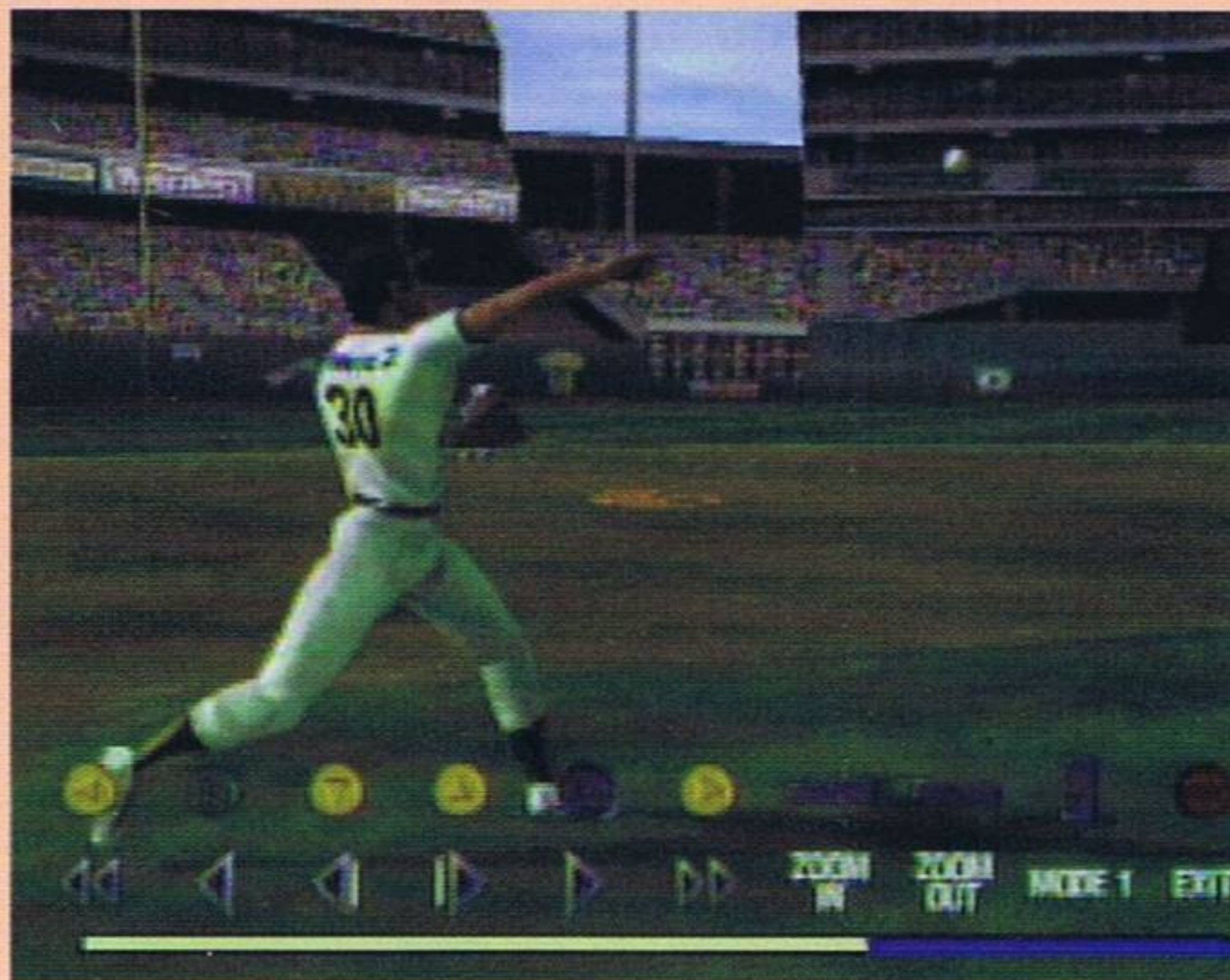
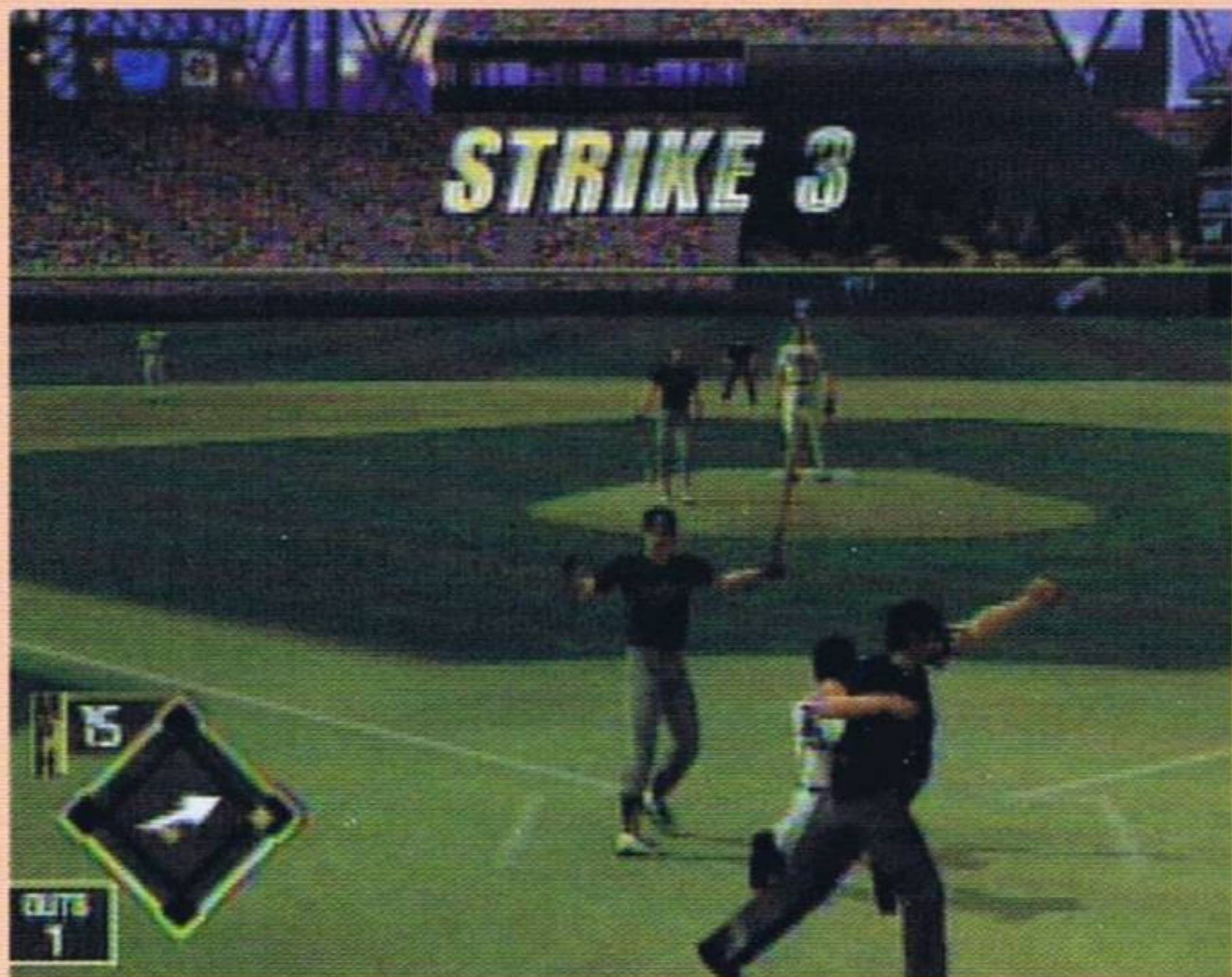
Whoops. Looks like someone's Queen Lord has taken a direct hit.



Or you could try...

**Mario Kart 64**  
 Nintendo ★★★★★  
 Possibly the finest multi-player game ever made.

**Extreme G2**  
 Acclaim Entertainment ★★★  
 Multi-player tank action, with a Wipeout-style one-player game.



■ The new Replay mode enables you to re-run painful-looking moments like this to your heart's content.



### Milo's Astro Lanes

■ Publisher: **Interplay**  
 ■ Developer: **Crave Entertainment**  
 ■ Price: **£40** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-4**  
 ■ Extras: **On-cart save, Rumble Pak-compatible**

**Had enough of guns, spaceships and racing cars? Then perhaps you'd like a bowl? No? Don't blame you.**

■ Well, thank goodness for this. Having saved the free world more times than we care to remember in *GoldenEye*, collected 120 stars several times over in *Mario 64*, hit 1,800km/h in *F-Zero X* and finally found that last pesky Skulltula in *Zelda*, we were a bit worried about what to do next. Until, that is, *Milo's Astro Lanes* came along with its subtle blend of cartoony humour, sci-fi stylings and – oh yes – ten pin bowling.

Only joking. *Milo's Astro Lanes* is complete and utter rubbish. Not just bad, or poor, or – God forbid – a good idea lurking inside a sub-standard game. It's genuinely, terrifyingly awful. A soulless black pit of a game with absolutely no redeeming features. Whatsoever. Outwardly, it's just a normal plastic cartridge. But, we swear, plug it in to your N64 and the stench of death fills the air. Oh good Lord, it's diabolically dreadful.

Get the picture? It's probably that cartoony humour, sci-fi stylings and bowling were never, ever meant to be in this close proximity to each other. Certainly not in a videogame system which plays host to those fine games mentioned in the first paragraph (and a fistful of other classics, too).

All you need to know about *Milo's* is this: it's a futuristic bowling simulator with 12 courses, six characters and six different balls. That's it. It's bowling. With absolutely no skill required and consequently, no enjoyment to be had. Even when *Milo's* tries to be fun, it fails. To wit: one of the six balls "hilariously" splits into three, theoretically increasing your chances of a strike. Except, of course, there's a gap in the track, which two of the balls fall through. *So what was the point?*

Somebody plainly thought this was a good idea. It wasn't. Hopefully this person has been fired. If they apply to you for a job, don't give them one. If you've got 40 quid going spare, you'll get more enjoyment out of burning it. Or sticking it up your nose.

*Milo's Astro Lanes* is a pongy pile of old pants. ★ **Jes Bickham**

# BASE 1999

## A FIELD OF HI-RES DREAMS?

### All-Star Baseball 2000

■ Publisher: **Acclaim** ■ Developer: **Iguana** ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1-4**  
 ■ Extras: **Memory Pak, Rumble Pak, Expansion Pak**

**Look at the quality of those visuals. They could almost make you interested in baseball.**

It's games like this that make you long for a UK cultural blitzkrieg that would see *David Bryant's Bowls Blitz 99* and *Crafty Cockney World Darts Extreme* roll across the Atlantic, crushing all before them. Because whatever its real merits, baseball is always going to be rounders with a bigger budget and come below tractor-pulling on a list of American sports we actually care about.

Trouble is, you can't easily dismiss anything that looks as stunning as *All Star Baseball 2000*. There's a hi-res visual sheen coating the game that makes you wish developer

Iguana was into footy. Motion captured players run in disturbingly realistic fashion around mind-reelingly detailed stadia. If you know your baseball you will recognise player faces while the rest of us can coo at the light-sourced shadows and beautiful base-sliding animations.

Further undermining anti-baseball prejudice is the solid game backing up the eye-seducingly good graphics; it's very much a simulation of the sport rather than an arcade slogger. The realism is such that you feel a real sense of sofa-vaulting achievement when you do finally hit a home run and the intuitive controls make fielding and tricky run-outs on third base possible, even if you're left bewildered by the swathe of tactical options.

Although not much has changed since last year's version, there's little doubt that this is the finest videogame baseball to be had on any format. But where fans of the sport will want to keep playing even when they've stopped swooning at the graphics, the rest of us are more likely to reach for *ISS '98*. Again. ★★★★★ **Robin Alway**

#### ↑↓ Uppers & Downers

- Home run**
- Gasp-worthy graphics
  - Comprehensive sim approach
  - Vast number of options
- Home and Away**
- It's baseball
  - Feels slow for the casual gamer
  - Not a massive change since the last one

#### Or you could try...

**All Star Baseball**  
 Acclaim ★★★★★  
 Last year's game and similar enough to make second-hand purchase an option.

**NFL Blitz**  
 GT Interactive ★★★★★  
 Arcadey cut-down gridiron that's playable enough for clueless Brits to enjoy.

WITH  
**'FRIENDS'** LIKE THIS...



WHO NEEDS TO GO  
**ONLINE?**



A NEW ERA  
IN GAMING

# UNREAL™ TOURNAMENT™

STAND-ALONE GAME  
- DOESN'T REQUIRE  
ORIGINAL UNREAL TO PLAY!

The world's greatest game is back. Unreal Tournament is a brand new stand alone Single & Multiplayer game which rewrites the rules. With superior 'bot' artificial intelligence you can play amazing multiplayer games such as Capture The Flag, Assault and Domination without going online. Customise your own 'bot' teams and pit them against the computer. If you want to go online then no problem, you can even take a team of computer controlled 'bots' to fight on your side. Utilise the new 'big bodycount' weapons such as the redeemer, the pulse blaster and the IMPACT hammer to fry and annihilate the enemy across 30+ tenacious environments.

Only one team can attain the title of 'UNREAL GRAND MASTER' - will it be yours?



IMPORT

# STONE FREE

## DREAMCAST PUTS UP A SERIOUS FIGHT



With all three gems, Gunrock transforms into the thing from *Fantastic Four*, only harder.



### Uppers & Downers

- Picked up**
- Eye-whoring coin-op visuals
  - Pulls off 3D fights with style
  - Splendid variety of ways to hurt
  - Superb setting and characters
- Single and miserable**
- Computer characters can be thick
  - Not many moves

This is a brilliant Dreamcast debut from the *Street Fighter* deities, precisely because it enables you to do things you've always wanted to do in a beat-'em-up, but probably never realised. We're talking here of chucking a pub menu blackboard at a WW1 flying ace character in a bar brawl. Or flame-throwing a mummified praying mantis person. Or landing a pot on Ryoma the Samurai's head and launching him into a giant fan. That one's particularly good.

Startlingly, Capcom hasn't only thrown aside its battle-honed *Street Fighter* cast in favour of these eight turn-of-the-century scrappers but also gone fully 3D for the first time, a big deal indeed for the company that innovated the whole "one-on-one along a rigid horizontal axis" genre in the first place.

Following Square's lead with the import-only *Ergheiz* on the PlayStation, the fighting in *Power Stone* sprawls across beautifully themed 3D stages that play a huge and integral part in the grief-giving. Rather than the exchange of blows and blocks and learning of moves that characterise beat-'em-ups as most of us know them, *Power Stone* requires you to make use of throwable props, pick up weapons and the geography of each stage. The emphasis on dodging attacks (there's no block) and using anything you can lay your hands on in the noble pursuit of inflicting bodily damage. It makes for hugely entertaining fights that are equal parts Jackie Chan film, ancient Mega Drive rumble sim *Final Fight* and a Western bar room brawl. All served with a side helping of *Itchy and Scratchy*-like cartoon ultra-violence as you take it in turns to blow each other up with fizzing black bombs or splatting each other with a large mallet.

Amazingly *Power Stone* manages to be instantly accessible, yet deep. Fighting game purists might snort

DREAMCAST

## Power Stone

■ Publisher: **Capcom** ■ Developer: **Capcom** ■ Price: **£58.99**  
 ■ Release date: **On sale now (Japan)** ■ Players: **1-2**  
 ■ Extras: **VMS** ■ Other formats: **Coin-op** ■ Contact: **Department 1 on 0171 916 8440**

"I'm nummer won!" Sharing only incomprehensible character speak with its *Street Fighter* series, Capcom goes for the 3D full Monty in this 19th century-themed display of 128-bit beat-'em-up power.

**B**azookas? Guns? Crow bars? *Power Stone*'s delightful array of pick-up weaponry is enough to make us think someone from Capcom was in the room taking notes the last time we were on the receiving end of a judo suit-creasing combo in *Tekken* and started mumbling an arms "Wish list" with which to wreak our revenge. (In which case, Mr Capcom, please excuse our foul language while we were playing).



Capcom show off spangly special effects in these transformation sequences.





■ There's nothing to stop you climbing up a lamp post to avoid an attack and then getting down and ripping it out of the ground to swing around at people.

dismissively at the limited number of moves, but the strategic side of the battle comes through the way the usual focus on the energy bar is deflected into collecting the three glowing stones that transform your character into their *Power Drive* alter ego. Once you've done this you can access special moves that show off Capcom's eye-napalmingly spectacular visual effects. Each character starts a level with one of these stones each, and the third one materialises in a neutral spot. To get all three you need to make a successful attack on your opponent. Doing this knocks the stone out of them for you both to chase after and serves to make fights even more frantic as you race around the screen. The way the stones pass between players as the bout progresses makes for even, dramatically choreographed scraps.

Of course, it helps that *Power Stone* is probably the closest any game on a home system has come to the coin-op quality that videogames have always strived for. Stunning is the only word for it – a 60-frames-a-second, razor-sharp piece of technical showing off, that displays all of Capcom's usual engaging flourish when it comes to characters and settings.

Ultimately, *Power Stone* – with all its dreamy 3D ambition – works fantastically well and pulls off everything it sets out to achieve. The characters, ranging from Indian braves to Arabian princesses, are nearly as distinctive and likeable as the old *SF* crew, and offer adequately smart AI

when you're battling them in a one-player game. The straightforward I-get-it controls are aided by seamless behind-the-scenes programming that makes sure the characters are always facing in the right direction and that the camera manages to keep both players in view on the screen at all times – despite the complexities of the 3D environment.

All these outstanding features make for a beat-'em-up that, particularly when played against a wily human, has a bucket-of-water-in-the-face-like feeling of freshness that is sure to enliven even the most jaded fighting fan. And, with PlayStation 2 rumbling into view, it's exactly what Dreamcast needs. ★★★★★

**Robin Alway**

**Or you could try...**

**Virtua Fighter 3tb**  
Sega ★★★★★  
Awesome coin-op-quality side-on scrapper. In a death grip with Tekken for the Best Fighter title.

**Godzilla**  
Sega ★  
Not a beat-'em-up, more of a stroll in a monster suit. An insult to the big G.

## A BUCKET-OF-WATER-IN-THE-FACE FEELING OF FRESHNESS TO ENLIVEN THE MOST JADED FIGHTING FAN



■ Bombs are black, shiny and come complete with a count-down timer. Catch?



■ From left to right, the *Power Stone* crew: Wang Tang, Ayame, Jack, Gunrock, Galuda, Fokker, Rouge and Ryoma.



## COIN OP

### CarnEvil

- Maker: **Midway**
- Developer: **Midway**
- Release date: **out now**
- Players: **1-2**

**Your memories of fun fairs may involve toffee apples and having your face slapped in the Ghost Train, but Midway remembers something different...**

■ So when did you last go to a carnival with a .45 auto and shotgun? Quite. The Laughing King at Blackpool Pleasure Beach might be scary but would you pack heat? Maybe Midway just livid in a bad neighbourhood, because in their dark game, the fun fair turns into a nightmare you have to blast your way out of.

So the theme may be nightmarish, but does the game live up to the concept? Quite frankly, this is something that depends on where you play it. The biggest complaint we've heard so far concerning *CarnEvil*, and something that is bound to damage the gameplay experience, has to be the unreliable nature of the guns. In some cases you'll empty a clip with pinpoint accuracy, while in others, you'll feel more like you're trying to blow away a coconut with a water-pistol at 100 yards.

Should you find a cabinet in full working order, though, you'll get a good few plays out of this offering. The theming is excellent and the graphics are good (if not up to Sega's usual standard).

There are also some original opponents, and while you'll fight hordes of the usual fare (zombies, skeletons and so on) you'll also meet bizarre double-bodied jugglers, street mimes and giant babies (and yes, shooting babies, however big and scary they may be, is a little disturbing).

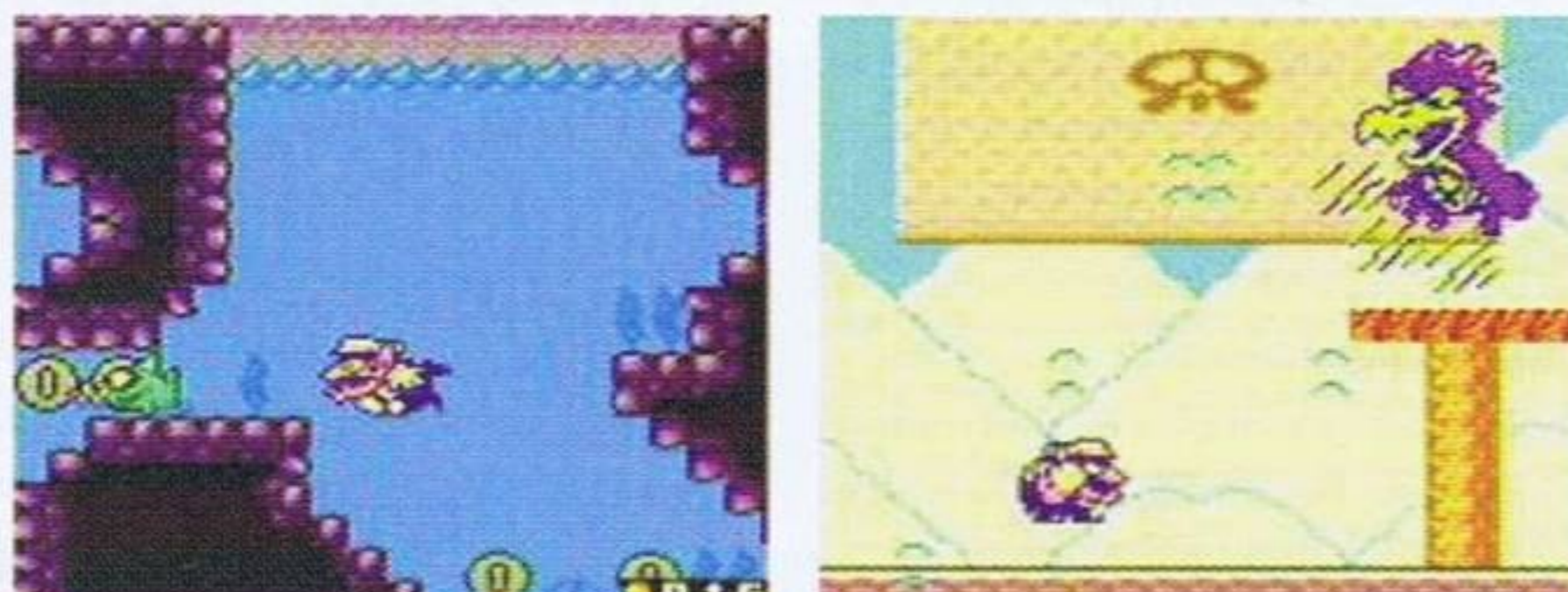
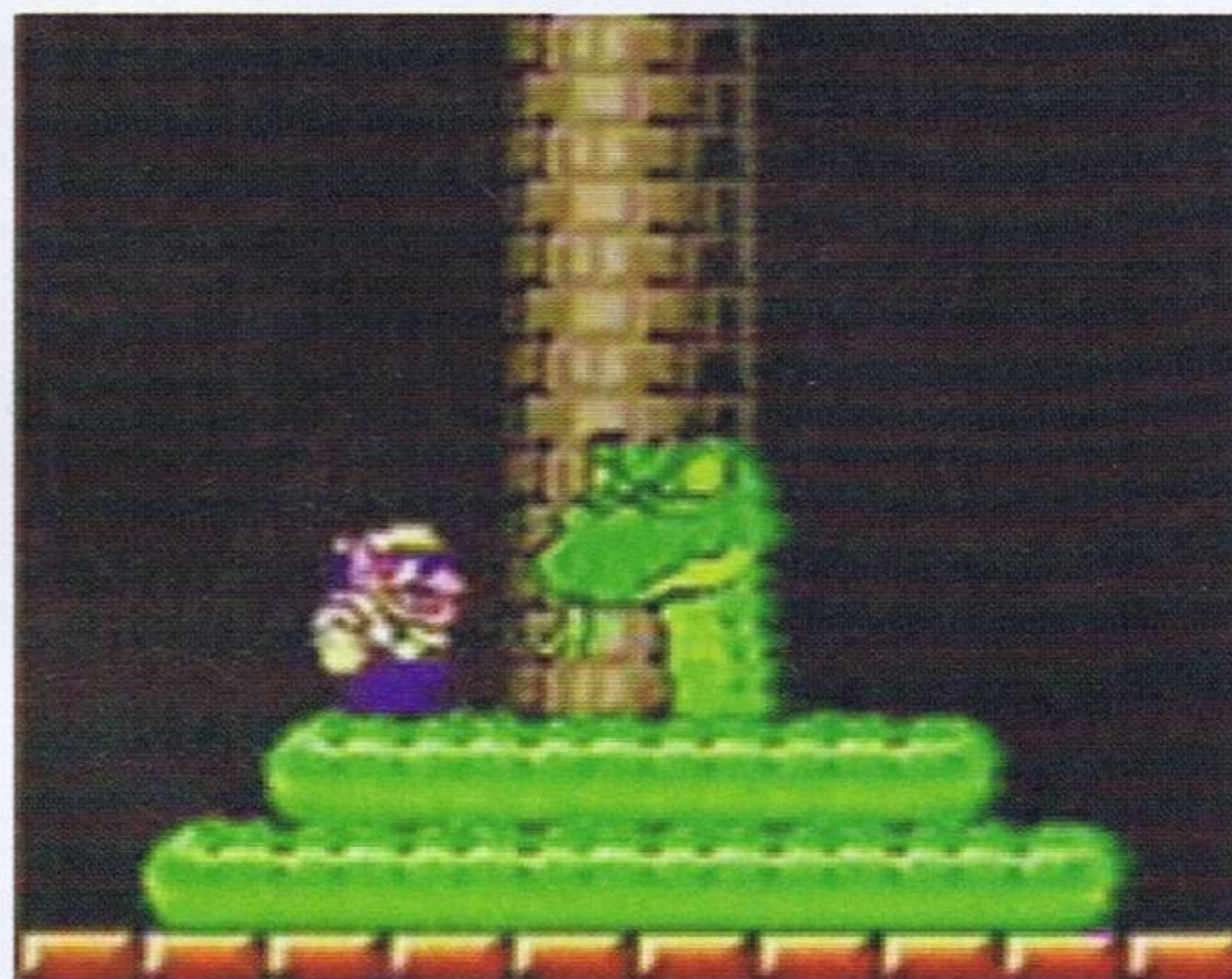
The problem with *CarnEvil*, is its bosses. Dull, repetitive and tedious, they're too predictable, difficult to put down and fighting them absorbs too much money.

The rest of *CarnEvil's* fighting action compensates somewhat, but the sad thing is that Midway really has missed an opportunity here – the atmosphere is good, but a rush job on the bosses and cutting costs on the gun mean that it's never going to make anyone's all-time favourite list.

Then again, if you have dreams of taking a shotgun to a street mime (and let's face it, who hasn't) you're going to have a few hours of vicious fun with this game. ★★★ **Cam Anderson**

# WARIO'S WORLD

## THE EVIL ONE GETS A SPLASH OF COLOUR



## GAME BOY COLOR

### Warioland II

- Publisher: **Nintendo** ■ Developer: **Nintendo**
- Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**

**Mario's evil alter-ego gains an all-colour wardrobe, but loses all his treasure to Captain Syrup's men.**

**T**he Finnish section of the *Warioland II* manual ends with two blank pages headed "Muistiinpanoja", which is presumably Finnish for "Notes". But no other race is offered notes pages. This could be because Finland suffers from the most mobile telephones per capita anywhere in the world, and they perhaps need more room for phone numbers than other nations.

Sorry. It's just that saving Wario's fortune from the marauding Black Sugar Gang involves hopping from platform to platform, collecting coins and jumping on baddies' heads – in short, everything we've been doing in Nintendo platform games for the last 15 years. *So what's the notepad for?* Who knows. Anyway. Let's move on.

Now, it would be a brave reviewer who'd suggest that perhaps Nintendo's family of 2D platformers reached its zenith with *Yoshi's Island* on the SNES. It's just that, if you bought your Game Boy Color anticipating more than just tarted-up games of yesteryear, for the time being at least, you'll be disappointed.

That said, there's plenty of old-fashioned fun to be had with *Warioland II*. In a bravely novel twist, Wario can't ever

## Uppers & Downers

### Onnea matkaan!

- Astonishing amounts to do
- Perfectly polished
- Great bonus games

### Auts!

- Familiar stuff
- Pricey
- No "Notes" page

be killed. But he can be temporarily set on fire, squashed, shrunk, inflated to bursting point, concussed and over-fed. All of which sound like horrible fates, but they can in fact be quite handy. When he's squashed flat, for example, Wario can flutter leaf-like down the screen. When he's on fire he can burn down walls. And when he's been bloated by a bee-sting he'll float gently upwards.

Other *Warioland II* highlights include cute owls that carry Wario across the screen, an exciting bit where you run

along the roof of a moving train, and a tense bonus game which involves picking out a matching pair from eight briefly glimpsed pictures. And, of course, Nintendo builds platform games like the Germans build cars. Every ledge is perfectly placed, every baddy ideally positioned. Every awkward-to-reach corner is suitably baited with coins, every seemingly impossible puzzle ruthlessly logical. There are five different endings, reached by taking alternative routes through the game, and even if you polish off all five you'll still need to discover all the treasure and find the pieces of picture in order to unlock the secret level.

In other words, it's everything a game should be – in a cart the size of an oyster. But £25 nevertheless seems an indecent amount to hand over to Nintendo for yet another retread of its greatest idea, especially when the original black-and-white *Warioland II* is available for a tenner less of your hard-earned cash.

And yet... the train bit is great entertainment. And it never ceases to be funny when the Cooks throw pieces of cake and Wario, unable to resist, gobbles them down and gets all bloated. So, the scores on the doors? Nintendo has done it again, damn them. As the Finns would say: "Kolicot ovat kova sana." ★★★ **Jonathan Davies**

## Or you could try...

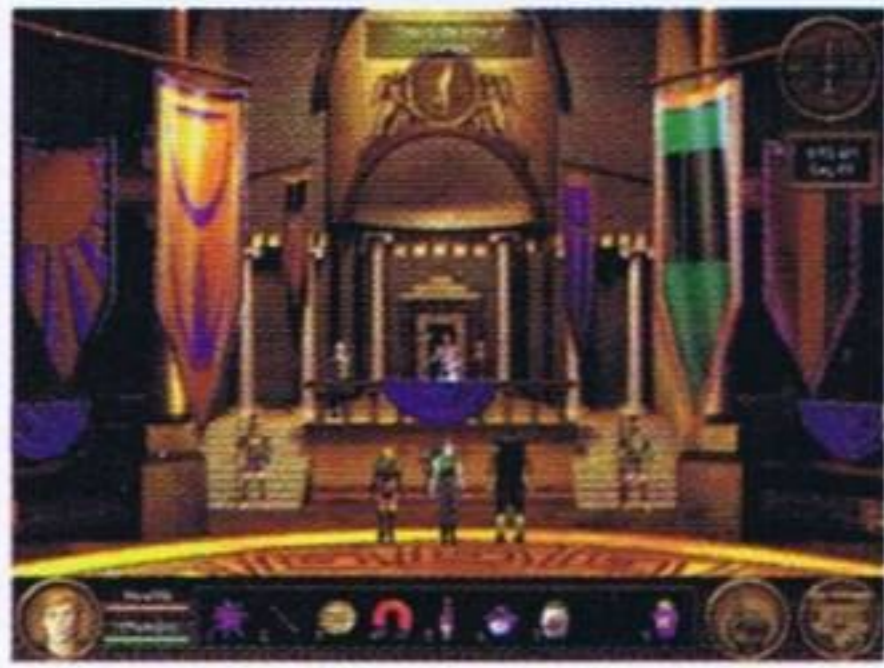
**Warioland II**  
Nintendo ★★★  
The black-and-white version, that is. The same, but b&w (obviously) and cheaper.

**Super Warioland II**  
Nintendo ★★★★★  
The ultimate in GB platforming. No special colour version, though.



■ Resplendent in yellow, Wario's immortal for one game only.





## MACINTOSH

### Quest for Glory V: Dragon Fire

■ Publisher: **Sierra** ■ Developer: **Yosemite Entertainment**  
 ■ Price: **£39.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **1**  
 ■ Requires: **120MHz PowerMac, 32Mb of RAM, 350Mb HD space, 16-bit colour, System 7.5**  
 ■ Recommended: **200MHz PowerMac, 64Mb RAM, 1Gb HD space** ■ Other formats: **PC**

**A hero, my kingdom for a hero! Which is exactly the point of this game – you're the hero, and the kingdom is up for grabs. Just a dragon or two to dispatch.**

■ Don't laugh, but games like *Quake* were born out of the original text-based RPG's where you had to type in commands. Of course, *Quake* isn't a true RPG, and neither is *Quest for Glory V*, to be honest, but it does offer a more cerebral challenge for the (ahem) more discerning gamer.

The story is so old it wears chain mail. You are summoned to the kingdom of Silmaria, where an assassin has knocked off the king and is now after the gentry.

*Quest* is set in a series of gorgeous scrolling 3D landscapes where you must fight and barter with the local denizens to complete seven fiendishly difficult tasks (Rites) and win the game. You have a choice of three standard characters (fighter, thief, wizard), but if you attained Paladin status in any of the previous four *Quest* games, you can import your old character.

You'll spend most of *Quest* coaxing information out of characters and finding out exactly what you're supposed to do with the beeswax and Pegasus feathers – it's just the traditional item-swapping chain. You also have to ensure that your hero gets enough food, sleep and exercise to stay in shape. There's an assortment of foes to dispatch whose weapons, treasure and experience points you get when they're beaten.

Unless you're an RPG nut you might find *Quest* dull. The game offers so many possible outcomes that you could potentially be playing it for months, particularly with the superb graphics, the reasonable sound effects and suitably frustrating gameplay. Which is all great, but the adventuring on offer just isn't going to be everyone's suit of mail. ★★★★★ **Lindsay Bruce**

## GAME BOY COLOR

# POCKET ROCKETS?

## FOUR MINI REVIEWS, FOUR MINI GAMES, FOR A MINI CONSOLE

**Posing as small-time forger Waxy Rattles, Robin's been infiltrating a terrorist organisation this month, so here's guest reviewer Jonathan Nash. (Er, forget Robin's secret identity, come to think of it).**



### V-Rally

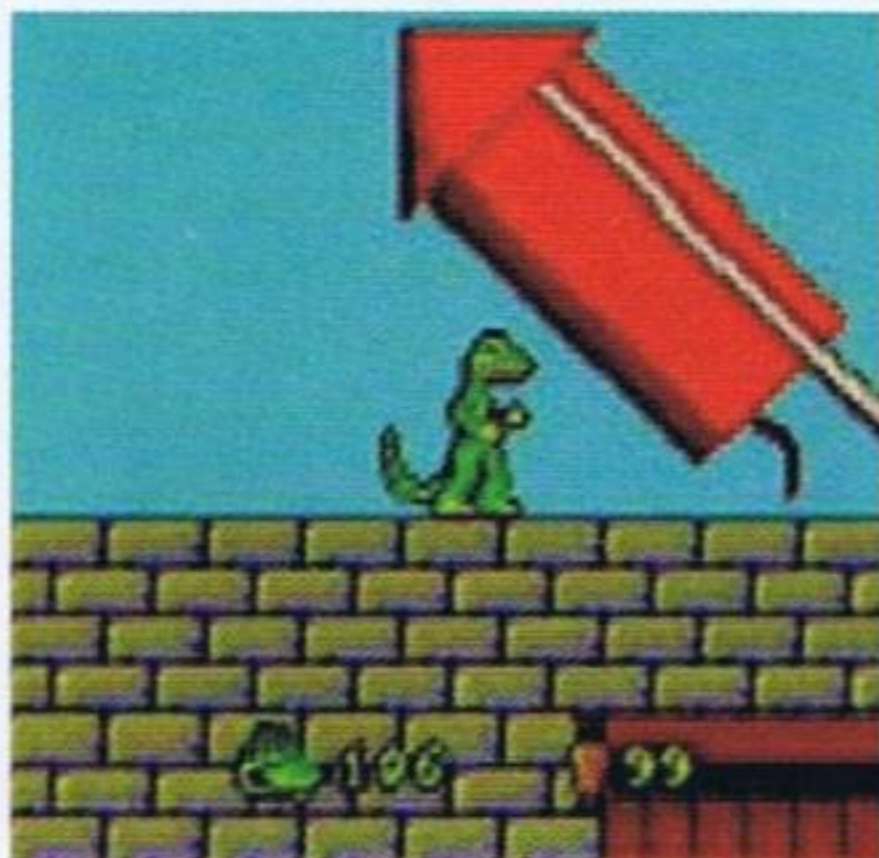
■ Publisher: **Infogrames**  
 ■ Developer: **Infogrames**  
 ■ Release date: **out now**  
 ■ Price: **£24.99** ■ Players: **1**  
 ■ Extras: **GB-compatible**

**Drive, V-Rally. Drive like a point of argument.**

■ A highly creditable racer, which is slightly baffling to me. I hate driving games. They're all the same. (And I'm terrible at them.)

The thing with *V-Rally*, y'see, is that it's learned from others' mistakes. The nine other drivers play fair and are pleasingly beatable. They're spread out along the course, so (unless you're first, obviously) there's always someone to pass, giving steady thrills of achievement. And the tracks themselves are interestingly eventful – it's a rally, so there are potholes and hills – with unusually splendid scenery and appropriate weather (snow in the Alps, for example). Even the colours are well chosen.

There's a quite a bit to it, actually: four cars to drive and 20 tracks over ten countries, with a reach-the-checkpoints arcade mode or an endurance championship (which I had to switch off after a gruelling 40 minutes, heading into Sweden in second place, since such intense concentration had clearly snapped my neck). Brilliantly, optional signs warn you of upcoming turns and hazards, and you sometimes crash so spectacularly that you land on your wheels again and carry on as if little had happened. The clincher with *V-Rally* is that I really felt looked after. My successes were earned; my errors were plainly my fault. Yes. Improbably, I like this lots. ★★★★★



### Gex

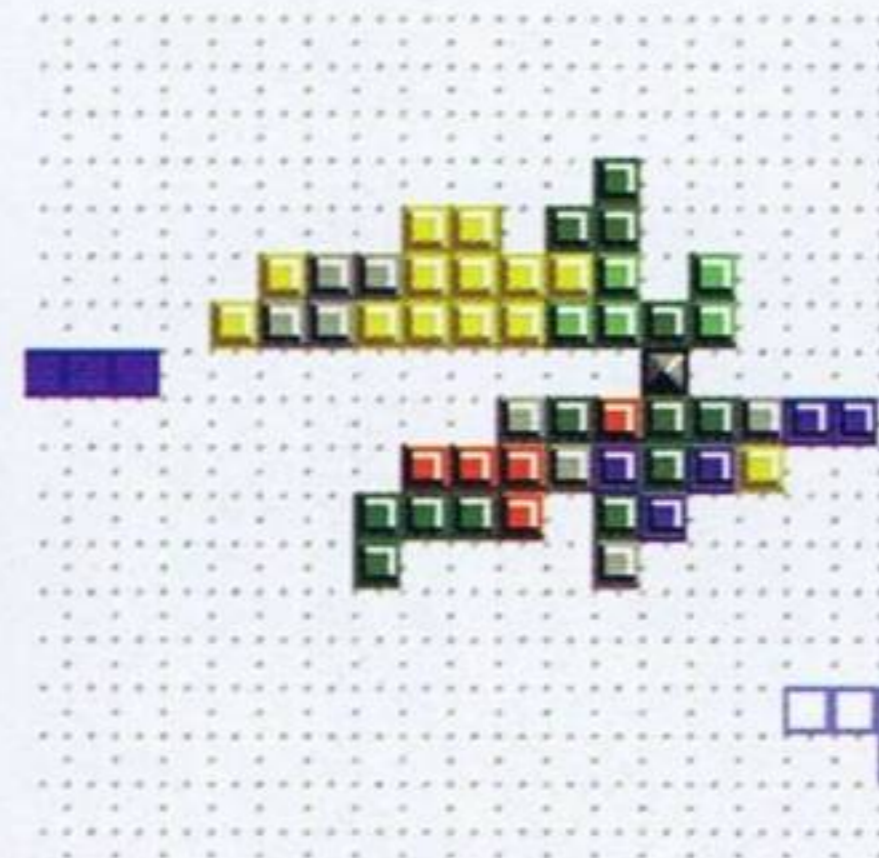
■ Publisher: **Interplay**  
 ■ Developer: **Crystal Dynamics** ■ Release date: **out now** ■ Price: **£24.99** ■ Players: **1** ■ Extras: **GB-compatible**

**Curiously, not called Gex 2D.**

■ Stripped-down Game Boy conversions almost never work. Look at the *Mortal Kombat* series, for example, or the totally incomprehensible *GB Donkey Kong Land*. Joining this illustrious company of rubbish is *Gex*, a game that started life on the PlayStation as a "Mario 64 beater" (which it wasn't) before, er, moving to the N64.

*Game Boy Gex* is a side-on platform game without a single original idea, from its tired, oh-so-very-tired Each Level Parodies A Film story, to the way you teeter comically on the edge of a cliff. But, hey, it's possible for a game to be thoroughly enjoyable without advancing the genre a jot, as *Warioland* (over on the left there) kind of proves.

*Gex* is huge with 20 sprawling levels, three missions per level and more bits unlocked as you go. It's just a shame it's so full of errors. Take the auto-run, for example. Walk uninterrupted for a couple of steps and the game decides you want to run. Fine, unless you don't. Or the way everything resets when you die, even if you've uncovered a restart point. Or the harrowing password system. Or the leaps of faith. And. So. On. Except impossibly, I suddenly found myself finishing missions and enjoying *Gex*. It does try so hard, you know. Perhaps this is an event horizon sort of thing. Whatever, it had better scamper away before I realise what I've done. ★★



### Klustar

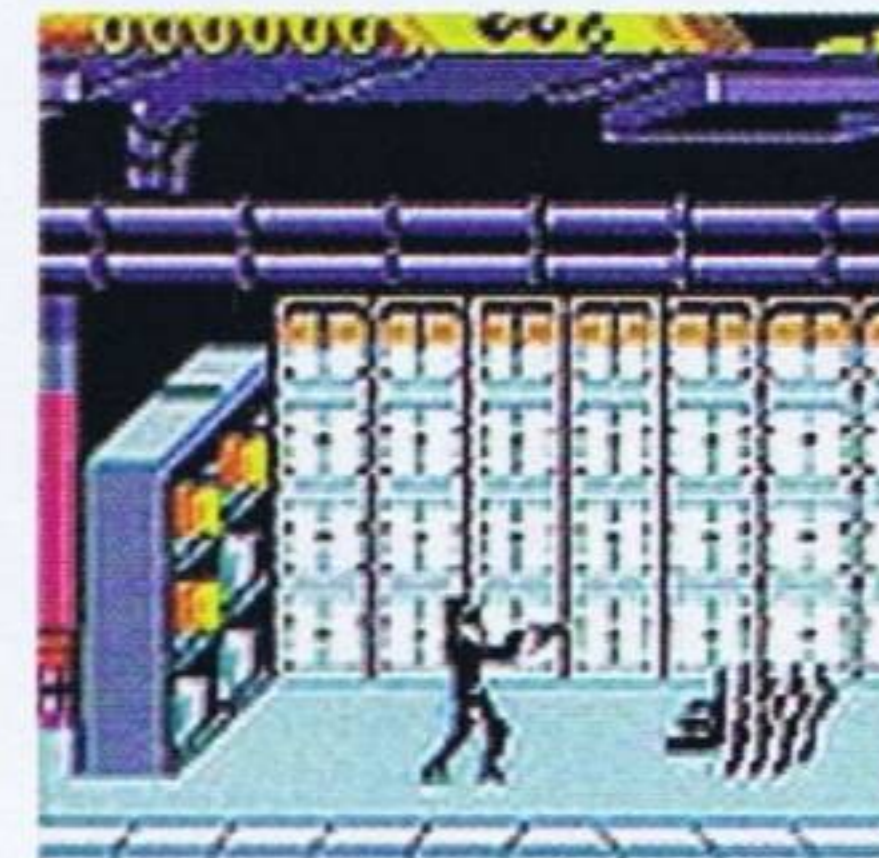
■ Publisher: **Infogrames**  
 ■ Developer: **Rebellion**  
 ■ Release date: **out now**  
 ■ Price: **£24.99** ■ Players: **1**  
 ■ Extras: **GB-compatible, link-up cable**

**Another misguided attempt to improve upon Game Boy Tetris.**

■ *Klustar* (bleugh) is *Tetris* (even to identical game options, begad), except you zoom around the screen attaching pieces to yourself as they fall inwards. Instead of lines, you're trying to make three-by-three squares, which then (traditionally) vanish and permit the structure to collapse further, possibly setting off chain reactions. If you miss a piece, it sticks to the opposite side of the field, impeding your movement. You can rotate your structure, but only if by doing so it remains fully visible on screen. There are knobby pieces to fill awkward gaps. The music is piercing and terrible.

Frankly, the whole idea of *Klustar* is flawed. Unforgivably, you're often left feeling that you're not in control. As you're shifting a large, increasingly ragged object instead of a single piece, it's ridiculously easy to become jammed or immovable. You can only grab pieces coming toward you, so if one passes, you have to watch helplessly, without a speed-up button, as it inches onwards. There's no capacity for the instinctive building of *Tetris* or *Super Puyo Puyo*: instead you're floundering in needless confusion.

Passably novel then, but messy and imperfectly developed, with unhelpful pastel colours. Also, no next-piece indicator? Idiots. ★★



### Men in Black

■ Publisher: **Interplay**  
 ■ Developer: **Tiertex** ■ Release date: **out now** ■ Price: **£24.99**  
 ■ Players: **1** ■ Extras: **GB-compatible**

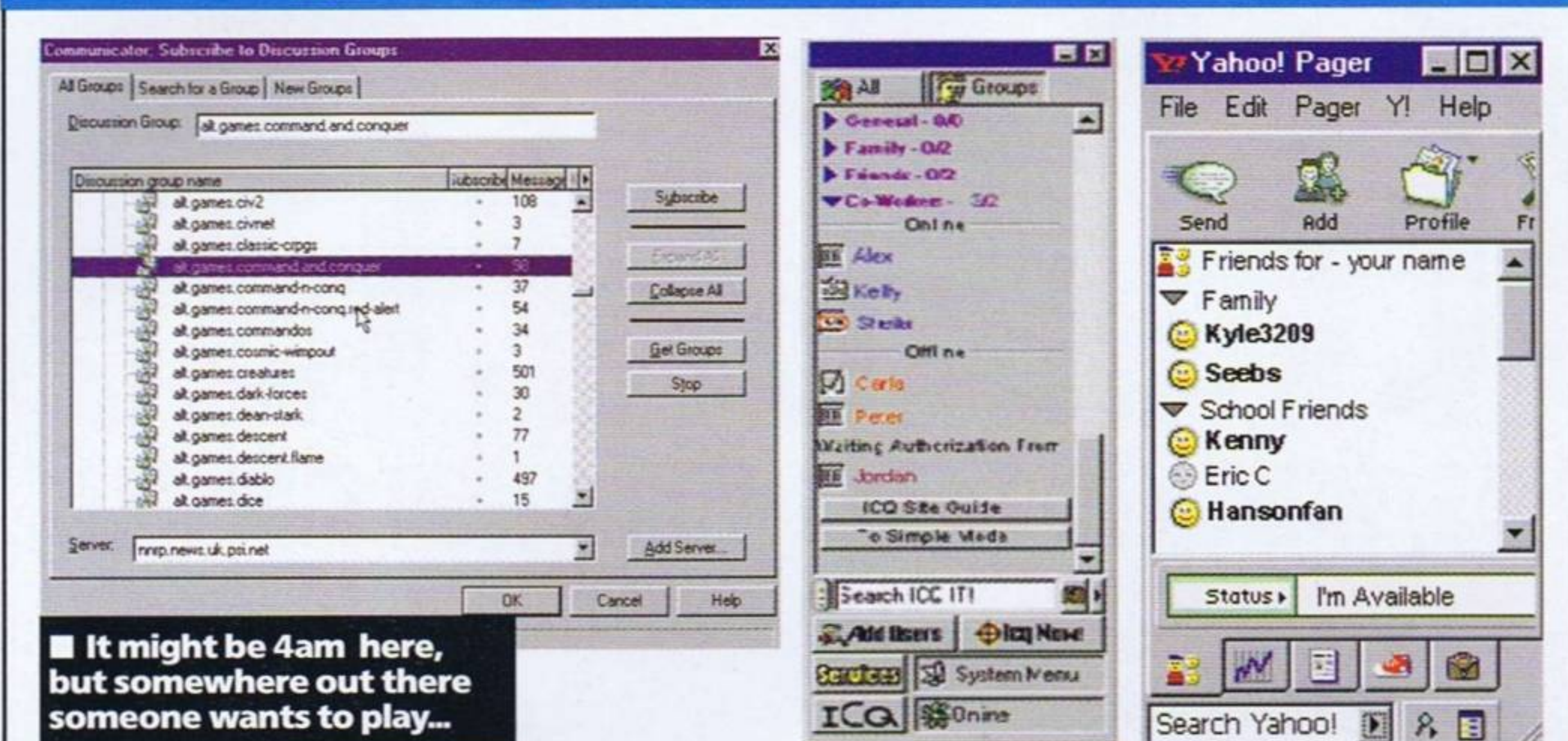
**The game of the cartoon of the film of the comic... that nobody bought.**

■ In *Men in Black*, you walk from left to right, shooting things and jumping over obstacles. Astonishing the senses with its corrosive horribleness, *MIB* is all you never wanted to see again. It's a 'Nam flashback of a game.

Playing *MIB*, you notice several things. Every monster's attack brings it into line with your gun. There are deadly holes in the floor, some hidden. Monsters seldom attack in obstacle-heavy areas, so at those points the game consists of clambering over boxes. Set-piece incidents of *MIB* include: multiple-hit monsters that appear too close to kill without taking damage; a big hole that a monster flies out of blockingly as you're in mid-jump; a series of final level monsters that you must pass with the run command, almost impossible to pull off consistently and not in the manual (double-tap right, if you're interested); and being knocked down by an invincible monster, which then completes its pattern circuit to hit you again – just as you recover, still helpless.

On Normal skill, I reached level six out of six on my second go by holding down the fire button, while half-watching a repeat of *Dexter's Laboratory*. I'd coolly and rationally rate *MIB* absolute zero. Tragically, I am compelled by *Arcade*'s scoring system to award it one star. Let the programmers face God's justice. ★

## On-line gaming



■ It might be 4am here, but somewhere out there someone wants to play...

# TRY SOMETHING ELSE!

Face it, you're a very boring individual. You just use the Internet for accessing the World Wide Web, right? "Ooh, look at all those pictures!" you gush. It's time you expanded your horizons...

You can't help but love the Web. It's bright and shiny, it's filled with pretty pictures and every now and then some of those pages load reasonably quickly. What started as a mere accompaniment, a gaudily costumed sidekick to the Internet a few short years ago, has now become the Internet itself in the eyes of most people.

But there's more to the Net than Web sites, believe it or not. Of course, if you simply refuse to look at anything on the Net that isn't accompanied by pretty pictures, turn away now.

Right, have the unbelievers gone?

Marvellous; let's start with Usenet. Predating the Web by around 15 years, Usenet is a massive discussion group arranged into something in the region of 30,000 hierarchical newsgroups. Check the small print on your e-mail client and you should be able to connect to Usenet through that. Then pick the subject of your choice (most clients will search for keywords and find the right groups for you) and join in the fun. You might want to check out uk.games.computer.quake2 or maybe alt.games.warcraft, or... Hell, there's thousands of them, just help yourself.

Ah, but what do you do if it's two o'clock in the morning, you fancy a *Half-Life* deathmatch, but you don't want to go to any trouble to set it up? Hunt through hundreds of servers? Nah. Be cunning – you could find some like-minded opponents instantly, either by heading to Internet Relay Chat (IRC) or with one of the many instant pager services available.

IRC's an easy one; go to <http://www.mirc.co.uk/> and download *MIRC*, one of the best IRC clients available. Turn it on, pick a server, pick a channel and find some friends (or just dip into some bizarre conversation). Alternatively you could go the pager route; our favourite is ICQ (<http://www.icq.com/>), but you can also try out Yahoo! Pager (<http://pager.yahoo.com/pager/>) or Netscape Instant Messenger (<http://www.newaol.com/aim/netscape/adb00.html>). All of them enable real-time (or close enough) chat with anyone similarly connected, and you can quickly build up a list of contacts anywhere in the world. One of them's bound to want a game.

Now all you need to do is stay awake.

## The Web Ring | Moving in circles

■ All aboard for a spin on the good ship "Internet Meanderings".

**Spew**  
<http://spew.hulka.com/>

■ Could it be? A Net-based radio show about games that doesn't have its head wedged firmly between its buttocks? You decide; we're too busy heading for...

**Ten Four**  
<http://tenfour.gagames.com/index2.html>

■ Let Ten-Four be your guide to the best available for *Quake II*, *Half-Life* and *SiN*. Then get on down to...

**GameSpyder**  
<http://www.gamespyder.com/>

■ A fabulous off-ramp to hundreds of Quake-related sites. Then follow a link to...



**Yello There!**  
<http://www.marlinproducts.com/yello/index.htm>

■ We love Blue's News (don't worry, we'll get there later on). But we also enjoy this comical tribute to his site. Still, no time to waste, off again to...

**Katalystic.com**  
<http://www.katalystic.com/>

■ Huge hosting networks such as PlanetQuake – good or bad? Who cares if the content is okay, say we. Let's see what Katalystic has to offer. Hmm... This'll do...

**Blue's News**  
<http://www.bluesnews.com/>

■ You see? We really do love Blue's News. Enough to plug his page for the umpteenth time, and it does take us back to...

**VoodooExtreme**  
<http://ve3d.net/>

■ Got a 3D card? Want the very latest news relating to it? Hampered by a strange obsession with *Diffrent Strokes* star Gary Coleman? Want to talk about VoodooExtreme. Then head straight off to...

**Redwood's 3D News**  
<http://redwood.stomped.com/>

■ Redwood, bless him, has been around for aeons, and it's starting to show. But we'd feel awful if we didn't stop by his site every now and then, before moving on to...

**Rust**  
<http://www.gamedesign.net/>

■ In an on-line world full of essential advice for budding game designers, this is yet another part of it. Learn how to design levels for 3D games, and then go to...

**Grin Reaper**  
<http://www.katalystic.com/reaper/>

■ Some 15-year-old Canadian kid who makes *Quake II* levels when he should be doing his homework. The little blighter.

## CD-ROM of the month

■ A dance club in your own front room.



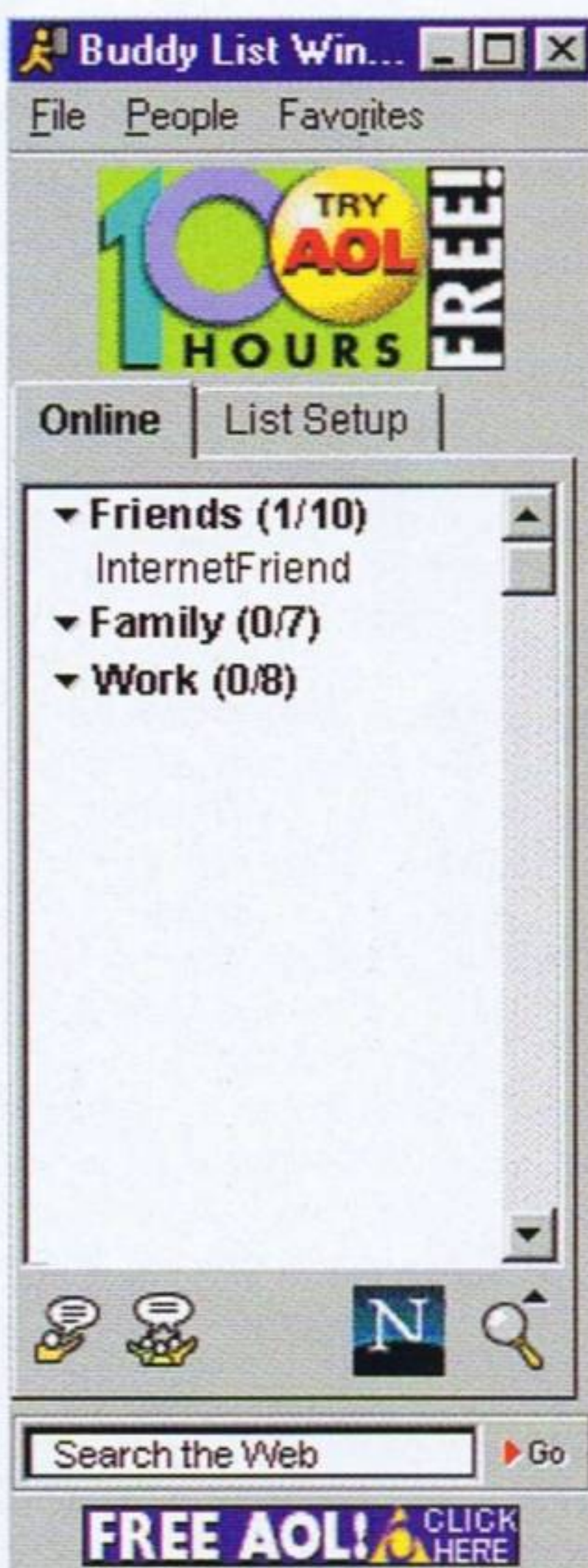
**DNA Dancer**

■ Publisher: **Notting Hill**  
■ Developer: **Notting Hill**  
■ Price: **£19.99**  
■ Release date: **on sale now**  
■ Requires: **P133, 16Mb RAM, Win 95**

■ On the face of it there can be few less likely bed-fellows than genetic engineering and hard-core dance music. But that hasn't stopped Notting Hill pairing them up and creating *Dancer DNA*, one of the most original CDs we've seen for some time. Based on the *Evolution of Life* by Professor Richard Dawkins, the concept may seem daunting, but in practice it's actually simple and very engrossing.

The package comes with 15 artificial life "species" which appear on the screen in colourful 3D. When you add a sonic stimulus – ideally a dance music CD – the creatures react, moving, spinning, zooming and actively evolving to the beat (man), according to their own electronic DNA codes. So far, so fancy screensaver then.

But the really clever science bit comes when you begin to monkey around with those unique DNA strands, modifying each species' sensibilities, via a series of filters. You can even select the species destined to survive in order to create entirely new life-form-based light shows. These evolved critters will even share your musical taste. Create something stunning and you can even upload it to Notting Hill's Web site, from here it could go on to star in clubs worldwide. So forget the new lava lamp, get *Dancer DNA* – it'll be the artificial life and soul of any party. ★★★★★ **Chris James**



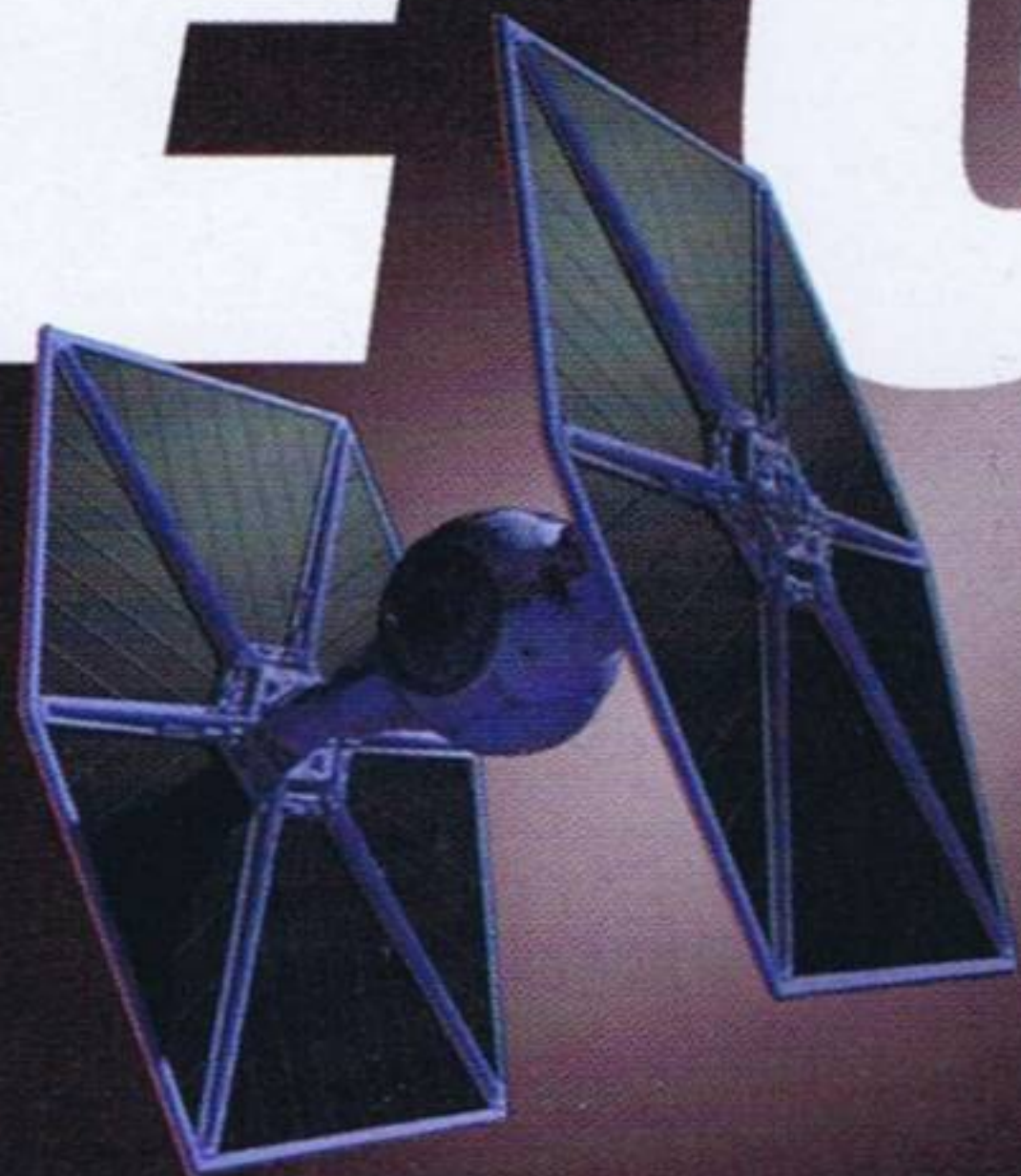
■ Want to chat to someone? Want to play *Quake*? the Web's got it all.

Next month

In June's  
**Arcade**

**NEXT  
MONTH  
IN AN ISSUE  
NOT SO FAR, FAR AWAY...**

**STAR WARS  
EPISODE 1:  
THE GAMES**



Get Arcade 7 on Thursday 6 May. Use Force if necessary.

## Saitek R4 Force Wheel

■ For: **PC** ■ Price: **£169.99**  
 ■ Available from: **Saitek on 01454 855050**

■ This R4 Force Wheel (nothing to do with *Ridge Racer Type 4*, by the way) is so huge that it comes in separate parts which you have to screw together. Many aspects of the wheel are adjustable, so you can find the most comfortable driving position. You'll need to clear a space the size of a small house on your desk, but its bulk is due to its impressive force feedback capabilities, which not only provide you with jolts and rumbles when you ram other vehicles, but make the wheel much easier to control.

The shape of the wheel is a little odd, leaving you slightly confused about where to grip it, but

we're being pedantic now. The major drawback is its price, which may require a second mortgage. Compared to other Force Feedback wheels though, it's not extortionate. Among the free games included on the accompanying CD-ROM are *F1 '97* and *TOCA Touring Cars*. ★★★★★



## Sabotage Ice Joypad

■ For: **PlayStation** ■ Price: **£6.99**  
 ■ Available from: **Wild Things on 01222 755774**

■ It's Ice in the way you can see through it, but Sabotage only because that's what you'd cry out if you found your Sony official controller replaced by this inferior piece of plastic. You'll notice the similarity in design, but this pad just isn't particularly well-made and looks a bit horrible. The buttons are more solid than typical third-party joypads and the D-pad is more comfortable to use than you'd expect, but we're talking damage limitation here. A reasonable buy if you're short of cash and ideas (it is incredibly cheap), but the Sabotage Ice will be left behind in the modern world of Dual Shock. ★★



## Blackhawk Digital Stick

■ For: **PC** ■ Price: **£29.99**  
 ■ Available from: **Gravis on 01296 397444**

■ A basic joystick for the PC gaming beginner. The stick itself is fairly loose and flimsy, but just solid enough to direct your man/plane/car with the required precision. The buttons are not placed in ideal positions, particularly the hat switch, which you ideally always want to find directly under your thumb. There is also only one left-hand button, meaning that for more complex games or flight sims, you're still going to have to rely on your keyboard to pick up on some functions. Marks are also lost for the rubbish throttle wheel and the piece of curly telephone cord which screams "80s throwback!" ★★



## Race 32/64 Compact

■ For: **PlayStation, N64** ■ Price: **£29.99**  
 ■ Available from: **Guillemot on 0181 914 1940**

■ This is an attempt at producing a smaller, cheaper console racing wheel but the quality just isn't there. Surely the steering shaft shouldn't rock from side to side? If you made a real car that did that you'd be locked in an asylum immediately, for the safety of the general public. Regarding the basics, the buttons are well placed for both PlayStation and N64 play and the wheel drives okay, if a little vague towards the margins of its rotation. Another problem concerns the angle at which you must attach it to your desk, making driving and watching almost exclusive pursuits. The maker suggests cradling it between your knees, but this makes playing your average racing game about as comfortable as giving birth. ★★



## Wingman Force Joystick

■ For: PC ■ Price: £99.00  
■ Available from: Logitech on 01306 734300

■ This mammoth joystick is the size of a games console in itself. Housed within its impressive bulk is the Force Feedback technology which looks set to make all those puny springback joysticks a thing of the past. Just like the current crop of steering wheels that push against the force of your movements, this stick meets every reaction with an equal and opposite reaction. Force Feedback actually makes the joystick easier to control and hopefully more PC developers are going to be making the technology an integral part of their software. It's a classy product, with enough assignable buttons to render your keyboard unnecessary. If you're not already convinced, a few free games – including *Descent: Freespace*, *Redline Racer* and *WarBirds* – are included. Even if it means having to build a new desk to accommodate it, the Wingman Force is a fine purchase. ★★★★★



## Premier Pad

■ For: PC ■ Price: £9.99  
■ Available from: Wild Things on 01222 755774

■ Shaping a PC controller like a PlayStation joypad is a simple but ingenious idea, attracting all those PlayStation gamers who have just got into playing on their PC but need a familiar crutch. Unfortunately, this joypad is so badly made that the clever concept is immediately nullified by shoddy workmanship. The function buttons are loose and the D-pad is stickier than a bath of treacle. Meanwhile, committed PC gamers may not be convinced by the atypical button layout, meaning that the only possible purchasers of this pad are likely to be people who are interested in looking at circuit boards. ★



## Dual Force Racing Wheel

■ For: PlayStation ■ Price: £59.99  
■ Available from: Mad Catz on 01992 707407

■ Despite early misgivings about this wheel (largely because of its pedals, which are creakier than the staircase in the world's most haunted house), it actually gives a good race. This is one of the few console wheels we've driven where you can keep control of a spinning car with careful handling, and it works just as well with arcade racers and more complex driving games. That said, the Dual Force feature is fairly pointless and, annoyingly, the wheel itself is actually too thin to hold comfortably. A mock-leather wheel cover is provided, but this is only handy if you have a spare week to tie it on properly.

So it's a good wheel, but marred by a series of minor niggles which will probably irritate endorser Mario Andretti as much as discovering his head has been Photoshopped on to a hideous Team Mad Catz racing suit on the packaging. ★★



## Cyborg 3D Pad

■ For: PC ■ Price: £39.99  
■ Available from: Saitek on 01454 855050

■ This is probably the first joypad in the world to look like an owl if you squint at it from the right angle and, for breaking away from the traditional styling, we applaud it.

But why Saitek then shoots itself in the foot with the Cyborg's button placement is a mystery. You have the choice of controlling the direction with a D-pad or an N64-style analogue stick, but, bafflingly, one is under where you'd naturally put your left thumb and the other under where you'd put your right. On no occasion would you require both control methods, so why not put both function buttons under the left thumb? Naturally, there are function buttons in other locations all over the pad, but despite claims of default settings, this is a configuration nightmare. Basically, it's an ambitious design that collapses under the weight of its own complexity. Comes with a CD of free games including *Heart Of Darkness*, *Jazz Jackrabbit 2* and *F1 '97*. ★★



## Film of the month

# STAND AND DELIVER!

## HORSEDRAWN COACH-SPOTTING FOR THE MTV GENERATION?

### Plunkett & Macleane

■ Director: **Jake Scott** ■ Starring: **Robert Carlyle, Jonny Lee Miller, Liv Tyler**  
 ■ Release date: **on release now**

**Set deep in the middle of the 18th Century, Jake (son of Ridley) Scott's explosive action piece tells of two notorious highwaymen and their quest for love and riches.**

**O**dorous peasant Will Plunkett (Carlyle) hates toffs and aristos with a vengeance and, to fund a one-way trip to the classless American frontier, turns to a spot of freelance highway robbery, shouting "Stand and deliver!" at randomly-picked coaches.

The twist is simple but extraordinarily effective – in order to discover when the rich are travelling, Plunkett

reluctantly hooks up with renegade slicker James Macleane (Miller). The characters are an unlikely pairing, but with the two men thrown together by a quirk of fate, they fast realise that their mix of brains and charm will serve them well for their campaign against the wealthy aristocracy.

Unfortunately, their work is not made easy by the unrelenting pursuance of nasty Thief Taker General, Chance (Ken Stott) whose single mission in life is to see the elusive pair hanging from the gallows. Love interest rides into the picture on a horse in the shape of the lovely Liv Tyler, of *Armageddon* fame.

A period spin on the traditional buddy movie, *Plunkett & Macleane* is a cocky Brit-pic that certainly fires on all cylinders. Like some sort of 18th Century MTV video, the set pieces are lavish and spectacularly shot, even if it appears that the script and historical detail are lacking in substance. The resulting movie is nothing more, or indeed less, than a good looking mess with likeable performances, instant action satisfaction and plenty of fun. Think *Zorro* but with a hint of the *Blackadder* humour. ★★★★★

■ Hit the road: period highwaymen Robert Carlyle and Jonny Lee Miller leg it in *Plunkett & Macleane*.



■ Sci-Fi horror in *The Faculty*.

### The Faculty

■ Director: **Robert Rodriguez**  
 ■ Starring: **Elijah Wood, Josh Hartnett, Jordana Brewster, Laura Harris**  
 ■ Release date: **out now**

■ Having passed on directorial duties for *The Mask of Zorro*, Rodriguez turns in the first installment of his five-picture deal with Miramax – a cracking Sci-Fi/horror romp that plays like a hybrid of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *The Breakfast Club*.

The students of Herrington High more than fulfil the *de rigueur* eclectic mix of social outcasts and troubled teens, stuck, as they are, at that awkward time of life when anyone above the age of 20 seems like an alien. It's a strange discovery, then, when they learn that their teachers are genuine extraterrestrials hell-bent on dominating the planet. This knowledge in hand, our unlikely band put their homework on the backburner and set out to foil the other-worldly ones' schemes.

The emphasis here is on fun and the script from Kevin Williamson (*Scream 1 and 2*) is peppered with pop culture references and cheesy lines. The effects are good, the action well paced and it's all carried along playfully with a string of cameos from the likes of Bebe Neuwirth, Robert Patrick, Famke Janssen, Piper Laurie, Salma Hayek, and not to mention *Ain't It Cool News* Web master (and chief Hollywood spoiler), Harry Knowles. ★★★

### In Dreams

■ Director: **Neil Jordan**  
 ■ Starring: **Annette Bening, Aidan Quinn, Stephen Rea, Robert Downey Jr, Paul Guilfoyle, Katie Sagona, Dennis Boutsikaris**  
 ■ Release date: **16 April**

■ *The Butcher Boy* director Neil Jordan tries his hand at psychological horror in this jumble of themes, ideas and classy visuals. But rather than a *Scream*-like yarn of blood-soaked teens, this 95-minute oddity tells the tall tale of a shrieking housewife and gushing apple juice.

Annette Bening plays

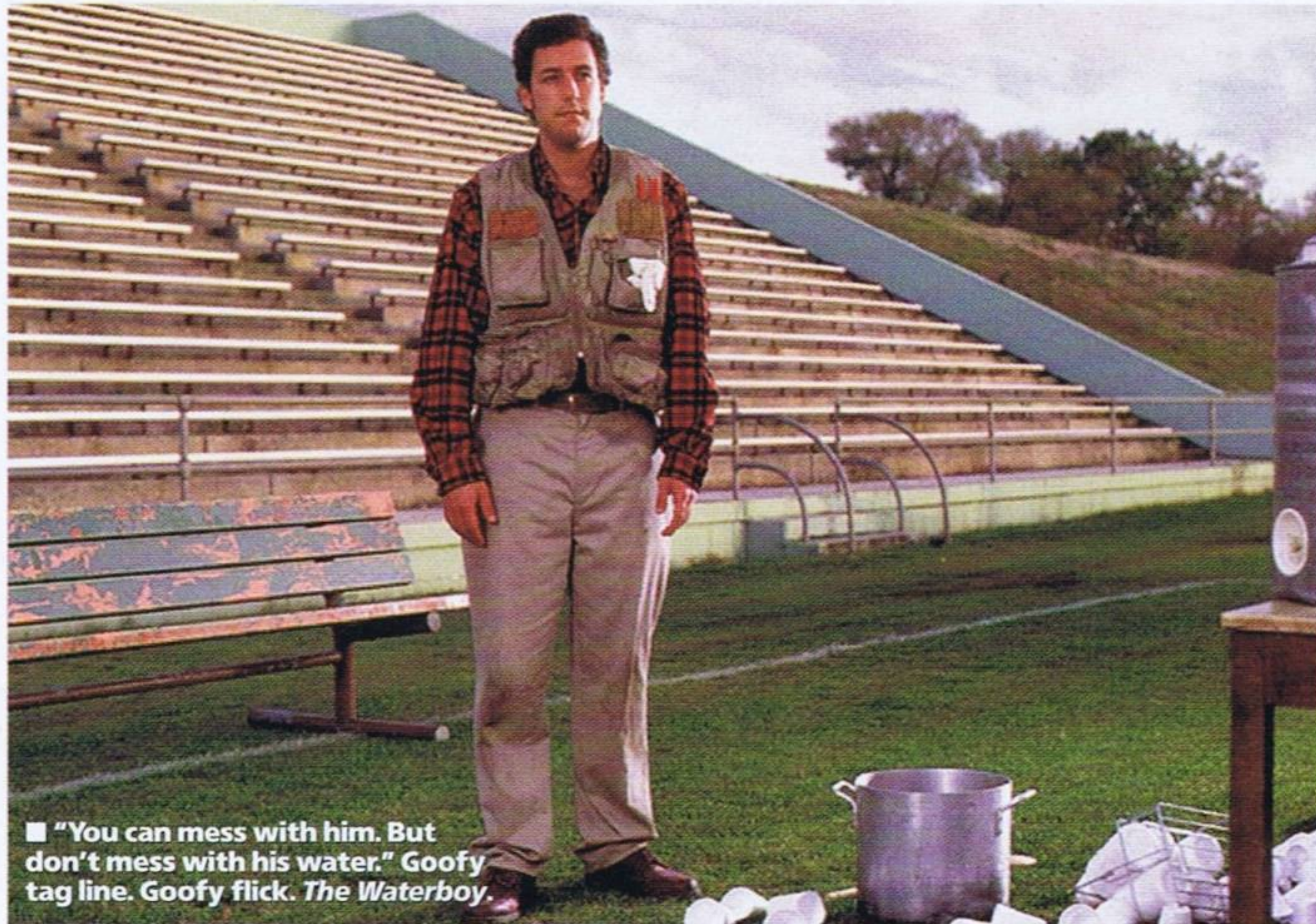
Massachusetts mum Claire, a woman plagued by disturbing recurring dreams that she can't understand. Thinking that her latest dream – of a kidnapped girl being led through an apple orchard – links her to the mind of a child serial-killer, she trips over the psychological edge when it later transpires that the little girl was her own daughter, Rebecca.

A sunken town, her husband's (Aiden Quinn) adulterous affair, and a childhood nursery rhyme combine to lead Claire to a dramatic face-off with Robert Downey Jr's deranged dream-weaver. However, while there are some fresh ideas and a memorable visual approach, *In Dreams* is an unsteady, unsatisfying hotch-potch of borrowed *Silence Of The Lambs*, *Psycho* and *Nightmare On Elm Street* props. ★★

## 8MM

■ Director: **Joel Schumacher**  
 ■ Starring: **Nicolas Cage, Joaquin Phoenix, James Gandolfini, Peter Stormare, Anthony Heald, Christopher Bauer**  
 ■ Release date: **23 April**

■ *Crash* and *Bat-flop* director Joel Schumacher invites you to take a grim, unhappy tour through the world of



■ "You can mess with him. But don't mess with his water." Goofy tag line. Goofy flick. *The Waterboy*.

pornography in the noirist thriller, *8mm*. It's an intriguing plot – a widow hires small-town private detective Tom Welles (Cage) to investigate a reel of film found in her late husband's effects. Is it a "snuff" movie, showing the brutal death of a young girl? Or is it just a good fake?

Hiring porn-store worker Max (Joaquin

Phoenix), Welles follows the blurry clues into the sex-for-sale, flesh-pressing porn industry and, as a result, drifts further away from his ordinary life with his wife (Catherine Keener) and family.

Half traditional detective snoop, half revenge flick, *8mm* is relentless in showing Cage's slide into immoral lunacy. But if *8mm* is supposed to be a "dark" movie then it has to contend with other recent powerhouses of that genre, such as David Fincher's sinister *Seven*. Not a chance, don't believe the hype, *8mm*'s not even in the same league. ★★

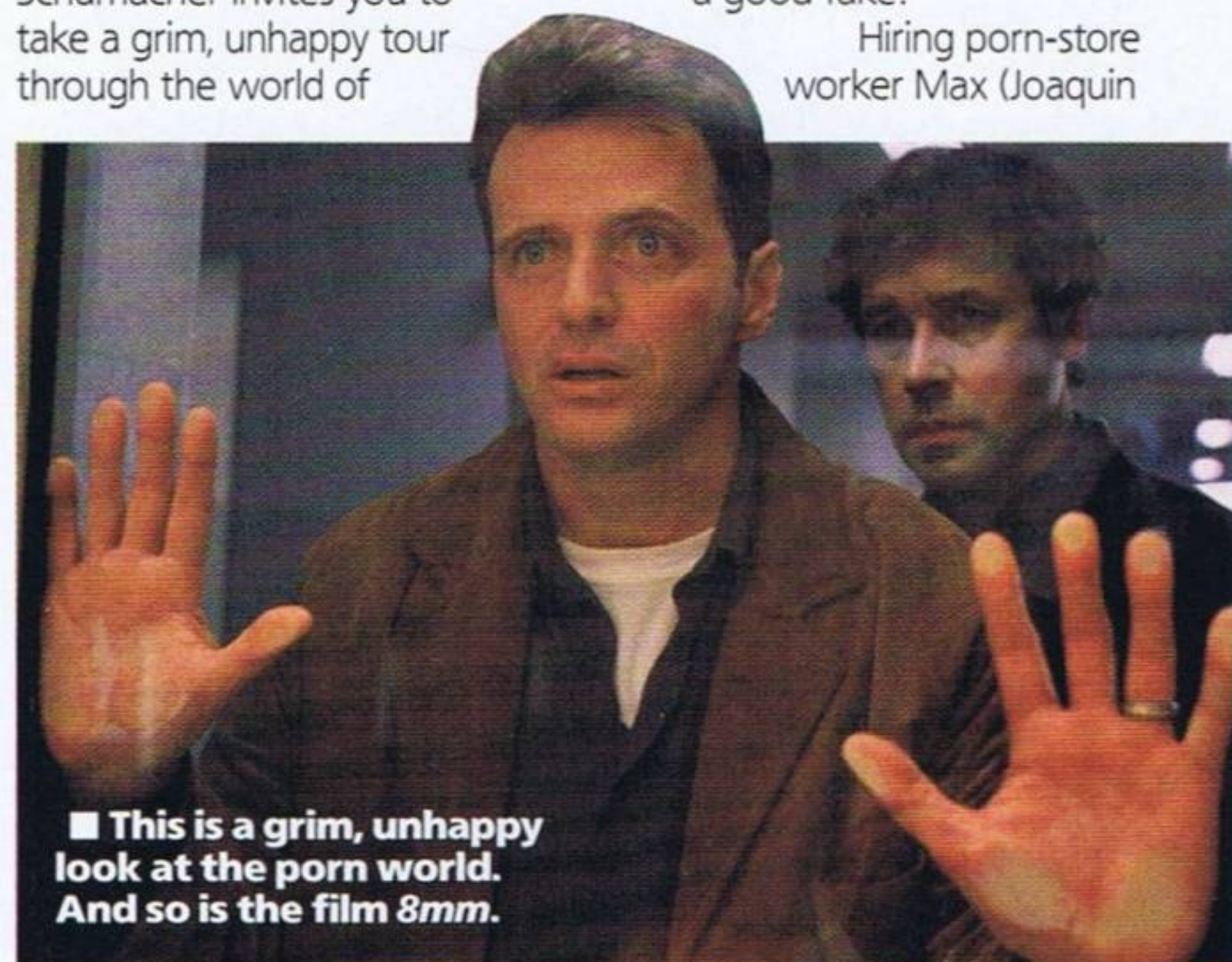
## The Waterboy

■ Director: **Frank Coraci**  
 ■ Starring: **Adam Sandler, Kathy Bates, Henry Winkler, Fairuza Balk, Jerry Reed**  
 ■ Release date: **30 April**

■ "You can mess with him. But don't mess with his water", reads the tag line for this, another

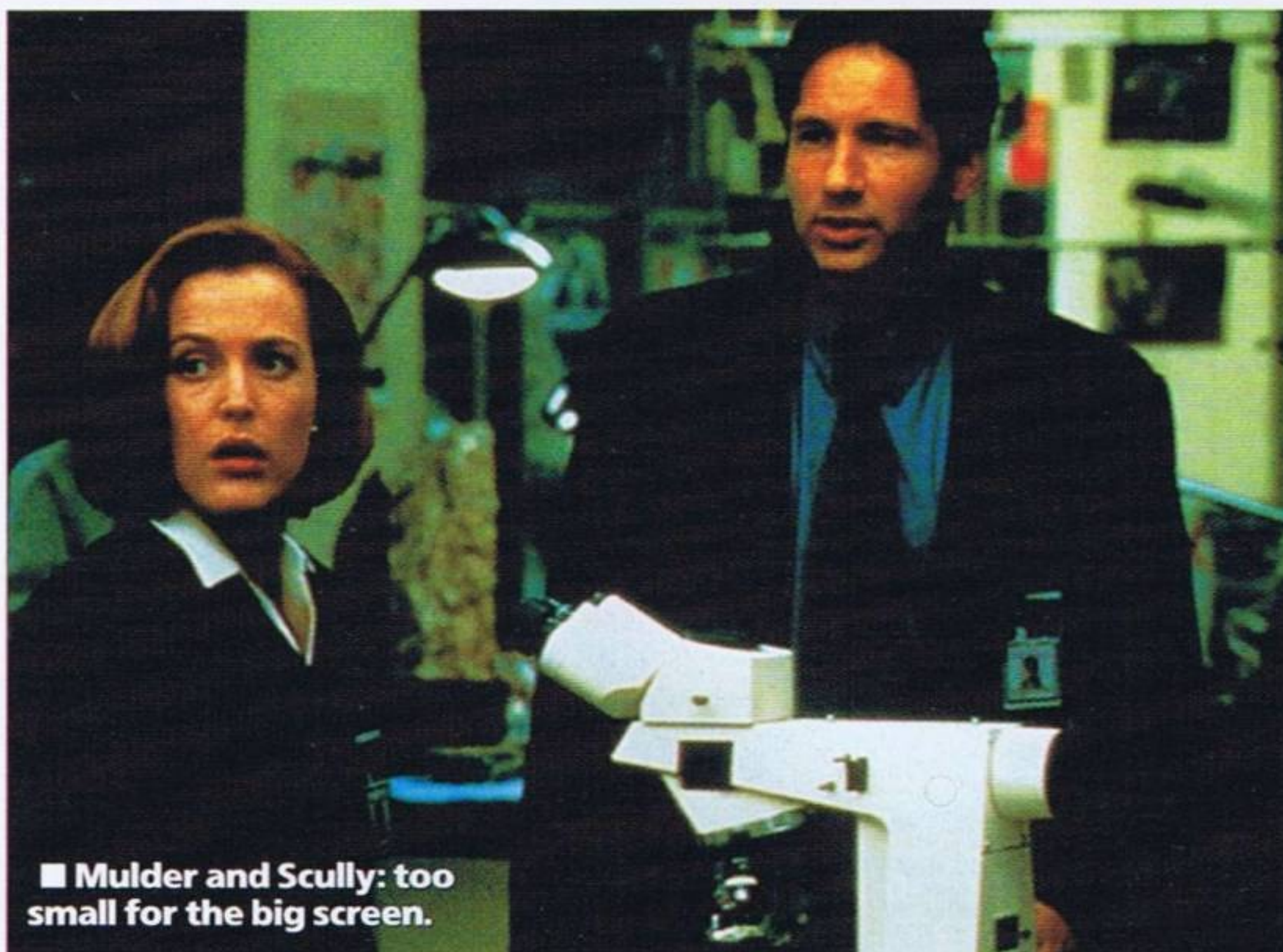
oddball Adam Sandler comedy that's hoping to ride the crest of *The Wedding Singer*'s success wave. This time, Sandler plays 31 year-old nobody Bobby Boucher, who works as a "Waterboy", handing out drinks to needy gridiron players. Tormented and ridiculed by the squad he works for, Boucher gets sacked and goes to work for another team. There he accidentally discovers that he has a natural tackling ability and, by keeping his talent secret from his over-protective mum (Kathy Bates), pursues a dream career in American football.

Having earned over \$39 million in its opening weekend in the US, *The Waterboy* tells a simple *Dumb And Dumber* tale of the geek-makes-it-good; an hour-and-a-half of brain-bypassing slapstick and exaggerated gagery that manages to do for the world of American football what Sandler's earlier comedy *Happy Gilmore* did for the golfing world. Inoffensive, goofy pap. ★★★



■ This is a grim, unhappy look at the porn world. And so is the film *8mm*.

## Videos to buy



■ Mulder and Scully: too small for the big screen.

### The X-Files Movie

■ **20th Century Fox**  
 ■ If there's any point in making a movie of a TV series, it's to make the effects grander, the aliens scarier and the underlying conspiracies global, if not universal. Enter the Smoking Man and friends, who, it is discovered, have entered into a malicious pact with a bunch of 70,000-year-old extraterrestrials who are, of course, plotting to destroy all humankind by unleashing a deadly virus. It's nonsense, obviously, and the plot is full of holes so big that a planet could pass right through without even touching the sides. Meanwhile, Mulder and Scully prove themselves to be the flattest characters in film history. Only *X-Files* junkies need dig into their pockets for this one. Novelty value only. ★

### Kiss The Girls

■ **CIC**  
 ■ Even if you're not bored by films about a "twisted genius" serial killer with an evil plan and a silly tag-name, *Kiss The Girls* will wear you down. In this case, the Casanova killer seduces attractive ladies, then tortures and kills them. Inevitably, the detective/part-time psychologist tracking him down finds his niece to be next on the list of victims. Morgan Freeman should have known better, having already taken this concept to the peak of its scope in the brilliant *Seven*. *Kiss The Girls* is full of great touches and is beautifully filmed, but even its unremittingly bleak style is lifted directly from *Seven*, making for a film far too in thrall to its superiors for comfort. ★★★

## Videos to rent

### Buffalo 66

■ **Columbia Tristar**  
 ■ Billy needs a slash. For the first 15 minutes of the film, he searches in vain for a public toilet or suitably concealed alleyway and the tension is more palpable than in any thriller. Even after Billy's done his business the claustrophobia doesn't lift, largely because Vincent Gallo is the narcissistic director and also the star, so there's little room for anything else in the film than Billy's tortured manchild personality, even when Christina Ricci plays his equally disturbed kidnapee turned lover. In fact, *Buffalo 66* is a strange and wonderful little film, full of inventive camera tricks and touching scenes, even if Gallo's presence is overpowering. ★★

### Zero Effect

■ **Columbia Tristar**  
 ■ Daryl Zero (Bill Pullman) is rude, slobbish, addicted to amphetamines, despises human contact, is probably insane and writes appalling music; he's also the world's greatest private investigator. The film's premise is scarcely more believable than the jarring love scene in the third quarter but there's plenty of subtle comedy to keep you interested. Ben Stiller is superb as Zero's put-upon assistant and the ingenuity of the unravelling mystery is such it would take Colombo ten episodes to solve. Silly but clever. ★★★

### Halloween H20

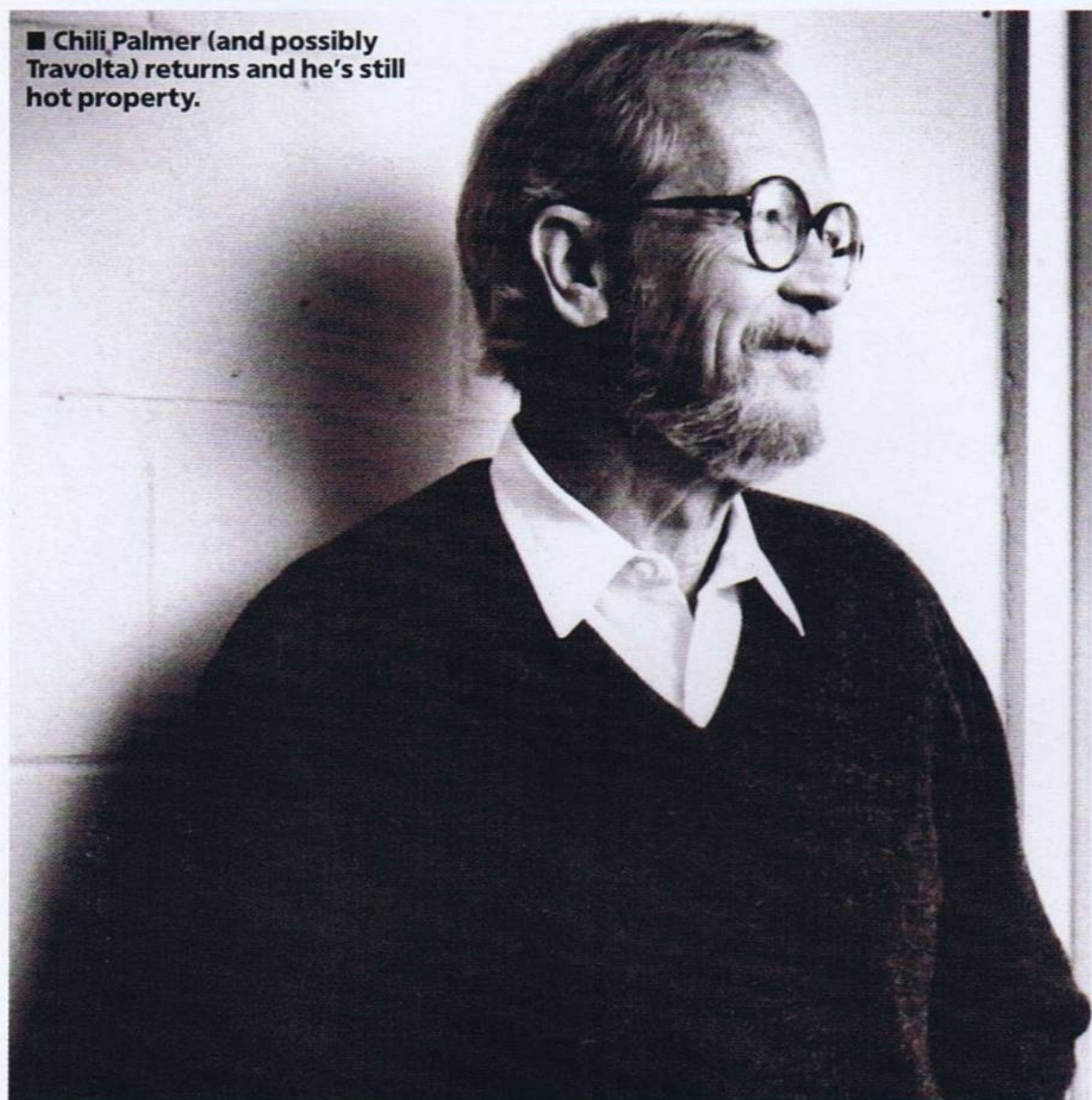
■ **Buena Vista**  
 ■ Poor old Laurie Strode. Twenty years on and she still can't shake the notion that there's someone out there sharpening a big knife with her name on it. She's right, of course, and so begins a belated sequel, respectful to the Carpenter original but striving to create its own modern identity by casting an impressive LL Cool J and the girl out of *Dawson's Creek*. The tension, the screaming females and the memorable *Halloween* theme all arrive on cue, but while *H20* is full of cheap, concise horror thrills, it's not a desperately memorable encounter. ★★★



■ Men in masks and screaming women: *H20*.

## Book of the month

■ Chili Palmer (and possibly Travolta) returns and he's still hot property.



# GET SHORTER

## LEONARD'S HIP HOLLYWOOD SEQUEL



### Be Cool

■ Author: **Elmore Leonard**  
 ■ Publisher: **Viking**  
 ■ Price: **£16.99**  
 ■ ISBN: **0-670-88494-4**

**H**is creased paperbacks have been lodged in the pockets of devoted fans for a decade or two, but now Elmore Leonard has suddenly gone all Tinsel Town on us. *Out of Sight* starring George Clooney was a recent hit, while Quentin Tarantino – who directed *Jackie Brown*, a film based on *Rum Punch* – also plans to bring three more Leonard novels to a flea-pit near you. Those sassy Coen Brothers have recently bought the film rights to the great man's *Cuba Libre* and then there's *Get Shorty*, the most successful of all the Leonard adaptations to hit the greyish-white screen.

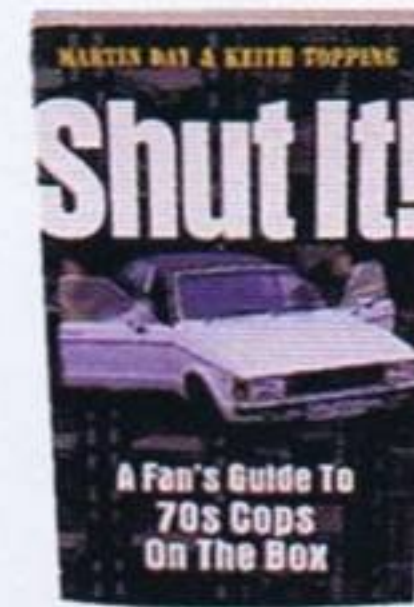
*Be Cool* is the sequel to *Get Shorty*, and Leonard has duly obliged by reprising the role of Chili Palmer, the mob debt collector turned Hollywood producer. After a series of straight-to-rental flops Chili is no longer studio hot, and turns his strong-arm

expertise towards the music business. This may all sound a bit predictable, but with a twisty-turny narrative and the normal cast of greed-driven ne'er-do-wells – including a Spice Girl copyist, Russian gangsters, soft-boiled cops and a gigantic, gay Samoan bodyguard – *Be Cool* is a real treat in its own right. The dialogue, always a Leonard speciality, is as sharp as vinegar poured on a paper cut, proving to doubters this is not merely a cynical cash-cow of a sequel.

Rest assured, *Be Cool* has all the ingredients that enthusiasts dared to expect from the established novelist's cultured pen. Leonard has somehow succeeded in adding yet another chunk of imaginative crime fiction to his marvellous body of work. By the way, John Travolta is already rumoured to have signed along the dotted to step into Chili Palmer's Hush Puppies for the inevitable sequel. ★★★★★ **Gary Tipp**

### Shut It! – '70s Cops on the Box

■ Authors: **Martin Day and Keith Topping**  
 ■ Publisher: **Virgin**  
 ■ Price: **£6.99**  
 ■ ISBN: **0-7535-0355-7**



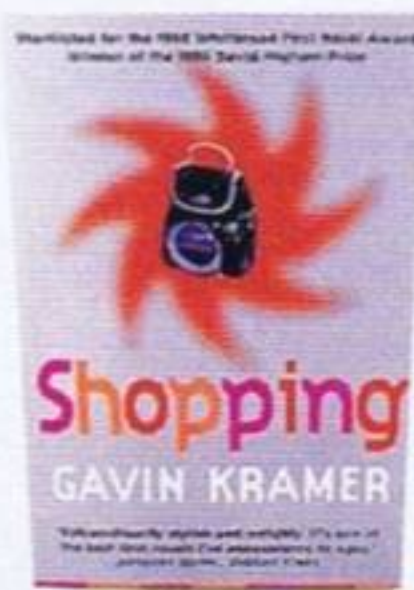
■ Bellowing the immortal line "Get your trousers on, you're nicked," John Thaw as Regan in *The Sweeney* changed the face of TV cops forever. That was back in '75 and his legacy lives on. Like all the best fan books, *Shut It!* is cheaply produced, researched with meticulous vigour and utterly hilarious. Tackling all the series of *The Sweeney* and *The Professionals*, episode by episode, the authors direct you towards lines of nonsense Cockneyisms, horrendous '70s threads and choice snatches of jazz funk accompanying the Capri-friendly car chases.

The authors laugh both with the programmes and at them. Often, the scripts were fantastic, but the combination of flares and corduroy jackets (with patches) risible. The stories of each episode are actually enhanced by these insights. Read *Shut It!* and you'll want to rent the vids immediately. ★★★★★

**Sam Richards**

### Shopping

■ Authors: **Gavin Kramer**  
 ■ Publisher: **Fourth Estate**  
 ■ Price: **£9.99**  
 ■ ISBN: **1-85702-807-4**



■ Japan is the subject of more gullible and misguided musings than perhaps any other place in the world, and at its hub is

Tokyo, a neon, noisy postmodern conurbation. Surfing an indoor wave to the house of a 16-year-old streetwise schoolgirl who funds her desire for the latest designer labels by selling her plastic-wrapped soiled underwear to wealthy Japanese business men, the two central characters of Gavin Kramer's debut novel, *Shopping*, are disoriented.

Paying the price for failing to make the cultural adjustment are an ill-matched pair of English lawyers (Meadowlark and an unnamed narrator), and the novel plots their free-fall from grace through the shops, bars, clubs, pleasure districts and fast-food joints of the capital city.

*Shopping* is a darkly humorous, culturally shocking and sinisterly satisfying first novel that explores the human condition with not a small amount of the Graham Greene about it. Kimono have a go if you think you're hard enough. ★★★★★ **Gary Tipp**

### Trailers

■ Author: **Kate Le Vann**  
 ■ Publisher: **Viking**  
 ■ Price: **£9.99**  
 ■ ISBN: **0-670-88138-4**



■ We all love to hate students. Whether it's for taking all our hard-earned tax money and wasting it on beer, for rarely getting up before 2pm, for never doing any work or simply for being incredibly pretentious. And as if their reputation needed another bashing, *Trailers*, a novel about student life, is excruciating.

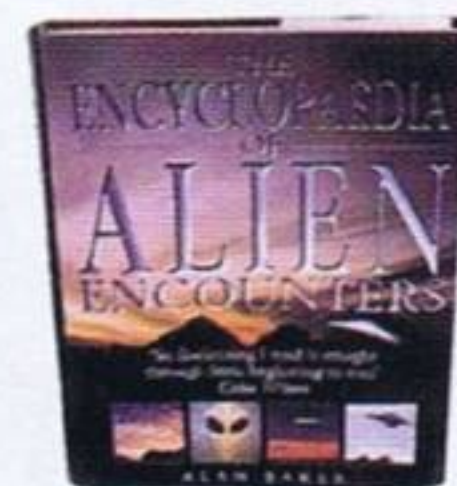
Written from the perspective of Grace, obsessed with boys, going out, sex, talking about sex, and most of all, obsessed with herself, her shallow lifestyle is supposedly a satire. Unfortunately, given the passages of indulgent philosophical waffle, Grace is so obviously a cipher for her author that it's impossible not to cringe.

Lacking any real plot or a driving theme, *Trailers* centres on Grace and the (mainly sexual) exploits of her six housemates. Crucially, Kate Le Vann fails to understand that gossip is only interesting when it concerns someone you actually know or care about. ★

**Sam Richards**

### Encyclopaedia of Alien Encounters

■ Author: **Alan Baker**  
 ■ Publisher: **Virgin**  
 ■ Price: **£25**  
 ■ ISBN: **1-85224-734-3**



■ You can't help but approach any book that claims to be an encyclopedia as a chocolate

box full of favourites. And sure, this one includes all the genre's favourite personalities and incidents. But at less than 300 pages, and with only eight pages of photos, some subjects are too cramped. Typical among entries that suffer from these space constraints is Area 51; it only gets half a page, although it's one of the most significant UFO stories.

In its favour, the *Encyclopaedia* is well written, and the info that it does provide is interesting. Most of the book's taken up with details of UFO sightings, but it also includes a few odd entries such as Bigfoot and *Men In Black*. Ultimately, however, most of the information here can be found on the Internet or from a decent UFO Web site for free.

And besides, if you need your extraterrestrials presented alphabetically, then John Spencer's *The UFO Encyclopedia* is a much better read. ★★ **Frank Bartucca**



**Electronic**  
**Twisted Tenderness**  
Label: Parlophone



Electronic began as a side-project while Johnny Marr was still in the Smiths and Bernard

Sumner fronted New Order. Now those two legendary groups are dormant, Electronic should be their primary concern, and yet the manic variety of *Twisted Tenderness* still suggests Johnny and Bernie's minds are elsewhere. Check their collaborators – Jimmy Goodwin from bliss-rockers Doves, experimental wibblers Fridge and lo-fi madman Badly Drawn Boy. Fair play to Electronic for looking after the new generation of Manchester talent, but it makes for a very disjointed album.

"Make It Happen" is a storming opener, reminiscent of *Screamadelica*-era Primal Scream. "Breakdown" is horrible indie-dance on loan from Kula Shaker. The title track is fantastic Pet Shop Boys pomp pop and the gorgeous "Like No Other" recalls "Get the Message" – Electronic at its best. This album is both brilliant and wretched. ★★★ **Sam Richards**

**Mogwai**  
**Come On Die Young**  
Label: Chemikal Underground



*Come On Die Young* is the fall-out from an unexpected and forceful explosion – the collision of

ponderous leftfield rock and gorgeous minimal techno. Mogwai revel in confounding expectations and anyone experiencing the live show, notorious for inducing vomiting in the faint-hearted, will be surprised by this album's veneer of calm. It's almost graceful, a fine achievement for four scruffy Glasgow boys.

Then again, however relaxed the tempo of these songs, they are always underpinned by mania (a hysterical NFL commentator in "Helps Both Ways") or suffocating tension ("Chocky", which after seven hypnotic minutes finally erupts into violence of the extreme guitar abuse variety). Remember, it's always going to be hard to dislike a band who name a song "Puff Daddy Antichrist". ★★★ **Sam Richards**

**Ultrasound**  
**Everything Picture**  
Label: Nude



Hotly-tipped throughout the two years of their slow germination leading up to this,

their debut album, *Ultrasound* suddenly got famous for streaking at the London Fashion Show. Having a transvestite lead singer who'd rival Big Daddy in the pie stakes doesn't harm your quest for being noticed either. Indeed *Ultrasound* are built for stardom, but *Everything Picture* suggests they crave it just a little too much.

Everything about *Ultrasound* is big. They're big, the sound is stadium big and the songs are Pink Floyd big. This is frustrating as

enjoyable tunes become tiresome after the seventh minute of tortured histrionics. "Same Band" and "Floodlit World" are astonishingly passionate and intense, but flabby at the edges. *Ultrasound* have obviously been over-indulged. ★★★ **Sam Richards**

**Wu-Tang Records Presents**  
**Wu-Chronicles**  
Label: Play It Again Sam



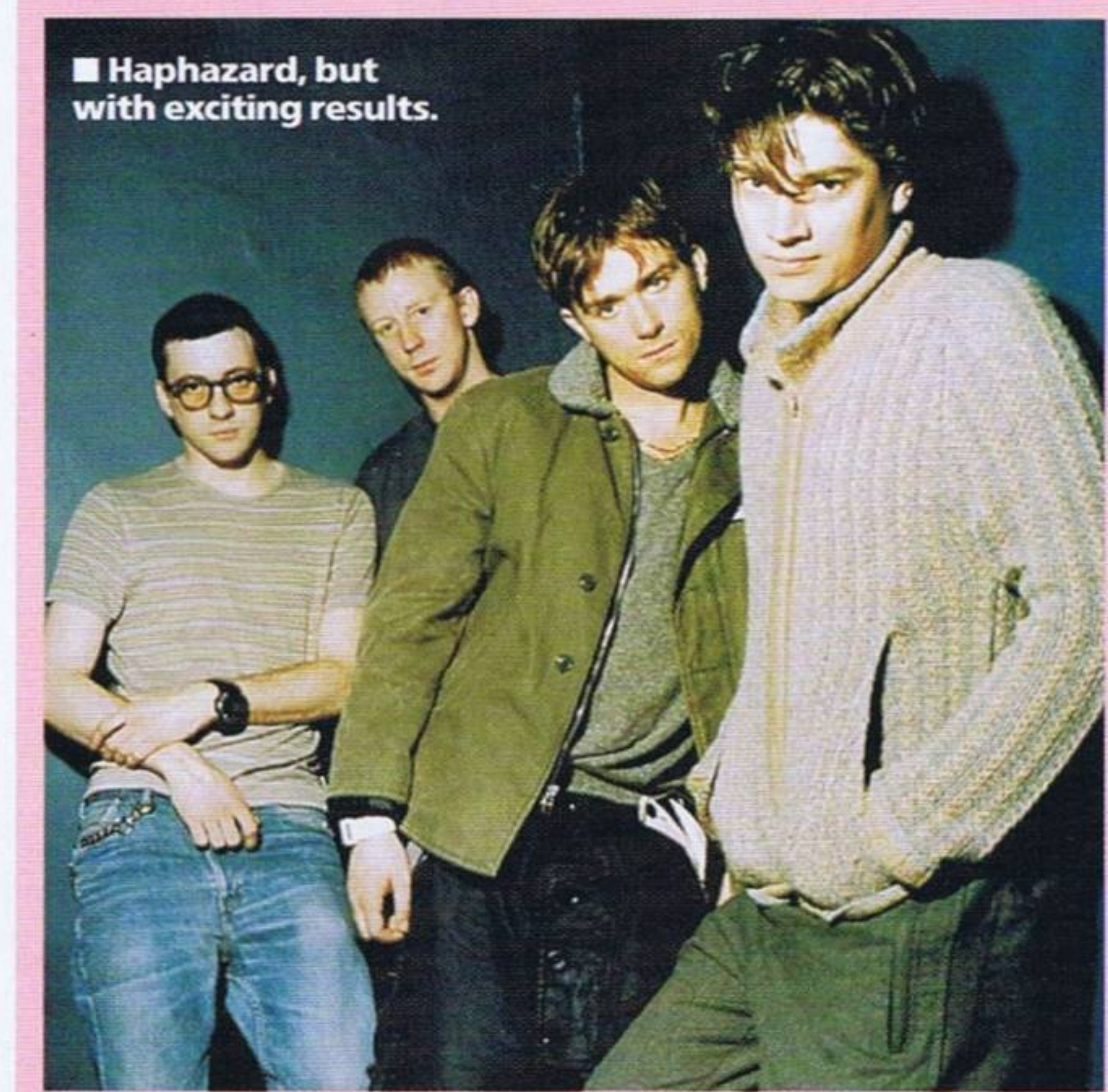
Already about the 20th Wu-affiliated release this year, New York's premier

hip-hop crew are an enigmatic bunch. With a seemingly endless membership, bolstered by legions of collaborators (everyone from obscure street rappers to Mariah Carey), the Wu-Tang's Clan's omnipotence is frightening. This album is a random selection of Wu-related tracks from the last five years.

The music careers recklessly from one major jam to another, as illustrated by Ol' Dirty Bastard and The Alkaholiks in the hilarious "Hip-Hop Drunkies". Notorious BIG unexpectedly guests with Method Man for hidden gem "The What", while "4th Chamber" and "96 Recreation" are classic RZA-driven Wu-Tang. Inevitably, there's a whole lot of dross clogging up the grooves.

For Wu watchers, this is essential, anyone else will be confused. ★★★ **Sam Richards**

**Album of the Month**



Haphazard, but with exciting results.

**LUCKY FOR SOME**  
**BLUR GET SUPERSTITIOUS**

**Blur**  
13  
Label: Food

By the time you read this 13 will have been in the shops for two weeks. You've probably already heard it. That's the way with deadlines sometimes, but this review can still serve a purpose – dismiss 13 for not rewriting 'Tender' over and over and you're missing out. Listen to this record again. And again. It's not exactly *Parklife*.

Much has been made of Damon Albarn's split with Justine Frischmann and its influence on 13. If this is an album borne from loss and depression, Blur's sense of despair and repair is stunningly eloquent. "No Distance Left To Run" is the only obvious relationship break-up lament and it's truly heartbreaking. The group's personality is more coherent than on their last ("experimental") album *Blur* and now they seem able to attempt new things without self-consciousness. The overall concept may be haphazard, as though they're locked in a room and are randomly throwing themselves against the walls in order to find a secret passage, but the intentions are genuine, and the results are genuinely exciting.

Blur may struggle to find a second single; the psychedelic groove of "Bugman", or "Mellow Song", which suggests *Nirvana Unplugged*, are fantastic songs but don't come wrapped in daytime radio glitter. Fear not – you should have already bought 13. Go and listen to it again, now. ★★★ **Sam Richards**

**Comic of the month**

**FINAL CONFLICT**

**Earth X**  
Writers: Jim Krueger/Alex Ross  
Artists: John Paul Leon/Bill Reinhold  
Publisher: Marvel Comics

Comic books throw up "hot new superstar artists" every few minutes, but few have ever risen as meteorically as photo-realistic painter Alex Ross. After only two mini-series and a slew of covers he's already the pre-eminent guy in his field. Now, with *Earth X*, Ross is back with his third major project, a 14-part series which does for the Marvel bunch what *Kingdom Come* did for DC. Twenty years into the future, and a mutant plague has given everyone on the



planet superpowers. Spider-Man, however, has gone to seed, looking like Homer Simpson as he tries to squeeze into his Spandex; The Mighty Thor is now a woman, victim of all-father Odin's misguided attempts to teach his proud son humility; and an old, bald

Captain America is now the weakest man on Earth. Thus the scene is set for what will doubtless be one of the comic events of the year, but it's not without its disappointments. Chief among these is that the now ultra-busy Ross has handled only plot and character



Alex Ross' *Earth X* turns the tables on the superheroes.

designs, turning the rest of the project over to less superhuman colleagues. Don't expect to be slammed by spectacular images, therefore; instead, merely thrill to a solid superhero epic, unafraid to mess with the status quo. ★★★ **Matt Bielby**

**Millennium Jukebox** Accompanying the deathmatches in the Arcade office month....

- Imani Coppola**  
**Chupacabra**  
The lovely lady says try it, and we just might like it.
- Underworld**  
**Push Upstairs**  
Supreme calm and supreme madness in one tune – that's for us.
- Add N To X**  
**Metal Fingers in my Body**  
Get the air synths out and go duuuh-nuuuh-nuuuh.
- Jeff Wayne**  
**War of the Worlds**  
A trip down memory lane. Still, the chances of anyone else listening to this are a million to one.
- Television**  
**Marquee Moon**  
Get out the air guitars and go duuuh-nuuuh-nuuuh-nuuuh.
- KFOG's "10 at 10"**  
**Whitesnake/Simple Minds/Steve Winwood (from 1986)**  
A disappointing innings from the San Francisco radio station that Neil still insists is great, honest, delivered live by the power of the Internet.
- The Aphex Twin**  
**Windowlicker**  
More evil, even, than *Res Evil II*.
- James Brown**  
**Black Caesar**  
Give it to me sideways! Yeah! Dig the jam!



## TABLETOP POLITICS THE POWER AND THE GLORY

### Europa

■ Publisher: **Euro Games** ■ Available from: **Leisure Games on 0181 346 2327** or **Playin' Games on 0171 323 3080** ■ Price: **£29.99** ■ Release date: **on sale now** ■ Players: **3-6**

If you've already played *Risk* and *Diplomacy* you'll find political thriller *Europa* immediately accessible. The board looks like *Diplomacy* and, like its famous cousins, the aim is to spread your sphere of influence throughout the region. But *Europa* doesn't contain the wargaming element that is the basis of its forbears; instead this is an entirely political game. And perhaps that is its ultimate flaw – success is determined entirely by dice rolls and your ability to

persuade your fellow players that your brand of cultural homogeneity is best for the future of everybody's lands.

Each player represents a political party. It doesn't matter which as they're all the same and can only be distinguished by colour (so the whole thing is more realistic than you might at first imagine). Your party grows by winning elections, almost invariably by coalition. Then, as the game extends from the heartlands of the EC, tensions in the former Soviet bloc flare into conflict, pressuring you to assign peace keeping forces to quell the flames of ancient ethnic hatred. Obviously, you don't want to employ all your resources in pacifying such conflicts, but neither do you want to be seen as one who is concerned only with your own power and who will do nothing to help your brothers in arms. Such is your dilemma. ★★★ **Jon Palmer**



## MY BEAUTIFUL BALLOON BOOST YOUR MEMORY WITH THIS BIJOU BABY

### Voice Balloon

■ Available from: **Sony on 0990 111999** ■ Price: **£40** ■ Release date: **on sale now**

■ We'd all like a good memory, but in real life, most people have a recall function akin to nothing so much as a leaky

sieve. You know how it is: you need milk, toilet roll and bread, but come back from Tesco with yogurt, cheese and pan scourers, because you couldn't remember what it was you'd originally gone in for.

Or you can't find a pen and paper when you meet that gorgeous boy/gal in the pub,

so you try to memorise their number, only to spend the whole of the next day going "I know it began with a seven or was it a four?"

So what you need is a nifty little pocket voice recorder like this. The Voice Balloon has 2Mb of memory: room enough to store up to 30 minutes of

voice notes. It loses a star for not having a facility to mark where the different messages begin and end, but at least now you'll be able to phone that boy/gal after all – and when you get him/her back for coffee, you know you'll have remembered to buy toilet roll and milk. ★★★ **Russell Deeks**

## GOING LIVE ALL-SEEING EYE



■ An egg. With legs. Hang on.

### PCA645VC Webcam

■ Contact: **Philips on 0181 689 4444**  
■ Price: **£92**  
■ Release date: **on sale now**

The biggest boom areas on the Net right now are video conferencing and video e-mail, and if you want to get in on the act you're going to need a Web cam. Web cams have been around for a while, but it's only recently that greater bandwidth availability and increasing processor speeds have made their use a realistic proposition for everyday folk.

If you're going to splash out on your first Web cam, then you might as well get one that not only does the job properly, but looks great as well. Enter the PCA645VC (great name, Philips). It has a resolution of 352 x 288 pixels and shoots at 24fps (frames per second) – plenty good enough for sending video e-mails, although live conferencing still suffers from a bit of a jerky "Super Marionation" look. Equally important, though, is the fact that the PCA645VC looks like something out of *Toy Story*. You could imagine it hopping off the PC and running around the living room after you've gone to bed. Possibly. ★★★★★ **Russell Deeks**

■ It's very handy, but you've still got to remember where you put it down last.



# PHOTO STORY

## IMAGE IS EVERYTHING

Digital cameras continue to improve enormously, while falling in price all the time. Russell Deeks of T3 magazine takes a look through the lens of five of the latest models.



### MX-500

- Available from: **Fujifilm** on 0171 586 5900
- Price: **£400**
- Release date: **on sale now**

■ The MX-500 is the scaled-down, less-expensive version of Fujifilm's hugely successful MX-700 model. Its strong point has to be value for money: you're getting a 1.5 million-pixel camera for about the same price as a decent Standard Lens job. With that number of pixels gracing the CCD (the charge-coupled device that picks up the image), you can't really grumble about the picture quality, and the MX-500 does include an impressive range of features.

We can't help thinking, though, that the MX-500 is hardly going to wow anyone when you pull it out of your pocket down the pub, being, as it is, a tad on the boring-looking side. It's not to be sniffed at, certainly, but if you can afford something a little better and want to impress your mates, we reckon it'd be worth spending a few extra quid. ★★★



### Olympus Camedia C-840L

- Available from: **Olympus** on 0171 253 0513
- Price: **£500**
- Release date: **on sale now**

■ Hmmm. On the looks front, we're not sure what to make of this one at all. Is it sleek 'n' sexy or just a bit boring? Looks aside, it's a 1.3 million-pixel job, which means the picture quality is reasonable but not fantastic. Additionally, as on most digital cameras we've looked at in this round-up, you have a choice of three quality modes – each reduction in image quality giving you a pay-off in terms of added picture storage capacity.

It's easy to use, and what it does do notably well is record images to the SmartMedia card, something it manages a damn sight quicker than many of its rivals. All in, it's a solid little camera but, while reasonable value for money, hardly astounding. ★★★

### OUR CHOICE

#### ePhoto 1680

- Available from: **Agfa** on 0181 560 2131
- Price: **£599**
- Release date: **on sale now**

■ The 1680 is one of the first of the new generation of two million-pixel cameras to go on sale. Well, nearly – it actually has 1.9 million pixels (the more pixels on the CCD the better the quality of your pictures). Until recently, 1.5 million-pixel cameras were the best available.

So you can expect the ePhoto to give you great digital snaps. And you won't be disappointed; the pics the ePhoto produces are fantastic, with huge amounts of detail and lovely sharp edges. You can store up to 48 of them on the supplied 4Mb SmartCard, and there's a 6x zoom as well. And it looks great. A fine little camera. ★★★★★



### DC260

- Available from: **Kodak** on 01442 261122
- Price: **£650**
- Release date: **on sale now**

■ Aah, Kodak – being the company that practically invented photography in the first place (all right, we know it was Monsieur Daguerre, but you get the gist), you'd think it'd be one of the front runners in turning out digital cameras, too.

Sadly, we have to report that this isn't the case. For a start, this 1.5-million-pixel camera costs more than half as much again as Fujifilm's similarly-specced offering. What's more, despite using the same number of pixels, the pictures aren't even as good, displaying some decidedly blurry edges (although colours are represented quite well). It has a 6x zoom, and you may be drawn to its looks if you prefer a more traditional camera shape, but those are its best selling points. We'd recommend you proceed with caution. ★★

### Coolpix 900

- Available from: **Nikon** on 0800 230220
- Price: **£700**
- Release date: **on sale now**

■ Now this is one cool-looking camera. Like the ePhoto, it boasts a swivelling lens, but has the added bonus of coming clad in sexy silver rather than that (somewhat naff) '80s retro champagne colour.

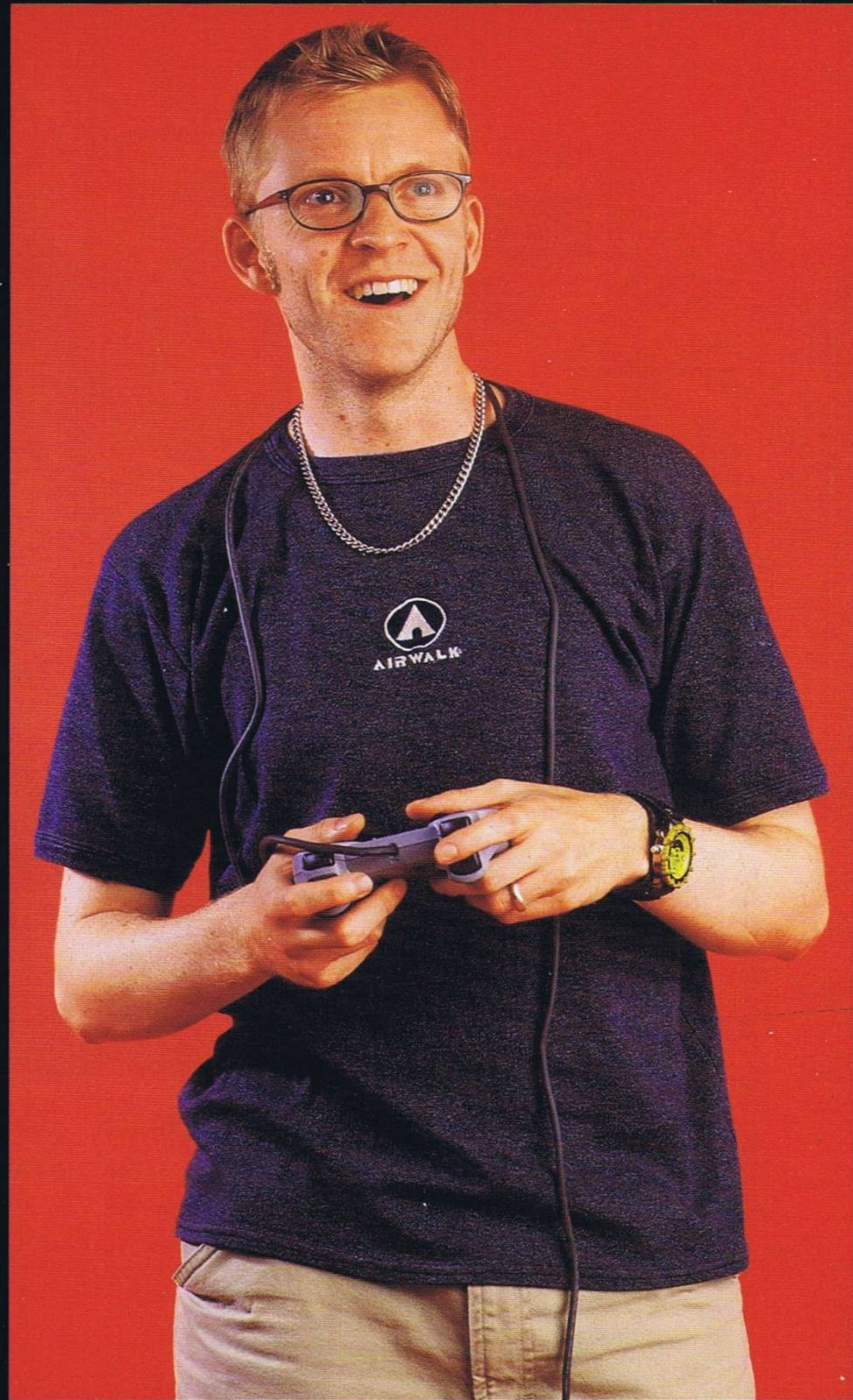
When it comes to image quality, though, the Coolpix can't quite keep up. Its 1.3 million-pixel CCD doesn't give bad pictures, but they're not up to the quality of those you can get from the ePhoto.

As usual, there's three quality modes to choose from, although the Coolpix's compression routines mean you'll only get 16 pics on a 4Mb SmartMedia card. You also get a 3x zoom included in the bundle for your money.

All-round, the Coolpix is not a bad little snapper, but it's six months old now and it shows. It's not cheap, but definitely still worth a look. ★★★



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Okay, so this little bit of text here may not be the single best read you've had all year. But we're proud of our writers. We hired the most knowledgeable and entertaining videogame experts we could find to provide the heart and soul of *Arcade* each month. We won't treat you like a kid, either.

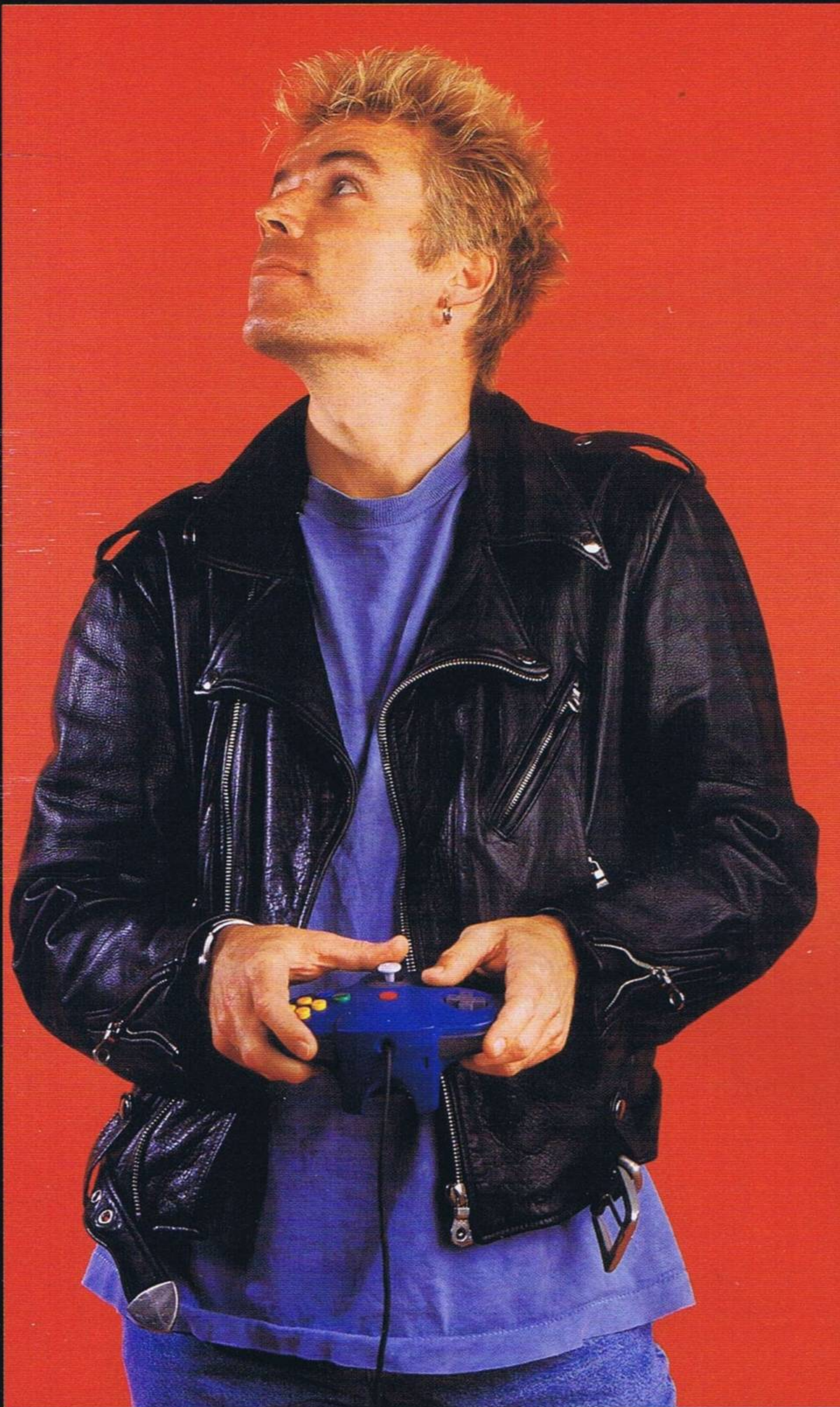
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### IMPORT TITLES

**U.S./JAP PLAYSTATION**

Bloody Roar 2 (JAP)

Convertor (Runs Imports)

Ehrgeiz (JAP)

Final Fantasy 8 (JAP)

Marvel V S.Fighter (JAP/US)

Ridge Racer Type 4 (JAP/US)

Silent Hill (US)

Soul Reaver (US)

Streetfighter Zero 3 (JAP)

Syphon Filter (US)

Tenchu 2 (JAP)

**JAP DREAMCAST**

Aero Dancing

Blue Stinger

Buggy Heat

Godzilla

House of the Dead 2 & Gun

Incoming

Marvel Vs Capcom

Monaco GP

Power Stone

Psychic Force 2012

Sega Rally 2

Sonic Adventure

Super Speed Racing

Virtua Fighter 3tb

### U.S RPG'S

**PLAYSTATION**

Brave Fencer-Musashi

Guardian Crusade

Lunar: Complete

Parasite Eve

Persona

Tales of Destiny

Xenogears

### OTHER SYSTEMS

**NINTENDO 64**

Castlevania (US)

Mario Party (US/UK)

Rogue Squadron (US/UK)

Smash Bros. (JAP)

Snowboard Kids 2 (JAP/US)

South Park (US/UK)

Wipeout 64 (US/UK)

Zelda (US/UK)

**SATURN**

Dungeons & Dragons Collection (JAP)

Magic Knight Rayearth (US)

Marvel Vs S.Fighter (JAP)

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# A-list

**Choice is good. You have a choice of several videogame magazines. You picked the best. Well done. But there are hundreds of games on sale. So which should you buy? Luckily, help is at hand. The A-list is your guide to every – EVERY – game currently on sale.**

## Featured this month:

### 134 PlayStation

This month's PlayStation Top 20 plus 173 other PlayStation games reviewed and rated. If you can't find something great in this lot, you must work for Nintendo.

### 138 PC

The PC Top 20 and 146 of your favourite PC games all reviewed and rated. It's your essential buying guide.

### 141 Nintendo 64

The N64 Top 20, then a closer look at 86 of the latest games, including – as with the other systems – a secondhand games guide.

### 143 Game Boy

The GB Top 5 and more than 32 games tried and tested.

### 136 Plus...

The game that ruined Mark Green's life (again). It's a sad tale of a youth misguidedly attempting to impress the laydeez with an Amiga game. Painful.

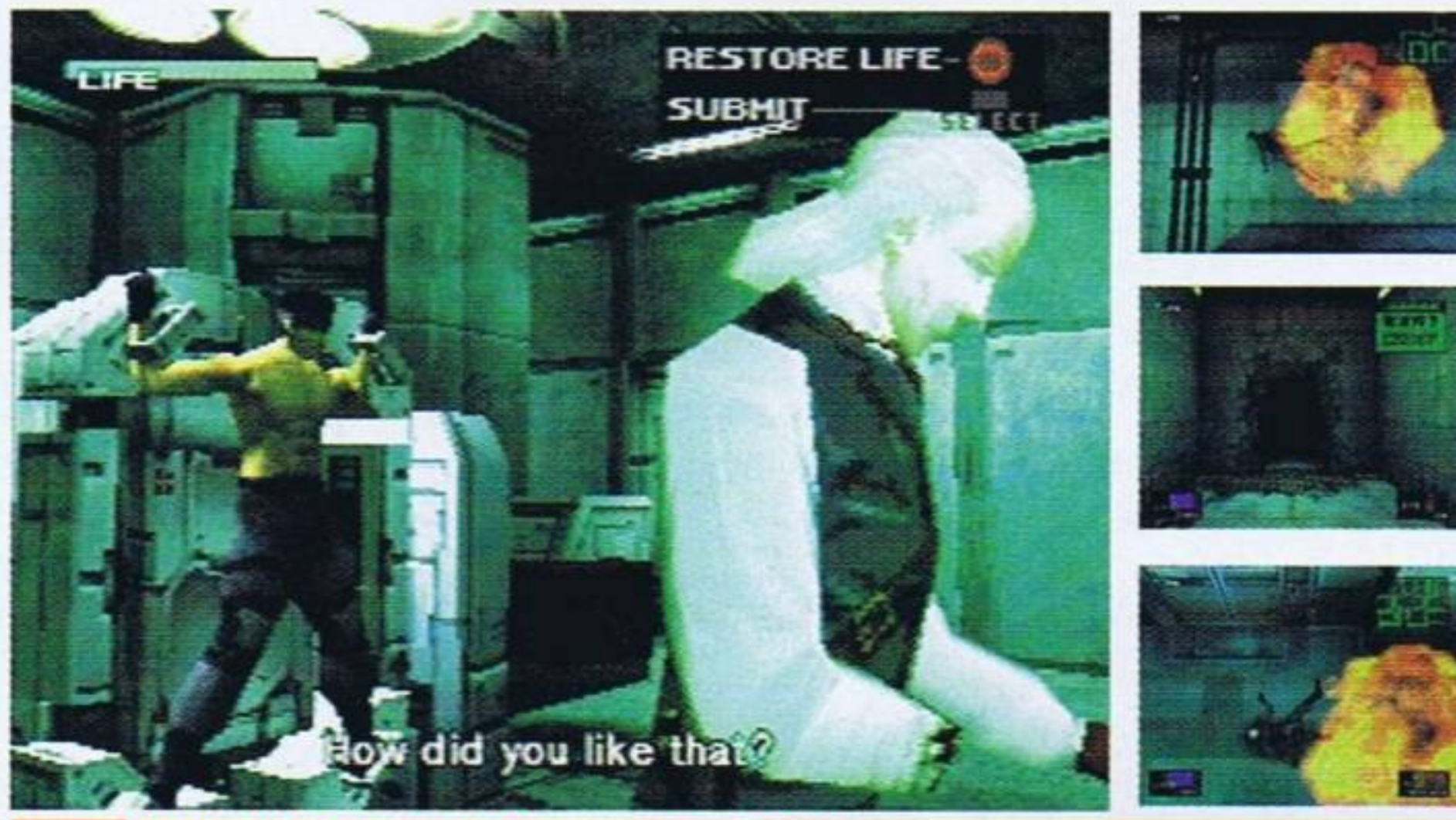
### Star ratings

- ★★★★★ Simply the best. A game you really should try.
- ★★★★ Excellent. Definitely worth your money.
- ★★★ Good stuff. Not exactly a world beater, but fine within its genre.
- ★★ Strictly average. We say: don't buy it.
- ★ Really bad news. Avoid at all costs.



## PlayStation Top 20

The games currently "shifting units" in games shops across the UK



**1 (-) Metal Gear Solid** ■ Sneaker ■ SCEE ■ £40  
**Infiltrate a shadowy enemy installation** Eagerly-awaited since the first sightings, *Metal Gear* is a brilliant idea – sneak around enemies and avoid detection rather than blasting everything in sight. And it has worked a treat – it looks and sounds stupendous, and – despite the end screen coming around after little more than a few hours play – you'll adore every single minute. A must buy. ★★★★★



**2 (-) A Bug's Life** ■ Platformer ■ Disney Interactive ■ £40  
**Ant-based adventures** Faithful in part to the movie it's based on, with 3D graphics that initially impress, but the crude animation and repetitiveness of the running, jumping and punching gameplay will fail to enthrall even the most easily pleased nipper. ★



**3 (2) FIFA '99** ■ Sports ■ EA Sports ■ £40  
**Long-running official footy update** All the visual frills, but scoring multiple goals is too easy – especially with the super-speedy players – and the programmers just don't seem to care about football. More suited to beginners than anyone looking to experience satisfying goal-mouth adventures. ★★★



**4 (1) Premier Manager '99** ■ Sports ■ Gremlin ■ £40  
**Footy management for everyone** Endorsed by Kevin Keegan, this sim features more squads than you'll be able to fit into your brain – including a future-proof European Super-League – and good controls, however, you'll need patience to become the best. ★★★★★



**6 (3) Tomb Raider** ■ Platformer ■ Platinum ■ £20  
**Indiana Jones meets Melinda Messenger** It made Lara Croft a global icon, but it was the excellent level design and atmosphere that sold the game. Proves that a pretty face and great gameplay aren't mutually exclusive. ★★★★★

**7 (-) Crash Bandicoot** ■ Platformer ■ Platinum ■ £20  
**3D antics with a mad marsupial** The supposed challenger to *Mario* emerges as a repetitive, on-rails platformer. Beautiful graphics and a good size are scuppered by gameplay that's too shallow even at this Platinum discount price. ★★★

**8 (-) WCW/nWo Thunder** ■ Sports ■ THQ ■ £45  
**Woeful wrestling** Blessed with plenty of greased fighters and attractive movie sequences, *Thunder's* actual action is repetitive, tedious, unresponsive and painfully slow. The create-a-character mode is its only pleasurable function. ★

**9 (5) Crash Bandicoot 3** ■ Platformer ■ SCEE ■ £40  
**More marsupial platforming** Another mad 3D race in and out of the screen with some new dino-riding moments and a female Crash. Thanks to atmospheric worlds and a host of challenges, this round of object-collecting and speedy running pays off handsomely. ★★★★★

**10 (6) TOCA Touring Car Championship** ■ Racing ■ Platinum ■ £20  
**One of the first proper racing sims** Genuinely exciting racer that has decent speed and excellent tracks, coupled with a good sense of control and gorgeous real-time damage. The lack of options lets the whole affair down slightly. ★★★★★

**11 (14) Croc** ■ Platformer ■ Platinum ■ £20  
**3D crocodile runabout** Lovely-looking cutesy platformer, ruined by some odd camera angles, poorly-designed levels and a complete lack of originality. It's less of a true 3D environment than you're led to believe, too. ★★

**12 (10) Mickey's Wild Adventure** ■ Platformer ■ Platinum ■ £20  
**Basic Disney-based running and jumping** The graphics are pleasing, if a little old-fashioned, and there are a host of nice touches, such as the *Steamboat Willy* black and white sections. But the task of simply running from left to right is too simple. ★★

**13 (8) Rayman** ■ Platformer ■ Platinum ■ £20  
**Old-skool vertically-scrolling jumpathon** Cheap, but it doesn't contain any ideas or visuals that wouldn't push an '80s console. It's horrendously difficult, packed with eye-wrenching colour, and its central character is detestable. ★★

**14 (11) V-Rally** ■ Racing ■ Platinum ■ £20  
**Classic solo driving** This age-old Playstation racer had its crown stolen by *Gran Turismo*, but it's still worth considering. Simply staying on the track is difficult, and it's occasionally strangely soulless. Still, cheap at this Platinum price. ★★★★★

**15 (16) Die Hard Trilogy** ■ Shooting/racing ■ Platinum ■ £20  
**Three action games in one** Excellent value for money, this triple bundle includes a *Tomb Raider*-style shooter, a *Time Crisis*-like and a driving game. Effort has been expended on each section, and it's tricky enough to last you for ages. ★★★★★

**16 (15) Resident Evil** ■ Adventure ■ Platinum ■ £20  
**Fright-filled sleuthing** A decent interactive movie that's genuinely frightening. The first game to achieve a proper film-like anticipation of the next scene, aided in part by brilliantly poor acting, detailed backgrounds and a great plot. ★★★★★

**17 (7) Tomb Raider III** ■ Platformer ■ EIDOS ■ £45  
**The bitch is back** More puzzle-solving and shooting with everyone's favourite woman. A new hi-res mode, some more well-designed levels and an increased difficulty are tempered by frustrating moments at the hands of the control and camera. ★★★★★

**18 (9) Cool Boarders 3** ■ Racing ■ SCEE ■ £40  
**Spectacular snow-boarding fun** A hefty collection of tracks, characters and boards, and looking a good deal better than previous instalments. Smooth controls make careering down the trick and speed courses a breeze. ★★★★★

**19 (20) Tekken 2** ■ Fighting ■ Platinum ■ £20  
**Perfect punch-uppery** The character models wouldn't look out of place in a pre-rendered demo, the one-player game is totally engrossing (uncommon for a fighter), and there are plenty of moves, bosses and secrets to get your teeth into. ★★★★★

**20 (-) Gran Turismo** ■ Racing ■ SCEE ■ £45  
**Astonishingly enjoyable real-life racing** Outrageously good graphics, near-perfect handling, immediacy of play and limitless levels of depth. Also: hundreds of cars to drive and a faultless replay mode. You might have guessed that we kinda like it. ★★★★★

### Also on sale...



### Fighters

#### Bloody Roar

■ Hudson ■ £15 **Animal magic** A lack of moves, but those that you do get are quick and smooth, with fighters that can change into beastly forms. ★★★

#### Dead or Alive

■ SCEE ■ £40 **Slick beat-'em-up** Barren-looking, but with quick-as-you-like visuals, this is a smooth deviation from *Tekken*-style fighting, with its clever use of counter-attacks and emphasis on grabbing your adversary and throwing him up into the heavens. Avoid the "bouncing breasts" option. ★★★★★

#### Kensei

■ Konami ■ £45 **Block-rocking beat-'em-up** Less flash than *Tekken*, but the range of characters and depth of play makes this comprehensive. The visuals and humour are lacking, but with challenges a-plenty and opponents who actually learn, who's complaining? ★★★★★

#### Mortal Kombat 4

■ GT Interactive ■ £40 **"Come and 'ave a go if you think..."** Although in 3D, this bloody fighter fails to take advantage of the extra dimension. After ten years, the controls and characters are getting staid. ★★★

#### Mortal Kombat Trilogy

■ GT Interactive ■ £20 **Everything from the previous three** The speedy, comedic fighting on offer here will almost certainly only satisfy fans of the series. ★★

#### Rival Schools

■ Virgin ■ £30 **Teachers and students take to the ring** Absolutely mad *Grange Hill*-style fighter, with over-the-top moves and a huge selection of modes and sub-games. Not technically great, but it's a whole heap of fun, thanks to the pleasingly easy-to-pull-off moves. ★★★★★

#### Soul Blade

■ Platinum ■ £20 **Big sword fest** Replacing the fist-bleeding fights of *Tekken* with weapon-clattering scraps steeped in folklore, this caters for the all-round gamer. The moves are more easily pulled-off than in *Tekken*, but it still offers some of the fastest, most beautiful beat-'em-up action on the PlayStation. Top fun for little money. ★★★★★

#### Tekken

■ Namco ■ £20 **Round one... fight!** This may have been usurped by its progeny, but the first *Tekken* combines slick visuals with a series of moves that would have your mother fainting on the floor. Plenty to do in one-player, and surpassed in two-player only by its sequels. ★★★★★

#### Tekken 2

■ Namco ■ £40 **Round two... fight!** It used to be the best beat-'em-up... until *Tekken 3* arrived. The second in the series is as polished as we've come to expect from Namco, with character models that wouldn't look out of place in a pre-rendered demo, and fights that make perfect sense. The one-player game is totally engrossing (uncommon for a fighter) and there are plenty of brilliant moves, bosses and secrets to get your teeth stuck into. ★★★★★

## Watch out for

Expect these new releases to break into the charts any day now.



**Rollage**  
■ Racer ■ Psygnosis ■ £40  
**Chaotic futuristic car racing** The crisp visuals, block-rocking beats and cars that can flip, turn and spin to accommodate any terrain and contour are great, but the speed and ease of crashes creates a very random, unfair feel. Otherwise, it's an original and exhilarating race. ★★★★★



**Bloody Roar 2**  
■ Fighter ■ Virgin ■ £40  
**Animated animal pugilists** The ability to transform into gorgeous, speedy animal fighters is welcome, but the game lacks variety, depth and finesse. ★★★



**Populous: The Beginning**  
■ Strategy ■ EA ■ £40  
**Omnipotence thrills** This commendable translation of the PC title, where you form tribes to worship you and destroy your enemies, is easily controlled and big enough to last weeks. It's pleasingly involving and the 3D visuals create a great sense of freedom. ★★★★★



**Viva Football**  
■ Sports ■ Virgin ■ £40  
**Pinball soccer** Utilises an interesting power-bar system, giving you complete control with just a little practice. But almost too damn fast, and the keepers and control system are awful. ★★★



**G-Police**  
■ Shooter ■ Platinum ■ £20  
**You are the law** As you guide your future cop around in his fancy spacecraft, sending crims packing, it's initially as easy to control as a three-year-old in a supermarket. Stick with it, and a compulsive experience emerges, especially as it manages to slip in some strategy while you're not looking. ★★★★★



## Tekken 3

■ Namco ■ £45 Round  
**Thr...oh, never mind** Here they are again. A major improvement to the prequels in almost every way – graphically flawless and the new moves add something for both newcomers and veterans. A wide variety of sub-games, bonuses and hidden characters, as well as a frightening difficulty level, means there's so much to do that it's almost the *Mario* of fighting games. But without the cute stuff, obviously. ★★★★★

## Vs

■ THQ ■ £30 **Beat people up**  
Set apart by the inclusion of a variety of fighters with their own distinct style, but very badly put together indeed. The decisions as to whether you've hit or miss are... er, a bit hit and miss. ★★★

## WCW Nitro

■ THQ ■ £30 **Crazy men in swimming costumes**  
Laughable controls and zero interaction. ★★

## WCW/nWo Thunder

■ EIDOS ■ £35 **Wrestling tedium** Slow, unresponsive and utterly ugly. ★

## WWF Warzone

■ Acclaim ■ £40 **Lardy leotarded lovelies fight it out** Moves and characters that make play interesting and a great create-a-player section that enables you to custom-build your own fighter. It lacks variety, and it's a bit slow and sluggish. ★★★★★

## WCW Nitro

■ THQ ■ £40 **Wrestling nonsense** Plenty of fighters, but that's all. ★★

## X-Men Vs Street Fighter

■ Virgin ■ £30 **Fight!** The great controls and 2D fighters that you expect from the long-running *Street Fighter* series, but repetitive, jerky and a bit shallow. ★★★



## Racers

### Burning Road

■ Sunsoft ■ £30 **Pitiful car racing** Horrendous, with a camera that sits directly above the car. ★★

### Circuit Breakers

■ Mindscape ■ £20 **Fine comedy racer** Race as fast as your little wheels can carry you, firing missiles at your opponents. The varied courses and speed help no end, and the multi-player game is sure to have you waking the neighbours with your boisterous swearing. ★★★★★

### Colin McRae Rally

■ Codemasters ■ £45 **Only his Mum's ever heard of him** A departure from the usual racing game, as your rally car rattles around countryside tracks with time and damage your only opponents. The variety of terrain and responsive controls give real driving feedback. ★★★★★

### Destruction Derby

■ Psygnosis ■ £20 **Early PSX racing** Poorly designed tracks and little fun. ★★

### Destruction Derby 2

■ Psygnosis ■ £20 **Smashing racing sequel** Your opponents are happiest when slamming into your backside and reaching the finish without your car falling apart is an achievement. Making good on the faults of the original, this sequel is fast, includes well-designed tracks, and offers more crashes than your average PC. And it's only 20 quid. ★★★★★

## Formula 1 '97

■ Psygnosis ■ £20  
**Vrooom...** A much-needed follow up to the original sim of Damon Hill's least favourite pastime. All the stats are here, along with increased responsiveness and more realistic opposition. The two-player mode lets it down. ★★★★★

## Formula 1 '98

■ Psygnosis ■ £35  
**Purportedly accurate driving sim** Inadequate views and horrendous handling. Into the bin with it. ★★

## Gran Turismo

■ SCEE ■ £45 **Probably the best racing game in the world** Take one measure of outrageously good graphics, another of near-perfect handling, throw in a pinch of immediacy of play and limitless levels of depth, add a dash of replay mode, and you've just followed the recipe for an unmissable pleasure pie. Sony has packed its little black disc with a hefty number of vehicles and courses and made sure that the whole thing plays perfectly. A masterpiece, and likely only to be bettered by the sequel. ★★★★★

## Jeremy McGrath Super Cross 98

■ Acclaim ■ £30 **Ride on a bike in the dirt** Fast, with a decent track editor, but very little sense of realism. ★★

## Max Power Racing

■ Infogrames ■ £40 **Fun boy free-wheeling** Fancy graphics can't save this driver from its over-long tracks and finger-clenching difficulty. ★★★

## Micro Machines v3

■ Codemasters ■ £20 **Tiny cars race around your living room** The old top-down 2D game souped up into pseudo-3D for a modern audience, and it's a beauty. There are 30 innovative courses, based on kitchen tables and school desks, coupled with a perfect overhead camera and a multi-player game that's as beautifully designed as Philipa Forrester. And all for just 20 quid? We must be dreaming. ★★★★★

## Nascar '98

■ EA ■ £30 **Americans love this** Pitifully dull tracks, as befit the sport itself, but the computer AI and handling create a passable impression of driving around as fast as you like. There are better racers, though. ★★★

## Need for Speed 3

■ EA Sports ■ £20 **I feel the need...** Plenty of modes to make the game last longer, great graphics and a good sense of speed. The chance to leg it from the police and the two-player mode make this the best *NFS* so far, but like so many others it's been overtaken on the inside by *Gran Turismo*. ★★★★★

## Newman Haas Racing

■ Psygnosis ■ £15 **F1 jostling** Well-designed tracks and a nice looker, but very jerky and too easy. ★★

## Psybadek

■ Psygnosis ■ £20 **Cute snowboardy stuff** Platforming and snowboarding mixed together. Difficult and pointless. ★★

## Rally Cross 2

■ SCEE ■ £35 **Off-road racing** Three cars and three types of terrain. Too many crashes and awful handling. ★★

## Rapid Racer

■ SCEE ■ £30 **Powerboat racing** The random track generator is a nice inclusion, and the hi-res visuals will undoubtedly make jaws drop, but the handling and lack of realism causes it to sink slowly and gracefully to the bottom of the gaming ocean. ★★★

## Rayman

■ Ubisoft ■ £20 **Old-school platformer that's a bit wrinkly** Cheap, but graphically bare and too difficult. ★★

## Road Rash 3D

■ EA ■ £30 **Manx TT meets WWF** A racer for people who like the look of bruises on a man, but this bizarre combination of racing and smacking other riders doesn't balance too well. ★★★★★

## Running Wild

■ SCEE ■ £35 **The first run-'em-up** Negotiate courses on foot. *Very slowly.* ★

## Rushdown

■ Infogrames ■ £35  
**Rubbish racing** Three types of downhill races. Forgettable. ★

## S.C.A.R.S

■ Ubisoft ■ £20 **Cute racer** A faithful attempt at a less serious *Mario Kart* clone, but lacking immediacy. The difficult control system rewards patience, but the multi-player game ultimately disappoints. ★★★

## Street Skater

■ EA ■ £40 **Tarmac skateboarding** Poor controls and tiresome simplicity. ★

## TOCA 2

■ Codemasters ■ £40 **Yet more touring car mayhem** A garage-full of cars that all handle differently and embrace accurate driving physics. If it wasn't for its intense difficulty, this game would be the perfect racer, with accurate courses and speed, and a level of smoothness that's scary. ★★★★★

## Tommi Makinen Rally

■ Europress ■ £20 **Colin McRae rival** Plenty of tracks (130) and the option to create even more of your own, but still beaten to the chequered flag by the competition. ★★★★★

## Total Drivin'

■ Infogrames ■ £20  
**Comprehensive driveabout** Does exactly what it says on the tin, with tight handling, plenty of cars and tracks, and some neat touches. It has lost appeal since its initial release, but it's still comprehensive, exciting and bursting with variety. ★★★★★

## Vigilante 8

■ Activision ■ £20 **'70s-influenced destruction driving** Blowing up buildings and cars while driving '70s vehicles sounds great, but when the reward is just more explosions per level, monotony soon follows. ★★★★★

## V-Rally

■ Infogrames ■ £20 **Rally rather good** Even staying on the track in this rally sim is difficult, but the addition of Dual Shock and another car make this re-release a sensible purchase. ★★★★★

## WipeOut

■ Psygnosis ■ £20 **Futuristic hovercraft action** The game that made PSX the console of choice, with the soundtrack that helped make gaming cool, but the nasty opposing craft mean you'll need to persevere to succeed. Your reward is the opportunity to career down classic neon tracks at incredible speeds. ★★★★★

## WipeOut 2097

■ Psygnosis ■ £20 **A sequel 100 years in the making** A better bet than the original for the casual racer, as the learning curve is gentler, but the new, more difficult, racing class should make veterans weep. It has excellent CPU opposition, more weapons and the twistiest tracks this side of Alton Towers, although – dare we say it – in comparison with some of today's gorgeous offerings, it's starting to look a little rough around the edges. ★★★★★

## Wreckin' Crew

■ Telstar ■ £13 **Mario Kart clone** Comedy racer with comedy characters, where your aim is to break the other cars up real nice. Could have done with a multi-tap mode to bring the best out of the multi-player game, but there's loads of fun, with plenty of hidden extras buried here. ★★★★★



## Sports

### 2Xtreme

■ SCEE ■ £24.99 **Extreme sports sim** Rubbish. ★

### Actua Golf 3

■ Gremlin ■ £25 **Time for tee** Eight courses, a variety of one-player and multi-player tournaments, and some lovingly crafted scenery. It doesn't offer anything new, but its slickness and Peter Allis' wonderful commentary bring it in well under par. ★★★★★

### Actua Soccer 3

■ Gremlin ■ £30 **Pigs bladder kick-a-thon** Pleasingly difficult and wonderfully fluid, producing play that flows like a well-oiled Brazilian back four. Let down by occasionally ropery animation, but otherwise a solid – if unimproved – sequel. ★★★★★

### Adidas Power Soccer '98

■ Psygnosis ■ £20 **Simple, speedy, silly** Ludicrously fast-paced, ropery graphics, and some very unpredictable keepers. ★★

### All Star Tennis '99

■ Ubisoft ■ £20 **Serious recreation of Henman's hobby** Fast and comprehensive, but the rather inadequate camera makes things difficult. Stick to the multi-player and "bomb tennis" sub-game. ★★★★★

### Brian Lara Cricket

■ Codemasters ■ £40  
**Leather-on-willow simulator** This cricket sim is so realistic that you know it's your fault when you're losing. It's painfully hard half the time, but surprisingly playable and very well-crafted, with the commentary and graphics in particular standing out. ★★★★★

### Dead Ball Zone

■ GT Interactive ■ £15  
**Rugby for space-age sadists** Metallic-suited individuals tackle each other and occasionally throw a ball into the goal. Violent and difficult, and speed comes at the expense of smooth play. ★★★★★

### Dodgem Arena

■ Project Two n ■ £40 **Pucking average** A battle to collect pucks and fire them off at hovering goal-mouths. Fast, but tedious. ★★

### Everybody's Golf

■ SCEE ■ £35 **Cartoon-style stick-and-ball antics** Simplistic looks but complex gameplay, with an arcade slant that injects a welcome burst of speed. Great if you don't take your golf too seriously. And who does, apart from that Faldo chappy? ★★★★★

## ISS Pro '98

■ Konami ■ £30 **The best football game in the world** Konami sticks one up its desperate licence-toting rivals by beautifully honing its original killer title. The playability is smoother, tactics more subtle, graphics more well realised, goal-scoring more rewarding and that through-pass will send shivers of ecstasy along your spine. And Tony Gubba's commentary is oddly soothing. ★★★★★

## Knockout Kings

■ EA Sports ■ £35 **Boxing very clever** A simulation of punch-uppery, with a power-bar system to make sure you don't just stab the "Hit" button until your opponent falls. Plenty of modes, a create-a-player section and the chance to meet a virtual Muhammed Ali. Cripes! ★★★★★

## Libero Grande

■ Namco ■ £35 **Original footy sim** Control just one player for the duration of an entire match. Glitchy and tedious. ★★

## Michael Owen's World League Soccer '99

■ EIDOS ■ £20 **Not taking the Michael** Ooh, this looks bad, with players skating around the pitch like Torville and Dean. Still, you'd be hard pushed to fault *WLS '99* in any other direction, because it plays like a dream. The finest footy details have been recreated with the Liverpudlian Boy Wonder in a starring role, and the intuitive controls, sexy combos and realistic difficulty level make this a fine interpretation. ★★★★★

## Nagano Winter Olympics

■ Konami ■ £30 **Sports fortnight tie-in** Boring icy events ★

## NBA Live 99

■ EA Sports ■ £40 **That's a slam-dunk!** Silky motion capture, proper gurning faces, and Simulation and Arcade modes that should satisfy proper basketball devotees and normal people alike. Rodman fans should be happy with the cornucopia of stats and the create-a-player mode. ★★★★★

## NFL Blitz

■ GT Interactive ■ £40 **US footy simplified and made fun** Abandoning the usual US football style (overloading on rules and stopping for a rest every other minute) and moving to something more worthwhile (emphasis on speed, simple controls, usage of fists), this is top fun. ★★★★★

## NHL 99

■ EA ■ £40 **Ice hockey for mother puckers** Far too many goals, and much too little action. Disappointing. ★★

## Pool Hustler

■ Sunsoft ■ £35 **Simming pool** Challenging and comprehensive, with faithful physics and a loads of game styles to try your hand at, but it lacks atmosphere, and there's something about pool that means it never makes for videogame fun. ★★★★★

## Pro Pinball –

■ Big Race USA  
**Empire Interactive** ■ £35  
**Flippin' balls** Accurate and long-lasting, but lacks that "real" feel. Only for fans of pinball. ★★

## Sensible Soccer: European Club Edition

■ GT Interactive ■ £30 **Old-skool soccer updated** Tedious footy, where shooting and passing are toe-curlingly difficult. ★★

## Three Lions

■ Take 2 ■ £30 **Much hyped, sadly flawed** An admirable attempt to give footy a different, measured feel, but the stilted player movement and pace ruin it, a feeling reinforced by the irritating shooting target. ★★★

## Tiger Woods 99 PGA Tour Golf

■ EA Sports ■ £40 **Decent fore-play** Easy to pick up and with lots of eye-pleasing real-life courses, *PGA Tour Golf* delivers a realistic, option-heavy simulation of the game with the grass. The mechanics of play leave a little to be desired, but it's still worth your readies. ★★★★★

## World League Soccer

■ EIDOS ■ £30 **Footy for the addicts** Although there's nothing particularly wrong with this, its emphasis on tactics and statistics makes it far less immediate than the arcade thrills offered by *ISS* and the like. ★★★★★



## Platformers

### Akuji The Heartless

■ EIDOS ■ £40 **Voodoo-inspired puzzler** A creepier *Tomb Raider*-style romp with switch-pushing and ledge-jumping. Plenty of graphical wizardry, but tediously simple. ★★★

### A Bug's Life

■ SCEE ■ £35 **Ant adventures** Crudely animated, repetitive running-jumping-punching walkabout. ★★

### Batman & Robin

■ Acclaim ■ £30 **Lacklustre tie-in** A mixture of various gaming styles that doesn't gel. ★

### Blasto

■ SCEE ■ £30 **Broad-shouldered babe-rescuing with action hero** Limited graphically and gameplay-wise, and difficult for all the wrong reasons. Too slow and too tricky to control. ★★★★★

### Casper

■ SCEE ■ £20 **Movie tie-in** Transparently bad. ★

### Castlevania

■ Konami ■ £30 **Old platforming strand returns** Retro-style platformer based around vampires and things occult, which sacrifices graphics for size. Takes a bit of time to get going, but like any good old-skool 2D running-jumping game, it's involving, exciting and addictive. And look – no cute Italian pipe merchants. ★★★★★

### Crash Bandicoot 2

■ SCEE ■ £40 **Pseudo-3D antics, again** Control a mad marsupial as he runs into the screen, collecting apples and avoiding the bad guys. The linear level format and ease of the levels doesn't help. ★★★★★

### Croc

■ Fox Interactive ■ £30 **Tries to better Mario 64** Lovely-looking cutesy platformer, ruined by odd camera angles, poorly-designed levels and a complete lack of originality. ★★★★★

### Fade To Black

■ EA ■ £20 **Sequel to classic adventure Flashback** Definitely looking its age, but remaining a very commendable mix of puzzles, running and shooting. *Tomb Raider* has since shown how it can be done a great deal better, but this is good fun for the price. ★★★★★

THE GAME THAT RUINED MY LIFE

# Love me, love my Amiga

Using Lemmings as an aphrodisiac? Mark Green will tell you that it doesn't work – just stick with the Rhino horn.

■ Amiga ■ Puzzler ■ 1991 ■ DMA Design



■ It's in that heady period of "adolescence" that a young chap most commonly wants the ground to swallow him up. As if the gradual growth of a vanilla-coloured moustache and a voice that regularly sails towards Aled Jones territory isn't enough, the appearance of "girls" who are "interested" provokes more cheek-redening moments than having your face slapped repeatedly by the school bully.

So, feel pity for the Mark Green of 1992, who found a gorgeous fellow fifth-former expressing a sudden interest in him. It wasn't the first time it had happened, but this was different; after several days of coming to visit me at breaktime, she hadn't kicked me in the nuts or referred to me using the words "tedious" or "mistake". In fact, one heady day in May, she actually invited herself to my house.

I had very little time to decide on what I'd do when

she arrived. During those exciting breaktimes in her company, I'd already managed to exhaust the usual options of blabbering like an idiot and telling jokes that would shame Jim Davidson. A change of tack was needed. And, yes, in my innocence, I decided that computer games could well be the key to that change.

She arrived in my tidied bedroom to find puzzle game *Lemmings* already running on my Commodore Amiga, and me adopting what I youthfully considered to be a provocative pose next to the monitor (involving a slightly skewed stance and half-closed eyelids).

The odd thing was that she actually played for a while, apparently in a state of shock. What wasn't odd was how I felt after breaktime the next day, with my balls turning a familiar shade of black and blue, and the words "tedious" and "mistake" ringing in my ears once again.

**Fighting Force**  
■ EIDOS ■ £30 Attempt to revive '80s-style scrolling beat-'em-up. A load of moves and the ability to use scenery as weapons, but this suffers from offering the same monotonous challenge, level after level. ★★

**Gex 3D: Enter the Gecko**  
■ Take 2 ■ £20 Lizard-lover's plat-fest. It's after *Mario's* crown, but Gex's running, jumping and collecting exploits don't feel as free-roaming as the *Big M*. Still, the level design almost matches Nintendo's, and there are 125 moves at your disposal. ★★

**Heart of Darkness**  
■ Ocean ■ £30 Long-awaited 2D adventure. Gallic 2D platforming epic about a boy and his dog. Frustratingly difficult and descends into trial-and-error far too often. ★★

**Hercules**  
■ SCEE ■ £20 Cute-as-a-button mythology. Disney's difficult, tedious and clichéd 2D running and jumping. ★★

**Jurassic Park The Lost World**  
■ Platinum ■ £20 Dino Spiel. Control your dino trudging across a dull 3D landscape. ★★

**Klonoa**  
■ Namco ■ £35 Cutesy dog jumpery. An incredibly well-designed and intuitive platformer that would be up there with *Mario* if you didn't complete it far too quickly. More involving than your average platform game. ★★

**Lucky Luke**  
■ Ocean ■ £30 A kids' adventure. Aims to look and feel a bit retro, including bonus sections that cautiously tread into other gaming genres. Its cartoony looks and simplicity make it entertaining but short-lived fun. ★★

**Megaman X4**  
■ Virgin ■ £35 Retro running and jumping. Blighted by excessive dialogue and a rather dated feel. ★★

**Ninja: Shadow of Darkness**  
■ EIDOS ■ £25 Here comes the man in black. Another third-person wanderer, with a great range of punches, kicks and magic. Enjoyable, but rather too difficult and with a rather odd camera system. ★★

**Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus**  
■ GT Interactive ■ £30 Puzzly platform game with agile alien. Wander through 2D screens and rescue your friends, solving puzzles along the way. Often infuriating rather than tricky, but neat touches and marvellous graphics make it a long-lasting and enjoyable challenge. ★★

**Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee**  
■ GT Interactive ■ £20 Save cute-but-ugly alien from meat factory. Borrowing heavily from the classic *Flashback*, Abe manages to be genuinely likable and this first game in the series includes several original features. The controls take time to learn but are brilliantly intuitive, and it's absolutely massive, with puzzles that will break your brain. ★★

**ODT**  
■ Psygnosis ■ £20 Disappointing third-person adventure. A *Tomb Raider* clone, ruined by dreadful controls and perverse difficulty. ★★

**Pandemonium 2**  
■ BMG Interactive ■ £30 It's chaos in there. Pseudo-3D platforming with a fixed path, and nothing to challenge you. ★★

**Rascal**  
■ Psygnosis ■ £20 Cute kid antics. A big heap of ill-advised running and jumping. ★★

**Skull Monkeys**  
■ EA ■ £15 Nostalgic platformer. Beautiful graphics that move around quickly, but this is really just a re-creation of retro 2D platformer *Earthworm Jim*. Possibly one for the kids, especially with its incredibly bad jokes. ★★

**Spyro the Dragon**  
■ Platformer ■ SCEE ■ £35 Camp dino platforming. Starring a purple My Little Pony/dinosaur hybrid, this gorgeous – and massive – 3D platformer is aimed at the kids, as the simplistic and dull early levels demonstrate. But the dragon-rescuing missions and platforming theme are well-crafted. ★★

**Tenchu**  
■ Activision ■ £35 Lara Croft and the oriental arts combine. Starring a bloke who gets about with the aid of a grappling hook, this hugely atmospheric kung-fu fighting/exploring game could have been a five-star affair were it not for the glitchy graphics and annoying camera. ★★

**Tombi**  
■ SCEE ■ £35 Porcine platforming power. Some welcome RPG elements, and innovative tasks to carry out add to the enjoyment in this old-school 2D platformer, which relies on secrets and level design to carry it through. ★★

**Shooters**

**Alien Trilogy**  
■ Acclaim ■ £20 Lost in space with Ripley and "friends". Monotonous, with aliens who look like they might fall apart at any minute. ★★

**Apocalypse**  
■ Activision ■ £30 Bruce Willis and some guns. A big, bold, futuristic shoot-'em-up experience, with a decent learning curve and not too many puzzles to interrupt the action. Solid, violent fun. ★★

**Asteroids**  
■ Syrox ■ £20 Shoot rocks, fly, shoot... The original concept hasn't changed, but power-ups and eye-torturing effects make it enjoyable – if repetitive and dated – for '90s kids. ★★

**B-Movie**  
■ GT Interactive ■ £20 '50s-style shoot-the-aliens game. An amusing 3D shoot-'em-up with a mission-based slant and cartoony alien ships flying about. Odd controls and a high difficulty level ensure frustration. ★★

**Colony Wars**  
■ Psygnosis ■ £30 Space opera in the *Wing Commander* tradition. A bit of a looker, and with some fun to be had, but the mission structure – whereby you can't immediately retry a mission you've failed – will soon have you stamping on your controller in frustration. ★★

**Colony Wars: Vengeance**  
■ Psygnosis ■ £35 Epic space battles. Looking gorgeous, this sequel takes you and your spaceship through a variety of first-person missions and all-out explosive battles. It's off-puttingly methodical, but there's enough realism to make *Star Wars* fans wet their pants. ★★

**Doom**  
■ GT Interactive ■ £20 In the beginning... Superb conversion of ID's breakthrough first-person shooter. Just in case you've been wearing a blindfold for the last few years, *Doom* features your squaddie traipsing through big futuristic dungeons, making big bloody holes in whoever he meets. The fact that the graphics are years out of date merely enables the excellent level design and gameplay to shine. ★★

**Duke Nukem**  
■ GT Interactive ■ £20 "You want some?" An outrageously bad-taste first-person shooter, starring a crazed psychopath and numerous topless lovelies. Strong gameplay and with levels that are ingeniously designed around real-life locales, but looking dated already. ★★

**Final Doom**  
■ GT Interactive ■ £30 The original shooter imitates itself. More of the same with a whole load of new levels chucked in. If you're a devotee of *Doom* then you could do worse, but otherwise you should be satisfied with the original. ★★

**Forsaken**  
■ Acclaim ■ £15 Blast bikers. Battle to the death in a scramble to gain the last resources of a condemned planet in this tough tunnel-and-hovercraft based shoot-'em-up. The controls are tricky, but the look of the thing will keep you persevering through its moodily lit corridors. ★★

**MDK**  
■ Interplay ■ £30 Mind-bending blasting. A curious mix of behind-the-hero walking about and first-person shooting, starring a man with a head like a crab's hand. Incredibly original, with well thought out levels and a suitably frenetic pace. ★★

**Nuclear Strike**  
■ EA ■ £30 Helicopters! Guns! And so on. Several vehicles and missions, along with a strategy approach necessitated by limited fuel and armour. Ultimately tedious. ★★

**Point Blank**  
■ SCEE ■ £35 Grab your gun. Only the Japanese could create a shooting gallery featuring ninjas and piranhas, stick in a four-player mode and still ensure that it includes the most weirdly addictive gameplay ever. Get your mates and some beer round, and laugh your socks off. ★★

**R-Types**  
■ Virgin ■ £30 Classic scrolling. *R-Type* parts one and two; emulated rather than merely converted, and therefore closer than close to the originals. Lovely level designs, perfect power-ups and unbridled addictiveness, all squeezed into your little portable TV. ★★

**Retro Force**  
■ Psygnosis ■ £35 Aliens attack. Old-skool vertical shoot-'em-up that's just plain dull. ★★

**Small Soldiers**  
■ EA ■ £35 Movie-based tin-men exploits. Decent looking and well crafted, but this third-person shooter just isn't much fun. ★★

**Strategy/God**

**Command & Conquer**  
■ Virgin ■ £20 The original real-time strategy game. A complicated but accessible point-'n'-click war sim, where it's up to you to manage all your resources and decide where and when to send men to their deaths. It's extremely popular, solid and involving but, sadly, it's also starting to date. The design of the levels and speed of the action make it a bit of a bargain, though, so we advise you to get it in. ★★

**Command & Conquer: Red Alert**  
■ Virgin ■ £30 And again... The sequel to C&C has a number of improvements, including better graphics and a brilliant, often neglected link-up game. If you don't come to the massacre with a mouse, then knock a star off the score for the difficulty you'll have controlling your tiny warriors, but otherwise this is a fine title with loads of missions. ★★

**Wargames**  
■ EA ■ £40 Action-orientated strategy game. The missions are simple and limited in number, but this is a worthy action-based strategy alternative to C&C. The wide range of vehicles and the capture-the-flag two-player game will keep you laughing as you watch men die. ★★

**Warhammer: Dark Omen**  
■ EA ■ £40 Fantasy role-playing. This suffers at the hands of its controls and its confusing nature. Having to repeat missions will get on your nerves. ★★

**RPGs**

**Alundra**  
■ Psygnosis ■ £20 Utterly puzzly. An absorbing plot married with an enticing arcade feel. The emphasis is as much on moving and jumping about as it is on solving difficult, but logical, puzzles. ★★

**Breath of Fire III**  
■ Virgin ■ £25 Turn-based isometric role-player. Mill about a pseudo-3D landscape, chatting to people and solving puzzles. An interesting story (you must combine genes to give dragons special powers) makes this involving, if a little slow. ★★

**Final Fantasy VII**  
■ SCEE ■ £45 150 hours of epic adventure. Takes the usual RPG staples (moving around a landscape, chatting to locals, solving puzzles) and tarts them up with cut-scenes that mix seamlessly with the moving characters, adding exciting conflicts and a story that will make sure you stay emotionally involved. Even the linear plot and apparently random battles can't mar this near-perfect adventure experience. ★★

**The Granstream Saga**  
■ SCEE ■ £35 Pedestrian role-player. A promising plot that reveals a set of obvious and simplistic puzzles. ★★

**Megaman Legends RPG**  
■ Virgin ■ £35 Flavour of Japan. The long-awaited 3D update of *Megaman's* '80s platform/shooting adventures. The RPG element provides depth, but the repetitive big-robot shooting could put you off. ★★

**Monkey Hero**  
■ Take 2 ■ £35 Adventuring monkey magic. Role-playing, fighting and puzzling huddled together, but including far too much switch-flipping and object-moving. ★★

**Wild Arms**  
■ SCEE ■ £35 Huge role-play adventure. A strong RPG, eclipsed by the shadow of Squaresoft's seminal classic *Final Fantasy VII* (see above). It suffers from *Final Fantasy's* random battle syndrome and the slick-but-retro-looking visuals strip away much of the feeling of involvement, but it's still absorbing. ★★

**Adventures**

**Broken Sword 2**  
■ SCEE ■ £35 Crime-solving antics. Point and click to solve the mystery. This often descends into over-long conversations, but it's still unexpectedly interesting and amusing. ★★

**Discworld 2**  
■ Psygnosis ■ £30 Terry Pratchett's characters reach your PlayStation. Unfortunate lack of plot and challenge. ★★

**Resident Evil 2**  
■ Capcom ■ £35 Scary sequel to the original gore-fest. The ability to control two characters is gimmicky, and the puzzles are similar to the first incarnation, but *RE2* is better than the original in all other respects. The improved script and acting (and the wildly increased zombie count) will scare your skin off, and the cut-scenes, once again, are the highlight of a polished and creepy package that will have you scared to be alone at night. ★★

**Puzzlers**

**Bust-A-Move 2**  
■ Acclaim ■ £20 You'll forget that sleep exists! The simplest and most addictive game since some Russian bloke had an idea while mucking about with his kids' Lego. All you need to do is match the blobs to clear the screen – it's simple, but the two-player mode will keep you and a mate up all night; try one-player and you risk losing every friend you ever had. ★★

## THE CHOICEST GAMES AVAILABLE ON THE SECOND HAND SHELVES

### Bust-A-Move 4

■ Taito ■ £30 **Bubble-bursting brilliance** Fantastically addictive puzzle game, where the simple – yet infuriating – aim is to match coloured bubbles. It's as easy to pick up and painfully compulsive as previous versions. The bubble-link feature makes for faster and more frenetic play, and the Story Mode levels add some novel bits, too. Probably not worth a purchase at full price if you already own an earlier version, though. ★★★★★

### Devil Dice

■ SCE ■ £35 **Cuboidal conundrum** This beautifully presented 3D dice-based version of dominoes isn't for the casual gamer, but it's tough to put down once you get your head around the astonishing speed of the thing and the utterly soul-numbing creepiness of the central evil pixie characters. ★★★★★

### Kula World

■ SCE ■ £35 **Indecently addictive puzzler** Ball-rolling-impossibly-on-a-floating-maze game. As head-bending as it sounds, but once you're sucked in you'll be hooked, thanks to the well-designed controls and ingeniously tricky levels. ★★★★★

### Lemmings Compilation

■ Psygnosis ■ £20 **Multiple midget mayhem** Click on green-haired little men to help them avoid traps and get safely home. Alternatively, just scream at the screen in frustration. All a bit dated looking these days. ★★

### Live Wire

■ Sci ■ £30 **Dot-to-dot dullness** Compete squares to colourise tiles on a board. ★

### Sentinel Returns

■ Psygnosis ■ £10 **Classic '80s tactics** Absorb the Sentinel, who sits on the highest point on the 3D checkerboard landscape. A successful retro update at long last, with the graphics kept deliberately low key to maintain the feel of the original. ★★★★★

### Shanghai: True Valor

■ Activision ■ £35 **Snap drag-on** Awful Chinese matching pairs-style game. ★

### Super Puzzle Fighter II

■ Virgin ■ £30 **Superb Tetris-style puzzling** Mix *Tetris* and *Bust-A-Move*, add some *Street Fighter* kiddie characters and you have one of the best puzzlers of all time, with successful moves affecting an on-screen battle. It's insanely addictive in two-player mode, but try one-player and you'll have the family banging on your bedroom door, wondering where on Earth you've been for the past month. ★★★★★

### Worms

■ Ocean ■ £20 **Multi-player battle game with warring invertebrates** Tries too hard to be cute and different, and it offers very little to enjoy in one-player mode. ★★



### Party

### Bomberman World

■ Sony/Hudsonsoft ■ £35 **Bomb-chucking maze game** The isometric 3D version of this classic is tedious and unoriginal in one-player mode, but – thankfully – as addictive as ever in multi-player battle mode. ★★

### Poy Poy 2

■ Konami ■ £40 **Multi-player chuck-a-thon** Run around, pick up stuff and throw it at your opponents. Funny – especially with friends – but ultimately too confusing. ★★



### Retro

### Arcade's Greatest Hits: The Atari Collection 2

■ Midway ■ £40 **Retro compilation** *Millipede*, *Road Blasters*, *Paperboy*, *Crystal Castles*, *Marble Madness* and *Gauntlet*, but none of them holds up well in an age when you need to possess massive breasts to become a gaming legend. ★★

### Frogger

■ JMI ■ £20 **Update of early game** You're a frog. Cross the road. Dull. ★★

### Namco Museum 1

■ Namco ■ £30 **Say hello to Galaga, Pacman, Pole Position and Rally X** The first of the five-strong *Namco Museum* collection is the best, and might provide nostalgic relief for some, but otherwise the games are far too simple to be worth all that money. ★★



### Flight sims

### Ace Combat 2

■ Namco ■ £30 **Aeroplane antics** Your chance to fly your very own mechanical sky-bird on a series of combat missions. Fun for a while, but liable to bore you quickly. ★★

### Air Combat

■ Namco ■ £30 **You can be Tom Cruise** Namco has never been able to pull off flight sims as successfully as it can racers. This mission-based arcade-style flyer is fun for a while, but becomes boring in the long run. ★★



### Misc

### Music Creation for the PlayStation

■ Codemasters ■ £35 **Custom-build your own techno** Create your own choons by manipulating little chunks of music and pictures. Too difficult for novices and too insulating for music professionals. ★★

### PaRappa the Rapper

■ SCE ■ £15 **Puppy love songs** It's time for you to join the rapping dog with "attitude". A selection of fantastic tunes make this brilliantly funny and completely original. You'll finish it in an afternoon, but it's still something that you should have tons of fun with. ★★★★★

### Spice World

■ SCE ■ £20 **The fab five... er, four** Choreograph cartoon Spices to some unsurprisingly grating music. ★

### Super Pang

■ Ocean ■ £30 **Ages-old bubble buster returns** The original game about busting bubbles into smaller and smaller version of themselves, updated for the PlayStation and losing none of its charm in the process. A prime example of simplicity disguising addictive gameplay. ★★



### Fighters

### Battle Arena Toshinden

■ SCE ■ **The PSX's first beat-'em-up** Looking dated, but this is an enjoyable (if rather limited) fighter nonetheless, especially now you can get hold of it at this Platinum price. ★★

### Bushido Blade

■ SCE ■ **Pugilism for purists** Using trad weapons, and with characters who drop to the floor after just one hit, this is the beat-'em-up for purists. Once you've played other, more cartoony, scrappers it takes some time to adjust to fighting this way, but there are rewards a-plenty if you persevere. ★★★★★

### Street Fighter Collection

■ Virgin ■ **Triple whammy** Two *Super Street Fighters* and a re-jigged *Street Fighter Alpha*. There's a selection of solid fighters, but overall the game lacks *Tekken's* slick and addictive nature. ★★

### Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha

■ Capcom ■ **Another in the beat-'em-up series** Conversion of the first 3D SF coin-op, with loads of extra bits chucked in. Excellent speed and good backgrounds, as well the pleasingly familiar moves and style, make it every bit as intuitive as its predecessors. ★★★★★



### Racers

### Phat Air Racer

■ Funsoft ■ **Horrendous snowboarding "simulation"** The controls are all over the place, it's too jerky, and it suffers from appallingly poor graphics. ★★

### Rage Racer

■ Namco ■ **Arcade racing in your house** The third in the *Ridge Racer* series is speedy, moodily good looking and option-laden. This is the definitive racer if you like your cars a bit more "Woah, woah, whoahh, woaaaaahhh!" than *Gran Turismo*, with powersliding and rocketing down straights at 100mph par for the course. Let down only by the lack of a split-screen option, but the link-up mode more than makes up for that. Soon to be surpassed by *Ridge Racer Type 4*, due out for PlayStation in April. See page 88 of this issue for a full review of R4. ★★★★★

### Ridge Racer Revolution

■ Platinum ■ **Second in the racing series** Improves upon its prequel *Ridge Racer* no end, with a better track, faster speeds, enhanced handling and some gorgeously-rendered scenery. The racing that results is fast, satisfying and exceedingly difficult to master, thanks especially to opposition cars that are only too happy to overtake you with every minor mistake you make. ★★★★★



### Sports

### Actua Ice Hockey

■ Gremlin ■ **Minority sport for armoured psychos** Surprisingly slow and somewhat unresponsive, but its saving grace is its easy-to-pick-up control system. ★★

### Tennis Arena

■ Ubisoft ■ **Comedy tennis antics** Good, but manages to offer nothing new over the range of tennis sims that are already out there. As it jettisons a great deal of the more complicated tactics for simplicity's sake, it's left with little depth. ★★

### Total NBA '98

■ SCE ■ **Get in the hoop** A sim that requires a large amount of determination to both learn and succeed, thanks to its selection of intelligent computer-controlled opponents. The impressive create-a-player mode, a whole range of great options and total control over your players, make the game addictive and surprisingly beautiful to watch. ★★★★★

### VR Baseball

■ Interplay ■ **Run out** Looks quite nice, but there's nothing on offer in this bat-'n'-ball sim to really hold your attention. ★★



### Platformers

### Bubble Bobble 2

■ Virgin ■ **Bubbly sequel** Old-skool bubble-blowing and platforming with tiny dinosaurs Bub and Bob. Still addictive, but a little too simplistic for today's audience. ★★★



### Shooters

### Loaded

■ Gremlin ■ **Mass murder quest** Unfortunately this bloke-bloodbath is actually nothing more than a boringly mindless shooter. ★★

### Reboot

■ EA ■ **Destroy a dictator with hoverboard help** Interesting take on the frequently repetitive shoot-'em-up theme. Well-thought out levels and graphics create a genuine sense of atmosphere, which is let down by the game's high degree of repetition and unfortunately poor controls. ★★

### Viper

■ Ocean ■ **Mission-based gun-play** Incredibly repetitive and ridiculously easy. ★★



### Strategy/God

### Constructor

■ Acclaim ■ **Build yourself an urban empire** Point and click to build up houses and keep your tenants happy. You have a host of enemies, rivals and mad hippie-types to contend with as you go along. Complex, comprehensive and cool. ★★★★★

### Global Domination

■ Psygnosis ■ **Brain-drain wargame** Rather difficult to get to grips with, but it's ultimately satisfying. ★★

### Treasures of the Deep

■ SCE ■ **Underwater exploration** The lack of levels is compensated for by the sharply rising difficulty curve and a wide variety of both weapons and missions. The underwater aspect of the whole thing is a bit of a gimmick, though. ★★

### X-Com: Terror From The Deep

■ MicroProse ■ **Turn-based wander** Head into the lair of sea-dwelling aliens and kick their asses. Successful takey-turney style, but often frustrating and a little dated. ★★



### RPGs

### Diablo

■ EA ■ **Medieval role-playing** Unimaginative wandering around, fighting and chatting with whoever you meet. Dull. ★★



### Retro

### Bubble Bobble/Rainbow Islands

■ SCE ■ **Old-skool plat-fest** These jumpy multi-screen action games starring the bijou Bub and Bob don't stand up well against blue hedgehogs and Italian plumbers. ★★

### BUY THIS

## Carnage Heart

■ Strategy ■ SCE



■ Developed by crazed Japanese code shop Art Dink, *Carnage Heart* seems commercially doomed from the word go. A 58-page manual is the first nail in its coffin, swiftly followed by a 30-minute tutorial disc that you have to play to stand the remotest chance of comprehending the game's structure. Fight your way through all that, though, and you'll discover an involving, engrossing and comprehensive battle game. No, really. It's great.

If you remember playing with a Big Trak, you'll be right at home here – program your "OverKill Engine" tank for all of the necessary offensive and defensive possibilities, then send it into the fray. The graphics are functional, the sound won't blow your ears off, but the nail-biting tension as you watch your personalised tank routines being put to the test is worth the hours spent with your nose in the manual.

### DON'T BUY THIS

## Croc

■ Platformer ■ Fox Interactive



■ If we had to pick one *Mario 64* clone to demonstrate how 3D platformers aren't something that any old Tom, Dick or Harry can chuck out in a lunch break, we'd pick *Croc*.

Argonaut, the game's developer, couldn't even get the "3D" bit right. The irritating crocodile star (who screams "Wahool!" and "Wahey!" at every opportunity) can wander freely, but each level is actually just a thinly disguised corridor, guiding the eponymous reptile on his merry way towards the linear map's next room.

In its wisdom, Argonaut has saddled *Croc* with rotational controls. Getting about means painstakingly pointing the hapless crocodile in the direction you want to go, then pushing "forward". The punishment for failing sees your little green friend jumping limply into the air and spilling his hard-won collection of diamonds. Fingernails dragged down a blackboard are a less irritating prospect.

## PC Top 20

What new PC games are people finding hard to resist this month?



**1 (-) Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri** ■ Strategy ■ EA ■ £35  
**Build a new beginning** Re-create Earth's society with a host of resources and several clicks of your mouse. It looks dull and it's highly derivative, without a genuine feeling of discovery, but the new additions – including undulating terrain and new technologies – and the huge scope for learning the game's nuances, save it. It offers an endless challenge and it's full of neat details that'll keep you on the edge of your seat. ★★★★★



**2 (1) Sim City 3000** ■ Strategy ■ EA ■ £35  
**City-'em-up** Initially disappointing, but lurking underneath the familiar features are some far more intuitive controls, and the joy of seeing your creation grow. None of the battles you'll see in so many strategy titles, but still old-fashioned fun. ★★★★★



**3 (2) Delta Force** ■ Shooter ■ EA ■ £40  
**Gung-ho army squad action** Realistic simulation of battles with a mission-based structure. Although it is possible to embark on a crazed killing spree, true pleasure comes from indulging in the tricky tasks proper. ★★★★★



**4 (5) Half-Life** ■ Shooter ■ Sierra ■ £35  
**Stunningly atmospheric first-person shooter** Built around a terrifyingly believable environment and logical puzzles, and incorporating mind-bogglingly intelligent bad guys and a decent amount of gorgeous all-out alien-blasting. ★★★★★



**5 (3) Baldur's Gate** ■ RPG ■ Virgin ■ £35  
**Dungeons and dragons** Control a motley band of thieves, elves and wizards in this old-fashioned role-playing game. The controls take time to get the hang of, but it's choc-a-block with sub-quests, exciting real-time combat and some impressive isometric 3D graphics. ★★★★★



**6 (-) A Bug's Life** ■ Platformer ■ Disney Interactive ■ £35  
**Ant-based adventures** Faithful in part to the movie it's based on, with 3D graphics that initially impress, but the crude animation and repetitiveness of the running, jumping and punching gameplay will fail to enthral even the most easily pleased nipper. ★

**7 (-) Resident Evil 2** ■ RPG ■ Virgin ■ £35  
**Zombie-filled scares** Shoot zombies and collect objects on a quest to get to the bottom of the sinister G-Virus outbreak. Sufficiently scary and loaded with atmosphere, but the awkward fixed camera obstructs the gameplay. ★★★

**8 (10) Worms** ■ Party ■ Sold Out ■ £5  
**Multi-player battle game with warring invertebrates** Tries a little too hard to be amusing, cute and different, and offers very little in one-player. With friends it's funnier, but it's still an unsatisfying experience. ★★★

**9 (20) Theme Hospital** ■ Strategy ■ EA ■ £13  
**Ailment-based real-time strategy** Assume the role of hospital manager in a quest to build the perfect emergency ward and cure your patients of comedy illnesses. Interesting at first, but gradually becomes more and more repetitive. And it just isn't funny. ★★★★★

**10 (7) Combat Flight Simulator** ■ Simulation ■ Microsoft ■ £40  
**Pilot historical planes** The free-flight and quick-combat options cater for arcade fans, while the missions and campaigns will bring a smile to the face of the die-hard plane freak. Not much improved over the original, but still a very fine sim. ★★★★★

**11 (8) Tomb Raider III** ■ Platformer ■ Eidos ■ £35  
**Exploring encore** A tendency toward sudden death, coupled with the same inadequate controls and frustrating, difficult puzzles. But wait! The intelligent level design and gob-smackingly gorgeous graphics we've come to rely on are present and correct. ★★★★★

**12 (4) Worms Armageddon** ■ Party ■ Hasbro ■ £30  
**Turn-based slap-'em-up** Destroy your opponent's pink 'uns with an arsenal of serious and comedic weapons. As in earlier incarnations, it loses much in one-player, but the flawless controls and eye-popping visuals create a multi-player gem. ★★★★★

**13 (9) FIFA 99** ■ Sports ■ EA ■ £35  
**Long-running official footy update** All the visual frills, but scoring goals is too easy – especially with the speedy players – and the programmers don't seem to care about footy. More suited to beginners than anyone looking for satisfying goal-mouth adventures. ★★★

**14 (11) The Simpsons: Virtual Springfield** ■ Adventure ■ Fox ■ £20  
**Novelty cartoon adventures** A splendid version of the funniest TV show on Earth, with all your favourite characters putting in an appearance and a plot that thankfully reflects the intelligence and humour of the show. ★★★★★

**15 (-) FA Premier League Football** ■ Sports ■ EA ■ £35  
**Soccer management** Including both Scottish and English divisions, and giving you plenty of coaching and business matters to deal with, this is the most realistic football management title out there – your decisions really affect the games. ★★★★★

**16 (15) Star Wars: Rogue Squadron** ■ Shooter ■ Activision ■ £35  
**Star Wars-inspired gunfire** Mixes first- and third-person, and enables you to pilot a variety of ships over an assortment of Star Wars-themed levels. Nothing more than a simplistic blaster, and too easy to offer lasting thrills. ★★★

**17 (16) Age of Empires** ■ Strategy ■ Microsoft ■ £25  
**Ancient battles** Build detailed empires and armies and send them to their deaths. Age of Empires is packed with ideas and easy to get into, although the number of niggling Microsoft-style flaws may put some people off. ★★★★★

**18 (17) Microsoft Flight Simulator 98** ■ Simulator ■ Microsoft ■ £40  
**Hugely realistic flying** Plenty of craft to fly and landscapes rendered in breathtaking detail, with a worthy selection of missions to get your teeth into. You'll need to own a killer PC to get the best from it, though. ★★★★★

**19 (-) Colin McRae Rally** ■ Racing ■ Codemasters ■ £35  
**Against-the-clock driving** A departure from the usual racing game, with your rally car rattling around countryside tracks, and time and damage your only opponents. The variety of terrain and responsive controls give real driving feedback. ★★★★★

**20 (-) Theme Park** ■ Strategy ■ EA ■ £15  
**Create your own funfair** Amusement park management in a Sim City-style. It possesses surprising depth and contains a fair number of belly-laughers, but managing your tourists and attractions can become as flat as week-old candyfloss. ★★★★★

## Also on sale... Racers

**Carmageddon 2: Carpocalypse Now** ■ Sales Curve ■ £30  
**Bloody car action** The controversy added road-rager is back once again. With the game structure improved to include races, deathmatches and some interesting power-ups, it's a pleasing time-waster. ★★★

**DethKarz** ■ Infogrames ■ £35  
**More space-age racing** Four worlds and 12 circuits, brilliantly designed in a rollercoaster vein, with tons of weaponry. Unfortunately the amount of skidding about makes it unnecessarily tricky. ★★★

**Mad Trax** ■ Black Friar ■ £30  
**Futuristic bottle-necking** Bad handling, bad opponents, bad collision-detection, bad trip. ★★

**Motorcross Madness 3D** ■ Microsoft ■ £35  
**Motorbikes and dirt tracks** A huge array of racing modes and more tracks than you can shake a Kawasaki at. No two-player mode, but reasonable racing thrills. ★★★★★

**Pod Gold** ■ Ubisoft ■ £10  
**Future racing... again** The circuits are designed to make life as difficult as possible, but there are plenty of tracks and vehicles, a multi-player option and a budget price. ★★★

**Powerslide** ■ GT Interactive ■ £20  
**Rough terrain driving** Looking lovely and moving like a gerbil on speed, this roughshod racer behaves realistically, but can be frustrating and takes too short a time to complete. ★★★

**Redline Racer** ■ Ubisoft ■ £13  
**Motorbike madness** Plenty of tracks and a pleasing number of opponents in this speedy, attractive superbike racer. Happily, the racing is more than just holding down accelerate, as staying on your bike requires a fair amount of skill. ★★★★★

**Viper Racing** ■ Sierra ■ £35  
**Screaming sports cars** Over-realistic car mechanics give way to some frighteningly comprehensive racing, that's added to by network multi-player options and individual tweaking. ★★★

**X Games Pro Boarder** ■ EA Sports ■ £40  
**Funky frozen freestyling** The graphics don't look particularly special, but there are enough crazy moves and tree-high flips to keep you amused. The multi-player suffers, though. ★★★

## Sports

**Actua Tennis** ■ Gremlin ■ £20  
**Strawberries and cream sim** Packed with stats and gorgeous motion capture, but the power-bar sacrifices the directional control that you really need. ★★★

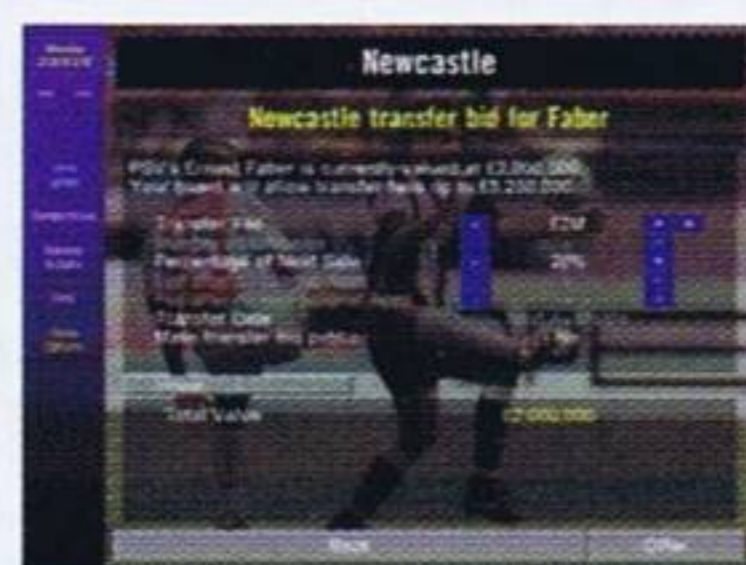
**Championship Manager 2** ■ Eidos ■ £10  
**Take your team to the top** This is more attractive at its bargain price, but looking a little out-of-date now, and still far too easy. Nevertheless, it's engrossing and packed with neat details. Be aware that the sequel is due, though. ★★★★★

## Watch out for

Young, ambitious, recently released and destined for Top 20 appearances.



**Civilization: Call to Power** ■ Strategy ■ Activision ■ £35  
**Populace production** Nurture a society from 4000BC to the future. Call to Power shuns graphical excess in favour of greater complexity and a lasting challenge, so building cities and fighting wars take place in immense detail, and require intense planning. ★★★★★



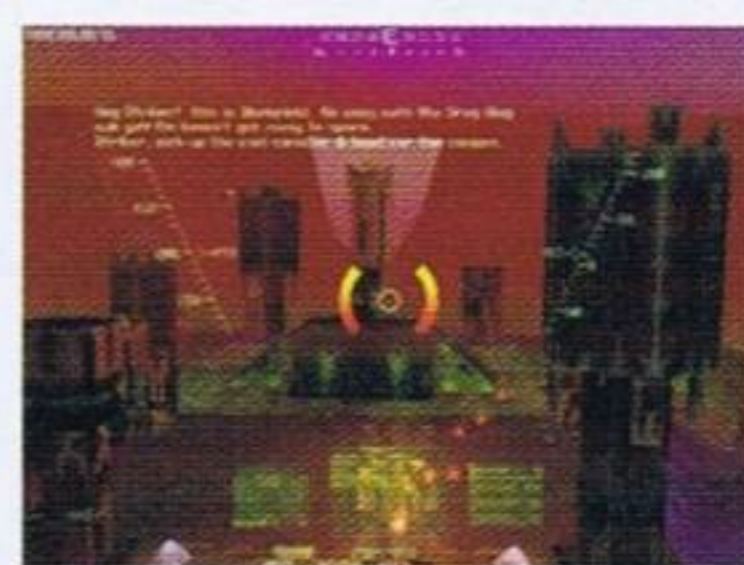
**Championship Manager 3** ■ Sports ■ Eidos ■ £30  
**Coach Huddle** No fancy graphics, but the 16 global leagues, 35,000 players and minute details make this the definitive management title. There's a sensible control system and your decisions affect every match. The opposition might as well hang up their boots. ★★★★★



**TOCA 2 Touring Car** ■ Racing ■ Codemasters ■ £35  
**Realistic revs** Even with 15 cars jostling for position in front of you, TOCA 2 never threatens to look anything but stunning. The realistic handling makes free-wheeling over the varied courses an unrivalled pleasure, and the added support races supply extra value-for-money. ★★★★★



**Close Combat III: The Russian Front** ■ Strategy ■ Microsoft ■ £35  
**Montgomery-'em-up** Bark orders at military units, watch them advance over enemy lines, then listen to their horrifying death screams. More immediate than the usual tile-based war sims, this is easy to get to grips with, yet complex enough to satisfy. ★★★★★



**Tellurian Defence** ■ Shooter ■ Psygnosis ■ £20  
**First-person galactic blaster** Unfortunately this offering's liable to be instantly forgettable. ★

## FA Premier League Football Manager 99

EA EA £20 **Be Glenn Hoddie, but better** Including both Scottish and English divisions, and with plenty of coaching and business matters to deal with, this is the most realistic management title out there - your decisions really affect the games. ★★★★★

## Football World Manager

Ubisoft EA £30 **Ball-and-net-based management** A cornucopia of clubs, a clear and easy-to-use interface, and not too much confusing financial rubbish. A little difficult to make out what's going on, though. ★★

## The Golf Pro

Empire EA £30 **Novel golf sim** A new swing system, makes play difficult, though it gets easier with practice. The scenery in both courses will make you want to bring a picnic to the game, and the ball physics are superb. ★★★★★

## Jimmy White's 2: Cueball

Virgin EA £30 **Snooker loopy nuts are we** Superb snooker and pool sim, with a highly playable game engine, and the added bonus of wacky darts, draughts and fruit machine sub-games. Check out *Arcade's* big night out with Jimmy White on page 68 of this issue. ★★★★★

## Links LS '99

EIDOS EA £35 **Golf for it!** The visuals are lovely, but it takes time to draw the scenery and - predictably - *Links* uses the same power-bar system as all other golf games. Still, with four courses, eight players and 30 modes of play, who's complaining? ★★★★★

## NBA Live 99

EA EA £35 **Ball-in-the-basket fun** It's too easy, mainly because of the limited computer opposition, but *NBA Live 98* never pretends to be accurate basketball. It controls well, looks fantastic and provides loads of options. ★★★★★

## World Cup '98

EA EA £10 **Licensed kickabout** Judged by graphics and licensing (as football games often are), this one wins hands down. But, while improving little on *Road to the World Cup*, it does enable you to play smooth and exciting games (with or without the easy-to-pull-off fancy moves), and there's even a limited strategy element. Goal! ★★★★★



## Platformers

## Heretic II

Activision EA £20 **3D medieval marauding** A traditional three-dimensional shooter, that sticks the main character on the screen, shoves in a set of offensive and defensive spell-casting, and makes sure that controls, damaging weapons and graphics are all in place. ★★★★★

## Rayman

Ubisoft EA £13 **French vertical platforms** Unsatisfying, over simple, retro-style platforming. ★★



## Shooters

## Blood II: The Chosen

GT Interactive EA £25 **More first-person bloodiness** 3D wandering with some of the most violent and amusing blood-spillage this side of American wrestling. A strong story and good variety in the map layouts. ★★

## Darklight Conflict

EA Classics EA £15 **Alien antagonism** Strap yourself into a Repton fighter and do battle with the Ovons. *Darklight's* a lightweight blast, aided by intuitive controls and satisfying explosive effects. ★★

## Forsaken

Acclaim EA £13 **Almost Quake - almost certainly better** One of the most intense 3D games you'll have on your PC, *Forsaken* wastes no time at all dumping you in a room full of droids, missiles, gun emplacements and whizz-bang special effects, and it features the best tunnel-based combat action and 16-player deathmatch on offer since time began. ★★★★★

## Future Cop: LAPD

EA EA £20 **Prophetic police drama** Satisfyingly large levels to sink your crim-catching skills into, but too instinctive, with little scope for challenge or any variation from mindless shooting. ★★

## Jedi Knight

Activision EA £15 **Classic Force-d 3D** A timely re-release for this exciting *Star Wars Quake*-a-like. The Force itself crops up in a surprisingly meaty role, and the level designs and puzzles have had some genuine thought put into them. For both fans and enemies of the film. ★★★★★

## Klingon Honor Guard

MicroProse EA £20 **Pasty-headed Doom-style exploits** A full complement of niggling factors in this *Star Trek*-based 3D walking shooter - such as suddenly completing levels without realising you were anywhere near the end of a mission - are negated by the sheer intensity of the big-weapon shooting action. ★★★★★

## Quake II

Activision EA £20 **Seminal first-person baddie-beater** More of the same, but that's more of one of the finest games in the world. *Quake II* is best played over a network and offers bigger, better (although not cleverer) monsters, massive guns, improved level designs and a customisable game engine. ★★★★★

## Rainbow Six

Red Storm EA £30 **Stealthy first-person hostage action** Starring SAS-style combat heroes, this is a third-person shooter set in real-life terrorist situations. The healthy dose of realism works well and the overwhelming amount of strategy makes it more cerebral than your usual shooter. ★★★★★

## Shadow Warrior

EIDOS EA £13 **First-person flop** Superfluous gore and unreasonable difficulty. ★

## Shogo: Mobile Armour Division

Microids EA £25 **Big robots** A first-person shoot-'em-up distinguished by its animé stylings and the opportunity to dress up as a robot. Getting about in a hulking great metal suit is easier than you'd think and the visuals perfectly complement the intelligent level design. ★★★★★

## Sin

Activision EA £20 **Traditional shooting action** The graphics of *Quake II*, the mission style of *GoldenEye*, and the big guns of *Duke Nukem*. Unfortunately, *Half-Life's* already done it all better. ★★

## Spec Ops: Rangers Lead the Way

Gametek EA £30 **First-person war sim** Complete five separate missions where stealth and the need to learn tactics are vital. The graphics and AI are top-notch, but you'll need a top-notch PC to go with them. ★★

## Terminal Velocity

Activision EA £5 **Classic close encounters** Whizz over 3D landscapes shooting at spaceships. Good fun at the time, this jaunt through over simplistic landscapes has dated, but it's still fun. ★★

## Thief: The Dark Project

EIDOS EA £35 **Medieval sneak-'em-up** A first-person shooter with all the room-crashing and gun-toting replaced by *Metal Gear Solid*-style sneakiness and tip-toeing. Atmospheric, but unabsorbing. ★★

## Trespasser

EA EA £40 **Disappointing dino shooter** Shooting dinosaurs is difficult, dull and depressing. ★

## Unreal

GT Interactive EA £20 **Doom clonestastic** This has to be the fastest, most enjoyable *Doom* clone available for the PC to date. It's packed with luscious scripted moments, a fully pumped-up atmosphere, strictly intelligent denizens and enough eye candy to rot your lashes, although the slightly poor weapons do sometimes give the feeling that you are defending your corner with nothing more dangerous than a pair of curling tongs. ★★★★★

## Wing Commander: Prophecy Classic

EA Classics EA £13 **Space battling** As your brave space pilots face an unidentified alien threat, *Prophecy* presents less monotonous video footage and more 3D shooting than we'd expect from this occasionally tedious series. At its best, the game looks like a particularly thrilling episode of your favourite sci-fi TV programmes, with only the odd on-screen stats display spoiling an otherwise perfect space opera. ★★★★★



## Strategy/God

## Baldies

Sold Out EA £5 **Silly god game** Build up tribe of baldies and wipe out your enemies. Plenty of levels, but repetitive. ★★

## Caesar III

Sierra EA £35 **Roman-based strategy antics** There are two ways to play this: either as a straight *Sim City* rip-off where you build your own empire, or as a mission-based Roman Emperor-'em-up. It's complicated, and the amount of stuff you have to do may bring on a "Caesar", but stick at it and you'll find it involving and addictive. ★★★★★

## Cannon Fodder

Sold Out EA £5 **Soldiering on** A real-time-strategy title, reduced in scale. The controls make guiding your men across the World War battlefield intuitive, but not easy. Slightly dated. ★★

## Command & Conquer Classic

EA Classics EA £15 **War veteran** Pick an army, point and click to build up resources and guide your troops into battle. It's been surpassed, but it's ideal for real-time-strategy virgins. ★★★★★

## Dark Reign

Activision EA £10 **Another futuristic battle sim** The future-bound setting of this real-time battle control title, the intelligence of the missions and the clear interface make for a pleasurable experience. At this price, you can't go wrong, even if the visuals and sound leave a little to be desired. ★★★★★

## Deo Gratias

Cryo Interactive EA £40 **Be God and run your own universe** Confusing interface and - considering that you're running the universe - very little feeling of being in control. ★★

## Dungeon Keeper

EA Classics EA £13 **Your very own dungeon** Run your own murky torture chamber in this strategy-laden epic. Difficult at first, especially with the mixture of game modes and cameras, but the sense of humour and finely-tuned gameplay will eventually get you hooked. ★★★★★

## Dune 2000

EA EA £20 **The granddad of strategy** This new build-your-own-empire game houses 27 levels and three "tribes" to choose from, but it's too simplistic to be great fun. ★★

## Gangsters

EIDOS EA £40 **Married to the mob** This '30s-set mob-'em-up combines the best bits of both *Sim City*-style construction games and turn-based strategy titles. Tricky controls, but rewardingly complex. ★★

## Jeff Wayne's War Of The Worlds

GT Interactive EA £20 **No one could have believed that** marrying C&C-style combat with a *Risk*-like map could have had such dull consequences. ★★

## Magic & Mayhem

Virgin EA £20 **Swords and sorcery in strategy shocker** Featuring knights and wizards, this real-time strategy gives you a great spell-casting, creature-creating environment. The main characters are well-designed, the story sucks you in, and the 30 maps are realistic enough to make you feel you're there. ★★★★★

## MechCommander

MicroProse EA £20 **Real-time strategy, management and big robots** Based on the *BattleTech* board game, but a strategic step away from the action of previous *Mech Warrior* games, *Commander* boasts clearly laid-out logistics, intricate detail and superb level design. ★★★★★

## Populous: The Beginning

EA EA £30 **Become omnipotent** You're God! Build huts, breed warriors and braves, get new spells to alter the land, fight and conquer enemies, and all that. Essentially the original all over again, but it's a lot easier and, of course, it's all 3D. You'll be playing for hours. ★★★★★

## Railroad Tycoon II

Take 2 EA £30 **Thermos-'em-up** An improvement on the original, with both financial management and train direction given more emphasis at the expense of tedious railway construction. There's a pot full of time zones and trains to play with, and the range of options leaves you with scope to customise the game. Chuffing great. ★★★★★

## The Settlers III

Blue Byte EA £35 **Sim City-style strategy** This threequel enables you to build cities for a variety of distinct races, and then resource-manage until you're blue in the face. The combat isn't up to scratch, but it's beautifully designed and fine-tuned to an almost painful degree. ★★★★★

## Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri

EA EA £35 **A new beginning** Rebuild Earth's society with a host of resources and several clicks of your mouse. Highly derivative, and without a genuine feeling of discovery, but the new additions - including undulating terrain and new technologies - and the huge scope for learning the game's nuances save it. ★★★★★

## StarCraft

Blizzard Entertainment EA £25 **Real-time strategy** The same mixture of building, research, resource management and combat as its prequel *Warcraft*, but with enough intricacy and sidesteps to inject life into the genre. ★★★★★

## Star Wars: Supremacy

LucasArts EA £10 **Write your own plot** An R2-D2-with-the-top-removed-sized bin full of strategies, with over-complex gameplay. ★★

## This Means War

Sold Out EA £5 **Isometric 3D warfare** More point-'n'-click action, as you save the world from a computer virus, but it's fiddly and over-complicated. ★★

## Total Annihilation

GT Replay EA £13 **Futuristic strategy nonsense** More intense than your *Command & Conquers* and as easy to use as an inflatable sheep (straightforward for beginners and yet challenging for experts), the battles are great and there are plenty of patches and additions available on the Web, too. Buy this. ★★★★★

## UFO: Enemy Unknown

Sold Out EA £5 **Alien-filled brain-tickler** Turn-based combat from the boys who invented *Spectrum* classics *Chaos* and *Rebelstar*. It might not look good, but the plot is complex, and the controls helpful. ★★

## Uprising

Ubisoft EA £10 **To battle!** Bark orders at a ground-based strike force, then join the throng in your personalised tank and view the battle in the first-person. Combines resource management and all-out blasting to come up with a head-scratching yet exciting whole. ★★★★★

## Warcraft

Sold Out EA £5 **Wizards and warriors** Amusing, yet complex at turns, *Warcraft* has been bettered, but this budget release still provides astonishingly challenging and atmospheric real-time strategy exploits, with all kinds of wizards and knights at your disposal. ★★★★★

## Wargasm

Infogrames EA £20 **Ultra-realistic war sim** With graphics that'll have your family convinced you've taken to watching non-stop videos of recent Gulf War-type events, and the option to control battles from either the squaddies' boots or the commander's throne, *Wargasm* is an absolutely breathtakingly comprehensive death-'em-up. ★★★★★

## Western Front

Empire EA £35 **Board-based battles** An inability to save mid-battle means you have to fight for hours at a stretch. Ridiculous. ★★

## X-COM: Interceptor

MicroProse EA £13 **Latest in the long line** This combo of real-time strategy and 3D action is perfected just as smoothly and effectively as the mix of strategy and tactical infantry combat in the prequels. And the result? Another corker. ★★★★★



## RPGs

## Baldur's Gate

Interplay EA £30 **Dungeons & Dragons** Control a motley band of thieves, elves and wizards in this old-fashioned role-playing game. The conversation is text-based, the controls take time to get the hang of, but it's choc-a-block with sub-quests, exciting real-time combat and impressive isometric 3D graphics. ★★★★★

## Biosys

Take 2 EA £35 **Dome alone** Keep a gigantic biodome ticking over. Badly executed and confusing. ★★

## Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain

Activision EA £10 **Drac on your PC** Linear, monotonous vampire-laden, top-down role-playing. ★★

## Dark Earth

MicroProse EA £12 **Stylised story** Wander around a permanently darkened post-apocalyptic Earth, chatting to the populace and grabbing objects in an effort to bring back the light. Obscure puzzles and a tendency to take itself too seriously can't mar the glorious visuals. ★★★★★

## Diablo

Blizzard EA £20 **Hack 'n' slash adventure** A real-time strategy RPG that's incredibly intuitive, with hidden depths and complexity to be found if you delve deeper into its dark and sticky innards. A whole load of monster-killing and spell-casting to keep beardy types happy. ★★★★★

## Fallout 2

Interplay EA £35 **Old-skool RPG antics** As you find your way around in this apocalyptic city, you'll be shocked by the isometric 3D, turn-based combat and an overload of stats, but *F2* will still win you over, thanks to its overall simplicity. The intelligent unfolding of the plot merely adds to the pleasure. ★★★★★

## Final Fantasy VII

EIDOS EA £35 **Why shouldn't the PC have the best PlayStation RPG ever as well?** It'll keep you up all night, it'll make you cry, it'll make your nose bleed, but only if someone hits you in the face with a copy of it. Which they ought to, if you don't buy it. A great story, lavish graphics and brilliant selection of spells. It's a little confusing, rarely enabling you to see your opponents before you get into a fight, but put this down to Japanese quirkiness and you're on to a winner. ★★★★★

## King's Quest: Mask of Eternity

Cendant EA £35 **Third-person romp** A graphically-impressive game that attempts to disguise its RPG nature by using fancy effects. But the combat and puzzle-finding action gives the game away. Still, it's approachable, easy to use and fun. ★★★★★

## Adventures

### Broken Sword

**■ Sold Out ■ £15 Gallic adventures** One of the best examples of the adventure game genre, where talking to people and clicking on objects to solve puzzles will advance the story. The puzzles are logical, the story (an American investigating mysteries in France) is involving, and the characters and conversations are amusing. As an added bonus, it succeeds in being funny. ★★★★★

### Curse of Monkey Island

**■ LucasArts ■ £30 Fantastic point-'n'-click adventure** Genuinely amusing, and with clever puzzles, *Monkey Island* scores well for its controls, which make exploring and examining as easy as possible. Great to look at and to listen to, if a tad frustrating and illogical, but mostly this is top-notch stuff. ★★★★★

### Grim Fandango

**■ LucasArts ■ £35 Death warmed up** The style, presentation and content of this odd, amusing adventure – where you play a skeletal travel agent who shuffles people between the living world and heaven – leave it towering head-and-shoulders above everything else. The puzzles are difficult and obscure, but you'll forgive it for its neat touches, absorbing plot and downright loveliness. ★★★★★

### Resident Evil 2

**■ Virgin ■ £30 Zombie-filled scares** Shoot zombies and collect objects on a quest to get to the bottom of the sinister G-Virus outbreak. Sufficiently scary and loaded with atmosphere, but the fixed camera obstructs the gameplay. ★★★

### Sanitarium

**■ Mindscape ■ £35 Crazy talk** Start the game trapped in a lunatic asylum and fight your way out. The text is stilted and linear, and the adventure infuriating, but it's still reasonably engaging entertainment. ★★★

### Toon Struck

**■ Sold Out ■ £5 Cartoon capers** A clumsy *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*-style marriage of cartoon graphics and real-time action, this point-'n'-clicker has enough inventive moments to grip for a short time. ★★★

### The X-Files

**■ Fox Interactive ■ £30 Spooky cash-in tie-in?** It may be a pile of video clips stuck together with VirtualCinema glue, but the seven weeks of exclusive filming and relative freedom of movement elevate this above the herd. ★★★

## Flight sims

### Apache Havoc

**■ Empire ■ £35 Proper war flight sim** You're in a war, which will carry on regardless of whether you're actively controlling your troops or making a cup of tea. The missions are increasingly complex, tricky and time-limited for added tension, with great visuals. ★★★★★

### Falcon 4

**■ MicroProse ■ £35 Long-running air manoeuvres** You may get only one craft to fly, but the whole game is extraordinarily realistic, with accurately-mapped terrain and a pilot and engineers advising on the simulation's details. Hardly a game, more a realisation of mid-air flying. ★★★★★

## Fighter Squadron: The Screamin' Demons Over Europe

**■ Parsoft ■ £35 Be a 1920s Tom Cruise** Almost too real, with floating-point maths used to simulate every last force acting on your aircraft, and planes designed to react to a dip with the ground in the same way as the real thing. Plenty of vehicles and a diverse range of missions, but only for fanatics – there's no arcade flying about and shooting things here. A fantastic simulation. ★★★★★

## IF/A-18E: Carrier Strike Fighter

**■ Interactive Magic ■ £25 Fly planes** Simulating a craft that won't be flying for five years, for the most part *Strike Fighter* looks gorgeous. The missions are varied and convincing, and your success alters what you're offered to do in future levels. ★★★★★

## Flight Simulator '98

**■ Microsoft ■ £40 Ultra-realistic aeroplane antics** This isn't for the casual gamer, including, as it does, a load of knobs to get the hang of. In that it's supposed to be a true flying experience, the controls are necessarily difficult, but some of the graphics are less realistic than you might like. There's also quite a nightmarishly difficult-to-control helicopter included as a "bit of a laugh", too. ★★★★★

## Joint Strike Fighter

**■ EIDOS ■ £10 Aeroplane antics** Exciting air-bound combat and spectacular visuals, but the open-ended missions are just too open-ended, which makes getting lost far too easy. ★★★

## Pro Pilot '99

**■ Sierra ■ £35 Fly high in the sky** Functional graphics and mostly flat cities make pointing your plane in a certain direction and watching the scenery go by generally uninteresting. ★★

## Team Apache

**■ Mindscape ■ £15 Convincing chopper sim** Few other flight sims introduce the novice in such a friendly way, before proceeding to let all hell break loose around them in such a terrifyingly convincing fashion. Recommended. ★★★★★

## World of Combat 2000

**■ Novalogic ■ £35 Real-world combat sim** Fancy getting your hands on a military helicopter, jet fighter or tank? Well of course you do, and this is the compilation for you. All the vehicles are based on genuine military specs, and the controls are easy enough to get the hang of if you're just beginning, yet complex enough if you're an expert. The visuals suffer slightly, but that doesn't matter a jot. ★★★★★

## Compilations

### The Biggest Names, The Biggest Games

**■ EA Classics ■ £25 Aptly-named six-pack** Theme *Hospital*, *SimCity 200*, *The Need For Speed 2: Special Edition*, *Dungeon Keeper*, *Warhammer: Dark Omen* and *Nuclear Strike*. If you're not a fan of god games or strategy titles, this collection loses much of its appeal, but otherwise you won't find a duffer contained within. Classic build-your-own-city title *SimCity* is worth the 25 smackers alone. ★★★★★

## Overload

**■ Gremlin ■ £35 Three for one** *Men In Black* (a lacklustre 3D action-adventure tied-in to the film), *Premier Manager '98* (a smoothly executed football management title) and *Motorhead* (one of the PC's finest arcade driving games) make this a decent, if not absolutely outstanding, collection. ★★★★★

## Power Racing Pack

**■ Sierra ■ £20 Twin-wheels pack** *Nascar Racing 2* and *Indycar Racing 2* bundled together for US racing fans. It's good value, and both games are realistic, but neither can really make driving around an oval circuit seem like much fun. ★★★

## Star Trek Federation Compilation

**■ Interplay ■ £30 It's a compilation, Jim** Ignore the *Next Generation* titles, enjoy the 25th Anniversary title for the self-indulgent fun that it is; then concentrate your efforts on *Star Fleet Academy*, which provides you with the great opportunity to sit in the Captain's chair. ★★★★★

## Ultima Collection

**■ EA ■ £40 Seminal titles collected** Ten games from the last 20-or-so years, this suffers the same unfortunate fate as most retro groupings; yesterday's faves are inestimably dull compared to today's delights. ★★

## X-Wing Collector Series

**■ LucasArts ■ £30 You must face Darth Vader again** *X-wing*, *TIE Fighter* and *X-wing vs TIE Fighter*, plus all their mission packs, plucked from LucasArts' back catalogue and bundled together at a budget price. Rather than being standard licensed tat, these titles offer frenetic and exciting *Star Wars*-themed blasting and, as the first two instalments here have been rejigged and improved graphically, this compilation is a must. ★★★★★

## Misc

### Beavis & Butt-head: Bunghole in One

**■ GT Interactive ■ £20 TV-licensed comedy pitch & putt** "Huh, uh, uh. But this is like awful, dude." "Yeah. Huh, uh, uh. It's like worse that your pants after you ate that chilli dog, man." "Yeah." "Do you reckon' they'll... like, still buy it then?" "Only like if they're real Dickweeds, dude." "Yeah, Buttwipe. Huh, uh, uh." ★

### Grand Theft Auto

**■ Take 2 ■ £20 Drugs, death and driving** Notorious for its lack of scruples, *GTA* encourages the killing of bystanders and the trafficking of drugs, while giving you a sense of freedom as you drive around massive cities. The top-down graphics are rather disappointing, but the missions are enjoyable, if repetitive. For a full review of *GTA's* first mission pack, *GTA: London*, turn to page 105 of this issue. ★★★★★

### Worms: Armageddon

**■ Hasbro ■ £30 Turn-based slap-'em-up** Destroy your opponent's pink 'uns with an arsenal of serious and comedic weapons. As with the earlier incarnations, it loses much in the one-player mode, but flawless controls and eye-popping visuals create a multi-player gem. ★★★★★

## IF YOU FANCY PICKING UP A BARGAIN, LOOK OUT FOR THESE SECOND HAND

## Racers

### Andretti Racing

**■ EA Classics Tarmac-burning driving sim** A dull race around several boring American ovals. A stock car racing section and some slightly more exciting tracks liven things up just a bit. ★★

### Destruction Derby 2

**■ Psygnosis Hit-and-run turn-taking rivalry** Fine as a normal racing game, but better as an all-out smash-'em-up that provides edge-of-your-seat thrills, coupled with gorgeous visuals and fantastic images of your car as it disintegrates. Great tracks, real speed and smart computer cars, too. Yay! ★★★★★

## F1 Racing Simulation

**■ Ubisoft Driving for would-be Damons** All the stats and tracks are here, and the handling and controls are perfect. There's a lack of realism and customisation options, but the game is fast and offers a real driving challenge. ★★★★★

## MicroMachines v3

**■ Codemasters Top-down, miniature racing** Embrace a world where you race round table-top tracks in a mini car, boat or ice cream van, preferably battling against as many other human players as possible. It's showing its age a bit these days, with the simplistic graphics and old-fashioned one-screen multi-player taking a bit of time to adjust to, but this is as good on the PC as it is on any of the consoles. ★★★★★

## Motorhead

**■ Gremlin Futuristic sports-car visual drooler** Nine cars, slick track design, a myriad of tiny road-side animations (such as monorails and space craft) and the right difficulty pitch: a cinch to drive, but hard to drive well. Fast, too. ★★★★★

## Powerboat Racing

**■ Interplay Watersports** Clumsy, blocky, jerky visuals and stunted gameplay – *Powerboat Racing* is no fun. ★★

## Prost Grand Prix

**■ Inogrames Variable F1 sim** Has you driving like a member of the McLaren team when you use the automatic setup, and like that woman from *Driving School* when you don't. ★★★★★

## Virtual Karts

**■ Sold Out Rubbish racing** Go-karts for idiots. ★

## WipeOut 2097

**■ Psygnosis Argentum Space-age racing** Hover vehicles scream over gaudy neon tracks suspended in the sky, and use fair means or foul to get to the front of the pack. It's since been overtaken. ★★★★★

## Sports

### Actua Soccer 2

**■ Gremlin Actually football** Convincing graphics and a shed-load of camera angles, but play is frustrating, with limited options. Quite shockingly, worse than its PlayStation incarnation. ★★★★★

### Microsoft Golf 1998

**■ Microsoft Virtual pitch-and-putt** Motion-captured players and dodgy controls. ★★

### Player Manager Season '98-'99

**■ ANCO Mediocre footy management** Fussless player tinkering, where your teams fail to respond to your TLC. ★

### Player Manager 2 Extra: Chase For Glory

**■ Sold Out Footy coachmanship** Tedious ★

### Premier Manager '98

**■ Gremlin Footy managerial action** An accurate database update, but the imperfections that bugged *PM's* previous incarnation remain and now stick out further than Jimmy Hill's chin. ★★★★★

### Pro 18 World Tour Golf

**■ Psygnosis Near-perfect putting** Each shot's execution, coupled with the utterly stunning courses, convinces you that you're watching the real thing. An original and eminently suitable mouse control system removes the need for aiming, making *World Tour Golf* a soothing sim. ★★★★★

### Roland Garros 1998: The French Open

**■ Grolier Accurate tennis sim** Garros's great strength (making sure you have control over where the ball will land) is also its weakness (it's too easy to beat the computer opponents). ★★★★★

### Triple Play '99

**■ EA Baseball for the fans** Not the most exciting sport in the universe, so we recommend this fine translation, with the option of a single game or complete 170-game tourney as well as loads of players and stadia. ★★★★★

## BUY THIS Overboard!

■ Puzzler/Shooter ■ Psygnosis



Despite the romantic image of sailing the seven seas with a Jolly Roger flickering in the salty breeze, there aren't many games that put you at the helm of a pirate ship. *Overboard!* does just that, and operates with its tongue firmly in its cheek; alien spacecraft hijack your crew, sea monsters appear from the watery depths and whales pop their heads up before rudely exploding. Ridding the seas of these obstacles with your big steel balls is only half the fun, as you also need to open gates and select the most appropriate camera view at every turn (no really, it's a lot more fun than it sounds).

The pirate ship aspect isn't a gimmick, either – fire puts in an appearance at regular intervals, setting your galleon alight and sending your crew on a panicked journey overboard. Odd, oh yes, but unexpectedly good.

## DON'T BUY THIS Airbus 2000

■ Simulation ■ The Associates



Going on a plane flight is a tormenting business. The trek up to Heathrow, the pushing and shoving in the baggage check-in queues, the confusion over whether it's better to buy your duty free on the way out of or the way into the country, and the inevitable boredom of waiting. And that's before you even get on the plane. At least you don't have to fly the thing when you finally embark. Like you do in *Airbus 2000*, which enables you to pilot over 60 Jumbos, from the A300 to – yes – the A319, as accurately as if you were in the real thing. Which begs just one question. Why the fu....?

# Nintendo 64 Top 20

The games tickling the fancy of N64 owners this month.

## Platformers

**Pandemonium 2**  
■ **Ubisoft** **Deathly dull running and jumping** It initially looks like it's in 3D, but *Pandemonium 2* is 2D in a cunning disguise, and your path is tediously restricted to one route. Irritating characters, dated gameplay. ★★★

## Shooters

**Conflict: Freespace the Great War**  
■ **Interplay** **Sprawling, intricate, space shooter** Escort this, protect that, shoot the other – *Conflict* might at first seem like a direct *X-wing* Vs *TIE-Fighter* rip-off, but it's more the game that *X-wing* should have been. Watch out for the superb explosions, cleverly designed missions and plenty of replayability. ★★★★★

**Hardwar**  
■ **Gremlin** **Exciting mix of trading and combat** This unofficially updates the great 8-bit space-trading game *Elite* for the late '90s. The environment is enormous, but the gameplay is hampered by too much waiting around. ★★★★★

**Incoming: Lux et Rubor**  
■ **Rage** **Fancy, multi-vehicle blaster** A triumph of conventionality over originality, *Incoming* features every shoot-'em-up cliché known, but the gorgeous starry visuals, variety of *Babylon 5*-style vehicles and frenetic action prove that there's plenty of life to be squeezed out of the genre yet. ★★★★★

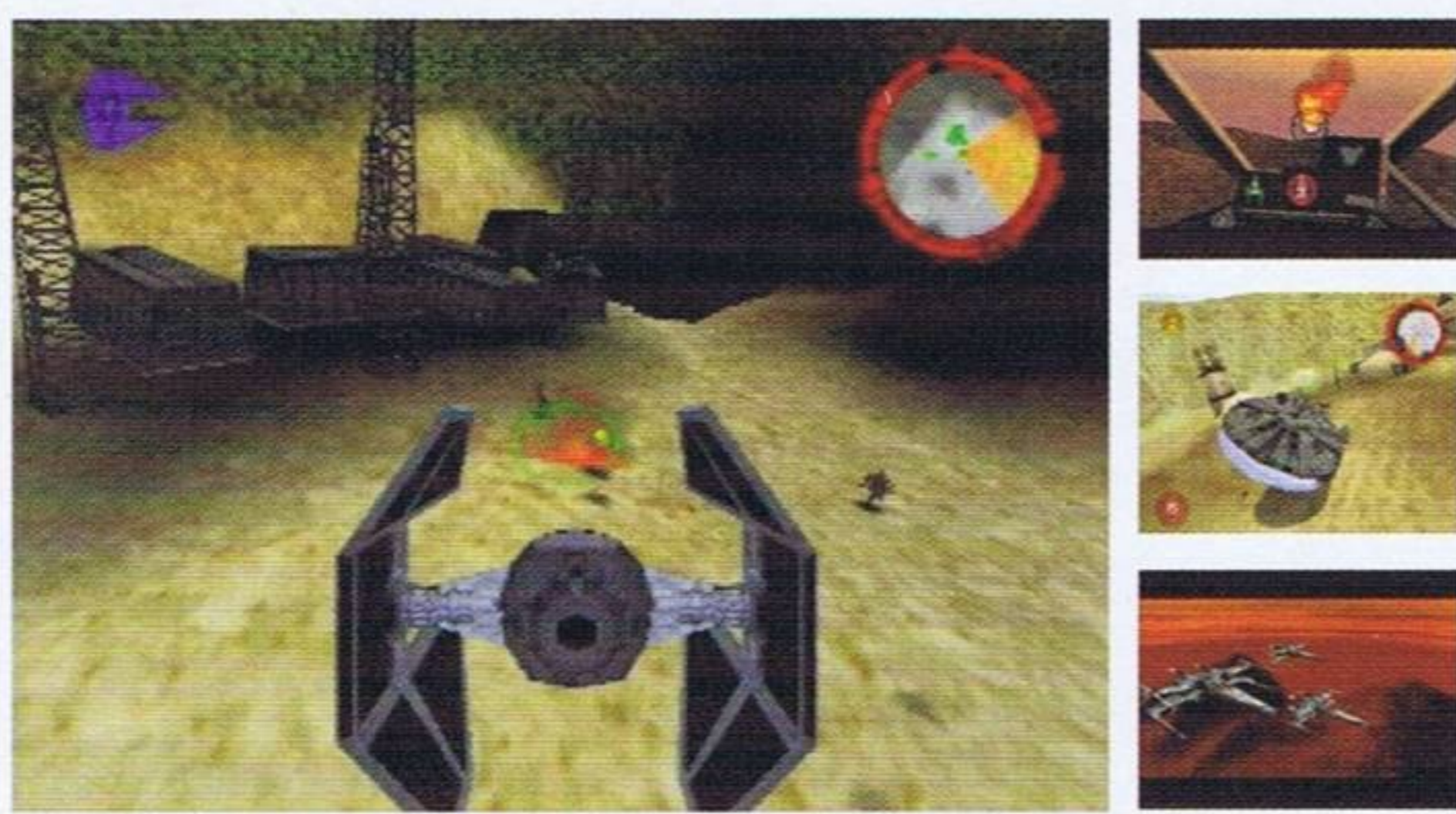
**Outwars**  
■ **Microsoft** **Starship Troopers: the (unofficial) game** Drop down a lift shaft in an overrun research installation, then try to raise a cargo lift as big as a *Quake* level. *Outwars* breathes fresh air into the 3D shoot-'em-up/arcade adventure, with this *Quake/Tomb Raider* cross-over. ★★★★★

**Privateer 2: The Darkening**  
■ **EA Classics** **Open-ended space fun** With a huge galaxy and an emphasis on exploration, *Privateer 2* promises much. The characters and combat are all there, but the game soon becomes restrictive. ★★★

## Flight sims

**Apache Longbow**  
■ **Sold Out** **Chopper fun** An accessible, accurate and long-lasting helicopter simulation, although the graphics give away its age. Still offering a fun rotor-packed fly-past. ★★★

**Jane's Combat Simulations: WWII Fighters**  
■ **EA** **The FIFA of flight sims** Both the vehicles and the ground below look sufficiently realistic, and there's a host of planes to crash. Damage and physics are handled realistically, and there's also the chance for you to put together your own missions. ★★★★★



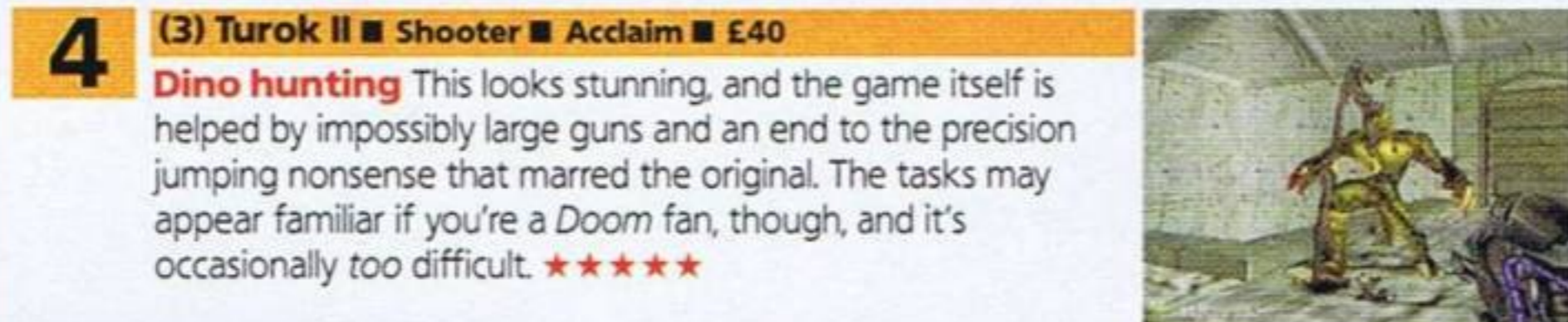
**1 (1) Star Wars: Rogue Squadron** ■ Shooter ■ Nintendo ■ £40  
**A 16-mission battle against the Empire** Marries arcade-quality excitement with pleasingly authentic *Star Wars* visuals and sounds. The shooting action is a little slow, and there's a hefty supply of fog to maintain the detailed visuals, but all the ships, enemies and locations are there, and it's surprisingly involving. The lack of a multi-player option is disappointing, but *Star Wars* fans will find little wrong with this. ★★★★★



**2 (2) The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina Of Time** ■ RPG ■ Nintendo ■ £50  
**The best game in the world ever** Keeps all the traditional *Zelda* hallmarks and wraps them up in a beautifully realised 3D world. The wandering about, talking, fighting and cut-scenes have been tweaked and fine-tuned until they're perfect. An absolute marvel, and worth the price of an N64 alone. ★★★★★



**3 (6) WCW/nWo Revenge** ■ Fighting ■ THQ ■ £50  
**Greasy blokes a-wrestling** A largely unimproved update of *World Tour*, *Revenge's* main claim to fame is a slew of up-to-date grapplers. It's quick, and looks better than its predecessor, but it's still too easy and samey, with over-long matches. ★★★



**4 (3) Turok II** ■ Shooter ■ Acclaim ■ £40  
**Dino hunting** This looks stunning, and the game itself is helped by impossibly large guns and an end to the precision jumping nonsense that marred the original. The tasks may appear familiar if you're a *Doom* fan, though, and it's occasionally too difficult. ★★★★★



**5 (7) Mario Kart 64** ■ Racing ■ Nintendo ■ £40  
**Cute characters go to the races** The original comedy racer returns. The one-player game is a lonely experience, but the time-trial adds longevity and the multi-player game is arguably the greatest on any platform. ★★★★★



**6 (4) 1080° Snowboarding** ■ Racing ■ Nintendo ■ £40  
**Snow-based racing** A brilliant range of modes, plenty of tricks to pull off, and loads of boards and courses for you to have a crack at. Beautiful controls, brilliant replays and some suitably challenging racing. ★★★★★

**7 (5) Banjo-Kazooie** ■ Platformer ■ Nintendo ■ £50  
**Bizarre bear-bird crossover** Beautiful levels that beg you to explore, a genuine challenge with plenty of variety, and the first Rare game not to feature an eye-wincing amount of cute. Almost manages to knock *Mario* from his perch. ★★★★★

**8 (-) Virtual Pool** ■ Sports ■ Interplay ■ £40  
**Decent balls sim** As exciting a version of pool as home consoles are ever likely to see. When it comes to physics, it's all faultless, and the pleasingly spherical balls are very easy on the eye. It's limited, but good if you're actively searching for a pool title. ★★★★★

**9 (9) V-Rally** ■ Racing ■ Infogrames ■ £40  
**Roads, revs and racers** The cars skid and flip into tress if you don't use the brake, making *V-Rally* difficult to learn but pleasing to master. Not outstanding, but the graphics and velocity are adequate, and there's a wealth of challenge available. ★★★★★

**10 (11) Super Mario 64** ■ Platformer ■ Nintendo ■ £40  
**The king of 3D platformers** A masterpiece, with huge levels, sublime controls and totally immersive gameplay. As with all Miyamoto games, it slowly sucks you in and refuses to let go, and its full-on 3D graphics still have the power to impress. ★★★★★

**11 (8) GoldenEye 007** ■ Shooter ■ Nintendo ■ £40  
**Stealthy first-person shooter** A believable and immersive 3D world, with 20 challenging missions taking you from gorgeous snow-covered wasteland to grubby mens' toilets. One of the best multi-players that money can buy, too. ★★★★★

**12 (14) Shadows of the Empire** ■ Shooter ■ Nintendo ■ £20  
**Star-Wars licensed hotch-potch** A curious mixture of all sorts of games (including *Doom*, space shoot-'em-ups and racers) that doesn't really work, thanks to too few good parts and too many flaws. Only a game for true *Star Wars* devotees. ★★★

**13 (12) F1 World Grand Prix** ■ Racing ■ Nintendo ■ £40  
**Damon Hill simulator** Looking as good as real-life, with all the real cars, drivers, stats and other nonsense. Whether you're an arcade racer or a true F1 fan, there's something here for you, with a two-player option to round it all off nicely. ★★★★★

**14 (15) Mission: Impossible** ■ RPG ■ Infogrames ■ £40  
**3D stealth-'em-up** Not bad looking, with a host of great ideas (such as being able to disguise yourself as other characters) that should've turned this into a potential *GoldenEye* beater. Sadly, the finished game has turned out a little bland. ★★

**15 (-) Quake** ■ Shooter ■ GT ■ £25  
**Gory first-person gunplay** Nothing wrong with this, but with no more than two players able to take part, the multi-playing that made the PC's version so much fun takes a back seat to the monotonous one-player shoot-the-bad-guys action. Awful 2D enemies, too. ★★★★★

**16 (13) Diddy Kong Racing** ■ Racing ■ Nintendo ■ £40  
**Comedy animal karting** A complex and inventive one-player racing game with superb graphics and tons of challenges, but the multi-player game is duller than a very dull thing. Packed to the rafters with annoying super-cute characters, too. ★★★★★

**17 (10) WipEout 64** ■ Racing ■ Midway ■ £50  
**Funky futuristic face-flapper** This seems perfectly suited to the Nintendo's analogue controller, helping to lessen the steep learning curve. Plenty of weapons and sumptuous graphics, but the vehicles are floaty and temperamental. ★★★

**18 (16) WWF: Warzone** ■ Fighting ■ Acclaim ■ £50  
**Men in leotards** Looks good, but boring in one-player, and ultimately limited. Get your wrestling-loving mates in and you can enjoy four-men-on-the-floor action, though, and there's a novel create-a-player section. ★★★★★

**19 (-) World Cup 98** ■ Sports ■ EA Sports ■ £30  
**Officially-licensed footy** The FIFA branding makes this the public's footy game of choice, but the sluggish controls and disappointing visuals will leave a bitter after-taste. ★★★

**20 (17) International Superstar Soccer 98** ■ Sports ■ Konami ■ £40  
**Football action** Almost identical to its prequel, so you get the same silky controls, wealth of options and beautifully smooth football. Dig deep and you'll find lots of subtle improvements, including new camera angles, kicks, crosses and headers. An essential purchase. ★★★★★

## Watch out for

Games freshly released and looking to make it big.



**Mario Party**  
Board game ■ 1-4 players  
■ **Nintendo** **Bring your own controller** A traditional board game featuring all your favourite Nintendo characters and a plethora of original and enjoyable multi-player sub games. Not good for solo gamers, but a laugh a minute with some friends. ★★★★★



**FIFA 99**  
■ Sports ■ EA ■ £40  
**Licensed balls-up** Sadly, EA has wasted the fancy official stamp. Sluggish controls, unnatural visuals and a disappointing simplicity are the main faults. Buy *ISS* instead. ★★★



**Castlevania 64**  
■ Platformer ■ Nintendo  
■ **£40** **Dracula delirium** It could have been great, but Konami's 3D version of its classic platforming series is hindered by camera problems and an inadequate game length. It's packed with atmosphere, though, and there's enough puzzling, jumping and vampire killing to sustain interest. ★★★★★



**All Star Tennis '99**  
■ **Ubisoft** ■ **£40** **Frilly pants and strawbs** This looks and plays well, but with its combination of realistic players pulling off over-the-top shots, *All Star Tennis* can't seem to settle between serious play and light-hearted fun. ★★★



**Micro Machines 64 Turbo**  
Driving ■ 1-8 players  
■ **Codemasters** **Aged toy car racing** Top-down driving that's renowned for its unequalled multi-player fun. Unfortunately, it's almost too simple, and the format has already aged considerably. ★★★

### Also on sale...

#### Fighters

**Clayfighter 63 1/3**  
 ■ Interplay ■ £20 **Plasticine beat-'em-up** Tries to be funny. ★

**Fighters Destiny**  
 ■ Ocean ■ £20 **Laydeez and ah gentlemen, we present the world's best N64 fighter...** A selection of well-defined characters and plenty of moves make this, by default, the N64's *Tekken*. As with so many N64 games, it's too easy, but the excellent range of challenges ensures longevity. ★★★

**Rakuga Kids**  
 ■ Konami ■ £35 **Pastel-based punch-'em-up** The fighting hiding underneath these crayoned crazies is surprisingly solid, even if it's often rather difficult to work out whether you've made contact with your opponent. ★★★

**WCW Vs NWO Revenge**  
 ■ THQ ■ £30 **Greasy blokes at it again** A largely unimproved update of *WCW/NOW World Tour*, its main claim to fame being a slew of up-to-date grapplers. Has slightly better graphics and a quicker pace, than previously seen, though. ★★★

#### Racers

**Cruis'n USA**  
 ■ Nintendo ■ £20 **Lacklustre racing** Too easy, too samey and far too stupid. ★

**F-Zero X**  
 ■ Nintendo ■ £40 **Quick-as-you-like space-age racer** This experience has to be the fastest, smoothest racer in the whole wide world, largely thanks to its reduction of graphical detail. The controls are sublime, the handling fantastic and the tracks horrifically difficult. ★★★★

**GT64**  
 ■ Ocean ■ £50 **Another racer to forget about** Ocean won't fool anyone with this *GT* sound-alike. There's more pop-up than my Nan's toaster and visuals that make it look like someone's sneezed on the screen. ★★★

**Iggy's Reckin' Balls**  
 ■ Acclaim ■ £40 **Incredibly ugly spheres roll for their lives** Racing without cornering. It doesn't work. ★

**Snowboard Kids**  
 ■ Nintendo ■ £40 **Mario Kart for the snowboard generation** This looks, sounds and plays in a simplistic way, but it's packed full of fun and liable to make you a load of new friends if you show them the multi-player option. ★★★

**Top Gear Overdrive**  
 ■ THE ■ £35 **Devilish driving** The handling's a bit on the iffy side, and it's all slightly unfair, but the track design, visuals and vehicles mean that *TGO* still manages to serve up a funky four-wheeled treat. ★★★

**Twisted Edge: Extreme Snowboarding**  
 ■ Nintendo ■ £45 **Board stiff** In comparison with other snowboard sims available, this is too difficult and lacks speed, attractiveness and originality. Do not buy. ★★

**Wave Race 64**  
 ■ Nintendo ■ £30 **How jet-ski games should be done** Even though it's over two years since its release in Japan, this title offers water-based frolics that are second to none. The tracks are beautiful and the controls are as responsive and intuitive as you'd expect from Nintendo. Just remember to keep a bucket handy for the sea-sickness. ★★★★★

**XG2: Extreme G 2**  
 ■ Acclaim ■ £35 **Space-age motorbike sequel** Iguana hasn't done much to improve on the faults of the original – you never feel completely in control, and the frame rate still dips dangerously low. ★★★

#### Sports

**All Star Baseball**  
 ■ Acclaim ■ £40 **Realistic bat-on-ball action** Wide smiles all round for baseball fans, with smooth-looking players and gorgeous backgrounds. It's more of a straight sim than most other titles, and more thoughtful and challenging as a result. ★★★★★

**Kobe Bryant in NBA Courtside**  
 ■ Nintendo ■ £20 **Basketball, but good** Effectively the *Madden* of basketball games, as it provides an easy-to-use control system, coupled with gameplay that behaves properly. But who the hell is Kobe Bryant? ★★★★★

**Nagano Winter Olympics**  
 ■ Konami ■ £45 **Simulation of snow sport** Utterly boring. ★

**NBA Jam '99**  
 ■ Acclaim ■ £35 **Option-heavy basketball sim** Looks good, plays fast and contains enough options to enable you to shape the game to your requirements. It's very tricky – defending, in particular, is a nightmare – but a sports game that's realistically difficult is a refreshing change. ★★★

**NFL Quarterback Club '99**  
 ■ Acclaim ■ £45 **Stateside soccer** Visually more detailed than the real thing. Tackling and defending are made user-friendly – only the passing system causes any frustration. ★★★★★

**Virtual Pool 64**  
 ■ Interplay ■ £40 **Stick-'em-up** As exciting a version of pool as home consoles are ever likely to see. The physics are faultless and the pleasingly spherical balls are very easy on the eye. As a game, it's limited, but if you're actively searching for a pool title, you can't go far wrong with this. ★★★★★

**World Cup 98**  
 ■ EA Sports ■ £20 **A football game with a big cock on the box** The sluggish controls and disappointing visuals mean you'll be left with a sense of bitter disappointment. ★★★

#### Platformers

**Chameleon Twist**  
 ■ Ocean/JSS ■ £25 **Get about with your tongue** Interesting platformer, but the camera and simplicity damage it. Turn to page 112 for a full review of *Chameleon Twist 2*. ★★

**Gex 64**  
 ■ GT Interactive ■ £40 **Rubbish reptilian roam-about** Laughable. ★

**Mischief Makers**  
 ■ Nintendo/Treasure ■ £20 **Old-school 2D platformer action** Mad as you like, and decidedly old skool, but top-notch platforming action. Well-crafted levels, coupled with difficult-to-learn but effective controls, make for a whole crate full of fun. So who said 2D platformers were dead? ★★★★★

**Spacestation: Silicon Valley**  
 ■ Take 2 ■ £40 **Take control of animals (with nasty side)** Kill animals and then manipulate their bodies to solve puzzles. The graphics do their job well, the controls and puzzles are great, and the attention to detail is second to none. ★★★★★

**Starshot: Space Circus Fever**  
 ■ Infogrames ■ £30 **Weird 3D jumping about** The necessarily unwieldy camera and over-fiddly controls are present and correct. You'll also find a great deal of wandering between one place and the next. ★★★

**Yoshi's Story**  
 ■ Nintendo ■ £40 **2D platform antics with Mario's dino mate** An easier retread of the original *Yoshi's Island*, and suffering from few fresh ideas and a lack of initial challenge. Hidden areas and more difficult challenges arise through more determined play. ★★★★★

#### Shooters

**Body Harvest**  
 ■ Gremlin ■ £20 **Bug-blasting** B-movie invasion; lots of aliens Loads of weapons, 100 vehicles to drive around in, and five varied levels single out this interesting blaster. The graphics are ropey, and the character dialogue terrible, but the mix of RPG and intense, panicky alien shooting works a treat. ★★★★★

**Buck Bumble**  
 ■ Ubisoft ■ £45 **Honey bee-based shooting** Mission-based shooter with puzzle elements. There's a varied bunch of enemies, but the levels just aren't involving enough. ★★★

**Doom 64**  
 ■ GT Interactive ■ £20 **Seminal PC shooter** Nothing wrong with this conversion, but the alien-blasting gameplay has been knocking about too long to push the N64 in any way. ★★★

**Knife Edge**  
 ■ Microware ■ £30 **Into-the-screen gun action** Boring. ★

**Lylat Wars**  
 ■ Nintendo ■ £50 **Animal Magic in space** Loosely based on the SNES's *Starwing*, and intended to be a truly immersive movie-like experience, with cut-scenes that ape films like *Independence Day*. It's too easy, and should have had a level select, but it's still addictive, well-crafted and frantic, and features some pure blasting action at a time when it's relatively scarce. Brilliant speech, too. ★★★★★

**Quake 64**  
 ■ GT Interactive ■ £25 **PC owners have less to laugh about** There's nothing wrong with this version, but with no more than two players able to take part in the classic roaming blaster at any one time, the multi-playing that made the original such great fun is now taking rather a back seat to the monotonous one-player game. ★★★★★

**Robotron 64**  
 ■ Midway ■ £20 **Primitive shoot-'em-up reborn** Admirable attempt that ends up dull and repetitive. ★★

#### RPGs

**The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time**  
 ■ Nintendo ■ £50 **The best game in the world ever** You can't write the word "Miyamoto" without following it up with "has created another masterpiece" – it's the rules. Keeping all the traditional *Zelda* hallmarks and wrapping them in a beautifully realised 3D world, this platformy RPG is worth buying an N64 just to play. The wandering about, talking, fighting and cut-scenes have been finely tweaked and tuned until they're perfect. ★★★★★

#### Puzzlers

**Bomberman 64**  
 ■ Hudson/Nintendo ■ £20 **Bomb-based maze antics** The one-player game's awful and the multi-player is in ruins. ★★

**Bust-A-Move 3 DX**  
 ■ Acclaim ■ £35 **Multi-coloured spherical fun** So simple, and yet so completely and utterly absorbing, this bubble-bursting sequel wipes the floor with most other puzzlers. There's a new four-player mode, and a ton of other options and challenges, although the story mode is just a smidgen too easy. ★★★★★

**Tetrisphere**  
 ■ Nintendo ■ £20 **Tetris, but transferred to a sphere** Less like the original *Tetris* idea than the name would suggest. Trying to manoeuvre blocks into a sphere to free little robots is a great way to get incredibly annoyed and quickly achieve a lovely thumping headache. ★★★★★

**Wetrix**  
 ■ Ocean ■ £30 **Build lakes and fry 'em with fireballs** Much more of a successor to *Tetrisphere*. Initially as difficult as hell, but stick with it and the clear – if rather limited – tactics become obvious. A *Tetris*-like addiction will then take control of your life. Again. ★★★★★

#### Misc

**Blast Corps**  
 ■ Nintendo/Rare ■ £20 **Utilise a variety of vehicles to smash up buildings.** A truly unique game (the closest true comparison is *Godzilla* emulator *Rampage*), and if you think knocking down buildings sounds like great fun, then you're right, especially when you also have plenty of fantastically inventive vehicles to control. It might at first seem a little simple, but the additional goals will have you tearing hair out from all over your body. Yes, even there. ★★★★★

**Pilotwings 64**  
 ■ Nintendo ■ £20 **Fly about a bit and cry at the difficulty of it all** Along with *Mario 64*, this is the game that launched the N64. It boasts beautifully realistic scenery, and some of the hardest tasks this side of Mensa, including pushing balloons to targets and piloting a jet-pack through an underground tunnel. It all makes for a unique flying experience, though. After all, where else would you get to spring-boot up to a terrifying 100 feet? ★★★★★

### HUNT OUT THESE SECOND HAND BEAUTIES

#### Fighters

**Dark Rift**  
 ■ Vic Tokai **Dark beat-'em-up** Dark they say, and dark it is. There are some good graphics beneath the blackness, but it lacks the kind of moves and inventiveness that you'll find in *Fighters Destiny*. ★★

**Dual Heroes**  
 ■ Hudson **Boring robots fighting** A good complement of moves, but no challenge in one-player. ★★

**Mortal Kombat Trilogy**  
 ■ GT **Three Mortal Kombats rolled into one** Diabolical, even given that you get three offerings in one package. ★

**War Gods**  
 ■ GT **Primitive fighter** Suffers from a complete lack of moves and decent characters. ★

#### Racers

**Automobili Lamborghini**  
 ■ Nintendo **Drive around racetracks** A lack of options, decent courses and proper handling add up to an experience worth forgetting. ★★

**Extreme G**  
 ■ Acclaim **Futuristic racer to melt your face** *Turok*-style misting enables this to run at a phenomenal speed. Pounding along tracks with 90° turns while beautiful scenery flicks past is the surest way to get a pure adrenaline rush. ★★★★★

**F1 Pole Position**  
 ■ Ubisoft **Disappointing driving** Schumacher and friends shouldn't have to put up with poor handling and terrible pop-up like this. ★★

**Multi-Racing Championship**  
 ■ Ocean/Imagineer **Average racing** Far too easy and the handling is awry. Why can't anyone get the damn graphics right on these racing games? ★★

**San Francisco Rush**  
 ■ GTI **Big cars and mean streets** The controls simply aren't what you'd expect from a PlayStation-ported racer, and you've got to contend with the Cellophane-over-the-screen blurry visuals we've come to expect from the N64. Still, it's fast, handles excellently, and has a top two-player mode. ★★★★★

#### Sports

**Madden 64**  
 ■ EA **Another version of the ubiquitous US football series** Looks sparse, especially without the official logos that *Quarterback Club* offers, but the controls and game mechanics are so intuitive that you'll feel like you actually understand what's going on in this version of the American national sport. Hut! Hut! Or something. ★★★★★

**NBA Hangtime**  
 ■ GT **Basketball again.** Strip away 80% of the players and you finish up with this take-turns-to-score farce. ★★

**NBA Pro '98**  
 ■ Konami **Anyone for basketball?** Another American sports game for a minority UK audience. A lack of any obvious intelligence in the computer-controlled players, along with a general list of niggling faults, let this one down. ★★

### BUY THIS

## Spacestation: Silicon Valley

■ Puzzler ■ DMA Design



■ DMA spent years putting this odd animal-based puzzle/platformer together, then watched as it bothered the lower portions of the chart before disappearing entirely. It does sound weird – animals with pneumatic limbs and shoulder-mounted rocket-launchers wander around each level, and your aim is to solve puzzles by killing the animals, taking control of their bodies and putting their abilities to good use – but it's also polished to perfection and packed full of neat touches. The cast of creatures is funny, well-animated, and varied enough to make you look forward to getting your mitts on each one, and the puzzles are deviously well-crafted by DMA's most fiendish minds. Oh, and did we mention the intro? The bit where a lovesick sheep watches as her canine lover is crushed by a spaceship? Well then.



## NHL Breakaway '98

■ Acclaim Another ice hockey game This sim fails to present anything that's either exciting or indeed polished. The computer-controlled players are decent opponents, but you'll be completely scuppered by the speed of the game. ★★★

## Wayne Gretsky 3D Hockey '98

■ GT Interactive Updated version of original ice hockey sim Fast and smooth enough to make for an accurate interpretation of the too-quick-to-watch sport. ★★★

## Forsaken

■ Acclaim Futuristic space-tunnel-hoverbike-shoot-'em-up The controls let this one down, but it's the most frantic and absorbing shoot-'em-up you'll find. Each tunnel is filled with robotic baddies to take out with your big gun, while you try not to smash into the walls and die horribly. The graphics, with their impressive lighting, will even impress your Mum. ★★★★★

## Hexen

■ Midway Early goblin battler Shoddy conversion of Doom that uses magic spells instead of guns. ★

### Platformers

## Mystical Ninja

■ Konami Surreal adventure with a blue-haired maniac More an RPG-platform game than anything – the fundamental unfolding of the story is coupled with a range of Mario-style platforming tasks, and is all the better for it. The only real downer here is that once you've completed *Mystical Ninja*, there's probably not enough to keep you coming back for more. ★★★★★

### Shooters

## Duke Nukem 64

■ GT Interactive Bad taste alien gunplay No bare-breasted ladies in the slightly more wholesome N64 version of this game, but still plenty of death and destruction, and a decent four-player deathmatch mode thrown into the bundle. But isn't there a better first-person shooter out there already? Some James Bond licenced type of an affair or something? ★★★★★

### Puzzlers

## Bust-A-Move 2

■ Acclaim Addictive bubble-matching puzzler Hardly the best-looking game on the N64, but its sheer simplicity makes for a ridiculously addictive experience, especially when played against a friend. ★★★★★

### Flight sims

## Aero Fighters Assault

■ Konami Sky-based shoot-'em-up from the Pilotwings team. Aerial dogfights against massive aircraft and submarines, but sadly it's chock full of unforgivable flaws and levels you can complete in your tea-break. ★★★

### Misc

## Rampage World Tour

■ Midway Your very own Japanese B-movie in a box Being able to control King Kong and then smack down buildings provides short-term enjoyment – especially in three-player mode – but it won't last long. ★★★

### DON'T BUY THIS

## Turok: Dinosaur Hunter

■ Shooter ■ Acclaim



■ Despite an "unpopular" price tag of £90, the first *Turok* was critically acclaimed, and helped Nintendo's new wonder-machine to arrive at the first-person party in style. Two years on, with the sequel riding high in the charts, it's looking a bit sickly. The infamous "Turok mist" is as intrusive as ever, with each level cloaked in a thick smog that helps the game to run faster, but makes seeing more than a few feet in front of you an impossibility. And in the light of *GoldenEye* and *Turok 2*'s realistic environments and missions, *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter*'s gameplay isn't as enthralling as once it was ("Go on, jump on to that platform without falling! And the next! And... er, could you do keep doing that for an hour or two, please?"). It seems like the anti-dinosaur hunting lobby was right all along.

## Game Boy Top 5



(-) Zelda DX ■ RPG ■ Nintendo ■ £25

**1 Puzzle-solving with your fave elf** A truly involving plot, coupled with beautiful graphics (including plenty of cut-scenes), and a story where the emphasis is on engaging the player in the same way as *FFVII*. It's incredibly difficult, with a vast range of interesting challenges – can *Zelda* do no wrong? ★★★★★

(1) Game Boy Gallery ■ Retro ■ Nintendo ■ £10

**2 Five game-and-watch items** Bundling together five ageing unplayable handheld curiosities was never going to be a good idea, and even a set of updated versions with Mario and friends in starring roles can't make this any more interesting. ★

(-) Warioland II ■ Platformer ■ Nintendo ■ £20

**3 Mario's arch-enemy sets forth** Features a novel "can't die" aspect and insists on your collecting all the coins from each level, creating fist-clenching difficulty in the process. It's top quality, fiendishly challenging, and breathes new life into platforming. ★★★★★

(-) The Smurfs' Nightmare ■ Platformer ■ Infogrames ■ £20

**4 Blue-boy wanderings** Another simple Game Boy platformer with little, if any, innovation. It looks lovely, though, making full use of the Game Boy's "Colour". ★★★

(2) Mario and Yoshi ■ Puzzler ■ Nintendo ■ £10

**5 Match-em-up merriment** An original brain-bender with a perfect learning curve and the best Nintendo characters along for the ride. Its shape-matching idea borrows from existing puzzlers, but that's no bad thing. ★★★★★

### Also on sale...

### Fighters

**Mortal Kombat 4**  
■ Midway ■ £25  
**Disappointing fight-'em-up** Old-style, with a very jerky feel. ★

**Power Quest**  
■ Sunsoft ■ Color ■ £20  
**Odd RPG/fight mixture** At heart this is a pure beat-'em-up. The ability to upgrade yer robot fighter is a welcome addition, and the fighting is complex, but generally it's only mediocre. ★★★

**Street Fighter II**  
■ 1 player ■ £15  
**Classic small-scale fighting** The graphics are great, but all come at the expense of speed and control, since you have only two buttons to play with. Very difficult, too. ★★★

**WWF Warzone**  
■ Acclaim ■ £20  
**Men in Pants action** A bit of a looker, but jerky animation and finger-snapping controls. ★★

### Racers

**Super R.C. Pro-Am**  
■ Nintendo ■ £20  
**Dinky driving** This re-release of Rare's frantic remote-controlled car racing game looks primitive, but the races are a joy, with the chance to use weapons against the ruthless computer opponents and upgrade your car as you go. ★★★★★

### Sports

**Hollywood Pinball**  
■ Take 2 ■ Colour ■ £20  
**Flippin' average** Some acceptable ball movement but sadly only seven rather sparse and uninteresting tables. ★★

**NFL Blitz**  
■ Midway ■ £25  
**Arcade-style US football** Fast and furious, with surprising depth, but – incredibly – the players suffer from the early-'80s problem of flickering on and off, which makes tracking them impossible. ★★★★★

**Tennis**  
■ Nintendo ■ £15  
**Racquet fun** Despite its simplicity, *Tennis* is one of the most enjoyable such sims available on any platform. With a horribly addictive two-player option, a hard-to-beat computer player and some very intuitive controls, this is a great game if you want to avoid getting involved in any real-life John McEnroe-style ill-placed-abuse nonsense. ★★★★★

### Platformers

**Bugs and Lola Bunny: Operation Carrotpatch**  
■ Infogrames ■ Colour ■ £25  
**What's up, Doc?** The cast from every Warner Brothers' cartoon is present and correct, but the clichéd running and jumping on offer isn't anything new. ★★

## Donkey Kong Land II: Diddy's Quest

■ Nintendo ■ £25  
**Miniature monkey stories** Tries hard to squeeze the SNES game on to the tiny grey handheld, and doesn't do a bad job. The visuals require you to squint a bit, but the controls and secrets makes it a worthy Mario-style jump-about. ★★★★★

## Loony Tunes

■ Infogrames ■ £25  
**Animation-inspired adventures** All the Warner Bros characters have made their way on to the Game Boy for this rather attractive, varied platformer. A little more use of colour would have been nice, but after the gaming dross the Game Boy has had to cope with lately, this is platform-based heaven. ★★★★★

## Montezuma's Return

■ Take 2 ■ Colour ■ £20  
**Unknown quantity Max, returns** A little character jumping about. Too retro to be good. ★★

## Oddworld Adventures

■ GT Interactive ■ £20  
**Save your alien chums** Abe's ability to run, jump, tiptoe, fart and possess enemies has survived intact from the PlayStation version, as has the frustrating gameplay. What's inevitable, of course, is that the Game Boy port also lacks the original's lovely graphics. ★★

## Super Mario Land

■ Nintendo ■ £15  
**The pipe man cometh** One of the Game Boy's original releases, and *Super Mario* still excels in most areas, despite its now having reached – what is in gaming terms – a positively geriatric nine years old. The graphics are simple, but the subtlety of control and excellent level designs have been carried over to the bijou Nintendo with aplomb. ★★★★★

## Tweety & Sylvester – Breakfast on the Run

■ Infogrames ■ £20  
**Canary capers** Impressive visuals, but the 2D puzzle solving is an insult. ★★

### RPGs

**Harvest Moon**  
■ THE ■ Colour ■ £20  
**Down on the farm...** Clear your land, till the soil, plant some seeds – there aren't many farming sims out there, but *Harvest Moon* proves that such games should be even more popular than Lara. Managing all the the animals and crops is trickier than you might initially imagine and the level of detail is astonishing, but it's the amount of stuff to do that'll have you gluing the Game Boy to your hand for a month. ★★★★★

## James Bond 007

■ Nintendo ■ £25  
**Shaken or stirred?** Nothing remarkably innovative about this top-down Game Boy RPG, but it's nice to see something like this set in the modern world, even if it is a tad simple. The sparse mazes are rather short and somewhat disappointing, but the emphasis on sneaking about is very welcome. ★★★★★

### Puzzlers

**Hexcite**  
■ Ubisoft ■ £25  
**Pick up a polygon** Fit shapes together and score points for the closest fit. *Hexcite* isn't likely to displace *Tetris* – it lacks that title's immediacy – but it's frantic, head-scratching fun, that's curiously compulsive when played against a friend. ★★★★★

## Mole Mania

■ Nintendo ■ £20  
**Puzzle/RPG combo** It won't take long to finish, even though it's almost impossibly hard in places, but that said, it's cute, it's funny and it'll have you stuck to your Game Boy until you get through to the end. Top fun. ★★★★★

## Tetris DX

■ Nintendo ■ £20  
**Brick drop return shock!** The graphics, sounds and modes might have changed, but this is still the same old *Tetris*, known worldwide as the most addictive version of the Russian puzzler. Stemming the rising wall of bricks is, in fact, all the better for being able to save your high scores at long last, but sadly the game doesn't work too well in black and white. ★★★★★

### Retro

**720**  
■ Midway ■ Colour ■ £25  
**Difficult skate stunting** Skate around town, pulling off stunts that '90s kids have long forgotten. Unfortunately, the Game Boy's D-pad doesn't lend itself well to skateboard action. Disappointing colour, too. ★★

## Breakout

■ Take 2 ■ £20  
**Hit the bricks** Astonishingly straight conversion of '70s coin-op. Why? ★

## Centipede

■ Take 2 ■ £20  
**Shoot the insects** Ancient arcade game. Stupidly simplistic. ★

## Game & Watch Gallery

■ Nintendo ■ £10  
**Four titles in one** Featuring *Fire*, *Manhole*, *Octopus* and *Oil Panic*, these games are simple fun, but weren't the original handheld games always a bit rubbish? ★★★★★

## Game & Watch Gallery 2

■ Nintendo ■ £20  
**Handheld retro collection** '80s Game & Watch classics *Parachute*, *Helmet*, *Chef*, *Vermin* and *Donkey Kong*, bundled together in both classic and updated guises. This collection is all surprisingly enjoyable, especially the full-colour versions with Mario characters. ★★★★★

### Misc

**Cool Hand**  
■ Take 2 ■ Colour ■ £20  
**Card games** Blackjack, solitaire and cribbage in one package. Extensive enough, but why not just buy yourself a pack of cards and save your cash for the gaming tables? ★★★★★

## Rampage World Tour

■ Midway ■ £25  
**Old-skool arcade game returns.** Take control of King Kong and smash up buildings. Boring. ★

## Tamagotchi

■ Bandai ■ £20  
**A blob of your own** The original keyring concept extended with a wealth of options. For the kids. ★★

### NEXT MONTH

■ So there you have it. 21,529 words (some 2,832 more than in last issue, fact fans), all hand picked to tell you about the very best (and the very worst) gaming experiences available in a store near you. And all updated every month. A

# May 1987

Compiled by | Mark Green

Moles, pigs, nipples and Frankenstein's monster. **Twelve years ago** it was a brave new world indeed.



as you'd expect, the game's littered with the sort of visual puns and japes the Gremlin gagsters are famous for

■ The critics loved *Monty Mole*, as did gamers, even if it featured Arthur Scargill.



CAVERN SCORE: 110 HIGH: ■ At the time of the miners' strikes, Monty was a left wing hero.

had the poor mole being chased by the coppers after stealing the coal in the first game. That led to *Auf Wiedersehen* in which, as a persecuted mole, you've somehow got to flee the country."

*Auf Wiedersehen Monty* saw the unlucky mole attempting a getaway to the Greek Island of "Montos" to avoid extradition. It was a platformer in the purest sense – there were ladders to climb, fixed-route enemies to avoid and plenty of teeth-gnashing life loss – but the small in-game characters were atypical; packed with detail, colourful, and racing around the screen like moths around a light bulb. Traditionally irritating Monty elements also returned – including the infamous crushers, which went through their pneumatic manoeuvres at random, making getting past an annoying game of chance – but they didn't harm the game's loveable charm.

Shaun was aware of the series' popularity. "You knew with the *Monty* games that you were working on something that would be very popular," he says, "and that inspired you to give the project 110%." It paid off – the reviewers shed a collective tear at Monty's departure. *Your Sinclair* magazine gave *Auf Wiedersehen Monty* a Megagame award saying "Gremlin has kept up the *Monty* tradition and put together a top-hole multi-screen platform game", while *Crash* magazine referred to it as "A fine continuation of the long-standing *Monty Mole* theme" awarding it 85%.

*Monty* was resurrected one final time by Pete and Shaun for *Moley Christmas*, a short game given away on a *Your Sinclair* cover-mounted cassette. "Both Shaun and I had fond feelings for the little chap" reminisces Pete, "so we thought, why not do a little covertape with our favourite mole?" Several years later, after the developers had left, Gremlin Graphics commissioned a separate team to program *Impossamole*, which saw Monty gifted with superhero powers. But people tend not to talk about that game.

So could there be a return for the mole? "I think a *Monty* game could still be made today, providing the age range was set low enough," says Pete. "8-14 sounds about right. Okay, the technology has moved massively, but we must not forget that with all this blood and realism, games started out concentrating on being just one thing – fun." And he's not wrong. **A**

## Coal mole goal

**W**hen videogaming was young, there were plenty of common-or-garden animals practically begging to star in their own game. With loveable beasts such as rabbits, cats and mice ripe for coding, there was no need for developers to resort to obscure creatures like bandicoots and geckos. And so it came to pass that a humble mole named Monty became the platforming hero of the late '80s, and made what was planned as his farewell appearance in *Auf Wiedersehen Monty*, an 8-bit title released by Gremlin Graphics in May 1987.

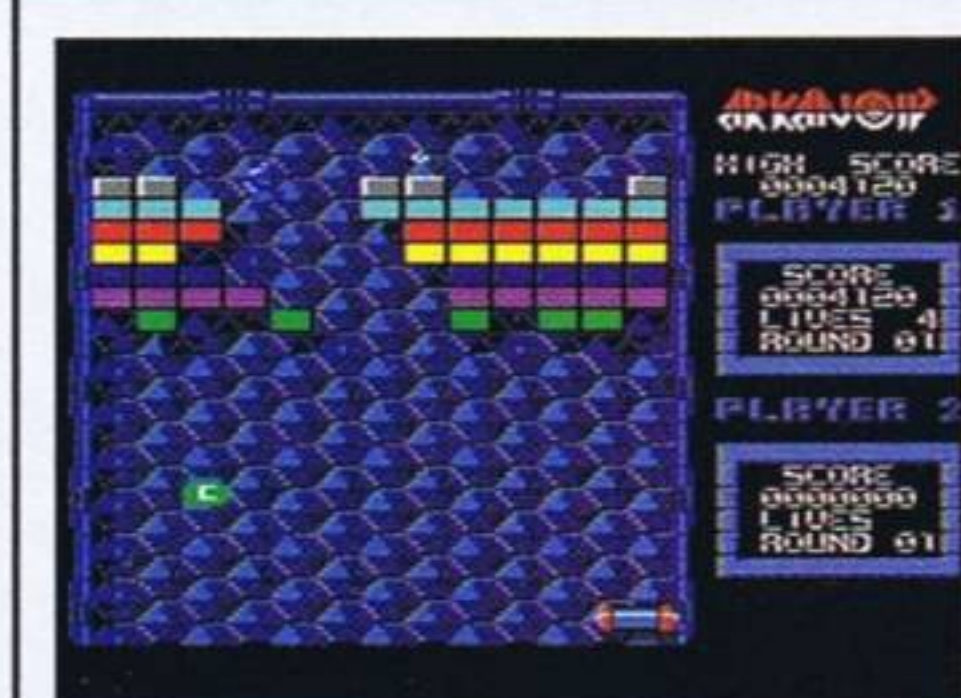
Monty became the platforming hero of the '80s

In common with the (arguably more popular) *Miner Willy* series, the Monty mole games were

linked by a coal mining backstory. Other publishers were content with "Aliens attack!" plotlines, but the Monty games were concentrating on, in developer Shaun Hollingworth's words, "being both popular and different". The first title, *Wanted: Monty Mole*, had seen the young mammal scampering through a mine and "borrowing" pieces of coal – a topical storyline thanks to 1984's miners' strike, and one which secured the mole several column inches in the national press.

Developer Pete Harrap, now a director at Krisalis Software with Shaun, explains how Thatcher's troubles helped influence the games. "I'd just been for a driving lesson during the strike, and was dropped off by my instructor in the middle of a running battle. I saw this great big pair of policeman coming towards me, and thought I was going to get clobbered. Luckily, I managed to calmly walk towards them, and they ignored me. After that, the third game, *Monty On The Run*,

### Games of the month | Ridge Racer Type 4? Pah! Here's what the kids of the '80s were playing...



**Arkanoid**  
System: **Imagine**  
Publisher: **C64**  
■ Taito's modern take on break-the-wall classic *Breakout*, had been a guaranteed coin-guzzler in arcades for some time before it arrived on home computers. The conversion was good, but the YS covertape game *Batty* (written by an ex-Ultimate programmer) humiliated it.



**Into the Eagle's Nest**  
System: **Pandora**  
Publisher: **Spectrum**  
■ A graphically-impressive clone of *Gauntlet*, Pandora's game had the hero rescuing captives from a WWII Nazi fortress. The task wasn't any more complicated than finding keys, opening doors, and shooting the reams of soldiers who - literally - lined up to die.



**Head Over Heels**  
System: **Ocean**  
Publisher: **Spectrum**  
■ The unofficial sequel to *Batman* (see *Arcade 5*): widely regarded as Jon Ritman and Bernie Drummond's finest work, and arguably the most impressive 8-bit game ever. You switched between two characters with different skills, separating and combining them to solve puzzles.

# Comic capers

**W**e do it on purpose, you know. Games magazines have long been courting controversy with parents, WHSmith and other "guardians of moral standards" with dodgy covers, random swearing and gratuitous fleshy bits. Most titles have yelled a metaphorical, "Sod it!" at some point in their lives, and found themselves spending a painful month on the top shelf of the local newsagent.

*Crash* was the gutsy rebel when in May '87 the magazine staff decided to cover-mount a specially-produced copy of obscure kids comic *Oink!*. Published by IPC and counting among its contributors Frank Sidebottom and one Marc Riley (better known as Lard from Radio 1's *Mark and Lard* show), *Oink!* styled itself as a children's version of *Viz*, and had already suffered at the hands of WHSmith's giant axe.

As *Crash* explained, "Many readers thought it was insulting to have what they thought of as a 'kiddies' comic in a grown-up games mag, yet newsagents had already been moving it out of reach, considering its content to be of a nature more adult than was suitable for youngsters." The "unsuitable content" went no further than one of the comic's characters having an exploding pimple, but parents were up in arms, and *Crash* thought better than to mount a similar promotion (especially as the game based on the comic never materialised), so only one episode of *Oink!* was ever covermounted.

*Crash* had been in trouble before with a cover loosely based on the Gargoyle game *Dun Darach*



1985's games mags were the *Loaded*s of their time.

in 1985. The half-naked man kneeling in front of a sinister fantasy background was too much for some parents, but it was his handcuffed wrists, studded dog-collar, and the woman standing behind him legs akimbo that caused the most uproar. WHSmith exercised its top-shelf by-law once again, and the letters pages overflowed with missives.

Following *Crash's* lead, *Your Sinclair* strolled down the corpse-laden route of the comic tie-in, with a free sample copy of *Viz*. It was a massively toned-down version, with no swearing, boobs or babes. Still, *YS's* letters pages filled up again. The situation recurred with a *YS* cover of *Vixen* featuring page three model

Corinne Russell in a leopard-skin bikini.

Another notorious incident was the *Amiga Power* "Cannon Fodder" episode. Sensible Software's wartime strategy title arrived on the magazine's cover complete with a British Legion-style poppy. Various quarters kicked up a fuss and, while the editorial staff were at lunch, the magazine's publishers decided to change the cover to a game screenshot. Of course, no such controversy could ever happen in *Arcade*.

Or could it? Our illustrious editor has had his fair share of trouble in the past, including the seemingly obligatory "pulled-from-the-shelves" incident. Under Mr West's editorship, *Mega* unfavourably reviewed a version of *Strider II* for the MegaDrive, which publisher US Gold then claimed wasn't finished. "Yeah, right" is Neil's only comment. But after several heated telephone conversations, *Mega* was removed from every newsagent in the country. So if you ever have trouble finding *Arcade*, you'll know exactly who to blame.



Cannon Fodder kicked ass and caused trouble.

## World News Headlines

Twelve years old, here was the news...

The assistant bosun on the *Herald of Free Enterprise*, the ferry which sank near Zeebrugge in an incident that killed almost 200 passengers, admitted that he'd been asleep when he should have been closing the vessel's bow doors.

Mrs Thatcher announced a general election for 11 June, providing her with the opportunity to achieve a record-breaking third successive victory. Labour built its



Feu vert for Chunnel.

campaign around the "personality" of leader Neil Kinnock. And lost.

The first rumblings of projects which are now an everyday part of British culture were heard. The green light was given for a Channel tunnel between France and England, and support grew for a national state lottery, with a maximum prize of £6,000.

The Royal Mint warned that the 5p and 10p coins may shrink in size, and there was a chance that the 50p may follow suit. New coins worth £10, £25, £50 and £100 were also set to be produced. You know, for rich people.



"Like" being the operative word.

## Music Charts

2 May 1987

- 1 La Isla Bonita *Madonna*
- 2 Can't Be With You Tonight *Judy Boucher*
- 3 Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now *Starship*
- 4 The Slightest Touch *Five Star*
- 5 Lean On Me *Club Nouveau*

Information © CIN

## Film Charts

May 1987

- 1 Platoon
- 2 Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home
- 3 Blue Velvet
- 4 Personal Services
- 5 Tough Guys

Information from Total Film

## Gaming Round-up | Also going on this month

The Spectrum world was recovering from the first salvo in the magazine covertape battle, which would soon develop into a war of epic proportions. *Your Sinclair* cover-mounted a full, unreleased Ocean title, *Road Race*, sending shivers down the spine of rival titles *Sinclair User* and *Crash*. In a few years, four-game, 8-game and even 12-game cassettes would become the norm.

After the sale of Sinclair to Amstrad in 1986, Amstrad followed up the Spectrum +2 (a 128k Spectrum with a tape deck bolted on) with the launch of the Spectrum +3 (a 128k Spectrum with a disk drive bolted on). It sold for £250 and used uncommon and expensive three-inch disks, at a time when three and a half-inch disks were becoming standard. Ironically, the +2 outlived its disk-based cousin.



FREE DOUBLE-SIDED POSTER! SIR CLIVE SINCLAIR AND MARIA WHITTAKER!

Back in the bad old days, foot soldiers risked having buckets of molten plastic tipped over their heads.

CRL's *Frankenstein* was awarded a "15 certificate" by the British Board of Film Classification. As submission of a game to the BBFC was (and is) entirely voluntary, this was a blatant attempt to gain publicity on the part of a publisher best known for games which no-one bought.

Despite the carefully-orchestrated controversy, the game failed to sell in any kind of numbers.

Imagine began to advertise its new shoot-'em-up *Game Over* with a drawing of a female villainess with part of her nipple exposed. Most magazines covered up the offending area with the developer's logo, although *Crash* took the time to airbrush in a new piece of clothing for the well-endowed exhibitionist. The cards at *Your Sinclair* went the opposite way, giving away a huge poster of the lady and her partially-exposed melon.



Gun play on shoot-'em-up *Game Over*.

## Your Sinclair Spectrum top 10

- 1 Leaderboard *US Gold*
- 2 Bomb Jack II *Elite*
- 3 Paperboy *Elite*
- 4 Olli And Lissa *Firebird*
- 5 Gauntlet *US Gold*
- 6 Feud *Bulldog*
- 7 BMX Simulator *Code Masters*
- 8 Konami's Coin-op Hits *Konami*
- 9 Agent X *Mastertronic*
- 10 Fist II *Melbourne House*

## Zzap 64 C64 Reader's Chart

- 1 World Games *US Gold/Epyx*
- 2 Leaderboard *US Gold/Access*
- 3 Gauntlet *US Gold*
- 4 Uridium *Hewson*
- 5 Delta *Thalamus*
- 6 Nemesis *Konami*
- 7 Sanxion *Thalamus*
- 8 Gunship *Micropose*
- 9 Green Beret *Imagine*
- 10 Elite *Firebird*

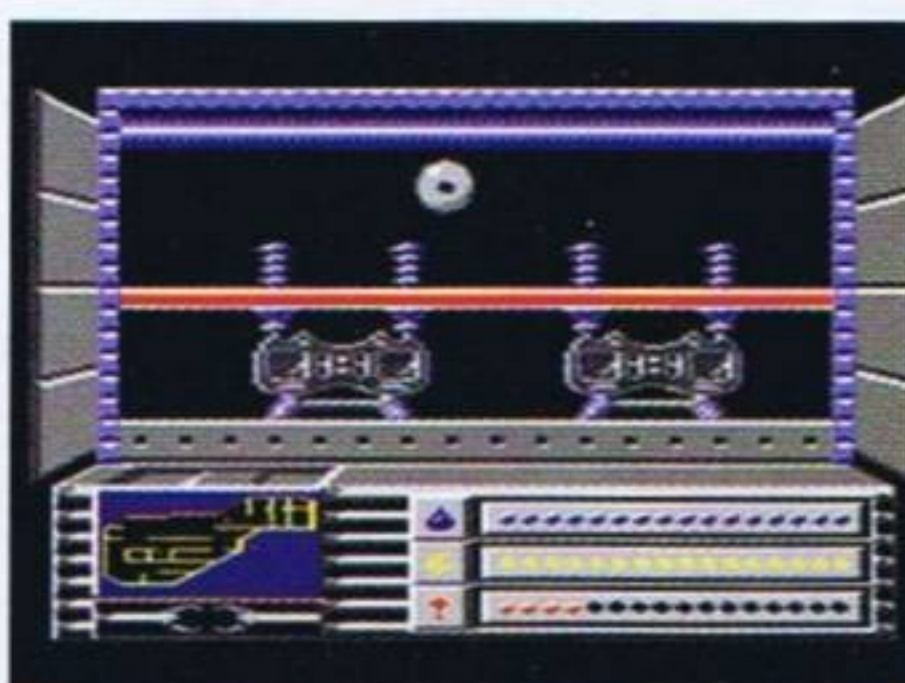


## Saboteur II

System: Amstrad

Publisher: Durrell

The sequel to the '84 classic saw a woman slipping into the role of black-clad stealth assassin. The *Metal Gear Solids* of their day, the *Saboteur* games asked the player to infiltrate enemy compounds without attracting the attention of the guards. Or those pesky guard dogs.



## Rasterscan

System: Amstrad

Publisher: Mastertronic

A slightly odd budget release that used digitised pictures of cassette tapes and hands for scenery, creating an eerie, other-worldly feel. The game wasn't particularly great - guide a wandering ball towards "cups" and solve puzzles to open doors - but it had a certain creepy charm.



## Barbarian

System: Spectrum

Publisher: Palace

One of the most infamous beat-'em-ups in 8-bit history. The gory game featured a goblin who kicked severed heads around. The magazine ads featured a near-naked Maria Whittaker, and *Crash* put it on the cover with a drawing of a man about to have his throat slit. Good game, though.

## Great Gaming Moments

# White men can jump

Remembered by | Rich Peley

You say you want a revolution? Then try Nintendo 64's **1080° Snowboarding**.



**T**hink back to when you were young. Good, wasn't it? You sat on the floor, playing with your toys. Then, if you were going out, your Mum and Dad would pack up all the clothes and playthings you needed and usher you into the car. You could help navigate by inquiring "Are we nearly there yet?" every 15 seconds, and go to sleep if you were bored. Wherever you went would be totally free, and if you didn't like it, you could just make a bit of a fuss and cry or be sick, and you'd be taken home again. Those, most certainly, were the days.

Now, though, life is more complicated. You have to worry about bills and relationships and washing up and money and remembering all by yourself to take an

extra jumper in case it gets a bit cold later. Your expectations of life become more cynical, with every cloud tainted, you convince yourself, by a shitty-coloured lining. And your pain threshold is vastly reduced, with every bump, twinge and cut requiring a ridiculous period of convalescence.

Your persistence, too, tends to wane with age. Should you stick at that tricky part of that videogame you can't quite do, or give up and go down the pub? The latter is, after all, far less hassle. Take trying to pull a 1080° move in *1080° Snowboarding*, for example. The promise of this ultimate manoeuvre is there, glaring at you, from the moment you set eyes on the box. But can you, a humble beginner, get it right? Can you buggery. You've managed to get to grips with the more basic stunts. You can pull off a "Shifty" with B and Left, or a "Stiffy" with Up and Left and B. The first spins aren't too hard either. You can hold the Right shoulder button and a nudge Left for a 180°, or a circular spin of the analogue pad for a 360°.

But then it starts to get difficult and so you goof off by sliding down the easy courses for a few hours. It's all good fun. But there's an annoying voice in your head saying you've left a chore unattended to.

### Wanna play?

■ Nintendo's *1080° Snowboarding* was released in the UK in time for Christmas '98, and has been riding high in the charts ever since. We reviewed it back in *Arcade 1* where we quite rightly awarded it a fantastic ★★★★★. Playing it again recently, having ploughed through the likes of *CoolBoarders 3* on the way, *1080°* seemed to fare as well as ever. If you have any passion for snowsports or racing games at all, you'd be a fool to pass it by.

So you grudgingly go back to tackle the 540°. Hang on... Bugger. What do the instructions say? Press A, then Right shoulder button, then a spin of the joystick, then R, then down. Hnnngh, jitiszuii, arrghh! Yes! Done it. You let yourself off any further effort with the thought that you'll never be able to do a 720°, and instead enjoy another few laps of Mountain Village.

But then you'll be back. Just as every pile of washing up has to be tackled eventually you know you'll feel a lot better when you've finally cracked it. It's like learning to ride a bike; wobbling about a bit, loosening your stabilisers, taking one off, and then finally riding with nothing else to support you than your momentum. And so it is that one day, when you're not even concentrating that hard, you'll pull off a 720° and then – oh miracle of miracles – your first 1080°. And it's as exciting as pulling your first girlfriend. Well, almost. **A**

**The promise of a 1080° spin glares at you. But can you pull it off? Can you buggery.**

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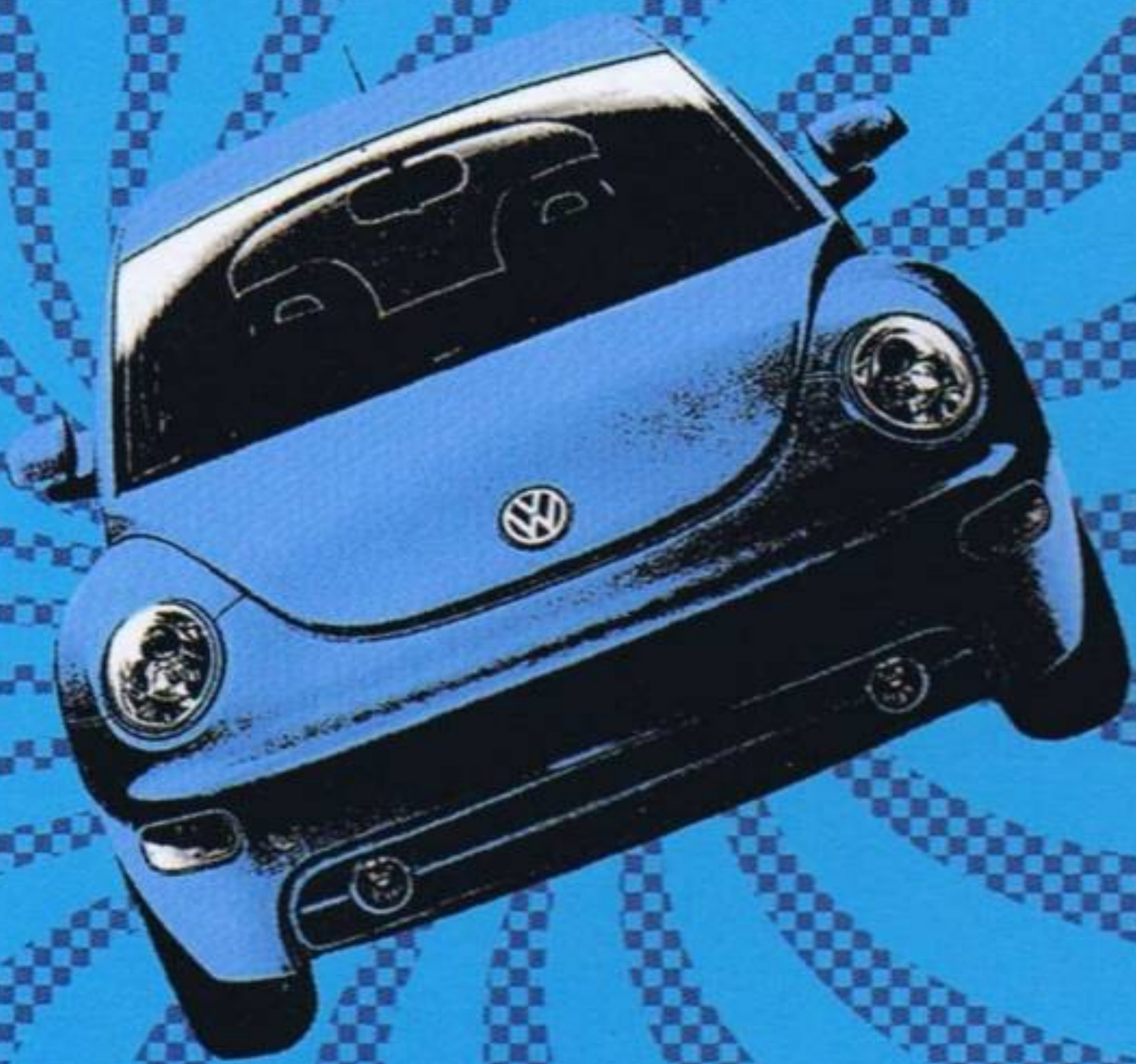
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