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May 1996

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- ▶ The Beast Within
- ▶ Psychic Detective
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Duke Nukem 3D

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- Civilization II
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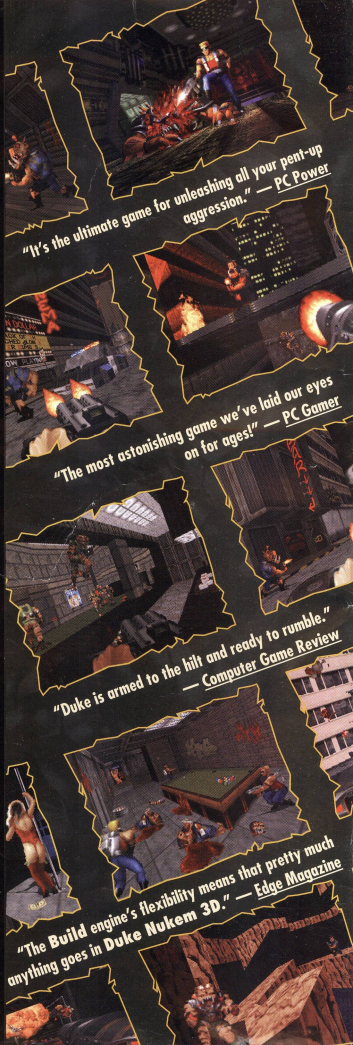
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"It's the ultimate game for unleashing all your pent-up aggression." — PC Power

"The most astonishing game we've laid our eyes on for ages!" — PC Gamer

"Duke is armed to the hilt and ready to rumble." — Computer Game Review

"The Build engine's flexibility means that pretty much anything goes in Duke Nukem 3D." — Edge Magazine

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"DOOM is DEAD — long live Duke Nukem 3D, could this be the greatest PC shoot'em-up ever?" — X-GEN / Next Generation

"Duke Nukem 3D truly looks like a 3D supermodel of a game: sleek, sexy, and gory with lead-thrashing action." — Strategy Plus

"The BFG was a pop-gun, (it's) got nothing on the sophisticated hi-tech weaponry at Duke Nukem's disposal." — Computer Gaming World

"Nowhere is safe from Duke's pounding, lasering action as you fight the alien scum in the streets." — PC Attack



Collector's Version

For more details, make tracks to your local software retailer!



Standard Version

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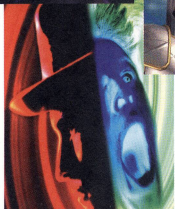
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**ON THE
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Duke Nukem
kicks alien
butt in 3D
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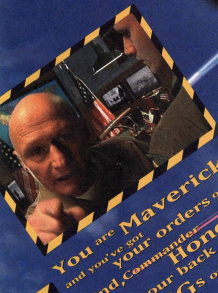
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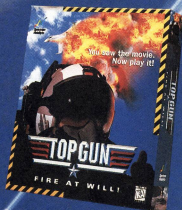
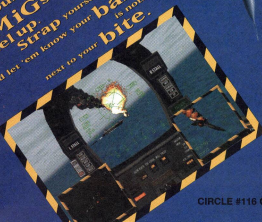
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 **Spectrum
HoLoByte**

editor's bytes

The Golden Age of Games

This morning when I woke up, I went through my usual routine, as most of us do. Mine includes heading straight for the bathroom and painfully looking at myself in the mirror. After frightening myself with a pair of eyes that looked as if they belonged in a maraschino cherry jar instead of on my face, I realized that I had *Civilization II* to thank for these new, lovely red contacts. More and more, I've been up till all hours of the night playing these games. What little social life I've had these past few months has been diminished to interaction with computer-game NPCs. For those of you who aren't familiar with this acronym, it stands for non-player characters, and that means I've been leading a pretty sad existence.

This got me thinking that recently, we've seen an abundance of amazing games (proof of it is my pathetic lifestyle)—even after the big holiday sell. Lately, it seems that almost every game arriving here at the magazine's office is immediately grabbed with much enthusiasm by editors. We all fight over the day's mail delivery. The overall quality of the games has gone way up. Long gone are games that are absolutely horrible. If a game does turn out to be a dog, it usually has some meritorious qualities: if it doesn't have playability, it might have good graphics, sound, or...you get the idea. We seem to be going through a computer-game renaissance.

Oddly enough, the push for excellence in game software is pushing the technology to new heights. Looking back, who would have thought that computer games would be the driving force behind making faster and more powerful computers? Even previously applications-only companies such as Microsoft have acknowledged the importance of the electronic-gaming market by developing and enthusiastically supporting it.

On the other hand, all the excitement surrounding the game market makes it immensely enticing to companies and individuals who have no motivation beyond making a quick buck. Usually, such companies flood the market with poor and quickly done games. Then they lose money and beat a hasty retreat with their tail between their legs, usually muttering about market instability. What a laugh. Hopefully, we won't see much more of this in the future.



—Mike Davila
Editor-in-Chief

HOW TO REACH COMPUTER PLAYER

America Online:

CompPlayer

CompuServe:

70007,3554

Internet:

CompPlayer@aol.com

Or, you can contact us the old-fashioned way:

COMPUTER PLAYER
251 Danbury Road
Wilton, CT 06897-3035
attn: communications

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Group Publishers
Louis DeFrancesco Jr.
Yvonne M. DeFrancesco
Publisher Gary Dotzall

EDITORIAL

Group Editor-in-Chief Tom Atwood
Editor-in-Chief Mike Davila
Senior Editor Jeff James
Game Strategies Editor Kevin J. McCann
Contributors
Zach Meston
Ron Dulin
Bernard Dy
Jeff Tachtlich

COPY

Copy Director Lynne Sewell
Senior Copy Editor Katherine Tolliver
Assistant Copy Editor Kathleen J. Doherty

ART / DESIGN

Managing Art Director Alan J. Palermo
Art Director Betty K. Nero
Assistant Art Directors
Michael Bouse
Angela A. Carpenter
Leslie Costa
Staff Photographer Walter Sidas
Image Technician Christopher Hoffmaster

ADVERTISING

Director of Advertising Rick Vandervoorn
4200 Park Blvd., Suite 153
Oakland, CA 94602
Phone 510.530.9586
Fax 510.530.9587

MARKETING

Marketing Manager Danielle Ruggiero

CIRCULATION

Circulation Manager Arlene A. DelGiudice
Circulation/Marketing
Coordinator Jennifer Kelsey

PRODUCTION

Production Manager Mary Reid McElwee
Production Assistant Arlene Melko

SYSTEMS

Systems Manager Gordon Oppenheimer

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NewsNet

by JOHN PATTERSON

See how they Run!

Well, the Primaries are upon us, and that means that, once again, we're inundated and overwhelmed by the appeals, commercials and lies, damned lies of all the fools who think they're good enough to reign o'er us. This year, we have the privilege of watching the Republicans tearing each other to pieces in a vicious, and probably futile, internecine struggle for the poisoned chalice that is the American Presidency. And so far, they're proving that the Democrats don't by any means have a monopoly on vacuous rhetoric. Who will it be? The rabid right-wing protectionist? The snarling geriatric? The wild-eyed billionaire egomaniac? Or that other guy...y'know...the, uh, canny investor who looks and sounds just like Clinton?

Folks, this is a democracy—least, that's what they tell me; but if you can't bring yourselves to vote for any of the idiots currently running, never fear, because this page is given over to a few equally tasty "democracy substitutes." That's right, just like saccharin. Politics without the guilt, the sleaze or the hassle. And you won't need to take a shower afterwards. Imagine....



If you have to get involved in politics, take my advice, the way to have the most fun is to be the campaign manager. Sure, you'll get fired if the polling numbers take a dive, but you'll be largely invisible, you can fling all the mud you want, and the candidate will have to take most of the heat. The best way to enjoy this experience is to play the new Online interactive political simulation game from Crossover Technologies and The Markle Foundation, *President '96*, which is available on the World Wide Web and America Online until November 16 at

<http://www.pres96.com>; America Online Keyword: President '96.

You'll take on the role of campaign manager for one of 10 political candidates, and you'll shape their political platform. The game will closely mirror the electoral process and will contain real-life and fictitious events, as well as embarrassing political (and, we hope, sexual) scandals. This totally interactive parallel political universe will be constantly updated, and the final outcome will be directly controlled by the players themselves. And since it's on the Internet and America Online, it (kinda, sorta) creates an electronic democracy in which millions of cyber-voters can participate. The candidates in the game are thinly veiled versions of real campaigners, or composites of various real figures. For instance, there's a foaming-at-the-mouth TV political commentator, a much-admired retired Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, an Al Gore/Clinton composite, an Ann Richards-like Texas governor and numerous others. From the *President '96* Home Page, players can visit candidates' campaign headquarters, survey bios, check out clips of debates and commercials, listen to sound bites and campaign songs, examine election charts, political cartoons and more. Also, they'll check out the latest mud-slinging, rumors and simmering political scandals in *President '96*, or read posted newsgroup messages to get informed. Gather a large enough constituency, and your candidate will be elected. The game will be augmented—and its serious side enhanced immeasurably—by weekly chat sessions involving real-life political and business figures, e.g., Mario Cuomo, and organizations. This may turn out to be more fun than the real thing. Vote! Vote! Vote! Contact Crossover Technologies at 212.777.1190.

Doonesbury goes Online

Not to be outdone, Gary Trudeau—Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist and creator of "Doonesbury"—has taken Zonker, Duke, B.D. Boopis, Rick Redfern and the whole gang online to create The Doonesbury Electronic Town Hall: a place where you can check out the latest political news, keep track of the heroes and villains of the '96 campaign and, if you feel the urge, create your own controversy. The Town Hall's sections include Daily Briefing, an insider's view of the Beltway follies



(which includes content from the Hotline) and Politics USA—two hot resources for politics junkies. Straw Poll allows you to take part in election surveys and voice your opinions. Get Involved lets you make a difference by learning about Doonesbury-

sponsored charities such as Human Rights Watch Asia and the Coalition for the Homeless. And the Chat Hall lets you talk with cyber-citizens nationwide about hot topics from education to abortion and environmentalism.

Best of all is the Flashbacks section, which features Doonesbury strips from past presidential elections. In fact, if you wish to enlarge on this section, you can go the whole hog and get hold of the Doonesbury Flashbacks CD-ROM, from Mindscape—a treasure-trove of every Doonesbury strip ever published. I recommend this wholeheartedly—not simply because Trudeau is a political cartoonist of genius and watertight integrity, but also as a way to get a thorough education in American politics since the Watergate era.

Access The Doonesbury Electronic Town Hall at URL: www.doonesbury.com, or for Doonesbury Flashbacks, contact Mindscape at 415.897.8268.

Fire a Salvo at Politics as Usual



Salvo
<http://www.salvo.com>

Those of you who are ill-disposed, indifferent or just plain contemptuous to the wicked ways of the American political process with all its negative ads, the brain-dead focus on non-issues (flag-burning, anyone?), petty one-upmanship and corruption may want to log on to Salvo: The American Survival Guide. It's an advertiser-supported World Wide Web site designed by and for the media-savvy and "predictably unpredictable" members of the misnamed Generation X. It aims to establish a place on the Net where people who are profoundly disillusioned with the whole electoral carnival of the animals can register their views and to make them instantly available to politicians and the media. This will be the first presidential election in which the Internet can play some kind of role, and Salvo makes the bold claim that it would like to recast stale old contests about party ideology and politicians' personalities into real battles about ideas. It will feature 12 graphically spectacular, issue-oriented sections detailing environmentalism, social justice, personal freedom and all areas of the national political debate. Commentators, writers, artists and activists from all parts of the political spectrum will offer their spin on issues and political proceedings. Salvo's calendar of events will include live online debates on all the issues as well as celebrity guest chats. Salvo promises to be a involving and evolving forum for debate. You can start petitions, learn how to register to vote, download information, hang out in Global chatrooms or just get a decent political education. Hyperlinked to the Rock the Vote website (and endorsed by RTV), Salvo is also backed by political pressure groups and conclave ranging from The Heritage Foundation to the Republican National Committee, Friends of the Earth, GLAAD, Greenpeace and the AIDS Action Network. Commitments are made from across the political map, from the loonie Left to the rabid Right. Salvo looks as if it will offer genuinely free speech, unencumbered by the narrow perspectives of national agenda-setters and political censors. Use it or lose it. Access Salvo at <http://www.salvo.com>.

games/software

Fans of the *X-Files* and of *Under a Killing Moon* should know that the new Tex Murphy Interactive movie, *The Pandora Directive*, from Access Software, will be upon us in the twinkling of an eye. The game revolves around two themes: the mysterious disappearance of the ancient Mayan civilization and the reputed UFO crash at Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947. From these two events, *The Pandora Directive* builds a dark, exciting and pulse-pounding interactive thriller shot through with the hard-as-nails gumshoe cynicism and humor that gamers saw in *Under a Killing Moon*. It's April, 2043, and a typical \$500-a-day-plus-expenses gig for Tex Murphy starts to become a world-threatening labyrinth in which everyone is threatening and no one can be trusted. Hired by a strange and slightly batty older client (Kevin McCarthy, star of the original *Invasion of the Body snatchers*) to track down an old friend (John Agar—ex-husband of Shirley Temple, no less!) and joining forces with a mysterious beauty (Tanya Roberts), Tex finds himself dogged at every turn by a murderous NSA agent (Barry Corbin). As the game unfolds, you'll solve puzzles, collect clues, and track down a number of boxes, each containing a component of the so-called "Pandora Device." UFOs and the Yucatan Peninsula feature heavily in the challenging gameplay, and the tight script, wonderful graphics and rendered environments will take you through three possible narrative threads, each with its own unique scenes, plot twists and character developments. Finally, the games playability is comprehensively enhanced by no less than seven endings, allowing you to replay the game several times, every time encountering new locales, puzzles and conversations. With all these features, *The Pandora Directive* promises to take the interactive movie to a new level of sophistication.

Contact Access Software at 811.359.2900.



Open Pandora's Box



Your Cheatin' Heart...

Cheats, clues, tips, tricks, infinite power-ups, infinite lives and everything the gamer could possibly desire for over 200 of the most popular PC games can be yours for the asking, thanks to the 1996 version of Microforum's Solution CD. From *Alone in the Dark* to *Zephyr*, from *Blackthorne* to *Virtual Pool* and from *Civilization* to *Quarantine*, Solution CD will take you through, show you strategies, let you in on cheat codes, and generally enable you to kick monumental booty in no end of tight gaming situations.

With a friendly Windows interface, a search engine for quick access by publisher or category and a Hex editor to manipulate game environments, Solution CD even offers an overview of gaming and graphic concepts for most games—a feature that incidentally helps you get an idea of games you may be planning to buy—a feast of stuff, in short. But remember: cheaters only cheat themselves. (Whaddya mean, shut up?)

Contact Microforum at 416.656.6406.



Zoning out Again

The good folks at WizardWorks are at it again, and this time they've been hard at work making new levels for *Hexen* and *Heretic*—two of the sexiest *Doom*-style first-person shooters around. *HIZONE* is the company's new add-on

compilation, and it contains a multi-player database and an interface that make loading multiple levels a cinch. It will give you 12 never-seen-before episodes designed by WizardWorks, and more than 250 bonus levels. It can also allow you to convert *Doom*, *Doom II* and *Heretic* levels to work with *Hexen* for continuous level play. You can customize *Heretic/Hexen* to change skill levels, select turbo, challenge other players and replace mobile items with patch wad files.

Contact WizardWorks at 612.559.5140.

Internet Catch-up

Anyone who has been left behind on the information superhighway will want to pick up a copy of *Internet Power Plus* from Brentwood Home Video and Earthlink Network. The package contains two 60-minute videos and four Internet programs, including Earthlinks' *TotalAccess* and *Netscape Navigator*—the number-one



Web browser. The two videotapes give an in-depth look at the two biggest areas of the Internet, education and entertainment, and will provide, in a compact and clearly stated form, an excellent introduction to the complexities of the Internet, so you'll be able to make the fullest use of its incredible resources—without having to suffer through trial and error. At \$19.99, that's a cheap education.

Contact Brentwood Home Video at 818.879.9090.

Here's a tempting proposition: spend a mere 50 bucks on Sirius Publishing's new release, *Treasure Quest*, and there's the distinct possibility that, if you're the first gamer to solve the mystery within the official rules of the game and the contest, you be the lucky winner of (ahem...) one million bucks. Developed



in ultra-secret conditions with round-the-clock security at the duplication plant and at Sirius corporate headquarters, *Treasure Quest* owes a little to *Masquerade*—a book published in Great Britain 15 years ago. It caused a sensation, sold a million copies and sent treasure hunters on a nationwide quest, digging up the countryside in search of the elusive prize: a golden rabbit. It's hoped that *Treasure Quest* will spur an electronic equivalent to that frenzy of excitement. Professor Jonathan William Faulkner has died, leaving an inheritance of one million big ones to the person who solves the mystery. His rambling 10-room mansion contains clues made up of videos, sounds, images and music. Gamers can also access a special website and converse with other players. Clues can also be found beyond the game itself. For example, the date and time of *TQ's* release—12:14 a.m. EST, March 22, 1996—may be more significant than you think. The meaning of all the clues must be uncovered if you are to net the booty, so put on your thinking caps and start using that gray matter!

Contact Sirius Publishing at 602.951.3288.

Million-Dollar Game!



NewsNet Publications

Holding Back the Tides of Darkness

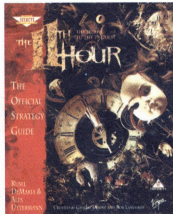
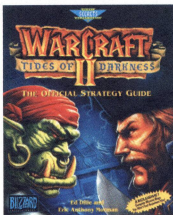
Here we go again, on another strat-ogy, and first up this month is *Warcraft II—Tides of Darkness: The Official Strategy Guide* by Ed Dille and Eric Anthony Morman from Prima's *Secrets of the Games* series. You'll find battle strategies guaranteed to annihilate the enemies' forces, advice for building a strong and prosperous community, detailed tips on all the new buildings and spells, comprehensive coverage of all new creatures, dwarfs, elves and dragons, plus information on weaponry, troops and winning formations. In short, the works—and the fastest path to world domination.

Contact Prima Publishing at 916.632.4400.

ROM-'Zine

The latest—and one of the best—in the flood of alternative music and pop culture magazines on CD-ROM is *Launch*. Currently preparing to ship issue number six, *Launch* is a bimonthly disc that seeks to net that culturally literate, trend-setting 18- to 34-year-olds with a tasty combination of new music, movies, animation and a solid dose of up-to-the-minute interactive gaming and entertainment. Chock-a-block with interviews with musicians, animators and movie stars, performances, movie sneak previews, game demos and the like, the interface accesses all areas with the minimum of hassle and bother. Past issues have featured Smashing Pumpkins, Tori Amos, Bush, Blind Melon and the legendary Edwyn Collins (he was a genius for 17 years before *A Girl Like You*; check out his work with Scottish popsters Orange Juice). Game demos in past issues have included *Hexen*, *Heretic* and others. We like what we see.

Contact Launch at 310.260.7786.

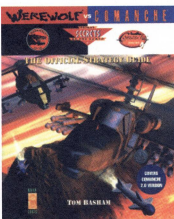


7th Guest—The *Official Strategy Guide*, by Russel DeMaria and Alex Uttermann, offers full puzzle solutions for every scene and every act; a complete list of clues; a complete fictional walk-through of the game; the original *The 11th Hour* script and no end of alternative paths through the game. This is the only guide you'll ever need. Enjoy!

Contact Prima Publishing at 916.632.4400.

Gentlemen, Prepare Your Choppers...

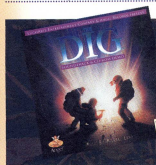
Get ready for some good old-fashioned Cold War helicopter simulation action with *Werewolf vs. Comanche: The Official Strategy Guide* by Tom Basham, now available from Prima. Whether you decide to



fly for Uncle Sam or the lovable old Evil Empire (where is that Evil Empire when you need an enemy you can really rely on?), you'll need this guide if you plan to exploit your airborne bringer of death to the full. Team battle tactics are the order of the day in *Werewolf vs. Comanche*, and learning the idiosyncrasies of flying and fighting in full battle formation against an equivalent fleet of enemy craft will prove easier if you follow the hints contained here. The guide covers both points of

view and illustrates how to employ real-world combat tactics in either craft, irrespective of the team you choose to fly for. Learn how to use team tactics during multiplayer games to drag and ambush the enemy, how to coordinate your maneuvers with the landscape to maximize kills, and how to communicate effectively with other pilots over the modem or network. If you want to cover your ass in the deadly skies, here's the most comprehensive education you'll find anywhere.

Contact Prima Publishing at 916.632.4400.



Diggin' The Groove

Oh, and one final thing to look out for this month is the soundtrack to *The Dig*. Michael Lind's score was derived from the orchestral works of Richard Wagner and, as Lind says, "The music is mainly ambient and mood-setting, with an occasional surge of power." It will mellow you out. A cool bonus is the inclusion of a second disc—a CD-ROM that includes a demo version of the game itself.

Contact LucasArts at 800.98.LUCAS.



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Box 417, Santa Monica, CA 90401

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CIRCLE #113 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Peripherals

LOOK MA! NO WIRES!

Approaching the joystick from another innovative angle is the latest stick from

Vivitar: no feedback technology involved in this one, but it does offer wireless play, so you're spared the hassle of tangling yourself up in a million leads and tripping over.

A freespace pistol-grip device—the WJ2000—uses innovative attitude-sensing technology to register player movements and communicates with the host computer through a non-directional infrared link.

Compatible with all PC hardware and software, it should increase your freedom and accuracy in gaming, lower muscle stress during hours of gaming, and require no software drivers or special installation; just plug it into the standard joystick outlet. With moving parts 86°ed in favor of precision microcontrollers, the system's center position never needs recalibration or readjustment because its electronic centering remains spot-on, no matter how much you brutalize it. Sims for driving, flying, space and 3-D will all come

under its precise control. So un-knot yourself from the tangle of your Stone-Age joystick and get ready to enjoy total freedom of movement!
Contact Vivitar at 805.498.7008.



GIMME, GIMME, GIMME FORCE FEEDBACK!

Physics lesson; pay attention, children! The average gaming joystick is an input-only device: it tracks a user's physical manipulations, but it can provide no physical feedback representing the results of those manipulations.

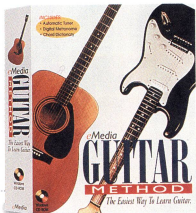
Basically, this means that when you're using a joystick in, say, a racing simulation and you crash into another car, the visual information will be apparent on the screen, but there will be no physical sensation communicated to the stick in your hand. With me so far? Well, Immersion Corp.—a leader in the field of Feedback technology—is currently at the prototype stage of development on its Force Feedback Joystick, which should be on the market before the end of the year. The picture you see here is only of the prototype, and the finished product will look substantially different, but essentially, it will be an input/output device, meaning that the hitherto missing physical, reactive dimension will be available. In English, that means you'll feel a jolt if you crash that car or fly your Comanche through the control tower. The stick will leap or buck in your hands. And it isn't just a one-note sensation: if you hit something soft, the stick will register a different, less unpleasant reaction. As with all the best toys, the Force Feedback technology was originally developed for higher purposes, such as for medical training and flight simulators, but now we game geeks can enjoy the fruits of all that research without having to be a heart surgeon or a fighter pilot. Force Feedback promises to make the abstract world of software tangible, physical and personal. Woo-hoo!
Contact Immersion Corp. at 408.467.1900.



PICKIN' AND STRUMMIN' WITH E-MEDIA

It's so obvious that I'm surprised we haven't seen it before. Learn to play the guitar in front of your computer! Simple, huh? E-media has come up with the perfect way to teach yourself every variety of guitar playing. *Guitar Method: The Easiest Way to Learn Guitar* beats the pants off old-style music books and teach-yourself fingering exercises, and it should save you a packet in lessons; plus, you can set your own pace and learn in your own time. With 60 basic lessons—from stringing the guitar and playing chords to strumming styles, playing melodies and fingering—the experience is enhanced by more than 30, full-motion, instructional videos and advice from professional guitar instructor, Kevin Garry. More than 100 exercises and songs help to reinforce the lessons and offer plenty of practice material. Additional features include a built-in recorder for hearing how you sound, an automatic tuner for tuning your instrument and an adjustable metronome for keeping time. Also, *Guitar Method* includes complete access directions to thousands of songs available free over the Internet, each referenced for their appropriate stages of difficulty.

Guitar Method ships for around \$59.95 and should be available in good music and software stores.
Contact e-media at 206.329.5657.



VOXEL SPACE II IS ON ITS WAY

They're keeping the details under their hats at the moment, but the folks at NovaLogic recently announced the creation of Voxel Space II—their new, ultra-smooth, realistic 3-D terrain-imaging technology, which, it's claimed, will

leave the original Voxel Space graphics oating dust. VS II should take users to new levels of realism in air- and ground-based simulations by delivering graphics that will apparently compare favorably with 3-D animation sequences in many other products. NovaLogic promise unbelievably smooth 3-D environments with increased degrees of freedom, longer lines of sight, and much more detail than we're used to. The new technology will also spawn three new sims—one helicopter, one tank and one racer—each of which should boast finely detailed polygon objects mapped into the terrain to offer myriad visual components to interact with. So there you go; no names yet; no further details. NovaLogic couldn't even give us a picture yet, so enjoy their logo for the time being, and we'll update when you can tell us more.
Contact NovaLogic at 818.880.1997.

NOVA



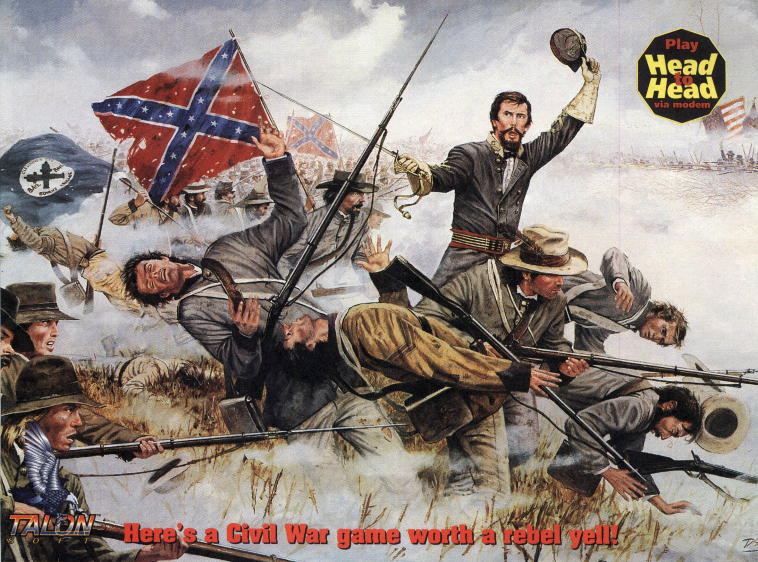
LOGIC

WOOFERS 'N' TWEETERS OUT THE YING-YANG!

Volume-freaks, noiseniks and anal soundaholics will welcome the introduction of Yamaha's new sound setup—the YST-M15 Multimedia speaker system. The YST-M15 can upgrade a computer's sound, turn a portable CD player into a sound system, and add arcade-quality audio to an electronic gaming system. Using patented Yamaha Active Servo Technology (YST), the speaker's amplifier, enclosure and cone interact to produce extended low-end response, down to an impressive 70Hz. The amplifier can actually monitor the motion of the speaker cone and instantly correct any overshoot or ringing. Additionally, the speakers incorporate a subwoofer output jack for additional low-end power and performance, so a subwoofer can be added to allow you to actually feel the bass while gaming. Dual stereo inputs make your computer more flexible; you can plug your sound-card output into one for radical game sound and plug the output of a portable CD/tape player into the other for background "tunage" or to rock out in full stereo. With a headphone output jack and pumping out 10 watts (RMS) per channel for less distortion, the YST-M15 is also magnetically shielded to protect video displays and magnetic storage data. Nice work! The speaker system will probably be listed at around \$99.95, or \$249.95, if you include the YST-MSW10 powered subwoofer.
Contact Yamaha at 714.522.9011.



Play
**Head
to
Head**
via modem



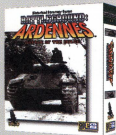
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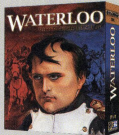
Battleground 1
Ardenne



Battleground 2
Gettysburg



Battleground 3
Waterloo



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ACCESS
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NewsNet

Shelf-burners
for May '96

Top 20

IBM PC Games
(MS-DOS, Windows)

1. *Myst* by Brøderbund
2. *Warcraft II: Tides of Darkness* by Davidson
3. *Rebel Assault II* by LucasArts
4. *Gabriel Knight 2: The Beast Within* by Sierra
5. *Doom II* by GT Interactive
6. *Ultimate Doom: Thy Flesh Consumed* by GT Interactive
7. *Mechwarrior II* by Activision
8. *Command & Conquer* by VIE/Westwood
9. *Microsoft Flight Simulator* by Microsoft
10. *Hexen* by GT Interactive
11. *Doom II Master Levels* by GT Interactive
12. *The 11th Hour* by VIE/Trilobyte
13. *The Need for Speed* by Electronic Arts
14. *Police Quest SWAT* by Sierra
15. *Furry* by Microsoft
16. *Monopoly Multimedia* by Virgin
17. *The Dig* by LucasArts
18. *SimCity 2000 Collection* by Maxis
19. *You Don't Know Jack* by Berkeley
20. *NASCAR Racing II* by Papyrus

Top 10

Macintosh Games

1. *Myst* by Brøderbund
2. *Doom II* by GT Interactive
3. *Dark Forces* by LucasArts
4. *SimCity 2000* by Maxis
5. *Marathon* by Bungee
6. *Links Pro* by Access
7. *Star Wars Rebel Assault* by LucasArts
8. *FA-18 Hornet* by Graphic Simulations
9. *Caesar's Palace* by Interplay
10. *Full Throttle* by LucasArts

Top 10

CD-ROM Games

1. *Myst* by Brøderbund
2. *Top Ten Pack* by Electronic Arts
3. *Star Wars Rebel Assault II* by LucasArts
4. *Doom II* by GT Interactive
5. *Dark Forces* by LucasArts
6. *FA-18 Hornet* by Graphic Simulations
7. *Links Pro* by Access
8. *Rebel Assault II* by LucasArts
9. *SimCity 2000 Collection* by Maxis
10. *Ultimate Doom: Thy Flesh Consumed* by GT Interactive

Top 10

Baker and Taylor's
Selling CD-ROM Soft-
ware for January '96

1. *Raiden* by IDI
2. *Iron Helix* by Spectrum HoloByte
3. *The 11th Hour* by Virgin
4. *Daemonsgate* by IDI
5. *Journeyman Project* by GameTak
6. *Flying Nightmares* by Domark
7. *Falcon Gold Compilation Flight Simulator* by Spectrum HoloByte
8. *SimTower* by Maxis
9. *Chaos Continuum* by Creative Multimedia
10. *Under A Killing Moon* by Access

HARD DRIVE TOP 5

Every month, the editors of *Computer Player* have the dreadful task of deleting games off our hard drives. Although we hate doing it (actually, there are a few we've enjoyed deleting), it must be done to make room for the incoming batch. Yet there always seem to be about five games that we just can't bring ourselves to delete no matter how hard we try. This month's winners are:

Mike Davila

1. *Duke Nukem 3D Shareware Version* by Apogee/Formgen (IBM PC CD)
2. *Allied General* by SSI (IBM PC CD)
3. *C&C: Covert Missions* by VIE/Westwood (IBM PC CD)
4. *TerraNova* by Looking Glass Technologies (IBM PC CD)
5. *Ripper* by Take 2 Interactive (IBM PC CD)

Jeff James

1. *TerraNova* by Looking Glass Technologies (IBM PC CD)
2. *Warhammer* by Mindscape (IBM PC CD)
3. *Allied General* by SSI (IBM PC CD)
4. *Duke Nukem 3D Shareware Version* by Apogee/Formgen (IBM PC)
5. *WarCraft II* by Blizzard Entertainment (IBM PC CD)

John Patterson

1. *Ripper* by Take 2 Interactive (IBM PC CD)
2. *Duke Nukem 3D Shareware Version* by Apogee/Formgen (IBM PC)
3. *Warcraft II* by Blizzard Entertainment (IBM PC CD)
4. *Destruction Derby* by Sony (IBM PC CD)
5. *Descent II* by Interplay (IBM PC CD)

All information (except Baker and Taylor's Top 10) taken from PC Data's Hits List of top-selling software for the month of December 1995. The list is based on units sold by 16 retail chains that represent more than 4,500 stores. For more information, contact PC Data at: 703.435.1025.

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THE BEST GAMES YOU CAN DOWNLOAD

INTRODUCING THE NEW SHAREWARE SPOTLIGHT

With all the changes going on with *Computer Player*, it was only a matter of time before this sleepy section of the magazine received a fresh coat of paint. This month marks the arrival of a completely new *Shareware Spotlight* that has been redesigned and reconstructed to keep up with the rest of the magazine.

You'll notice a number of changes right away: the

Since there are so many shareware games released every month, I've decided to be a bit more selective in the games covered here. With the exception of those games unlucky enough to make our "Download Dogs" blacklist (see below), all the games featured will be exceptional, whether because of a novel game concept, addictive playability, or eye-popping audiovisuals (or a combination of all three).

To help you save both clock cycles and greenbacks, I'll list the worst shareware games I stumble across in the "Download Dogs" section. Nobody likes to spend valuable time and incur expensive online charges downloading a bloated turkey of a shareware game, so I'll do my best to point out the most egregious examples of bad shareware.

To close, I'll point out a March 1996 issue error: on page 36, we inadvertently switched the screen shots for the shareware games *Wrath* and *Igor: Objective Utkokhonia*. Our apologies to the game developers and publishers at both companies.

Shareware Game Ratings

REVIEWS AND PREVIEWS

If a game is reviewed here, we guarantee that it will be a good gaming value. Although most shareware entertainment products won't earn the "Shareware Standout" award, many still deserve the recognition that a review in *Computer Player* provides.

SHAREWARE STANDOUT

Only the very best shareware games are fit to wear the "Shareware Standout" logo. If you spot a piece of shareware bearing one of these seals, you can rest assured that it's among the finest available.

DOWNLOAD DOGS

This is our rogue's gallery of shareware games gone bad. If a game is listed here, it probably has several of the following problems: abnormally large file, poor gaming value, lack of originality, excessive bugs and glitches, etc. Going online is too expensive for you to download bad games, so we'll point out the games to avoid.



Where do I find these games?

Most of the games listed here can be found on the major commercial online services, including America Online and CompuServe. On America Online, perform a file search in the PC Gaming forums (keyword: PC GAMES). On CompuServe, check out the Gamer's forum (GO GAMERS). Regardless of which service you use, to find what you're looking for, do a file search using the title of the game as a keyword.

If you develop or publish shareware games and would like to see your products covered in *Shareware Spotlight*, contact Jeff James via e-mail at jjjames@aol.com

numerical rating system has been dropped in favor of a visual award system that spotlights select shareware games with a "Shareware Standout" seal. Similar in many respects to the *Computer Player* "Recommended" and "Perfect" logos used in our review section, this award—which can only be given to a shareware entertainment product—will point out the very best games the shareware world has to offer.

P R E V I E W



Famous for *Jazz Jackrabbit* and *Epic Pinball*, Epic Megagames has recently cranked up their game development and publishing efforts to a new level. Hot on the heels of *Seek and Destroy* (pre-viewed here in the last issue), Epic is gearing up to release *New Order*—a top-caliber action game exclusively for Windows 95. Although the moniker *New Order* is just

a working title, there's nothing tentative about the addictive playability this game brings to the table. To call *New Order* an arcade shooter would be an injustice, just as calling *Duke Nukem 3D* a *Doom* clone would be unfair. *New Order* is similar in some respects to another Epic title, *Tyrian*, a top-down shooter. Yet instead of having an over-

New Order

Available: Summer '96
 System: Windows 95
 Publisher: Epic Megagames
 Website: <http://www.epicgames.com/>

head vantage point as in *Tyrian*, the player views the action in from an isometric three-dimensional view above and to the side—not unlike that in Origin's *Crusader: No Remorse*.

The graphics are decidedly impressive, with crisply rendered objects resting on top of one another in smoothly scrolling layers. Weapons fire in this game doesn't just explode; a spinning bomb creates a burst of light and fills the air with debris seconds before the



Duke Nukem 3D v1.1

Registration fee: \$39.95 (plus \$5 S&H)
 Publisher: 3D Realms Entertainment, P.O.
 Box 496419, Garland, TX 75049
 Website: <http://www.apogee1.com/>
 E-mail: Realms3D1@AOL.COM
 Telephone: 800.3DREALMS
 System: IBM PC/MS-DOS



OK, OK...you've undoubtedly heard about *Duke Nukem 3D* by now. What you might not have heard is that 3D Realms has upgraded the original shareware release by shipping version 1.1, which fixes some bugs and adds a

DUKE NUKEM 3D

raft of new features. Gamers can download the new version in its entirety or a much smaller patch file that updates the original from most commercial online services, or direct from the Apogee website.

The new features include a new mouse aiming method (à la *Terminator: Future Shock*) and increased support for a wider array of joysticks. Dukematchers rejoice: pipe bombs can now be planted in one location in view of a television camera and detonated remotely by way of a security screen. The HoloDuke gadget lasts even longer, allowing gamers to deceive and assassinate their buddies even more effectively than before. With all the bug fixes and improvements, this latest version of *Duke Nukem 3D* should be considered a required download for any action gamer.



Patolli

Patolli v1.0s

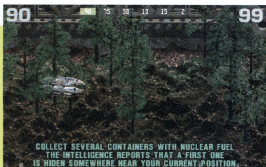
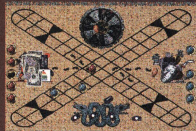
Registration fee: \$15
 Publisher: Steve Neeley, 248 W. 3325 N., North Ogden, UT 84414
 E-mail: 74212.1123@compuserve.com
 System: Windows 3.1

Seldom does a fresh new gaming concept hits the PC, but Steve Neeley's *Patolli* definitely fits the bill. Shareware games based on card games, Chinese tile games and *Doom* clones are a dime a dozen, but *Patolli* stands out like a squashed thumb. The unique thing about *Patolli* is that it's based on...well, *Patolli*. An ancient board game played by the Aztecs, *Patolli* is a challenge that involves throwing marked beans to move your pieces around an unusually shaped game board.

Programmer Steve Neeley is obviously passionate about the game, and it shows in nearly every aspect of gameplay. The X-shaped gameboard is surrounded by bits of authentic Aztec artwork; the player can choose to play against the computer opponent (dubbed "Smoking Mirror," whom the programmer describes as the "intrepid Aztec demon, sorcerer, and capricious god") or

another human player. Neeley consulted dozens of sources on the ancient history of *Patolli*, and he liberally sprinkles educational tidbits about the ancient Aztecs throughout the game. The game seems simple at first, but it genuinely surprised me with its hidden complexity. The cliché "Easy to learn, but hard to master" definitely applies in this case.

I can fault this game only for its lackluster 16-color graphics, which seem overly "dithered" and murky. This drawback is eliminated when you register the game, as the full version features lush 256-color graphics. As educational as it is entertaining, *Patolli* is a fresh and novel entry that deserves the attention of any self-respecting fan of board and puzzle games.



structures around it implode and burst into flames. There's even more graphic goodness, including snow, cloud, smoke and haze effects. The combination of multi-layered scrolling, impressive visuals and blistering action should bode well for the success of *New Order*, which should be available sometime this summer for Windows 95. Retail distribution of the registered version will be handled by Electronic Arts, or gamers can order the final version direct from Eric.

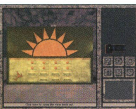
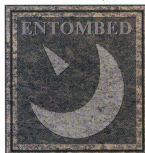
REVIEWS

**Entombed v2.1**

Registration fee: \$39.95
(plus \$3 S&H)
Publisher: Mercury Publishing Corp.,
4/146 Greenhill Rd., Parkside 5063,
South Australia
E-mail: 100026.275@compuserve.com
Telephone: 618.373.4469
System: Windows 3.1

If you've played *Myst*, you'll undoubtedly be right at home with *Entombed*—a puzzle/adventure game developed by

Australian game developer Chaos Concepts. You start the game as an



game atmosphere. I found the puzzles a bit more difficult than the

ones in *Myst*; even the most skilled puzzle mavens may find themselves challenged to solve some of the more demanding obstacles. Only one episode is included in the shareware version, but that episode should provide hours of entertainment. If you're into puzzle games, you won't find one much better than *Entombed*.

archaeologist trapped underground in a mysterious series of rooms that were created by an advanced, ancient culture. Using your senses and your puzzle-solving wits, you must make your way past a variety of intricate puzzles and mind-boggling conundrums. The 3D rendered artwork and animation are joys to behold, and the music and sound effects evoke an appropriately eerie

Shareware Games to Avoid**Thor's Hammer v1.1**

by MVP Software
File name: 1THOR.ZIP
File size: 2.4 MB
With high-powered shareware games such as *Quake*, *Duke Nukem 3D*, *Descent*, *Heretic* and *Rise of the Triad* clogging up the first-person-perspective action gaming market, I wonder why MVP Software's *Thor's Hammer* ever made it to market. With overly pixelated graphics, amateurish artwork and annoying music, even the venerable shareware release of *Wolfenstein 3D* puts this game to shame. Unless you're building a comprehensive collection of all the 3-D action games ever made, you'd be well advised to overlook *Thor's Hammer*.

Roadhog v1.3

by ImagiSOFT and Teacy Entertainment
File name: ROADHG13.ZIP
File size: 1.3 MB
At first glance, Teacy Entertainment's *Roadhog* held some promise as a fun-filled, fast-paced racing game. It does have good graphics and toe-tapping sound effects, but it blows a tire in the valve department; I played through all three game levels included in the shareware version in less than 15 minutes. After doing so, I was treated to the animated banter of two annoying characters called—imaginatively enough—Dozer and Mushbrain. The registered version includes more tracks and a scenario editor, but the poor value and nonexistent playability of the shareware version will put you to sleep long before you can order it. Take my advice and leave *Roadhog* in the pits.

MVP Bridge for Windows v2.0

Registration fee: \$39.95 (plus \$4 S&H)
Publisher: MVP Software, 1035 Dallas SE, Grand Rapids, MI
49507-1407
Website: <http://www.mvpsoft.com>
E-mail: 74777.1116@compuserve.com
Telephone: 800.968.9684
System: Windows 3.1

Thanks to MVP Software, there's no need to stand in line at the local bridge club to play your favorite card game. With *MVP Bridge for Windows*, you're a few clicks away from having a bridge-playing companion that won't cheat or steal your beer nuts when you aren't looking.

Three types of scoring are supported (Rubber, Chicago and Duplicate), so you can tailor the game to match your playing style. If you get

stumped while playing, a handy hint feature will provide some computer-assisted advice to point you in the right direction. Even if you're a bridge newbie (like yours truly) *MVP Bridge* will hold your hand and help you through an extensive walkthrough that provides basic instruction and points out the tips and travails of the game.

MVP Bridge is positively packed with even more features, including modem and serial support for multi-player bridge games. The Windows-based installation is a snap, and the included online help will have you up and running in no time. The sound and music are admittedly a little weak, and the graphics aren't exactly cutting edge. But if you're a bridge-playing stalwart, nothing should dissuade you from having a copy of *MVP Bridge for Windows* on your hard drive.





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Microsoft

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO TODAY?

Sid Meier's Civilization II

System: IBM PC CD
Genre: strategy
Publisher: MicroProse
Developer: MicroProse
Available: now

"Visit fascinating new peoples and then destroy them" should be on the box of this game. If there's one computer game that's on every diehard PC gamer's list of favorites, it's the original *Civilization*. Released back in '91, *Civilization* lured the gaming masses with its highly addictive gameplay. Not only was the game addictive, but it

also possessed a new quality that had never been seen in any one game—longevity. You could play through the game once, then—six months later—pick it up off the shelf and do it again, as if you had never played it before. Just ask anyone who has ever played the game

how many hours they whiled away building and conquering.

Though it seems that *Civilization II* will be addictive and as much fun as the original game, it's more of an upgrade than a sequel.

Civilization II incorporates some of the many suggestions that gamers gave MicroProse after the release of the first title, including the addition of a map editor. The game's overall theme remains the same: from the founding of its first city, players must develop a fledgling empire through to the age of space exploration. The most notable changes have been to the graphics; they've



improved. Gone is the overhead lo-res view, replaced by a new hi-res three-quarters isometric view. The controls are similar to those in the original title; I found myself easily playing the game without having to read the manual.



What's really new in *Civilization II* are the number of decisions gamers have to make and the broader range of the combat system. The game's units now have hit-points similar to those found in characters of role-playing games. Also, a unit's health/strength can be replenished by entering a friendly city and waiting it out for a few turns. When it comes to diplomacy, new features include



cooperative alliances, territorial boundaries, cease-fire agreements and a personal reputation.

There are now 28 wonders of the world to be built, including the Statue of Liberty and Leonardo da Vinci's workshop. On the completion of a wonder, an FMV clip pops up to show off the wonder's grandeur and, finally, its benefits to society. An online civilization encyclopedia allows gamers to peruse advancements and other reference material.

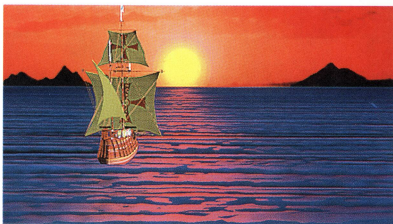
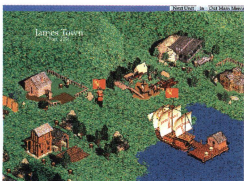
Though it seems that *Civilization II* will be addictive and as much fun as the original game, it's more of an upgrade than a sequel. So if you're looking for something completely different, you might not find it here.



Conquest of the New World

If you think *Civilization* and *SimCity 2000* have the "city-building" strategy market wrapped up, you had better think again. With the forthcoming release of *Conquest of the New World*, Interplay is making a bold move into the strategy genre with what's arguably one of this year's strongest titles.

Developed by Quicksilver Software (led by Vince DeNardo, a former Computer Gaming World staffer), *Conquest of the New World* is



functionally similar to *Colonization* (MicroProse) and *Exploration* (Interactive Magic). But apart from the games' similar premises, which center on the exploration and conquest of the New World by 15th-century Europeans, *Conquest of the New World* takes a big step beyond those titles. Part of this stems from its graphics: *New World* features lush SVGA graphics and animation to represent all aspects of gameplay. Units are represented by vividly animated characters who move about in real-time, much like tiny wind-up soldiers. A number of zoom levels allow you to get a comprehensive view of the action from an eagle's-eye view down to a close-in vantage point from which you can see the denizens of buildings go about their business. The depth of graphic detail is impressive, but DeNardo and company haven't forgotten gameplay, either.

The depth of graphic detail is impressive, but DeNardo and company haven't forgotten gameplay, either.

Although most of the game involves peaceful exploration and city building, at some point, you'll have to spill some blood. The combat system is unique—equal parts chess and miniature-based wargame. Three combat units are offered: infantry, cavalry and cannon. Much like the age-old game of rock, paper, scissors, you must deploy your troops using a combination of tactics to win the day. When the battle is over and the enemy has fled, your units gain experience and become even better at killing your enemies. To help gamers get up to speed as land-gobbling explorers, *New World* features a host of tutorials and online help that provide valuable game information.

The final version of *Conquest of the New World* will have even more features, including extensive support for network, modem and serial-link multi-player games. Additional music and sound effects are also slated for inclusion in the final version, as are a variety of other enhancements and improvements. Slated to ship this May, *Conquest of the New World* is one strategy game to watch for.

System: IBM PC CD
Genre: strategy
Publisher: Interplay
Developer: Quicksilver Software
Available: May '96



T-Mek

System: IBM PC CD
Genre: action
Publisher: Time-Warner Interactive
Developer: Bits Corp.
Available: June '96

If you've spent any time in an arcade over the past few years, you'll recognize the name, *T-Mek*. As one of the most popular arcade games in the U.S., *T-Mek* has built up a following of dedicated action gamers. Rooted in a war-torn future fraught with peril and filled to the bloody rim with violence, *T-Mek* is 100 percent action.

T-Mek's central theme revolves around gladiatorial competition. In lieu of swords and spears like those branched by archetypal Hollywood gladiator Kirk Douglas in *Spartacus*, *T-Mek's* combatants hop into supercharged hover tanks kitted out with all sorts of high-tech weaponry. Players choose from



among six types of hover tank, ranging from the heavily armored AssaultMEK to the skulking StealthMEK. The arcade version of *T-Mek* relied heavily on head-to-head play against human players, and the forthcoming PC CD-ROM version looks to be no different.

From what we've seen of the early Beta version, the PC version of *T-Mek* looks almost as good as its arcade counterpart. The sound effects and music are especially good, making the game a rock 'n' roll romp of virtual destruction. More serious-minded gamers may turn up their noses at all this action, but arcade players will find themselves in heaven with this one.



HyperBlade

System: IBM PC CD
Genre: action
Publisher: Activision
Developer: Activision
Available: June '96

HyperBlade is a futuristic battle/sport game in which players charge and penetrate the opposing team's zone while avoiding bone-jarring body checks.

HyperBlade is one of the first real-time multiplayer titles in a generation of cybersports games. The game allows players to compete in a 3-D virtual arena in which they can engage in league or tournament play and can battle one-on-one via modem, or can compete against up to three other players via network.

In the game, players can choose one of 12 international teams, or customize their own three-person team from a selection of more than 30 players. Opponents battle it out in 12 arenas,



each with a variety of obstacles, such as ramps, trenches, traps, etc. Players can also score bonus points or enhance their attributes by mastering challenging moves.

If you're into action-based sports games, you might be the kind of person who's interested in this game genre.



Afterlife

This new game by LucasArts best resembles a hybrid that's somewhere between Maxis' famous

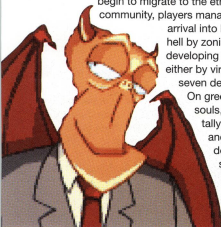
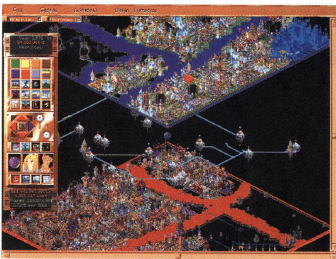
Sim series and Bullfrog's *Populous*. Unlike them though, *Afterlife* does not emulate real-world scenarios, but is a humorous, offbeat strategy game in which players must maintain and build an alien society's "great beyond."

As souls begin to migrate to the ethereal community, players manage their arrival into heaven or hell by zoning and developing areas, either by virtues or the seven deadly sins.

On greeting new souls, you must tally their good and bad deeds and send them to their just reward—accord-

ing to each soul's belief structure. Some souls believe in reincarnation, so players must build special vehicles to take them back to the land of the living. Other souls believe that all souls go to heaven, so players must zone enough areas in heaven to accommodate them.

Though playing a god might sound like a serious business, *Afterlife* is just the opposite. The game is littered with puns and humor from hell. For example, if a player fails to keep souls happy, the game could end with The Disco Inferno, in which a giant John Travolta look-alike dances across the screen, destroying everything in his path.



Bruce Jenner's World Class Decathlon

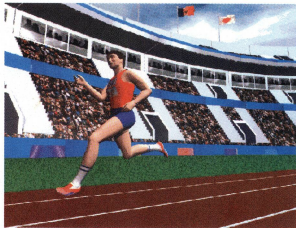
With the 1996 Olympics just around the corner, Interactive Magic and Holy Mackerell! Media have joined forces to release *Bruce Jenner's World Class Decathlon* in time for the summer Games. Over the years, computer games modeling track-and-field events haven't had the best of luck in the market, but this new game has a good chance to change all that.

To start, you must first create an athlete and assign him skill points in a variety of areas, including: sprinting, middle distance, weight throwing, jumping skill and coordination. Having up-rolled your superstar, you can hit the field and compete, using three styles of play, including practice and world championship modes. Once you're in the stadium,

you can compete in the 10 events that comprise the decathlon: 100-meter dash, long jump, shot put, high jump, pole vault, discus, javelin, 400 meters, 1,500 meters and 110-meter hurdles.

Although we didn't see much of him in the early Beta version we previewed, Interactive Magic plans to have Bruce Jenner serve as a digital online coach who will guide the player through all the events. Jenner will also be featured in the video clips used to open and close the Olympics ceremonies. Look for *Bruce Jenner's World Class Decathlon* this summer—just in time for the Games in Atlanta.

System: IBM PC/Windows 95
Genre: sports
Publisher: Interactive Magic
Developer: Holy Mackerell! Media
Available: June '96



Screamer

Virgin for IBM PC CD

Track Select and Bullet Cars

You roll down your window, and the wind blasts through your hair. Ahead of you, everything is blurred as you tear down the highway. Suddenly you realize that both the wind and the blurs are from the other cars blasting past you; you can't even manage to pass senior citizens!

But fear not! There are some handy cheats that will allow you to not merely blaze past your opponents, but to "bullet" past them. During gameplay, enter any of the following codes.

VELO: All six basic tracks are available for you

to burn some serious rubber. **INVER:** All six basic tracks and their inverted cousins are available for racing.

TAZOR: Tired of being in the rear? Then type this code, fasten your seatbelt, and put the pedal to the metal to "turbo" past others in the legendary bullet car.



ABURN: You think you're such a hotshot that your opponents need faster cars? This code will give your rivals bullet cars and make you rethink your self-appraisal.

CLOCK: Every so often, it's nice to coast along and admire the scenery. This will turn the clock off for one race and allow you to do just that.

UPDOWN: Finally, a code that allows you to play the game while standing on your head.

MIRRO: Enables mirror mode on the tracks.

MONTY: Turns cones and barriers into girls and bunnies.

JOINT: The cones and barriers become ghosts.



Wing Commander IV: The Price of Freedom

Origin/EA for IBM PC CD

Enemy Destruction Cheats

When the going got tough in *Wing Commander III*, you could always turn to Mitchell. Who's Mitchell? It's a cheat code that allowed you to easily wipe out your enemies with a key press. But Mitchell isn't

around in *Wing Commander IV*, so you'll need to find help elsewhere.

That help comes in the form of Mitchell's descendant, who is rather

bluntly named Chicken. To execute the cheat mode, go into your *Wing*

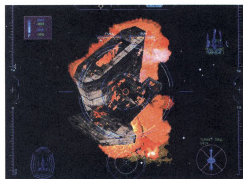
Commander IV directory, type **WC4-Chicken**, then hit the **Enter** key to start the game. This will enable the cheat

mode and allow you to use the following key combinations to send your enemies into hellish fireballs without having to even

pull the trigger.

ALT-W: Destroys your currently targeted enemy.

CTRL-ALT-W: Destroys every enemy currently on the screen.



Earthworm Jim

Activision for IBM PC CD

Max Ammo and Extra Lives

When you're out to save the world, you sometimes have to start from the ground up. In Jim's case, he has no choice but to start from the ground up,



because Jim isn't your average buffed superhero; he's an earthworm. But unlike your typical earthworm, he is armed to the teeth (er, whatever they have) and ready to kick up

some serious dirt to save the day.

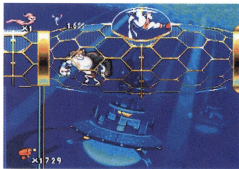
Still, even for a superworm, Jim needs all the help he can get to avoid being stepped on by his enemies. And if your natural disposition as a human causes Jim to die several times (well, interesting excuse), you can always turn to the cheats. The following codes must be entered during gameplay.

SLAUGHTERHOUSE: Allows you to jump to any of the first five levels, or skip them completely.

POPQUIZHOTSHOT: Jim eating ammo too fast? No more, with this code that refills your ammo to 1,000 rounds.

ITSAWONDERFUL: Gives Jim an extra life.

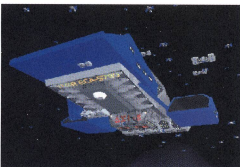
ONANDONANDON: As the name indicates, this lets Jim crawl on and on and on, thanks to unlimited continues.



Absolute Zero

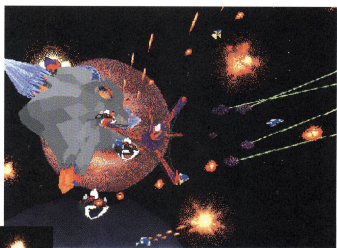
Domark for IBM PC CD

Level Select Cheat



You whip to the right, madly gunning at incoming fighters from your turret. One goes down, but before you can swivel to follow them, you notice a half dozen enemy tanks tossing up snow and heading your way. You level some cannon fire their way, sending the leading pair of tanks into molten explosions, while the other tanks break off. But your short-lived victory is ended as the fighters return from behind and blast you into an icy grave.

If you've been making absolutely zero progress in *Absolute Zero*, don't give up the ship quite yet. All levels can be accessed and played in any order you want (partially sacrificing the storyline, naturally). Go back to the main menu, start a new game, and enter



the name **Magazine Review**. All the level names will appear, allowing you to jump to any mission and skip others that may be blocking your progress.

Destruction Derby

Psygnosis for IBM PC

Hidden Track and Number of Opponent Cheats

As you slam into your opponent's car door, you wonder why you even bothered to wash and wax your car today. A piece of your fender bounces off to the side, but you inflicted



more damage than you received. You glance to your left to see a dozen cars all headed directly at you. Again, you wonder why you bothered to



wash and wax your car.

Do you find your car getting slammed apart before you even get into first gear? Want revenge? All you have to do is change your name. Enter **championship mode** on any course, and enter your name as **IDAMAGE!** (be sure to include the exclamation marks). You're now invincible and ready to pave the highway with pieces of your opponents' cars.

If the scenery is getting you down, just enter **REFLECT!** to bring up the **hidden track**, which allows you to bust your car apart amid new scenery. Or, if you're tired of being busted apart, simply enter **NPLAYERS** followed by the number of opponents you want.

Mechwarrior 2: Ghost Bear Legacy

Activision for IBM PC

X-Ray, Invincibility and Easter Egg Codes



You proved that you were brave when you entered *Mechwarrior 2*. When you completed the trials of that game, you established yourself as a warrior and not just as some foolish hotshot. But now you have the nagging feeling that you may have finally reached the end of your career in the *Mechwarrior 2* expansion pack, *Ghost Bear Legacy*.

To turn things in your favor, turn to Superman's alter ego, Clark Kent. Not only does Clark Kent have the ability to see through buildings, but thanks to his superpowers, he's also invincible. What's this got to do with *Mechwarrior 2: Ghost Bear Legacy*? Not much, except that his name is the basis for the cheat codes in the expansion pack.

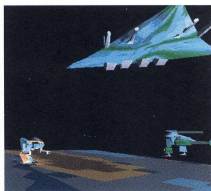
During gameplay, hold down **CTRL-ALT-SHIFT** while typing the

following codes to enable the desired effects.

CLARK: Lets you see through those mountains and buildings; perfect for spotting enemy mechs.

KENT: Gives your mech the gift of immortality; makes it an "unkillable" killing machine.

Don't let the X-ray vision and invincibility go to your head though, or you may miss finding the Easter



eggs. In the **Ice Hall**, click on the **light** on the left side of the screen. In the **barracks**, click on the **poster** on the right side of the screen in front of the mission computer projector. Last, but not least, at the **drop ship**, click on the **white computer screen** that's to the right of the mission computer.



Jungle Strike

Electronic Arts for IBM PC

Level Passwords

You thought the action was hot when you flew your Apache over the desert, strafing terrorists and decimating buildings. But the truth is, your first mission was nothing but a glimpse of what was really heading your way, and it's turning out to be a real jungle out there.

Want to jump to any level in *Jungle Strike*? The following pass codes will let you jump to any mission by entering the code.



Level	Name	Code
One	Washington D.C.	N/A
Two	Sub Attack	2MM4ZMMM2
Three	Training Ground	9BNG9MMM#
Four	Night Strike	9BB*CNMM#
Five	Puloso City	YVVZ8NMMQ
Six	Snow Fortress	YVCWJVMM7
Seven	River Raid	MCX5MCMMZ
Eight	Mountains	MCZ7BXMML
Nine	Return Home	MCL3VZMMP

Steel Panthers

SSI for IBM PC

Game Editor

You look across the battlefield and survey the smoldering wreckage of tanks everywhere.

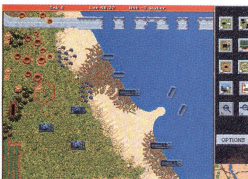
useful *Steel Panthers* edit program that lets you customize variables to your own tastes.

Want to create new units or modify existing units, formations and weapons? Or would you prefer to just edit the num-

ber and types of weapons, ammo, armor, speed and men? All of this is easily attainable with the *Steel Panthers* editor. You can also adjust the range, accuracy and penetration values of weapons.

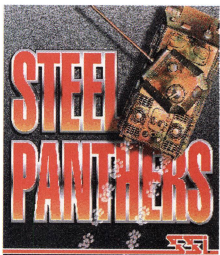
On CompuServe,

simply Go Gamers and select Software Library. Enter SPEDIT.ZIP and download the file, decompressing SPEDIT.ZIP into your *Steel Panthers* directory. Now just run the editor, and you'll be up, running and set to blast your opponents into the next century according to your rules, not theirs!



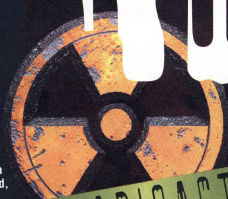
It was a good fight, but there was never really a question of who would win. Shaking your head, you wish that the victorious tanks had been under your control.

If enemy tanks tread over you too often for your liking, turn your sights to SPEDIT—a



GO!

NUKEM



by Jeff James

A little over two years ago, a small software company by the name of Id Software released a game called *Doom*. (Stop me if you've heard this before.) The rest, as they say, is history: since that seminal moment, a veritable flood of *Doom* clones have emerged, each attempting to unseat *Doom* as the preeminent first-person-perspective action game. Although some of these challengers have been good, and a meager few—such as LucasArts' *Dark Forces*—have been exceptional, nothing has yet managed to usurp *Doom* from its lofty perch.

I would have sworn by that last statement a few months ago, but now I'm not so sure. After taking a behind-the-scenes look at the commercial version of *Duke Nukem 3D*, I've finally seen an action game that supersedes *Doom* in almost every respect. From graphics to gameplay and sound effects to level design, *Duke Nukem 3D* has blasted and pummeled its way to the top of the 3-D action gaming heap. With a single kick of his mighty foot, Duke Nukem has booted the *Doom* space marine off the mountain top.

Unless you've been living in an igloo in the Antarctic for the past few months, you're undoubtedly aware that the shareware version of *Duke Nukem 3D* has been available since January 1996, offering ravenous gamers one meaty episode and five action-packed game levels to slake their thirst for virtual bloodsport. (For more info on the latest shareware version of *Duke Nukem 3D*, check out this month's *Shareware Spotlight* column.) In case you missed the shareware version, here's the story: *Duke Nukem 3D* takes place on Earth in the near future, with Duke fighting it out with aliens over the radioactive rubble of war-torn Los Angeles. Even more action is on the way: the dedicated 3D Realms development team is working diligently to finish the commercial version, which continues Duke's adventures on the Earth, the Moon and beyond.

GO RADIOACTIVE

with Duke
Nukem
3D



Left: one-eyed and ugly as sin, look for this bruiser in the registered version of *Duke Nukem 3D*.



Above: Duke goes mano a mano with bug-eyed critters at a starbase.



Above: the shareware end boss faces the music, Duke-style!



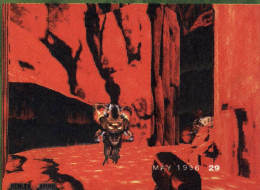
Above: nail this alien meathead to access the corridor beyond.

Left, below: a mutant pig alien cuts ahead in line at the movies and gets blasted.

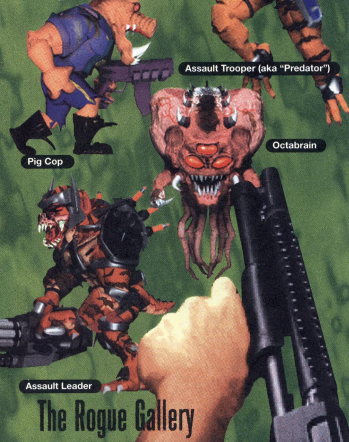


Above: Duke goes diving for ammo while dodging mines and stinky brain-suckers.

Right: in the Abyss level, blast floaty brain-things.



Duke Nukem 3D



Assault Trooper (aka "Predator")

Octabrain

Pig Cop

Assault Leader

The Rogue Gallery

Long before Duke grew chest hair and started waving greenbacks at topless dancers, he was a rosy-cheeked action hero in a side-scrolling gameworld. In the beginning, there was *Duke Nukem 1*—a shareware platform game in which Duke matched wits and biceps with the evil Dr. Proton. After blasting the good doctor into subatomic detritus, Duke faced off against the Rigelatins, an invading race of bug-eyed aliens featured prominently in *Duke Nukem 2*. Both games can be downloaded from America Online (key-word: APOGEE), CompuServe (go APOGEE), or from the Apogee website (<http://www.apogee1.com/>).

Duke's Past



More Destruction, New Construction

Distributed by FormGen, the commercial version introduces a raft of new features, including more than two dozen new levels parceled into two episodes (Lunar Apocalypse and Shrapnel City). More monsters make the new levels challenging, and three new weapons—the laser gun, shrink ray and wall-mounted laser trip bomb—add an extra dimension to play. Like the shareware version, registered Duke allows gamers to tinker with some aspects of the game to their heart's content. According to 3D Realms President George Broussard, gamers can customize the game simply by fiddling with the Duke 3D configuration (CON) files. "CON files are essentially external pieces of game code," Broussard says. "Players can customize the game by altering the CON files; if the CON files are faulty, the game will revert to stored internal defaults." One user-created CON modification causes Duke to rapidly lose health once he is wounded past a certain level—a reflection of the effects of extreme blood loss.

Unique to the registered version is the Build scenario editor. Essentially the same program that 3D Realms uses to create in-house game levels, the Build editor allows gamers to create their own *Duke Nukem 3D* levels from scratch. Unlike current map editors for other 3-D games, the Build engine lets gamers create game maps in two dimensions, then jump into the game and paint wall textures and add objects and monsters in three dimensions by simply pointing and clicking on the desired locations.

The History of Duke Nukem

The character known as Duke Nukem first made his appearance in the game *Duke Nukem* (later re-christened *Duke Nukem 1*), followed by a starring role in the sequel, *Duke Nukem 2* (see sidebar). In *Duke Nukem 3D*, Duke is all grown up and ready to rumble. He isn't a politically correct poster boy anymore, either. Gone is the rosy-cheeked do-gooder who collected coke cans and turkey legs in *Duke Nukem 1* and *Duke Nukem 2*. Duke has evolved into a thick-limbed, yellow-maned bruiser eager to get medieval on those brain-sucking xenos scheming to make the Earth their own. Squeamish parents may balk at the thought of their children glued to the monitor screen, watching Duke gulp down steroids, frequent strip joints and



Conceptual sketch of female alien (by Chuck Jones).

Dopefish!



Hidden somewhere in the murky depths of the Apogee/3D Realms office building there lurks a fish. Not a normal fish, mind you, but a *Dopefish*. Not to be confused with anything related to illegal substance use, the Dopefish is something of a legend among the Apogee staff. It was initially created by Tom Hall for the game *Commander Keen: Good-bye Galaxy!* when Tom was employed by Id Software. According to Tom, "I just drew this stupid little fish." Since then, the Dopefish has made an appearance or been

mentioned in a number of Apogee games, including *Wacky Wheels* and *Rise of the Triad*. The Dopefish even rates a few lines in *Duke Nukem 3D*: in the "Abyss" level (episode 1, level 5),



FORMGEN FACTS

Since 1994, the commercial distribution of all Apogee and 3D Realms products has been handled by FormGen—a software distributor/publisher based in Scottsdale, AZ. In addition to *Duke Nukem 3D*, FormGen distributes *Terminal Velocity* (3D Realms) and *Rise of the Triad* (Apogee). Led by Randy MacLean and Jim Perkins, FormGen also publishes games from other developers, including SE Software's *Black Knight Marine Strike Fighter*.

pend enough explosive ordnance to turn the U.S. Marine Corps green with envy.

Duke's parental controls go a long way to making this game parent-friendly, but make no bones about it: Duke is a big boy now, and he's more than willing to bludge the nose of any stinkin' alien he comes across. He's even more vocal and aggressive in the commercial version, with more digitized voice clips used to flesh out Duke's tough-guy image.

There's Fallout in your Future

As most hard-boiled action movies demonstrate, tough guys need even tougher places to hang out in. According to Scott Miller and George Broussard, the most common request from gamers is to see even more violence and nudity in the game. Due to the strong demand, 3D Realms is considering the release of an R-rated version of *Duke Nukem 3D* that contains more violence and nudity. In addition to *Duke Nukem 3D*, 3D Realms has a number of other games in development, including *Shadow Warrior*, *Blood* and the eagerly anticipated *Prey* (see sidebar). Reluctant to give release dates for any of their titles, Scott Miller states simply that "they'll come out when they're done."

When those games are released, it's a given that 3D Realms will follow the same proven, successful marketing strategy for all of them. Apogee and 3D Realms have proven that a

shareware distribution method—which relies on the "try before you buy" concept—can be successful. Indeed, Apogee has blazed a trail that other shareware game companies (such as Id Software and Epic MegaGames) have followed with great success. In the minds of the crew at Apogee, shareware is much more than just a distribution method—it pro-

vides other tangible benefits as well. "Making shareware introduces responsibility," says *Prey* designer Tom Hall. Sound programmer Jim Dose concurs, adding that "Shareware games have to be better than commercial products simply because gamers actually play the games before they buy them. I think that a lot of commercial stuff wouldn't sell if players could actually sit down and try it before they buy it." The shareware concept has been good for Apogee and 3D Realms, and both companies are unarguably blazing a trail to success. With *Duke Nukem 3D* hitting the ground running and *Blood*, *Shadow Warrior* and *Prey* close behind, it's easy to see why.

For the latest information on what 3D Realms has in the works, check out their website at <http://www.3drealms.com/duke3d.html>.



Duke Nukem 3D CHEAT CODES

Getting stomped by those brain-sucking aliens? Need extra cash for the strip bar? Have no fear, dedicated Dukesters; just use the cheat codes listed below to even the odds. To activate, type them in during play.

DNALLEN: Prints "Buy Major Stryker" at the top of the screen.

DNBETA: Prints "Pirates Suck!" at the top of the screen.

DNCASHMAN: Duke throws money every time the spacebar is pressed.

DNCLIP: Turns clipping off, allows Duke to walk through walls.

DNCORNHOLIO: Grants invulnerability and gives unlimited jump jets.

DNCOSMO: Prints "Register Cosmo Today" at the top of the screen.

DNHYPER: Grants increased speed, just like steroids do.

DNITEMS: Gives Duke all the keyboards.

DNKROZ: Identical to DNCORNHOLIO, but easier to type.

DNRATE: Prints the current frame rate in the upper left corner.

DNSCOTTYxy: Level teleport: x is episode number, y is level number.

DNSKILLx: Changes difficulty; x can be any number from 0 to 3.

DNSTUFF: Gives Duke all weapons, keys and inventory items.

DNVIEW: Gives a chase view of Duke, identical to the F7 key.

NOTE: These cheat codes were tested with, and are verified to work with the shareware version of *Duke Nukem 3D* v1.1. All bets are off if you try these codes with the registered version.



The "Big Boss"
(by Chuck Jones).

which relies on the "try before you buy" concept—can be successful. Indeed, Apogee has blazed a trail that other shareware game companies (such as Id Software and Epic MegaGames) have followed with great success. In the minds of the crew at Apogee, shareware is much more than just a distribution method—it pro-



Dukesters may run across the message "Dopefish lives." Interestingly enough, the Dopefish is owned by Id Software and used with Id's blessing by Apogee. For the latest dope on the fish, check out the Dopefish web page—accessible through the *Commander Keen: Goodbye Galaxy* web page on the Apogee website (<http://www.apogee1.com/>).

The Next Step:

Prey

Bigger and better things are in the offing at 3D Realms, and the brightest star on the horizon is the long-awaited *Prey*. If you can imagine a game that embodies the best elements from the movies *Spartacus*, *Predator* and *Aliens*, you'll be on the right track as to what *Prey* is all about. If you're already salivating over the registered version of *Duke Nukem 3D*, *Prey* will surely send you into an apoplexy of anticipation. Unlike most games in the first-person-perspective action-game genre, *Prey* models the gameworld in *true 3-D*, with everything in the gameworld viewed from an accurate perspective.

One of the most impressive features of *Prey* will be the lighting engine. It handles light sources in a realistic

fashion, with multiple lights in a single area having additive illumination. It will also feature dynamic lighting, with light sources that can move independently of each other, lighting up darkened areas in real-time. "A character could have a flashlight attached to a weapon; as the character moves, the light moves along with him realistically, illuminating the surfaces it shines upon," says *Prey* designer Tom Hall.

As impressive as the technology behind the game, the storyline will be unique as well. Instead of being another "explore the maze and blow things up" game, *Prey* will feature a character-full plot and setting that will add depth to the game experience.

Psychic Detective

With 14 possible endings and dozens of paths through the game, I don't have the patience or the word count to walk you through every single bloody scene in *Psychic Detective*. Instead, I'll guide you to three "good" endings: The Healing, Hot Head and The Grand Slam. When you need to select an icon, I've put it in brackets and boldface, like so: [Choose this icon, dude]. Use the Bookmark feature as you go—in the unlikely event that you screw up, or to try different paths for not-so-good endings.

by Zach Meston

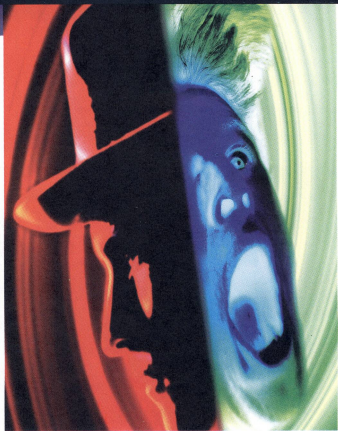
Electronic Arts for PC CD-ROM

DISK 1: THE FAMILY GATHERING, THE "BRICK," AND LAINA'S HOUSE

• Nothing you do at the family gathering affects your chances of getting The Grand Slam, but you'll definitely learn more or less information, depending on which heads you probe. The most plot-revealing path you can take at the gathering is this: jump into [Moki] when you see him. Stay in the Mokester's head as he looks at a family photo, confronts Laina and calls her a "psychic slut" (sounds like a great idea for a 1-900 line—the Psychic Sluts Network), finds a ripped-up photo of Laina and Sergei and picks up a doll's head. Jump back to [Eric] as Moki goes to meet Chad in the kitchen. (A variation is to jump into Chad's head until he finds you in the study, then jump into his head again as you leave.)



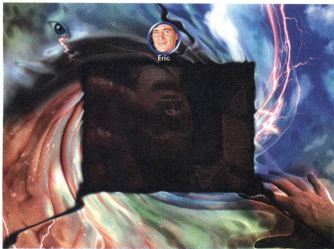
• Explore the study and check out any of the items; [Open Folder] and [Play Video] are the most interesting. You eventually get busted by Chad. Jump into [Chad] as you leave the





study. He browses through a green notebook and gets sliced by Sylvia. Try to save Chad's bacon by choosing the [Help Him] icon. You get clonked on the head by Sylvia and wake up next to Chad's bloody corpse. Bum deal. Monica screams like a banshee as you and Laina split the scene.

- Stay in the car as Laina and Monica leave, and [Go with Moki] when he offers to spill some beans. He takes you to an establishment called the "Brick." Let Moki show you snapshots and tell you Laina's family history, which is more twisted than an S&M bar.



- Jump into the [Dancer] as she runs into the Brick, then jump into [Sylvia] and hang out until she looks at the notebook photos. Quickly jump from [Bobby] to the [Dancer] to [Monica]. She watches as Max has an

obviously upsetting conversation, which would explain why the teacups on the table explode. Moki shakes you back into your own skull.



- Tell Moki [Teacups Explode] to make himself very happy. He hands over Laina's address and pops you in the nose. At Laina's house, choose [Teacups Explode] while she chews you out.

DISK 2: SERGEI TAKES TWO BULLETS; YOU TAKE THE RAP

- Laina makes you use the Collector. Wait for a few seconds, and jump into [Sergei] as he runs out of the house. Try to [Help Sergei] as Lance pulls a gun, kills Sergei and knocks your lights out.



You wake up with two displeased law-enforcement officials shining a flashlight in your face. Hello, big house.

- Jump into [Lt. Griggs] as you're taken to



your cell. When the lieutenant goes outside to smoke, jump into the [Courier], who conveniently drives past [Laina]. Stay with Laina as she drives to the mansion and talks to Madam Tikunov, whom you learn is really Anna in freeze-dried form.



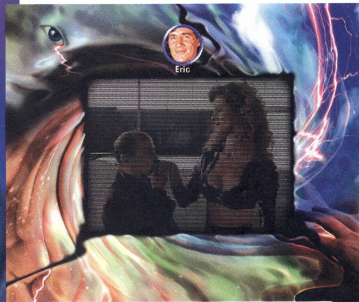


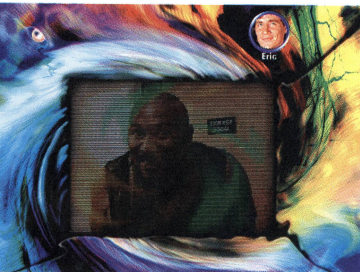
THE FOURTH COLLECTOR

- Moki is waiting for you as you strut out of prison. [Go with Moki] to an empty warehouse, where Sylvia shows up and hands him a Collector. Jump into [Monica] to find out that Max is headed for the warehouse. [Warn Moki] of the setup and [Run] as Max's limo pulls up. You wander the streets of San Francisco and stumble into Laina, who takes you to the mansion.



- Don't go to Madame T right away; wait for Laina to discover a strange pattern on the floor. Select the [Walk Pattern] icon to open Vladimir's secret room. Touch the [Collector Case] and select the [No, Go to Madame T] icon. You push the psychotic Sylvia off Madame T and save her life. Select the [Monica's Trouble] icon to push Sylvia's buttons. Anna tells you to select herself and Max's scar when playing Black Diamond.





DISK 2 (AGAIN): MIRAGEQUEST

• Touch Laina's [Bracelet] and resolve to [Find Monica]. Jump into [Jeanine] as she walks past you, and wait for her to see and talk to Lance. Jump back into [Eric] and [Use Collector] when Lance screams at you. Quickly use [Affection] on Lance to make him open the room, then use [Aggression] on Monica. You snatch the gun and escort Laina and Monica out of the building. It's time for you and Max to butt heads—or, rather, the stuff inside your heads.



DISK 3 (AGAIN): BLACK DIAMOND

• You choose four icons from the eight at the top of the screen, and Max gets the remaining four. You should choose the most powerful icons, which are: Madame T/Anna, Monica, the Cigarette (your psychic scar; better you have it than Max) and any other icon except the Skull, which is useless. Move your icons to attack Max's icons, using your strongest against his weakest. Win at Black Diamond and you get The Grand Slam; lose at Black Diamond and you get one of several "bad" endings, depending on how badly you lost.



"THE HEALING" ENDING

• Follow the walk through until Moki lets you test his Collector. Use the Collector without jumping into anyone's head. When Max shows up, choose the [Read Psyche Max] icon. Stay in his head until you're fried. Laina finds you wandering the streets, no doubt drooling all over yourself. At the mansion, you let her into your head and show her that Max killed Sergel, not Vladimir.

"HOTHEAD" ENDING

• Follow the Collector until you jump into Laina's head while your body rots in jail. Jump into the [Skateboard Kid] and jump into [Sylvia] when you pass the limo. Stay in her head for the entire limo scene, and return to your own head before you get fried. At MirageQuest, touch Laina's [Bracelet] and decide to [Seduce Sylvia]. Choose the [Seduce Sylvia] icon again when you're in Sylvia's office. During Black Diamond, choose the Cigarette, Kite, Madame Tikunov, and Sylvia for a very easy win.



Strategy Guide

This game was a very educational experience for yours truly. I learned about lycanthropy. I learned about Ludwig II of Bavaria. But most important, I learned that trying to run memory-intensive games with only 8 megabytes of RAM under Windows 95 is like trying to remove the transmission of an Oldsmobile Ninety-Eight with a melon baller.

A few notes before we begin our little wolf hunt. First, there is a great deal of backtracking in this game, so after I have described how to get to a location once, I assume you'll remember where it is. Second, when you talk to a character, you must—with few exceptions—go through every option. When a character requires a specific response, however, I have noted it. Finally (and this is very important), when viewing objects or reading the various books and plaques, you must click on them in the close-up. Gabriel or Grace will often make significant comments, and you will only get the associated points after these comments have been made.

THE BEASTS

A Gabriel Knight Mystery

Chapter One

Open the **bag** on the floor. Take the bag's contents. Look in your inventory. Read **Ubergrau's letter**. Read **Grace-to-Gabriel letter #1**. Walk down. Read the **note** from Huber on the coat rack. Take the **car keys** that are hanging under the mirror. Pick up the **newspaper** and read it. Put down the paper, and walk through the door to the **farm exterior**.

Walk right. Walk to the tree stump. Look at the **dirt patch** to see the **paw print**. Walk to the trees. Examine the **bushes**. Take the **red hair**. Return to the farm, then walk left into the **work shed**. Take the **cement** to mix it, then walk back to the log and look at the paw print. Pour the cement into the print. After Gabriel has returned the bucket, return to the log and take the **paw print cast**.

Walk back to the farm exterior and use the car keys on the car. Go to **Thalkirchen**. Turn right and look at the **wolves**. Click on a wolf. Read the **sign** next to the kennel. When **Thomas** appears, talk to him. Note what he says about **Doktor Klingmann**. Walk left into **Klingmann's office**. Interview Klingmann. When you've exhausted your conversa-



tion choices, leave the office. Leave the zoo, and return to **Lochham**. Enter the Huber farm. Use the **paper** on the table to write a letter to Grace.

After you've written the letter, click on the **tape-recorder** button. Choose the tape labeled **Klingmann** and then click **Load A**. Choose a **blank tape** and click **Load B**. Click

the **Splice** button. Create the following sentence using Klingmann's answers: **Thomas? Herr Doktor Klingmann here. Show our wolves to Mr. Knight.** Click the **transfer** button to complete the splice. Exit the farm, and use the keys on the car. Return to the zoo at Thalkirchen.

Go left to Klingmann's office. Take the **Klingmann splice tape** from your inventory and use it on the **walkie-talkie**, which is sitting on the desk. Search **Klingmann's coat** where you'll find a **receipt**. After exiting the office, follow Thomas into the kennel.

Look at the **wolf's tag**, then click on the wolf to take a **hair sample**. Leave the zoo and return to Lochham.



Sierra for IBM PC CD

T W I T H I N

by Ron Dulin

Enter the Huber farm. Look at Klingmann's receipt and be sure to examine the back side. Use the receipt on the mirror. Exit the farm and use the keys on the car. Choose **Marienplatz** as your destination.



Walk left into the building. Enter **21 Marienplatz**. Talk to **Ubergrau**.



After you've talked to him about the **samples**, he will set up an appointment at the **university laboratory**. Leave Ubergrau's office and head right down the Marienplatz. Continue right, then head up one screen to **Dienierstrasse**. Walk to the **post office**

on your right, and use **Gabriel-to-Grace envelope #1** on the door to mail it. Leave the post office and continue up. Walk to the red door on your right. Enter **54 Dienierstrasse**. Talk to **Xavier**. Choose **I'm an avid hunter**, then **I am a member of a prominent German family**. Leave the Hunt Club and return to Marienplatz. Exit Marienplatz and go to the police station at **Prinzregentenplatz**. Talk to the **officer** in the lobby, then leave.

Choose the **Universitat** as your next destination. Show the **zoo hair**, the **farm hair** and the **paw print cast** to **Michael**. Exit the



lab, and Michael will give you an **evidence analysis report** before you leave. Choose Marienplatz, and return to Ubergrau's office. Talk to Ubergrau to get the **Ritter family papers**.

Go to the Hunt Club, and show the family papers to Xavier to conclude Chapter One.

Chapter Two

You begin as Grace in **Gabriel's bedroom** at **Schloss Ritter**. Walk down to change the view of the room. Try to open the **library door** and learn that it is locked. Exit the room through the door next to the closet. Talk to **Gerde**. Walk right to the door and exit Schloss Ritter.

Go right down the road to the **Rittersberg town square**. Walk right and enter the **Gasthof Goldener Lowe**. Talk to **Herr Huber**. Exit the Gasthof. Walk up to the two blue doors. Knock on the left door, which is the **Rathouse**. Talk to **Herr Habermas**.

Return to Schloss Ritter. Walk up the stairs to Gabriel's bedroom. Examine the **toolbox** next to the fireplace. Take the **screwdriver**.

Examine the **missing stone** in the fireplace, then use the screwdriver on the **hole**. Open the **closet** and enter the **passageway**. Walk right to **Gerde's bedroom**.

Open **Gerde's closet** and take the **key**. Return to Gabriel's bedroom through the passageway.

Use the key to unlock the door to the **library**.

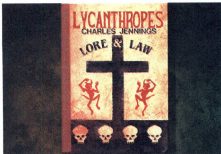
Examine the **center bookshelf** to find **Lycanthropes: Lore and Law**.

Read the book and the **letter to Ludwig II**. Look at the

shelf to find **Victor Ritter's journal**. Read the journal. Look at the left bookcase again to find **Christian Ritter's journal**. Read the second journal. Leave Schloss Ritter and return to the town square.

Enter the Gasthof and talk to Herr Huber. After speaking to him

about **Ludwig II**, return to the Rathouse. Talk to Herr Habermas about the **trial records** again. Ask him about the trial until he takes you to the **Rathouse dungeon**. Look through the **window** at **St. Georg Church**.

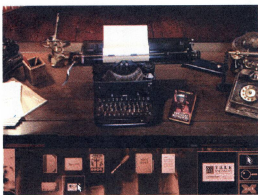


(Make sure you click on the church so that Grace says, "He asked to see a confessor.")

Return to the Rathouse and ask Habermas about the **church records**. He will give you a **mayor's note** to take to the priest. Walk left and enter the church. Give the mayor's note to the **priest**, who will give you the **church file**. Take the file to Habermas.

When he translates the confession, return to the library at Schloss Ritter. Sit at the desk. Use **Professor Barclay's card** on the **phone** to call him. Use the **typewriter** to write a letter to Gabriel. Go to the main hall and use the **unaddressed package** on Gerde to get the address. Return to the town office. Go to the **post office**, which is

between the Gasthof and the dungeon. Ring the **bell**. Give the **addressed package** to the **woman**, then use **Grace's wallet** on the woman to pay for the postage.



Chapter Three

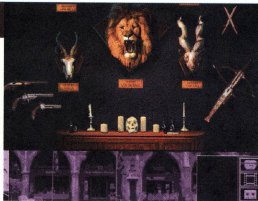
Go to the entryway, and read the **newspaper** on the table. Exit the farm and use the keys on the car. Choose **Marienplatz**. Go to Ubergrau's office and receive the **package** from Grace. Open the

package and read **Grace-to-Gabriel letter #2**. Talk to Ubergrau. Exit the office. Walk right through the plaza and stop at the first shop you can access. Enter the **cuckoo clock shop**. Look at the **small cuckoo clock** on the counter. Use **Gabriel's wallet** on the **shopkeeper** to buy the clock.

Continue right down the plaza and head up **Dienersstrasse**. Walk to the **alley** behind the Hunt Club, where the police have gathered. Attempt to speak with **Kommisar Leber**. Take the evidence analysis report from your inventory and show it to the **news crew** standing near the alley. Leber will tell you to come by his office later.



Enter the Hunt Club. Talk to Xavier. Walk up into the main hall, and head through the archway into the back hall. Use the cuckoo clock



on the potted plant. Walk back to the front hall. When the alarm goes off, examine the podium. Open the drawer and take Xavier's keys. Return to the back hall and use Xavier's Keys on the locked door to the left of the plant. Try to open the door. Take the clock from the plant and then use the clock on the plant again. Return to the front hall. When the alarm goes off again, examine the podium, open the drawer and put Xavier's keys in the drawer.

Walk to the back hall and open the unlocked door. Go down into the ritual room. Examine the hanging animal heads and the altar in the center of the room. Examine the photos on the wall to the right. Return to the altar and look at the notebook in the right corner. Von Zell will come down and lead you back up to the main hall. Talk to Von Zell. Exit the Hunt Club and return to the plaza. Leave Marienplatz and head to the police station at Prinzregentenplatz.

Talk to Leber. Look at the map hanging on the wall. Click on the map, then look at the tag labeled Karl Grossberg. Take Gabriel's notepad from your inventory and use it on the tag to write down the phone number. Examine Von Glower's card in your inventory. Leave the police station and go to Perlach. Examine the mask on the



wall. Talk to Von Glower, then return to Marienplatz. Go to Ubergrau's and talk to him about missing persons cases. Leave the office and return to the Huber farm at Lochham.



Enter the farm. Use Grossberg's phone number on the phone. Use the paper on the table to write a letter to Grace. Exit the farm and use the car keys on the car. Go to Marienplatz. Walk up to the post office on Dinerstrasse and mail Gabriel-to-Grace envelope #2. Continue up Dinerstrasse and enter the Hunt Club.

Walk back to the main hall. Talk to Herr Preiss. When the other club members arrive, walk over to Von Zell and Klingmann. Say Just wanted to grab a magazine. Put your tape recorder in the magazine, then return the magazine to the table. Talk to Hennemann and Von Aigner at the bar.

Chapter Four

Go into the library. Look at the left bookshelf and take the Ludwig II biography. Read the biography. Leave Schloss Ritter and go to the town square. Go to the post office and receive the letter from Gabriel. Read Gabriel-to-Grace letter #2. Enter the Gasthof. Talk to the Smiths and get tarot readings for Grace and Gabriel. Talk to Huber, then exit the Gasthof.

Walk left and enter St. Georg Church. Go to the back of the church and look at Gerde. Return to Schloss Ritter. Enter the passageway through the closet in Gabriel's closet. Exit down the steps in

the center of the passageway. Pick some roses and return to the church. Give the roses to Gerde and she will give you Gabriel's car keys. Use Gabriel's car keys on the car in front of Schloss Ritter. Choose Neuschwanstein

from the map of southern Bavaria.

Enter the castle. Note that during the tour of Neuschwanstein, you must visit every room and listen to every segment of the tour tape. Each room has a general tape segment, as well as several specific segments.

In the entry hall, there are four tape segments for the tower door and



the murals. The Bedroom has segments for the bed and the murals, as well as two statues, which you can access by exiting to the far right. The chapel has segments for the stained glass windows to the right and the mural above the crucifix. The living room contains segments for the painting to the right of the door, as well as an additional general segment when you change views to the right (this description contains a valuable clue about Ludwig's obsession with the lily). The grotto contains only a general segment. The study has a single segment for the three paintings on the walls. The singer's hall contains individual segments for each of the paintings on the walls.

After viewing each of the paintings in the singer's hall, look at the large wolf painting behind the stage. Once you have heard all the tape segments and examined the wolf mural, exit the castle from the singer's hall. Leave Neuschwanstein and head to



Herrenchiemsee. Talk to the **woman** behind the counter, and buy a ticket. Again, you must examine all the exhibits and read their associated materials. Start with the **photos** to the right. Read each of the **letters** under the photos. Next, look at the **painting of Elizabeth** and read the **plaque**. Examine the **painting of Ludwig** behind the counter, then exit left to the **display rooms**.

In **display room 1**, read the **excerpts from Ludwig's diary**. Examine the **photo of Wagner** to the right of the diary. Look at the **painting of the Knights of St. George**, and look at the **signets** in the display cabinet beneath the painting. Examine the **master robe** and the **painting of Wagner** to the left. Read about **Ludwig's diary** in the display case beneath the painting.

In **display room 2**, read the display entitled **The Last Days**. Look at the **Notice** to the right. Examine the **sleigh ride painting**, which will remind Grace of her dream. Look at it again, so that Grace mentions Mrs. Smith. In the display case beneath the painting, you'll find **Ludwig's notes to his servants**. Read each of the notes. Look at the case containing **Ludwig's death mask**, then exit the display room. Talk to the woman behind the counter. Ask her about **Ludwig's diary**

and the **Wagner opera**. (You might want to ask about the opera first; otherwise, you'll have to speak to her twice.) Leave the museum and travel to the **Wagner Museum at Bayreuth**. After speaking with **Georg**, explore the museum. Explore each of the three display rooms. Make sure you view the **theater plans** and the **letter on Wagner's desk**, the **plaque** above the **old sofa** and each of the **plaques** in the Ludwig room.

Return to the entry hall. Look at the **display case** on the counter, then talk to Georg. If you've seen the pertinent displays, you'll be able to ask him about the **Wolf Panels at Neuschwanstein** and the **lost opera** after you've exhausted your other conversation options.

Leave the Wagner Museum and return to Rittersberg. Enter Schloss Ritter. Gerde will tell you about the phone call. Walk up the stairs and enter the library. Sit at the desk and use Professor Barclay's card on the phone. Use the **note with Dallmeier's phone number** on the phone.

Exit Schloss Ritter and use Gabriel's car keys on the car. Head to the **Starnberger See** at **Seeshaupt**. Walk left to the benches, and **Dallmeier** will meet you. Talk to Dallmeier. Leave the Starnberger See and return to Rittersburg. Go to the Library at Schloss Ritter. Sit at the desk and use the Ludwig biography on the phone to call the publisher. Use the **note with Chaphill's phone number** on the phone. Walk to the main hall and talk to Gerde, and be sure to ask about the **special permit**. Walk to the town square.

Enter the Gasthof and ask Huber about the Smiths. Ask Mrs. Smith about the **Ludwig dream**. Exit the Gasthof and look at the **bushes** to the right of St. George Church. Look at the **flowers**, and the priest will give one to you. Return to Schloss Ritter and use Gabriel's car keys on the car. Go to the Starnberger See at Seeshaupt.

Walk to the benches, then look at the **water's edge**. Place the **ily** on the water. Return to Schloss Ritter. Go to the library and write a letter to Gabriel. Walk to the post office in the town square, ring the bell, and mail **Grace-to-Gabriel envelope #3**. Use Grace's wallet on the woman to pay for the postage.

Return to the main hall of Schloss Ritter, where Gerde will tell you a fax has arrived at the post office. Walk back to the post office and ring the bell to receive the **fax from Chaphill**. Read **Ludwig's diary**, then return to the car and drive to the Wagner Museum at Bayreuth. Show the fax of Ludwig's diary to Georg.

Chapter Five

After the steamy opening movie, head to Marienplatz. Go to the Hunt Club and enter the main hall. Take your tape recorder from the magazine on the table. Walk down the plaza to Ubergrau's office. Read **Grace-to-Gabriel letter #3**. Play the **tape of Von Zell's conversations** to Ubergrau. Talk to Ubergrau and he will tell you about the missing persons research. Exit Ubergrau's Office. Stop at the **meat shop** outside the building and buy some **Weiss Wurst**. Leave the Marienplatz and go to the police station at Prinzregentenplatz.



Talk to Leber. Play the Von Zell conversations tape for Leber to access **Grossberg's account book**. When Leber leaves the room, quickly exam-

ine the ledger. Click on the **page**, and Gabriel will rip it out of the book. Go to **Buchenau**, which will now be available on the map.

Knock on the door and talk to **Dorn**. Return to Ubergrau's office at Marienplatz. Ask Ubergrau about **getting cash**. Leave Marienplatz and return to Buchenau. Knock on Dorn's door and give him the **14,000**

Marks. Talk to him after he has invited you in. When he agrees to let you see the cage, walk down. Look at the last **cage** on the right. Examine the **straw** in the cage. Feed



the Weiss Wurst to the **tiger**, then take the **wolf tags** from the cage. Return to Marienplatz and go to the Hunt Club, where you will find the others leaving for the hunting trip.

THE LODGE

After the movie, you'll find yourself in **Gabriel's bedroom** at the **hunting lodge**.

Leave the room through the door to your right to the **upstairs hallway**. Enter to the first door on your right, which is **Preiss's bedroom**. Open the **closet** and take the **rope**. Close the closet and walk down to the **window**. Open the window and look down. Use the rope on the **ledge**. Walk left to the center window. Open it and enter **Von Zell's room**. Walk right and examine the **organizer** on the nightstand. Read the entry, then take **Grossberg's letter** sticking out of the pages. Read the letter.



Enter the bathroom. Move the **floor mat** and examine the **footprint**. Exit Von Zell's room through the window and head right back to Preiss's window. Return to the upstairs hallway. Go through the second door on the left into **Von Aigner's room**. Talk to Von Aigner until he asks you to leave. Walk down the hallway to the **great room**.

Talk to Henneman. Walk up the stairs to the hallway. Enter Klingmann's room, which is the third door on the left. Show the wolf tags to Klingmann. After the conversation ends, return to the great room. Open the **cabinet** and take the **lantern**. Go to the **fireplace** and take the **matches** from the mantel. Exit the lodge through the wooden door. Enter the **stable**. Look on the wall to the left and take the **shears**. Exit the stable.

Walk east into the



woods. Look at the **patch of dirt** and examine the **paw print**. Walk east. Walk south twice. Look at the **mud patch** and examine the **paw print**. Use the shears on the **trees** to the right. Enter the **small cavern** to the left. Use

the matches on the lantern and prepare for a grizzly sight. Walk north twice then west twice and enter the lodge.



Go up the stairs to the hallway and enter the third door on the right. Gabriel will automatically take Von Glower to Von Zell's cave. After the lengthy movie has ended, you'll find yourself in the woods. Take the **talisman** from your inventory and walk east. Use the talis-

man on the **werewolf**, then follow it. Continue to use the talisman and follow the wolf until you reach the ravine. When Von Glower arrives, he throws you the **riffl**. Use it on the wolf.

Chapter Six

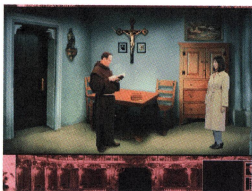
You'll find yourself in the **dungeon** of the Rathaus in Ritterberg. Walk down and talk to Gabriel, who's lying on the cot. Leave the dungeon and go to the post office. Ring the bell and you'll receive a letter from Von Glower to Gabriel. Read **Von Glower's letter**. Enter the Gasthof. Talk to Mrs. Smith and make sure you ask her about

Altotting.

When Grace stands, take one of the **rolls** out of Mrs. Smith's **bread basket**.

Go to Gabriel's bedroom at Schloss Ritter. Take the **pillowcase** from the bed.

Return to the Rathaus dun-



geon. Use the **dinner roll** on the **pigeon**. Use the pillowcase on the pigeon. Go to Gabriel's car and drive to **Altotting**. Enter the **church exterior**. Walk right. Look at the **case** containing the **silver body parts**. Walk right, then walk through the archway into the **priest's office**. Talk to the **priest** and he will give you a **card**. Examine the **basket** on the table. Use Grace's wallet on the basket to obtain a **bottle of holy water**, then leave Altotting.

Drive to the castle at Neuschwanstein. Go to the living room and walk right. A **child** will enter the room and climb on a chair. After the guard has removed the child, use the bottle of holy water on the **chair**. Return to the Ludwig's bedroom. Open the **secret panel** near the floor between the two doorways to get the **first act of the opera**. Go to the grotto. When the guard has gone, search the left wall of the grotto to find the **second act**. Go to the singer's hall. Walk right and use the pigeon in the pillowcase on the **archway**. Look for the **third secret panel** under the second painting to the right of the wolf mural. Take the **third act** and leave the castle.

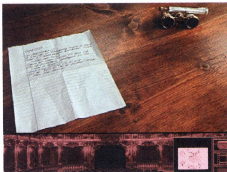


Return to Rittersberg. Go to St. George Church and walk to the back room. Look at the **silver heart** on **Wolfgang Ritter's casket**. Go to Schloss Ritter and ask Gerde about the **silver heart**. Return to St. George Church and take the silver heart. Drive to Altotting.

Enter the office and give the **priest's card** to the Priest. When he leads you to the chapel, use the silver heart on the **box** to the right. Walk right to the **archway**. Use the **light switch** on the wall to turn off the lights. Quickly move the **chair** under the **heart urns**. Look at the urns, and take the **chandelier diagram** from **Ludwig's urn**.

THE OPERA

Once the movie has ended you'll find yourself, as Grace, in the **Wittrebsbacher theater foyer**. Take an **opera programme** from the table and read it. Walk down to change the view of the foyer. Walk right into the **side hallway**. Go to the door at the end of the hall,



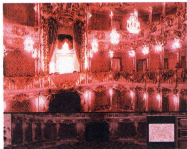
which leads to the **office**. Talk to Gabriel, then look at the **bulletin board**. Take the **seating chart**. Look at the **table** and take **Grace's "to do" list** and the **opera glasses**. Read the list. Leave the office and return down the hall to the foyer.

Enter the **audito-**

rium through the large double doors. Talk to Georg about the possible distractions. Talk to the **chandelier installer** to the left of the stage. Exit the auditorium. Walk up the large stairway to the **center hall**. Look at the chandelier diagram in your inventory. Click on the **X** in the center of the diagram. Look at the seating chart. Click on the area labeled **Mittel Loge**.

Go through the double doors into the loge. Look at the **seats** to the **left**. Exit the loge. Walk right to the upstairs **side hallway**. Go to the **spotlight room** at the end of the hall. Look at the **spotlight**. Click on the **switch** to turn it on. Use the **handle** beneath the switch and aim the light on the loge.

Return to the foyer. Give the theater seating chart to the **usher**. Go through the door to the left of the auditorium. Go through the door at the end of the hallway to the **backstage** area. Look at the **coil of rope** next to the door. Take the small piece of **rope** tied to the pulley. Go down the steps into the **theater basement**.



Walk right. Open the **box** on the back wall and take the **theater keys**. Walk left, then walk down. Go through the door on the left wall. Move left and take the **private banner**. Leave the **prop room**. Use the theater keys on the **prop room door**. Walk down. Walk right three times. Walk down into the **furnace room**. Open the **furnace door**. Click on the **coal bin** to load the furnace. Look at the **controls** beneath the furnace door. Click on the red **pilot button**. Turn the handle to **Mittel** to ignite the furnace.

Walk left, then walk right up the stairs. Walk right, then go through the office door at the end of the hallway. Talk to Gabriel. When the **overture** begins, walk right, then go down the hallway to the office. Put on the **dress**. After talking with Leber, return upstairs to the spotlight room. Look through the window to the right of the spotlight, and use the opera glasses on the Mittel Loge to see Von Glower. Exit the spotlight room, and walk down the hall. Look at the loge doors. Use the theater rope on the **door handle**. Use the pri-

vate banner on the door.

Now you'll be in control of Gabriel, who's trapped in the prop room. Walk left and move the **trunk**. Use the **Ritter dagger** from your inventory on the **vent**. Enter the opening. Walk up twice, then climb the stairs to the left. Look at the coil of rope and take the **electrical tape** from the pulley. Walk right into the **dressing room**.

Look at the **rack of clothes** to take **Engelhart's costume**. Use the costume on Gabriel. Look at the **dressing table**. Pick up the **powder**. Use the powder on the **mirror**, then hide behind the **wooden screen**. When the **actor** enters the dressing room, use the electrical tape on him to stop him from screaming.



After the long opera scene, you'll find yourself as the werewolf Gabriel in the basement. Your first goal is to close the doors leading to the room with the vent. Turn right, then walk forward twice. Turn around and click on the **door latch** to close it.

Turn right, then walk forward. Turn around and close the door you just came through.

Now you must trap the werewolf Von Glower in the furnace room. Use the **smell button** to locate Von Glower, then strategically close doors to move him toward the lower right corner of the basement. Do not walk into a room where he is, or trap yourself in a room. This is not too hard, but the solution depends on where Von Glower moves. Try to create a single passageway with the furnace room at one end and Von Glower trapped between it and you.

Once you have him cornered, enter the furnace room. Leber and Grace will enter the room. Click on Grace and you will begin to control her. As Grace, open the furnace door. Click on the **grey wolf** to give control to Gabriel. When Von Glower begins to leap at Leber, jump at him to knock him into the furnace.

And that's it. Congratulations! You've regained your mortal soul and ended the centuries-long reign of the Black Wolf—not bad for an obnoxiously smug American with overly conditioned hair and a fake Cajun accent.



INTERFACE

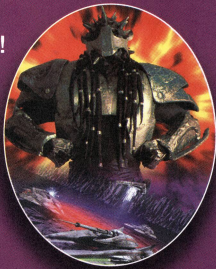
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V

Virgin's New Line

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S

PC Games

This winter, Virgin Interactive Entertainment unveiled and demo'd their new games lineup for the entire year, and they invited *Computer Player* to their state-of-the-art production offices in Irvine, CA, to sample some of their best. Included in our sneak peeks were all their in-house developments and their third-party releases. Of course, let's not forget about the little bash they threw for all of us electronic-gaming journalists...! Here's what they had to offer.

by Mike Davila



Command & Conquer: The Covert Operations

This add-on to the original *Command & Conquer* contains 15 new solo-play missions and 10 new multiplayer scenarios. Seven of the 15 missions are on the GDI side (for those of you who aren't familiar with the game, they're the good guys). Players will also find seven new sound tracks that weren't available in the first game. Unlike the original *C&C*, you can



choose to play the missions out of order instead of progressively playing through all of them.

AVAILABLE: now
SYSTEM: IBM PC CD, Windows 95

Command & Conquer: Red Alert

AVAILABLE: fourth quarter '96
SYSTEM: IBM PC CD, Windows 95

The world in *Red Alert* is a prequel to the original in *Command & Conquer*, and it's different from the one we're all so familiar with. There never was a World War II and Hitler never rose to power. The Soviets, led by good ole Joseph Stalin, are storming through Europe and taking over as many countries as they can. In *Red Alert*, gamers can play in one of two Allied fronts (northern or southern theaters) against the Soviets, or, if they prefer, join forces with them against the Allies.



Red Alert manages to correct some of *C&C*'s problems, including the weak artificial intelligence and lack of difficulty levels. There are also improvements in unit control, and in battles, gamers can now use air and sea units as well as land-based pieces. The playfields in *Red Alert* are twice as big as those in *C&C*, so there's plenty of room for all the bloodshed.

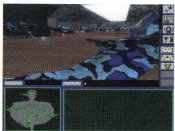


for '96



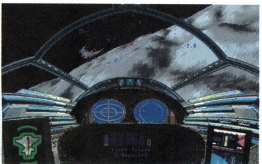
Alien Alliance

AVAILABLE:
third
quarter '96
SYSTEM:
IBM PC CD



Set in the years following the great intergalactic war, *Alien Alliance* puts you in the seat of a first-class wing pilot to embark on a series of calculated, furious missions to discover why human ships are being attacked by aliens.

The game picks up where space-fighter simulators such as the *Wing Commander* series leaves off. Two game engines combine rendered SGI graphics with action-oriented space combat. Players are given the chance to master a fleet of eight advanced fighter planes as they maneuver their way through land and space, while five alien sub-races threaten to thwart their chance of success.



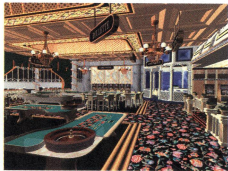
Golden Nugget

Modeled after the famous casino of the same name in Las Vegas, this title is best explained as gambling meets *Phantasmagoria*. *Golden Nugget* is a strange brew of 14 games of chance and a mystery adventure starring Adam West (of *Batman* fame).

Players can experience the casino by walking around and partaking in games of chance, or, if they get tired of the gambling, they can get involved in the adventure part of the game. Adam West leads players through the hotel's guest rooms and exclusive poker suites.

Players must solve the mystery of who stole the missing "Chaos Chip"—a super-advanced computer chip designed to predict the outcome of any game.

AVAILABLE:
second
quarter '96
SYSTEM:
IBM PC CD
Windows 95,
Mac CD



Caddy Hack: Haunted Miniature Golf

When we previewed this game, its bizarre humor left us feeling pretty perplexed.

Designed to appeal to beginners

and expert gamers, the title allows fearless miniature golfers to explore realistic,

spooky settings made from tabletop models that have

been digitized and animated. Up to four

players compete for the highest score on

nine different haunted holes, including a junkyard complete with a

headless, chainsaw-wielding baby doll.

You'll find other holes in a run-down trailer park with a threatening

tornado, a Hawaiian luau and a wacko scientist lab.

And don't forget to check out the hot tub!

Just make sure the kids aren't around.



AVAILABLE:
October '96
SYSTEM:
IBM PC CD,
Windows 95 and
Mac CD



Virgin's New Line PC Games for '96



Circle of Blood

In this Indiana Jones-style adventure game, a player becomes an American tourist in Paris by the name of George Stobbard. He sees a demented clown murder a person and steal a medieval manuscript created by the 14th-century order, Knights of the Templar. Legend holds that the knights left behind a massive treasure hidden somewhere in Europe. Gamers wander through various European cities looking for clues to solve the puzzles and unravel the mystery.



Virgin says the game is set to go after fans of LucasArts' *Full Throttle*. Estimated completion playtime?—around 40 hours.



AVAILABLE:
second quarter '96

SYSTEM:
IBM PC CD
and Mac CD

EURIT

A pleasant change from all those thinking and puzzle games, *EURIT* is an action/arcade game with strategy elements based on the games of tag and capture the flag—with a new twist: the addition of fantasy sci-fi elements such as magic spells, mazes, robots and monsters. The rules are fairly simple: travel through the mazes and capture the hidden flags. The first person to capture a designated number of flags wins; but if you're "it,"

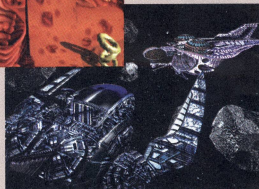


you must "tag" an opponent before you can start collecting flags. *EURIT*'s strength lies in its two-player head-to-head format, in which you're competing against another human. Fans of *Bomberman* will get a big kick out of this game.



AVAILABLE:
second quarter '96

SYSTEM:
IBM PC CD



NHL Powerplay '96

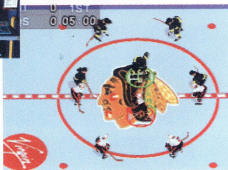
NHL Powerplay '96—a hockey sports sim—uses impressive motion capture 3-D technology taken from film footage of professional hockey players, so it has the look and feel of a live game. Players command NHL teams fielded from real NHLPA athletes. Amazingly, the game is the only PC hockey simulation that allows gamers to control the full selection of offensive and defen-



sive moves, i.e., gamers control the style of play. A smart camera gives players the best view of the action and allows them to see the game from any perspective or angle. Some of the other features included are head-to-head play, pre-season, playoff and championship tournaments.



AVAILABLE: June '96
SYSTEM: IBM PC CD



Toonstruck

Starring Christopher Lloyd, *Toonstruck* is a madcap puzzle-based adventure game that integrates painted backgrounds with animated characters and live-action video. Players will find it reminiscent of *Dragon's Lair* and *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*. The gamer takes on the role of Drew Blanc (Christopher Lloyd)—an animator who is transported into the bizarre cartoon world. To return home, Drew teams up with one of his animated creations to defeat the evil Count Nefarious.

Toonstruck is a big game—three CDs. The game contains a whopping 50,000 traditional frames of cell animation and over 100 hand-painted scenes. It is hoped that sales on this title will meet the expectations of the marketing kingpins at Virgin, because it truly is a game of much merit.



AVAILABLE:
June '96

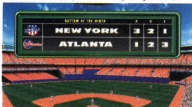
SYSTEM:
IBM PC CD,
Windows 95,
Mac CD

The Show

The Show recreates, in 3-D, realistic gameplay that captures the essence of professional baseball. The game will feature state-of-the-art 3-D technology, an advanced artificial-intelligence engine and high-production-quality audio, and

AVAILABLE:
second quarter '96

SYSTEM:
IBM PC CD



it will allow the user to have maximum control over gameplay. The objective is to guide and control a team through an entire baseball season until they become world champs. Gamers must successfully staff their teams with productive, healthy players taken from major and minor league rosters, make timely trades and win a ton of games.

The Show will have photorealistic 3-D stadiums modeled after the real thing. Multiple camera angles will switch to where the play is occurring, so you'll have the best vantage point possible. You'll also be able to select the depth of play you want, e.g., either simulation or pure action-oriented play.



Rivers of Dawn

AVAILABLE:
third quarter '96

SYSTEM:
IBM PC CD,
Windows 95, Mac CD

Designed and developed by the infamous Pepe Moreno—you might remember him from *Hell Cab*—*Rivers of Dawn*

pulls players into the fantasy age of wizards and warlords where there exists a magical crystal that holds the balance of



good versus evil. An ancient struggle for its possession eventually results in the gem's destruction. Players assume the role of Prince Glorian and travel through the Kingdom of Dawn, where they must find the lost gem that has been broken into five pieces and scattered throughout the land.

The game manages to marry the elements of a role-playing game with the stunning graphics of live-action video and real-time character control. Using a conversation engine,

players experience the dialogue that's typical of an adventure game of this type. From a graphics standpoint, the game is breathtaking. Rendered backgrounds of the forest and villages are nicely blended with live-action video.



How it Works

Our reviews are the opinions of our freelance and staff writers. Games are rated on a scale of 1 to 10; 10 is the highest rating.

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ADVENTURE

BrainDead 13

When a programmer writes a game, he or she usually has a specific idea in mind. The idea is to create a game that is fun to play, and that is also a challenge. In the case of *BrainDead 13*, the idea was to create a game that is fun to play, and that is also a challenge. The game is a puzzle game, and it is a challenge. The game is a puzzle game, and it is a challenge.

The computer tech out for a few extra bucks, whose agenda suddenly changes when he has to save the world from impending doom.



1 **TECHBOX**

Look for the CD-ROM icon on the box art. The CD-ROM icon is a small circle with a CD-ROM inside. The CD-ROM icon is a small circle with a CD-ROM inside.

2 **GAME-PLAYING HINTS**

BrainDead 13 is a puzzle game. The game is a puzzle game. The game is a puzzle game. The game is a puzzle game.

3 **OVERALL 7**

SCORE: 7
 CREATIVITY: 7
 ORIGINALITY: 7
 PLAYABILITY: 7
 GRAPHICS: 7
 MUSIC: 7
 SOUND FX: 7

1 Techbox

Important stuff you need to know about the game, including hardware requirements, developer, publisher and price. You'll even discover some of the game's active ingredients.



REVIEW INDEX

Genres

-  ACTION
-  STRATEGY
-  SIMULATION
-  ADVENTURE
-  SPORTS

Stamps of Approval

If you see one of these stamped on a review, put down the magazine, go to your software store and buy said game immediately.

GP PERFECT!
Exceeds in all categories. A milestone. These games are very rare.



GP RECOMMENDED
An overall great game. If you're an avid player of the genre, this game is a must-own for your library.



2 Summary Paragraph

It all ties together here, where we issue our final verdict and tell you honestly whether it's a dog or a *Doom*.

3 Ratings Categories

OVERALL: this rating takes into account all the game's pluses and minuses. This overall rating is not an average of the other scores.

\$ VALUE: we tell you whether a particular game is worth your hard-earned dollars. With games running anywhere from \$20 to \$80, you might find this rating indispensable.

ORIGINALITY: a look at the effort that was put into creating a unique gaming experience. Same old just doesn't cut it here.

PLAYABILITY: ease of game's interface, enjoyment of the task involved, control mechanism and replayability all factor in here. Playability is a game's single most important aspect.

GRAPHICS: we look at things such as animation, background and character art, color palette, scrolling, resolution, etc.

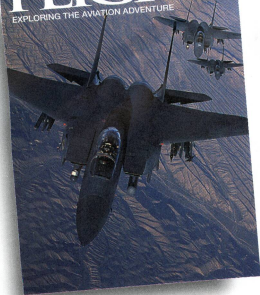
MUSIC: we evaluate those wonderful musical scores.

SOUND FX: on the side of the human head, ears play a big part in evaluating this non-musical aspect of the game. Creating an atmosphere is crucial.

OVERALL	7
\$ Value	7
Originality	6
Playability	7
Graphics	9
Music	8
Sound FX	8

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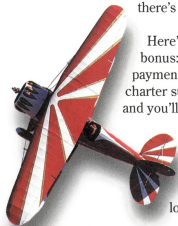
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CyberSpeed

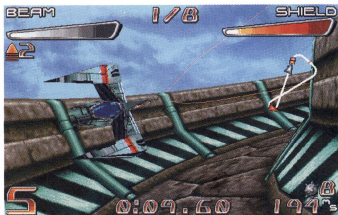
At first glance, I didn't have very high hopes for *CyberSpeed*. It looked a lot like *Hi-Octane*—EA's nicely done hovercraft sim—and like a smattering of other science-fiction racing games. Even the graphics, though sharp in SVGA 640 x 480 x 256, were awfully similar to *Hi-Octane's*. When I fared poorly and was left in so much virtual dust during my first few races, my first impression started to flex its muscles and settle in.

Much like my experience with Cyberdreams' similarly named racing product, *CyberRace*, I took a step back from the game, read the manual, studied the strategies and

What? Just put the pedal to the metal and fire at will, you say? Sounds easy, but there's a catch.

put in some practice laps. Slowly but surely, I crept from the back of the pack toward the pole position. *CyberSpeed* isn't stunning, but it's fun.

Most science fiction racing games make armed hovercraft your main steeds, but *CyberSpeed* uses a slightly different engine. Your ship flies above the track, but it's actually guided by an energy beam, which serves as part of the track and keeps your vehicle on course like a monorail track and transfers energy to your ship's engine, shield and weapon systems.



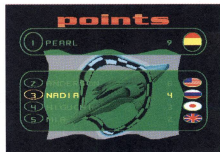
CyberSpeed is high-speed racing in a future filled with cyborgs and deadly technology. Combat racing you've seen before, but these racers don't burn rubber or float on air; they ride on an energy beam.

As in many of *CyberSpeed's* competitors, your goal is to finish an eight-lap race before your opponents do. You can outrun them, or shoot them to slow them down. What?

Just put the pedal to the metal and fire at will, you say? Sounds easy, but there's a catch.

If a ship doesn't take the inside angle, turning on the track can stress the beam's strength. This can be done by rotating

the ship around the beam. Ships have 360 degrees of freedom when rotating, so they can shift their weight in turns. I thought the force of the turn would stress the beam either

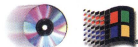


way, but hey, it's just a game. When you fire your guns or turn poorly in corners, you lose energy from the beam. This translates into reduced speed as a result of the energy drain on the engine.

CyberSpeed adds the interesting wrinkle of systems management to the mix, but it has some other problems. There isn't much of a story to inspire you, and though you can choose from eight characters and



TECHBOX



Media: compact disc

Developer: Mindscape

Publisher: Mindscape, 88 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945; 415.897.9900

Website: <http://www.mindscape.com>

Min. system req: IBM PC 486 DX4, 100MHz
8 megabytes RAM
8 megabytes hard disk
Local bus SVGA
2X CD-ROM drive
Windows 95

ships, the other racers have little personality other than what their pictures convey. I also didn't see a lot of racing styles, though each ship does have unique performance specifications.

Racing on this track requires a pretty solid machine, and I think the popular 486 DX2 community won't be too happy about that, though I didn't encounter any fatal bugs, and the Windows 95 autoplay and uninstall features were welcome. The interface is pretty standard, but some of the conventions bothered me: you have to switch to rear view to drop mines—pretty inconvenient, and it's hard to shoot and drive at the same time, because firing and accelerator functions are both slaved to joystick buttons that you may not be able to press at the same time without a

multiplexing joystick. Finally, there's no multiplayer support.

Still, *CyberSpeed* does have the interesting beam concept, some pretty tenacious computer opponents and a good number of tracks. Some of the tracks involve a lot more than just level racing, including *Descent*-like dives and zooming climbs.

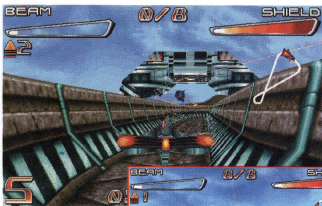


There's an interesting cast of characters racing in *CyberSpeed*, and you get to be one of them. Each one represents a different country. The Brits have a cyborg working for them.



GAME-PLAYING HINTS

- Start firing early in each race. Although it will drain energy from your engines, the computer drivers are good starters, and you should trip them up early so you won't fall too far behind. Once you manage to pass a few, good driving and the use of mines will ensure that you won't finish last.



But if you aren't a big fan of this genre and you already own *Hi-Octane* or *Slipstream*, *CyberSpeed*'s few unique quirks won't make it a worthy purchase. On the other hand, if you can't get enough of futuristic racing games, *CyberSpeed* is worth a look.



Races can not be won by speed alone. You'll need to learn to balance the use of offensive and defensive weapons with a unique strategy.

CYBERSPEED

GENRE: action

CONTENTS: beam riders

HITS: the computer-controlled opponents are not easy to beat.

MISSSES: difficult game conventions, i.e., hard to shoot and drive.

LAST WORD: an entertaining high-speed racing/combat game, but unfortunately, there is no multiplayer support.

OVERALL **7**

\$ Value **6**

Originality **6**

Playability **7**

Graphics **8**

Music **9**

Sound FX **8**



Descent II

Lethal metallic monstrosities lurking around corners still haunt your dreams. And though, for an adrenaline rush, nothing tops the flames of a blown reactor licking at your ship as you race through the shafts to safety, it's something you can do without again. But now it is happening again! More mining robots have gone amok, only this time, they're faster, smarter and some are even bigger than you thought possible...and they have bigger guns.

Just when you thought it was safe to descend back into the mines, *Descent II* ups the ante in underground warfare. Once again, you're piloting



They say red is an angry color, and that may be true, because this is one furious boss.

simplistic as what transformed *Doom* into *Doom II*—the addition of only one new weapon. Instead, Parallax concentrated

optimized and transferred to *Descent II*, and that gives *Descent II* a wider weapon base than any 3-D action game around.

Other new items include a guide-bot to help you locate mission objectives, which range from hostages to the reactor itself. There's also a very handy afterburner that takes your fighter to new

Just when you thought it was safe to descend back into the mines,

***Descent II* ups the ante in underground warfare.**

your trusty little fighter against hordes of enemy robots, rescuing hostages and blowing the reactor to shut down every mine. With six areas and a total of 30 levels, that's no small job.

Not much has changed in the overall flight engine since the original. It's a little more polished, but you still have the full, potentially disorienting, 360-degree freedom that separated *Descent* from other 3-D action games. But that's not to say these changes are as

on making more gameplay options, dynamic levels, a host of new enemies and plenty of new weapons to quickly reduce your opponents to shrapnel.

Among the new guns are the helix cannon (a lawnmower spreadfire), a phoenix cannon (ricochets), a gauss gun (extremely damaging machine gun—forget the vulcan!) and an omega cannon (a gun that even Clint would envy). Other weapons include guided missiles that seem to

fly you right into your target, blazing mercury missiles and the mama of all missiles—the earth-shaker. You can even drop smart mines, which will teach your enemies how to die very quickly, hence their name. Best of all, the weapons you came to know and love in *Descent* have all been



heights in speed.

Though the overall graphics in *Descent II* haven't been greatly improved, the new light-sourcing and flowing lava and water are major improvements. For example, if you shoot out a light, the area darkens proportionally. In addition to the old flares,



You haven't really played *Descent II* until you play via modem or network.

TECHBOX



List price: \$49.95

Media: compact disc

Developer: Parallax

Publisher: Interplay, 17922 Fitch Ave., Irvine, CA 92714; 714.553.6678

Website:

<http://www.interplay.com>

Min. System req:

IBM PC 486, 66MHz

8 megabytes RAM

20 megabytes hard disk

GAME-PLAYING HINTS

- Before you enter the mines (in single or multiplayer), customize your controls to your liking; this is critical for fighting enemies. DESCENT II supports most major joysticks and lets you customize the buttons; it allows full keyboard customizing, too. You want to be able to strafe (look forward while moving left or right) easily while moving forward or using the strafe to form a circle (facing the target and firing) around a target.
- You'll also want to set up the weapon priority list in advance. During multiplayer mode, use markers to monitor areas. They're great for setting up ambushes and locating and spying on your enemies in large levels.

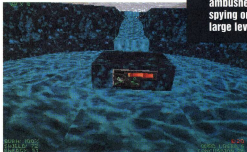


With its multitude of multiplayer options, *Descent II* puts the competition to shame.

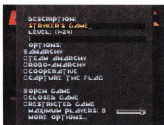


The energy-gobbling, spiral-of-death helix cannon is an excellent party crasher.

needed to pummel your ship to death? No more, because you can now customize the multiplayer games completely, removing the weapons/objects you don't want and keeping those you do want. Players can even leave up to two markers—static cameras to watch what's happening in other areas—which are great for setting up ambushes.

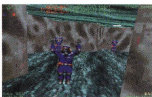


Shooting switches is often the key to unlocking doors and secret areas.



there's even a floodlight you can use. The detailed robots are more imposing than in the original *Descent*, and some take up considerable room.

From the ominous rumbling of the helix cannon to the deep blasts of the gauss gun, *Descent II's* sound effects are plentiful and among the best I've heard in any action game. If you don't have a good MIDI sound card, then this game is as good a reason as any to pick one up; it features new mine-rocking tunes



that will have you thumping your foot while you squeeze the trigger.

Although *Descent II* is easily a better single-player game than the first *Descent*, it's the multiplayer options that really shine. As with the original *Descent*, you can play modem-to-modem or up to eight players on a network. But remember how annoying it was when your opponent picked up invulnerability and pro-

The team play has also been ramped up, including the new "capture the flag" game and the option to let other players join a team game already in progress; there's a restricted mode that allows you to easily block out someone you don't want to join and to let only friends enter. This is especially good for playing over the Internet through network emulators such as KALI.

What really stands out about *Descent II* is that the designers at Parallax listened to their customers, customized the gameplay and heeded good suggestions; other game companies should take note. The result is that you gamers who completely lost yourselves in *Descent* in single-player, multiplayer, or both, will want to return to the nearest store and enter the mines again; *Descent II* will take you to new depths in action gaming.



Wavy red doors designate secret levels that you can visit.

DESCENT II

GENRE: action.
CONTENTS: maniacal robots, tons of guns and modem/network play.
HITS: improved light-sourcing, customizable multiplayer games, improved flight engine.
MISSSES: similar to the original game.

LAST WORD: *Descent II* retains the excellence achieved in the original game and manages to go a couple of steps further, a must for action-based fans.

OVERALL 10

\$ Value 10

Originality 7

Playability 10

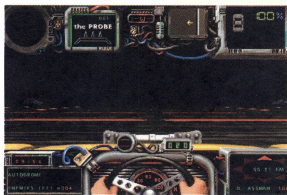
Graphics 9

Music 10

Sound FX 9

Road Warrior

It isn't mentioned anywhere on the box or in the manual, but GameTek's latest entertainment fiesta, *Road Warrior* (can't they get sued for using that name?), is a sequel to their 1994 driving/shooting game, *Quarantine*. This is probably an intentional omission, because *Quarantine* was wretched, and a wise omission, because *Road Warrior* is 83.759 times more enjoyable.



(I've recently taken to using algebraic formulas to determine fun ratios.)

Road Warrior continues the adventures of Drake Edgewater, the disgruntled cab driver of *Quarantine*, who has escaped the hellhole of Kemo City and ventured into the apocalyptic wasteland outside the city walls. Naturally, it ain't long before Drake wanders into trouble and needs to use his booze-addled wits and his cab's arsenal of weaponry to stay alive.

Road Warrior presents the player with a series of loosely related missions in a variety of locations scattered across the land, starting with a "Killduel" inside an Autodrome teeming with bloodthirsty fans (some of them shouting such encouragement's as "Kick his ass!"), and moving on to cities, farmlands, factories and, ultimately, the fortress just outside Kemo City, as you end up where you started.

Before each mission, one of the game's many completely insane characters gives you a map and a summary of your objectives—along with several hilarious comments: *Road Warrior* is stuffed with nutty, smutty humor that players will find either disturbing or (as in my case) rather amusing. Bad example: in the Killduel, your opponents' names include D. Assman, M. Hunt and I.P. Freely.

During each mission, you drive around and destroy enemy vehicles on the ground and in the air with machine guns, missiles, mines, flamethrowers and, my personal fave, retractable spikes that can be used to rather gruesomely dispose of any pedestrian stupid enough to blunder into your path. Thanks to a hefty number of enemies and strict time limits, the missions are short but intense. *Road Warrior* really isn't that hard, though; most missions can be finished in three or four tries, and you

GAME-PLAYING HINTS

- To keep better control of your car, tap the accelerator instead of holding it down, and slow down as you take the curves to avoid an always-embarrassing loss of control.
- Use the T key to target important enemies, and focus your aggressive tendencies on them. Don't use the postal-worker method of attack—shooting at damn near everything—because it wastes ammo and precious time.
- Cycle through your enemies on the mission map screen by pressing the left and right arrow keys. When you exit the map, your cab's wayfinder is locked onto the last enemy you looked at.
- Ram enemy vehicles to damage them a little and slow them down before you open fire.
- Some missiles have a longer reload time than others. Don't shoot the long-reload variety when you need to fire a load of missiles in a short time.
- Use the different gameplay views in certain situations. The full-screen "bumper" view is great against airborne baddies, for example.
- Here's a level-skipping cheat for those of you who like to run good games: when starting the game from MS-DOS, enter the command line RW 985VXIM F7. During the game, press F7 to skip ahead one level.

TECHBOX



List Price: \$49.95

Media: compact disc

Developer: GameTek

Publisher: GameTek, 2999 N.E. 191st St., Ste. 500, Aventura, FL 33180; 305.935.3995

Min. system req:

IBM PC 486 SX, 33 MHz
2X CD-ROM drive
MS-DOS 5.0
SVGA graphics card
8 megabytes RAM
1 megabyte hard disk

Road Warrior is the sequel to the awful *Quarantine*, but it's miles better than its gag-inducing parent in every conceivable way: gameplay, graphics, music and story.



Thanks to a hefty number of enemies and strict time limits, the missions are short but intense.

can save your progress at any time. Above-average players should jam through this game faster than Bill Clinton scarfs a Big Mac.

Road Warrior lets you play in normal or low detail in VGA or SVGA, and all these modes play more smoothly than George Foreman's head on my 133-megahertz PC. (Yes, I recently upgraded my feeble 486/66—please save your shrugs of indifference until the end of the review.) There don't seem to be many frames of animation for the enemy vehicles or the pedestrian bumper-fodder, but everything moves so briskly that you rarely notice. The background details of the various locations are excellent; from the urban decay of Flagg City to the

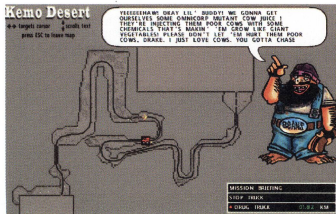
green farmland of Mutton County, you're always looking at something new.

Road Warrior's musical selections—an eclectic mix of power-chord rock, techno and even a hillbilly tune—are played directly off the CD, but they're sufficiently grungy-sounding to make me think they were sampled loops, until I popped the *Road Warrior* disc into my stereo and determined that the tunes were straight off the CD. The sound effects do the job—weapons make adequate booms and bags, pedestrians scream satisfyingly when smacked—but that's about all.

Your yellow cab is outfitted with everything from ramming spikes (great for impaling those damn pedestrians) to homing missiles.



Road Warrior is a far better game than *Quarantine*, but it suffers from a few minor flaws that place it smack-dab in the "pretty good" category. This is a perfect rental, because you can beat it in a couple of days. If you don't have that option (which is the case here on Maui; I can almost see your tears of sympathy), remember that rather wise saying: he who smelt it dealt it. Oh, and that other wise saying: try before you buy. (What? I can't drop the occasional completely immature gastrointestinal joke? Jim Carrey makes 20 million bucks a picture doing the same thing!)



Peter Armstrong drew the artwork for *Road Warrior's* still-picture intermission sequences and the prologue-stuffed comic book included with the game. The boy has talent.

ROAD WARRIOR

GENRE: action.

CONTENTS: car combat, bizarre humor and a post-apocalyptic world.

HITS: easy to jump right into and play.

MISSES: missions are far too simple; you can get through them in a few tries.

LAST WORD: an overall enjoyable action shooter, but if you're looking for intricate gameplay, you won't find it; for fans of twitch reaction-style games.

OVERALL **7**

\$ Value **7**

Originality **6**

Playability **7**

Graphics **8**

Music **6**

Sound FX **7**

Whiplash

Software developer Gremlin has "a thing" for unconventional racing games. Last year's *Slipstream 5000* featured aircraft racing through dangerous air space. Though Gremlin's latest release, *Whiplash*, returns the player to the more familiar realm of auto racing, thanks to the game's insane courses, the action is anything but ordinary.

Tracks names such as Tsunami Twister and Free Fall give you a hint of the madness you'll be asked to navi-

...a correctly timed nudge can send another car shooting off a ramp and into a wall at 150mph.

gate. The gentlest of the courses merely feature numerous banked turns and mild jumps that make you lose control and smash into barricades. But the game doesn't get interesting until you've successfully driven through a corkscrew ribbon of roadway that leads you into a towering 360-degree loop, or you've flown off a twisted ramp that makes your car spiral through the air as it crosses the chasm, while you wonder whether you'll land on the wheels or the roof.

Forget reality and physics; these courses are the stuff little boys dream of when they run their Hot Wheels™ track down the staircase with



a double loop through the living room followed by a death-defying jump over the couch. Thanks to a very good 3-D graphics engine, however, *Whiplash* lets you suspend your disbelief long enough to enjoy the rush of the wild ride.

Unfortunately, to really enjoy the game, certain graphics trade-offs have to be made. *Whiplash* features a beautifully detailed hi-res SVGA graphics mode, but you'll need a sledgehammer of a PC to use it for anything but replays. When using the SVGA mode on my 100MHz Pentium, I could only get an acceptable frame rate and marginal control if I reduced the screen size by 50 percent. Preferring bigger, faster action,

appointing.

Whiplash offers eight cars (plus a few hidden ones) to choose from; each comes from a different "manufacturer" and has its own unique performance and handling char-



acteristics. The specs for the cars vary considerably, but the cars themselves seem to be of the same polygon form with different bitmap graphic "panels" to simulate different looks, from the headlight configurations to the rocker panel air scoops.

When selecting a car to race, durability is a key factor to consider (as well as the usual acceleration, cornering, etc.). With 16 cars on the course, a little bumping is to be expected, but *Whiplash* takes it a bit further by condoning the destruction of opposing vehicles. Though the cars don't have any weapons per se, it's easy to use a track's features as such; for

TECHBOX



Price: \$59.95

Media: compact disc

Developer: Gremlin Interactive

Publisher: Interplay Productions, 17922 Fitch Ave., Irvine, CA 92714; 714.553.6655

Website: <http://interplay.com>

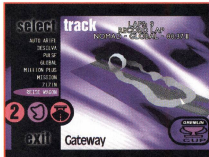
Min. system req:
IBM PC 486
MS-DOS 5.0
2X CD-ROM drive
8 megabytes RAM
16 megabytes RAM (under Windows 95)



I shifted back to the standard VGA mode, and though the graphics are good, after seeing the SVGA graphics, I found the pixelated display dis-

example, a correctly timed nudge can send another car shooting off a ramp and into a wall at 150mph. A damage meter keeps you apprised of your vehicle's condition, but the smoke pouring from your hood will probably be the first indication of trouble. It's a good idea to head for the pits when the smoke gets way to flames, or the next hit could make your car explode into a fireball.

Whiplash includes several multi-player modes. Two players can go head-to-head on a single PC via the split-screen view, or you can link two PCs together using a serial cable or modem connection. If your company doesn't have an using their network for gaming (after hours only, of course), up to 16 human players can compete at once. Players can pair up and race as teammates, blocking or taking out other cars to help their fellow driver out. Surprisingly, Interplay doesn't require you to buy 16 copies of the game for network play; though every machine that will be used needs to have had the game installed, only one PC needs to have the game disc in its CD-ROM drive.



There's often more than one way to get around the track.



Whiplash is an entertaining arcade racer that, thanks to its imaginative tracks that result in fantastic stunts, stands out in a crowded genre. The game even includes an instant-replay system that uses multiple camera angles and a full-function editor for saving your favorite highlights. Its only downside was its annoying, repetitive music, but since I could turn it off via the options screen, it didn't affect my overall rating for the game. If you're looking for fast action without the complexities of a simulation, be sure to take *Whiplash* for a test drive.

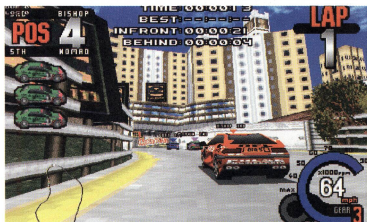


Check your speed before jumps and loops.

GAME-PLAYING HINTS

- Be sure to press the accelerator as soon as you see the track: If you wait for the green light, you'll fall so far behind the pack that you'll never catch up.
- When using a joystick, configure your accelerator and brake to the joystick buttons rather than "up" and "down," because these two functions don't make much use of the varying analog input. This will also make it easier to brake while turning.

Watch your damage meter when you start to see smoke.



WHIPLASH

GENRE: action.

CONTENTS: fast cars (but sadly no fast women), ramps, jumps, smashes, crashes, spills and thrills.

HITS: the multi-player modes are excellent; there's enough support for up to 16 players.

MISSSES: after extended play, the music becomes repetitive.

LAST WORD: purely an action-based racecar game that's best when played against human opponents. The stunts set this game apart from other racing sims.

OVERALL **8**

\$ Value **7**

Originality **8**

Playability **8**

Graphics **8**

Music **5**

Sound FX **7**

Wing Commander IV: The Price of Freedom

The latest trend in PC gaming is to add more cinematics, but unfortunately, game length is often sacrificed in the process. *Wing Commander III* was perhaps the best combination of gaming and full-motion video to date, primarily because the cinematics complemented the gameplay and, with over 30 missions, game length wasn't compromised.

At the time, *WC III* was also one of the most expensive games; it had a \$4 million budget to cover its extensive full-motion-video sequences. Its space-combat engine was also the best-looking around,



and there are many more cinematics to watch—approximately six CD-ROMs worth, to be exact. But unlike *WC III*, *WC IV*'s cinematics take their toll on gameplay; for example, the game can be finished

In *WC III*, the actors were filmed against a green screen (usually, a blue screen is used, but the actors wore blue uniforms). This allowed the backgrounds to be interwoven with the actors, rather than having to use real sets.

Virtually all the "sets" in *WC III* were merely well-designed graphics. Chris Roberts—the designer of the *Wing Commander* series—wanted more of a movie-like feel for *WC IV*, and real sets allow more freedom in moving the camera around, panning, etc.

Considering how much money was spent on filming, it's no small wonder that the emphasis is on the movie segments rather than the gameplay. If you look at the back of the *WC IV* box, you'll notice that of the 12 screen shots used, only four are from actual gameplay: two are cockpit views, and the other two are external ship shots. The remaining eight screen shots are all cinematics. *WC IV* is also the first computer game to have advertising trailers shown in theaters before movies.

Fortunately, most of the cast returns in *WC IV*: Mark Hamill as Colonel Blair, Malcom McDowell as Admiral Tolwyn and Tom Wilson's enjoyably egotistical Maniac. *WC IV* gets off to a rather slow start (it takes a couple of

Fortunately, most of the cast returns in *WC IV*: Mark Hamill as Colonel Blair, Malcom McDowell as Admiral Tolwyn and Tom Wilson's enjoyably egotistical Maniac.

with detailed SVGA graphics (as long as you had a 486/100 or Pentium-based machine to handle them smoothly).

WC III was a breakthrough; *WC IV* is more of an upgrade. The full-motion-video quality has been notably improved,

within eight hours. Also, remember *WC III*'s \$4 million budget (a mere year ago)? *WC IV* manages to "one-up" it with an astounding \$12 million budget. The reason? Real sets were used.

TECHBOX



List price: \$59.95

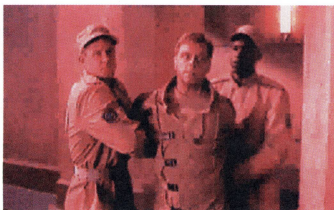
Media: six compact discs

Developer: Origin

Publisher: Electronic Arts,
1450 Fashion Island Blvd.,
San Mateo, CA 94404-2064;
415.571.7171

Website:
<http://www.ea.com>

Min. system req: IBM PC
486, 66MHz
8 megabytes RAM
24 megabytes hard disk



Security wrestles an angry Mark Hamill off the set after he's learned that Chris Roberts has someone else in mind to play Colonel Blair in a *Wing Commander* movie. Just kidding, Mark!



CDs before it really gets going), but it then builds momentum toward a satisfying ending. Actually, I should say "endings," because during the game, you're given an opportunity to defect to the "other side," and that would obviously result in the other ending.

LucasArts' *X-Wing/TIE Fighter* games are still more dynamic because they include a more fluid space-combat engine and other events during the missions, including transports that pick up comrades and then jump out, etc. *WC IV*'s engine is basically the same as *WC III*'s—no real improvements; that's not to say it's bad.

WC III's engine is very well done, but it does mean that most of the missions are "go to this navpoint; kill them; go to the next navpoint; kill them" type of missions, which don't rival the diversity of LucasArts' games.



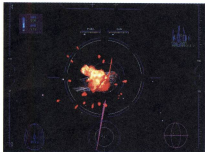
Even more endearingly obnoxious than before, Tom Wilson returns as the egotistical hot-head manic.

Aboard the carrier, the interface has been slightly improved. You still make minor decisions, direct the outcome of conversations and sometimes affect how other crew members will react to you throughout the game. But the best improvement is the map. In *WC III*, you had to wander about the ship, looking for others



to talk to before jumping into the next mission. *WC IV*'s map lets you go immediately to various ship locations; it even points out

who you need to talk to before you can enter the briefing room, and it shows the optional conversations.



Increase your weapon power level, switch to full guns and synchronize them for maximum damage bursts.

Though *WC IV* is not that ground-breaking or original among space-combat simulators, the bottom line is that unless you dislike space-combat simulators intensely, you'll probably want to pick up *WC IV: The Price of Freedom*. This time around, for optimal performance, you really need a Pentium, 16 megs of RAM and a quad-speed CD-ROM drive. *Wing Commander IV*'s primary drawback is its length, and if that is one price you're not willing to pay for enhanced full-motion video, then the *Price of Freedom* may be too high for you.



As in *Wing Commander III*, you can choose which ship and armament you think best for each mission.

GAME-PLAYING HINTS

- Before you jump to your first navpoint, adjust your power levels to increase your gun recharging rate. If you suffer major damage, temporarily increase your shield recharge to force the shields to regenerate faster, then set it back to combat mode when you're fully shielded. During combat, assign your wingman/wingmen their targets, so you don't all converge on one target (unless it's a large capital ship).
- Aboard the carrier, don't try to tick everyone off. Your crewmates will remember you in a bad way if you don't treat them with respect, so deal out verbal abuse only when it's really called for, not just because you had a bad day at work and got stuck in traffic on the way home.

WING COMMANDER IV

GENRE: action.

CONTENTS: space combat, interactive cinematics and two possible endings.

HITS: plenty of new missions, and you can now go directly to them.

MISSES: the game engine in *Wing Commander IV* is virtually the same as its predecessor's.

LAST WORD: this is more a set of new mission discs than an actual new game. If you're new to this series, you'll find *Wing Commander IV* very enjoyable.

OVERALL **8**

\$ Value **7**

Originality **5**

Playability **9**

Graphics **9**

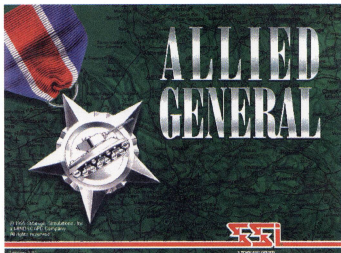
Music **9**

Sound FX **8**

Allied General

As the sequel to the best-selling *Panzer General*, Strategic Simulation's *Allied General* has quite a reputation to live up to. Surely the question burning in every wargamer's breast is: Is *Allied General* as good as *Panzer General*? I'd like to answer that with an unequivocal yes, but I can't; *Allied General* is good, but it can't touch *Panzer General*.

That's not to say that *Allied General* isn't a well-designed World War II-era wargame; on the contrary, it's one of the

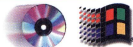


***Allied General* allows you to don the helmet of a World War II military commander and direct the actions of the fighting units under your command.**

of "core" units through a variety of game missions. The strategy you adopt will depend largely on the uniform you're wearing: American forces have weaker armor, but they compensate with a plentiful supply of high-quality combat aircraft. Conversely, the Soviets lack an effective air force and must rely on massed artillery and numerical superiority. All three campaign games are challenging, though fighting the war with the Red Army is arguably the most difficult task, because the Soviets are sorely tasked against the smaller (but more skilled) German armies.

If you'd rather not be confined to a campaign game, you can play one of nearly three dozen stand-alone scenarios; for example, you can raise the tattered banner of the German army as you struggle to halt the onslaught of Allied forces into the

TECHBOX



List price: \$60

Media: compact disc

Developer:
Halestorm/Strategic
Simulations Inc.

Publisher: Strategic
Simulations Inc., 675
Almanor Ave., Sunnyvale,
CA 94086; 408.737.6800.

Website:
<http://www.SS1online.com/>

Min. system req:
IBM PC 486 DX2, 66MHz
Windows 95
8 megabytes RAM
1 megabyte SVGA graphics
card
2X CD-ROM drive
Sound-Blaster-compatible
sound card



Fight the "Big One" in North Africa, Western Europe, or Russia.

best wargames of the year. Like its predecessor, *Allied General* allows you to don the helmet of a World War II military commander and direct the actions of the fighting units under your command. If being forced to command goose-stepping Nazis in *Panzer General* gave you a bit of moral indigestion, you'll be pleased to hear that the jack-

boot is now on the other foot: in *Allied General*, the three included campaign games can only be fought from the point of view of American, British, or Soviet forces. As with *Panzer General*, campaigns involve shepherding a group



Fatherland. Once you're tired of besting the computer-controlled opponent, you can use *Allied General's* handy play-by-email (PBEM) feature to swap saved games with a worthy flesh-and-blood adversary over your favorite online service. There are some nice graphic touches, too. For example, the game interface changes to reflect the nation you're fighting for: the hammer and sickle are teamed



with spare design elements on the Soviet side, while the American player is treated to a brighter, art-deco-style interface.

Unfortunately, *Allied General* falls on its own grenade on a number of key points. The interface feels stiff and unwieldy compared with

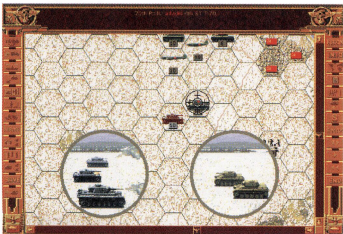


Buying a new tank: how much is that Tiger II in the window?

Panzer General, and it lacks the smooth map-edge scrolling of the original. Some of the static segue artwork looks as if it was hastily thrown together at the last minute, and a few game missions don't seem as well-designed and coherent as their counterparts in *Panzer General*.

Finally, the haughty German commander in *Panzer General* who gave you your missions with a heavily accented sneer has been replaced by a bland, humorless narrator. Why couldn't a cigar-chomping CO in the tradition of "Blood 'n' Guts" Patton have been added to snarl *Allied General* gamers into submission?

I can't say that *Allied General* is a great game, but it should definitely spark the interest of any wargamer who's interested in the period. Nevertheless, it falls a bit short of reaching the lofty wargaming heights that *Panzer General* commands. However, if you've been itching to fight the "Big One" from the Allied point of view, you may be able to overlook the aforementioned glitches and dive into this game with abandon.



German and Soviet tanks battle it out on snow-covered terrain.

GAME-PLAYING HINTS

- SSI has promised a number of program patches to fix a variety of shortcomings and bugs found in the initial 1.0 release of *ALLIED GENERAL*. Version 1.01 is currently available, and it provides map-edge mouse scrolling and other refinements. Version 1.10 will be the next patch, and it should fix glitches in e-mail play and other features.
- You can find the latest *ALLIED GENERAL* patch on CompuServe (Game Publisher's A forum, SSI file library), America Online (Keyword: SSI) and on the SSI website (<http://www.SSionline.com/>)

ALLIED GENERAL

GENRE: strategy/wargame.

CONTENTS: Spitfires, goose-stepping Nazis and the Red Army.

HITS: almost as addictive as *Panzer General*; players can fight from the Allied perspective.

MISSES: a more disjointed mission design and awkward interface than in *Panzer General*.

LAST WORD: *Allied General* doesn't live up to the legacy of *Panzer General*, but it's still an excellent wargame.

OVERALL **7**

\$ Value **7**

Originality **6**

Playability **7**

Graphics **7**

Music **NA**

Sound FX **8**

Return Fire



For PC game players, Windows 95 hasn't really lived up to the advanced hype that surrounded the new operating system. Touted as the best thing for gaming to hit the PC since 256 color VGA graphics, so far, few good titles have taken advantage of its new game-related features. But now, with the release of Time-Warner Interactive's *Return Fire*, Windows 95 owners have reason to rejoice.

Its straightforward concept and easy-to-learn controls make the gameplay instantly addictive...

A true Windows 95 game, *Return Fire* supports the new Direct Draw, Direct X and Direct Audio APIs, allowing a nearly perfect conversion of the classic 3DO console game.

The premise of this military action/strategy contest is pretty simple: invade enemy territory, capture the enemy's flag and return it to your bunker. To complete your objective, you have four types of vehicles to use—all with their own strengths and weaknesses. The helicopter is your quickest means of travel and is the only



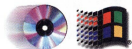
vehicle that can destroy enemy mines. Its powerful rockets can annihilate an enemy gun turret with just two shots. The helicopter's main weakness is its limited armor; direct hits will quickly impair your control and inflict heavy damage.

For ground assault, you have a tank and an armored support vehicle (ASV). The tank is faster than the ASV, and you can rotate its turret

360 degrees while it's moving. But the ASV is more heavily armored, its shots inflict more damage, and it's the only vehicle that can lay mines.

The final vehicle in your arsenal is the jeep. Quick and highly maneuverable, it's the only vehicle that can carry a flag (the enemy's or yours). The jeep doesn't have weapons, but its driver can throw grenades. The jeep has no armor, so the first hit is its

TECHBOX



List price: \$49.95

Media: compact disc

Developer: Silent Software Inc.

Publisher: Time-Warner Interactive, 675 Sycamore Dr., Milpitas, CA 95035; 408.434.3700

Website: <http://www.interplay.com>

Min. system req:
IBM PC 486, 66MHz
Windows 95
8 megabytes RAM



Return the flag to the bunker and you'll see a historical "victory" video clip.

GAME-PLAYING HINTS

- Use the helicopter for reconnaissance and to find the flag; don't try to go toe-to-toe with the enemy, because the helicopter has only light armor.
- Use the ASV and tank to clear a path to the enemy flag for your jeep. Remember that in two-player contests, the ASV can lay mines, so surround your flag bunker with them. If the enemy finds your flag, get into your jeep ASAP (even if it means destroying your current vehicle as the quickest way to the bunker) and move your flag before the enemy returns in his jeep.
- Use your radar; always keep moving; and—as the Baron says—practice, practice, practice!
- If you haven't done it already, be sure to download the QuickRes tool from Microsoft's PowerToys World Wide Web page: <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/software/powertoy.htm>

With a single mouse click, this cool gizmo lets you change color depth and resolution without exiting and reloading Windows 95—very handy when you usually work in high-color modes but want to play a 256-color game.



Use the tank and ASV to destroy turrets and clear the way for the jeep.

last; if you lose all eight of your jeeps before you capture the enemy flag, the game is over.

All vehicles carry limited amounts of ammo and fuel. The ground-based vehicles can re-arm and refuel at enemy supply depots or at your bunker; the helicopter can "refortify" only at the bunker. Every vehicle has a console (shown in the bottom third portion of the game window) that displays the radar, remaining ammo and damage meter.



Return Fire includes over 100 missions. Each starts with a map of the entire game area that shows how large the combat area is, whether there are multiple "islands" connected by bridges, and where the enemy flag towers are. Only one tower contains the enemy's flag; the rest are decoys. The radar in your

vehicle only displays enemy troop movement in your immediate vicinity, but you can always go back to the bunker to view an updated mission map at any time.

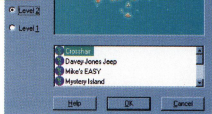
Return Fire is a great game for a variety of reasons. Its straightforward concept and easy-to-learn controls make the gameplay instantly addictive, and the increasing difficulty of the missions keeps the challenge high. The classical music themes, such as "The Ride of the Valkyries" for the helicopter (shades of *Apocalypse Now*), create an incredible atmosphere that gets you completely absorbed in your mission—as do the digitized sound effects of mechanical whirring and thunderous explosions.

The graphics and animation are cartoony but first-rate and add an element of comedy to the battlefield. If you blow up an enemy barracks, for example, you'll see tiny soldiers flee for their lives, the braver souls hurling grenades at you as they retreat. One of the sick pleasures of *Return Fire* is the sound of "squishing" as you roll over helpless soldiers with your tank, leaving a smear of blood in your wake.

The game is played from an isometric three-quarter overhead perspective, and the viewpoint is constantly zooming into and out of the action,



Discover the enemy flag and hear the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's "Messiah."



following the speed of your vehicle. If you're screaming along in the jeep, the camera pulls back, giving you a better view of your surroundings, but if you're plodding slowly along in the tank, the camera will zoom in close so that you can appreciate all the graphics, especially the highly animated explosions!



Return Fire is good as a single-player game, but it truly shines in its two-player, split-screen mode. Nothing beats the thrill of discovering your buddy's well-hidden flag or destroying the bridge his tank is crossing and watching the vehicle sink into the ocean. The two-player mode also adds several gameplay opportunities, including retrieving your flag from the enemy's jeep and hiding it in a variety of unique ways, such as casting it out to sea. With its unique blend of action and strategy, combined with superb graphics, animation and control, *Return Fire* is a showcase game that no Windows 95 gamer should be without.

RETURN FIRE

GENRE: action/strategy.

CONTENTS: classic gameplay and classical music; enough guns, bombs, missiles, explosions, bloodshed, destruction and mayhem to satisfy any defender of freedom.

HITS: easy to figure out and play.

MISSSES: graphics are a bit cartoony.

LAST WORD: based on the old "capture the flag" game that you played in grammar school, *Return Fire* is a pure breath of fresh air. Fun for all gamers.

OVERALL **9**

\$ Value 9

Originality 8

Playability 9

Graphics 8

Music 9

Sound FX 9

Space Bucks

Sierra's *Space Bucks* begins with a nice animated sequence that shows a space freighter loading up, taking off and then defending itself from pirates. It sets the stage for this "conquer the galaxy" genre strategy game, which concentrates more on trade economics than combat. But as you play, you may find yourself wishing for a little more fighting after all.

The concept is a good one, if not terribly original. You start with a company, some money, a star port and a ship. To win, you must become the master trader in the galaxy by competing against three companies run by computer AI

Whether you're losing or winning, if you want to finish the game faster, you can engage in foul play. This includes hiring saboteurs or pirates, bribing politicians and slandering competitors.

(no multiple-player options). The path to riches is on the path to the stars, and by sending negotiation teams to neighboring planets, you can purchase contracts for star-port access. Then you can begin to shuttle goods between the planets.

After playing a number of times, I realized the winning strategy was to build a comfortable income, then to simply gain star-port access to as many planets as I could. Once you gain access, a planet is basically protected from competitors, so winning becomes a simple matter of fencing in your opponents. When you begin to overtake them, it is difficult for them to stop you and vice versa. When you reach such points in the game, it takes real dedication to want to keep playing.

Unfortunately, that's the whole gist of *Space Bucks*.



Trading with five alien races sounds interesting, but since you hardly interact with them, they all seem like faceless automatons.

There are other details: some planets require specific types

shares because, for some strange reason, they were always doing well. In any event, you can't take over a company by buying all its shares and acquiring its assets; instead, when you manage to buy 51 percent of a company, the company will be liquidated, and its star ports will be opened for negotiations again.

The stock market isn't the only strange thing: your primary income comes from cargo transport. The planets in the game have different needs and products, and that's good, but on the other hand, your ships won't carry any cargo beyond one planet in its

of goods to satisfy contractual agreements, and there are random events, the planetary



customer satisfaction index, maintenance levels, security levels, construction of new ships and the stock market. Sadly though, these details don't have a major impact on the game, and sessions evolve into a series of rote actions that go on for hours.

There's a stock market, but in the games I've played, few companies needed to issue



route. In other words, if your ship is on a planet with plenty of chemicals and exotic pets, and the next two planets need chemicals but no pets and no chemicals, respec-

TECHBOX



List price: \$54.95

Media: compact disc

Developer: Impressions

Publisher: Sierra, 3380 146th Pl. SE, Suite 300, Bellevue, WA 98007; 206.649.9800

Website: <http://www.sierra.com>

Min. system req: IBM PC 486 DX, 33MHz SVGA graphics card 2X CD-ROM drive Windows 3.1 8 megabytes RAM 8 megabytes hard disk



tively, then despite orders to load both, your ship will pick up only the chemicals. Then on the next stop, it will make money for selling the chemicals, but on the final leg of the route, you could land empty-handed, rather than with fuel from the first leg.



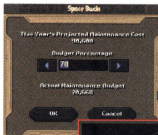
You can upgrade old ships and buy new ones, but you don't control how quickly new technology is developed; it happens at preset times.

You can avoid this predicament by using multiple ships and routes, but you must manually build these routes and cargo configurations. There's no way to assign your ship captains an overall "catch-all" such as, "Load everything you can, and sell it where customers will take it on the route." With a large network of star ports, managing routes becomes very tedious.

Finally, the combat is the very opposite of tedious and a lot like the combat in *Exploration*: brutally simple. The only conflicts are with pirates. Choosing to fight displays an animated sequence

that depicts your out-combat. There's no detail to combat at all, and the results are either absolute victory or utter defeat. Even with superior weapons, I lost many skirmishes and learned that paying off the pirates was often the best way to save ship and cargo.

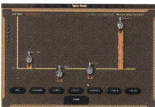
And that brings us to the people who hired the pirates: your competitors. Whether you're losing or winning, if



Space Bucks runs in Windows 3.1 and Windows 95. Crisp SVGA graphics and pop-up windows provide access to all functions.

Despite its many details, *Space Bucks* is a tedious play. Dealings with other races are reduced to simple relationships between specific alien needs and products, and there's little interaction with the competitors and aliens. Pretty graphics and repeated video sequences aren't enough to generate personality. There are better galaxy-conquering games than this, even if they do embrace combat more.

you want to finish the game faster, you can engage in foul play. This includes hiring saboteurs or pirates, bribing politicians and slandering competitors. Call me a despot, but after being backhanded by some of these gutless tactics, I didn't want to mudsling back; I wanted to declare war—which *Space Bucks* doesn't allow.



GAME-PLAYING HINTS

- Start slowly so you don't fall into a large debt. Once new ship drives are invented (which extend your reach), hire extra negotiation teams to contract as many planets as you can. Grabbing low-tech-level planets ensures low prices and friendly contract terms.

SPACE BUCKS

GENRE: strategy.

CONTENTS: malls, toxic wastes and board meetings.

HITS: plenty of details and good combat sequences.

MISSES: lackluster, tedious playability.

LAST WORD: aesthetically pleasing to the eye, but when it boils down to playability, it falls short by a longshot.

OVERALL **7**

\$ Value **6**

Originality **6**

Playability **7**

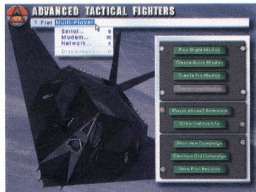
Graphics **8**

Music **6**

Sound FX **6**

Advanced Tactical Fighters

Over the years, PC owners have had many opportunities to take to the skies in various flight-combat simulators. Those who wanted hard-core realism took off in Spectrum HoloByte's *Falcon 3.0* (and the upcoming *Falcon 4.0*); those who didn't want to worry about every key performing a function could blast their way through other less realistic/intensive flight-combat simulators, such as *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat* and the *Jetfighter* series.



as realistic) *TFX-2000*. Basically, the engine is a minor updated *U.S. Navy Fighters* engine, so if you've played *USNF*, your learning

Whether you want to create your own mission, fly a single mission, or blast into campaign mode, *Advanced Tactical Fighters* lets you choose your fighter and its armament. There are two campaigns: in one, you fly missions over Egypt in an attempt to restore the government; in the other, you fly missions over Russia to defend the new government.

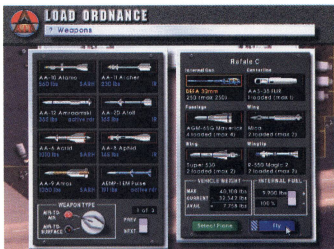
Unfortunately, the VGA flight graphics are nothing stellar—noticably less detailed than *U.S. Navy Fighters*. Enemy jets are identifiable by their graphics, but aren't much more than that. When zooming low over the landscape, trees are nothing but simple two-dimensional graphics (a green triangle on top of a brown square). For the most part, cities are flat bitmaps that warp considerably when you fly in close. In other words, the graphics aren't great, and they do detract from the realism.

Whether you want to create your own mission, fly a single mission, or blast into campaign mode, *Advanced Tactical Fighters* lets you choose your fighter and its armament.

What separates *Advanced Tactical Fighters* from most other jet combat simulators is that it was designed jointly by Electronic Arts and Jane's Information Group—a premier international defense-industry publisher. Though *Advanced Tactical Fighters* doesn't take as long to learn as *Falcon 3.0*, it isn't a jump-into-flight-without-reading-the-manual type of game, either. And as is to be expected from a combined effort of Electronic Arts and Jane's Information Group, the manual is fairly hefty—filled with gameplay instructions all the way to flight physics.

Although *Advanced Tactical Fighters* lets you play with some of the latest jets, its engine isn't as graphically appealing as those of other advanced jet-flight simulators, such as the gorgeous (yet not

curve in *Advanced Tactical Fighters* will be very short; you'll blast into fiery campaigns in no time.



A myriad of arms will fulfill your destructive urges.

TECHBOX



List price: \$59.95

Media: compact disc

Developer: Electronic Arts

Publisher: Electronic Arts, 1450 Fashion Island Blvd., San Mateo, CA 94404; 415.571.7171

Website: <http://www.ea.com>

Min. system req: IBM PC 486, 33MHz
2X CD-ROM drive
8 megabytes RAM
30 megabytes hard disk



An external pan of the F117A during a night-based mission.

The sound effects are adequate and what you would expect. The music, which intensifies dogfights or diving on a ground target, adds more to the enjoyment factor.

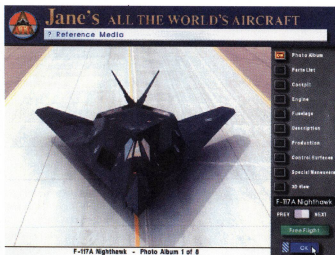
Still, the most important part of a flight-combat simulator is the actual flight model itself. All the realism factors are in place, and you can definitely test the limits of the many advanced jets that *Advanced Tactical Fighters* offers. You can also give your wingmen commands, turn on autopilot and enable time compression to speed up getting to the action.

Probably the most noteworthy addition to *Advanced Tactical Fighters* over *U.S. Navy Fighters* is that you can now play via modem with a friend, or with up to eight players total on a network. Artificial intelligence only goes so far,

and it's easy to look past the graphics when you're dealing with human opponents.



In addition to the single missions and campaign modes, *Advanced Tactical Fighters* has an extensive aircraft reference guide complete with highly detailed SVGA digitized images of the various fighters, including parts, cockpit shots and other pertinent data. Another menu covers the other vehicles you'll encounter in the game.



The aircraft reference serves as a useful database—everything from pictures to plane parts.



Study your mission objectives carefully so that you'll arm your fighter appropriately.

GAME-PLAYING HINTS

- This is a fairly realistic flight-combat simulator, so you'll have to read some of the manual, no matter how fast you want to get airborne and into heavy-duty combat.
- Study your mission objectives carefully, so that you'll be able to choose the proper armament for the mission. For example, if it's mostly an air-to-ground strike mission, you won't need a fully equipped fighter armed only with air-to-air missiles.
- When you enable the time compression, watch your radar carefully. You don't want to end up blasting into combat and being shot down before you can even disable the compression.

ADVANCED TACTICAL FIGHTERS

GENRE: flight-combat simulator.

CONTENTS: F-117A Night Hawk, B-2A Spirit, campaigns and modem/network play.

HITS: high level of realism, intricate manual and plenty of options.

MISSES: graphics engine is not on a par with some other flight sims; a refresh of *U.S. Navy/Marine Fighters*.

LAST WORD: *ATF* is targeted at diehard flight-sim aficionados. The mission editor guarantees play longevity, but if you're looking for groundbreaking technology, you won't find it here.

OVERALL **7**

\$ Value **7**

Originality **5**

Playability **9**

Graphics **7**

Music **8**

Sound FX **7**

Top Gun: Fire at Will



The sounds of "Danger Zone" blasted out of the speakers and carried me back 10 years to the motion picture *Top Gun*. The vocalist is not Kenny Loggins, but the relatively unknown and extremely talented Mary Elizabeth McGlynn. When you hear this theme, you'll feel transported into the seat of an F-14 Tomcat.

Contrary to the impression created by (the movie) *Top Gun*, the Tomcat is not a great dog fighting machine. It has earned a reputation as a beyond-visual-range fighter

The game has instant-action, campaign and multiplayer modes. Instant action varies from the easy turkey shoot to the many challenging enemies.



engines and a slightly enhanced flight model.

The interface has many of the refinements of most flight simulators and a full range of 52 keyboard-activated commands and support for the most popular joysticks. There is even a patch available for the FX-VR headset, but foot pedals are not supported. The 10 views include the popular invisible cockpit, a padlock and a virtual cockpit.

The game has instant-action, campaign and multiplayer modes. Instant action varies from the easy turkey

shoot to the many challenging enemies. The campaign mode follows three pilots (Raven, Stinger and the main character, Maverick) through 44 missions divided into four theaters: Top Gun school, Cuba, Korea and Libya. The multiplayer feature supports up to 16 players and four teams in competitive and cooperative modes via network, phone and null modem with a full, type-in communications function to taunt enemies.

This game is hard. And with limited difficulty options, it will be nearly impossible for



with extremely deadly, 70-to-120-mile range AIM-54, fire-and-forget Phoenix missiles. The Spectrum HoloByte designers have taken the basic design of the plane and refitted it with higher-powered

Use the "T" key to lock up the target in the virtual cockpit view to simulate keeping an eye on the bandit during dogfights.



those without extensive flight-simulator experience. There's no "invincible" mode, and unlimited missiles are available only in the earlier missions. Spectrum HoloByte admit that their best tester needed two weeks of constant flying to finish the game, while another still completes missions successfully only 25 percent of the time.

Simply increasing the mis-

TECHBOX



List price: \$51.99

Media: compact disc

Developer: Spectrum HoloByte

Publisher: Spectrum HoloByte, 2490 Mariner Square Loop, Alameda, CA 94501; 800.695.4263

Website: <http://www.holobyte.com>

Min. system req:
IBM PC 486 DX, 66MHz
8 megabytes RAM
30 megabytes hard disk
32-bit SVGA video card
2X CD-ROM drive



The easy-flight model only differs from the realistic model by having a max "G" of 8 rather than 7 for realistic and slightly more powerful engines.



sion difficulty levels to eliminate the complaint that the game is too short does not work. If the missions weren't so difficult, the game would take only 10 to 12 hours to complete. And though the game suffers from the lack of a mission editor and too few missions, starting this spring, Spectrum HoLoByte will make a new, instant-action mission available each month.

Characters have their own personalities supported by over 6,000 lines (90 megabytes) of some of the funniest and most lively dialogue in any flight sim to date. You just have to hear motor-mouth Merlin talk about flying nude and taunting the enemy to near-stroke-blood-pressure level to know how good the dialogue is. Stinger's wimpy personality and Raven's and Wolfman's aggressiveness is supported by missile loadouts, resulting in avoidance and aggression in flight.

More than 45 minutes of newly shot film and a cast of 20 actors headed by James Tolkan from the original movie enhance the game. The 20-minute video introduction and some exterior shots of planes are from the original film, or were shot on location at the Alameda Naval Air Station. The 17-frame-per-second video is not MPEG, but with a line-skipping technique, it provides near-video-quality short clips before and after each mission.

Only the F-14A—an air-to-

air superiority fighter—is available to fly in the game; players are not free to fly the F-14D fitted with its impressive weapons array. The less-than-faithful 360-degree radar functions much better than the real F-14 limited cone radar. The picture-in-picture roughly approximates the television camera set beyond the visual range identification system. But "groggards" will not be happy with the less-than-realistic instrumentation.

The hi-res, texture-mapped, 640 x 480 graphics emphasize details, such as the colors of planes and the moving vertical horizontal stabilizers, swept wings and flaps. Unlike *EF 2000*, which emphasized ground graphics more than plane, the ground is in lo-res, except on the higher-speed Pentiums on which high-res graphics don't impair the frame rate. Contrails even stream from wingtips in high-G turns.

In addition to pitting Maverick against enough planes to make a veteran ace bug out, Spectrum has added more sophisticated artificial intelligence than in previous flight sims. Enemy and planes constantly check their airspace for other planes and threats, preventing you from just slipping in behind them while they are attempting to get a gun-kill on your wingman. Computer-controlled planes work in teams to isolate and double-team individual opponents using eight variations of four basic tactics: bracket, drag

left, drag right and high-low split. Even novice enemies pose a challenge when they employ these tactics.

Aircraft carriers and missile boats do not just sit passively at the mercy of defenders and aggressors, but actively defend themselves with the phalanx gun and missiles. Even with the aggressors outnumbering the Tomcats in some of the missions, the aircraft carrier could have used support from a Ticonderoga-class missile cruiser.

I really enjoyed this game. It takes you back in time right into the '80s motion picture, with hairball dogfights and all the action that few F-14 pilots ever see. The downside is that novice players may die so often that their confidence will be shattered by the lethality of the missions. A mission editor, or more missions and a more realistic set of difficulty controls would have made the game more accessible to novice game players.

GAME-PLAYING HINTS

- Use the object viewer to locate guns on the airbases for recon missions and patrol-boat stratings. These missions are quite lethal, but guns only fire to the rear on patrol boats, and triple-A is missing on the same side of every airbase in the game. Take the recon pictures before you pass a target, while you approach from the side, without AAA. If you wait for the PIP to pop, pull to the left and bug out before passing over the target, you'll survive.

- Practice dogfighting with the instant-action, infinite-enemies mission, which starts with you versus a Tomcat "in the elbow" of a dogfight. This perfect position allows you to practice closing in for a shot.

- Trade altitude for position, let gravity increase speed and pull you around faster, then take a quick, glancing shot while turning, and finish off your weakened opponent. Damage affects enemies and friendlies accordingly, and that makes a partially damaged plane easier to finish off.

TOP GUN: FIRE AT WILL

GENRE: simulation.

CONTENTS: Tomcat, Fulcrum, Falcon, Hornet, Tiger and other wild beasts such as the Frigate.

HITS: *Top Gun*'s artificial intelligence is pretty sophisticated.

MISSES: the game's main drawback is that if you're a novice, it's incredibly difficult to play.

LAST WORD: though *Top Gun* might not be for newcomers to the flight-sim genre, it will satisfy sim purists. There are lots of extras, and the FMV breaks up the action.

OVERALL **9**

\$ Value **7**

Originality **9**

Playability **6**

Graphics **9**

Music **9**

Sound FX **9**

Angel Devoid: Face of the Enemy

It's painful to open your eyes, but it does mean you're alive—or possibly in hell? You open them fully to discover you're alive and lying on a "medical" bed, but you're breathing. You recall a high-speed chase when you blasted after the criminal Angel Devoid then wiped out. But now, on waking after reconstructive surgery, you find you have Angel Devoid's face.

So begins Mindscape's *Angel Devoid: Face of the Enemy*, a unique full-motion video game in which you play the part of Jake Hard, a police

Keep in mind that the game occurs in real time, and if you don't move fast, you'll soon be dead.

officer of the future pursuing the former police chief now turned criminal Angel Devoid. And having his face won't make your job any easier.

The manual fills most of its pages with details on Jake



Get used to this screen, because you'll see it a lot.

Hard: who he is and what led up to the chase. It's cleverly written, fast and enjoyable to read.

In the past, full-motion video games have mostly been strict shooters, much as the titles by American Laser Games and Digital Pictures. The only other FMV game that tried to break out of the this genre

was to be an interactive movie was Sony Interactive's *Johnny Mnemonic*.

Unfortunately, *Johnny* was crippled by an extremely poor interface, and ultimately, it wasn't much better than the movie—which isn't saying much.

Though *Angel Devoid* does have its share of shootouts, the overall action demands that you think and move fast, and there's

even a standard adventure game inventory system. Along the way, you'll speak with



around 20 people to gather clues and move along. Instead of the usual "click on all questions" type of interface, *Angel Devoid* uses an "attitude" approach—specifically devil, normal and angel skulls that depict angry, normal and a passive/sympathetic attitudes respectively. So if a thug with a big gun aimed at your head is complaining about his dear mother's ill health, which attitude do you choose?

Moving from place to place is accomplished by using the usual hot-spot interface. Drag the mouse cursor around until you see an exit you can use, and as long as you want to

TECHBOX



List price: \$59.95

Media: four compact discs

Developer: Electric Dreams Inc.

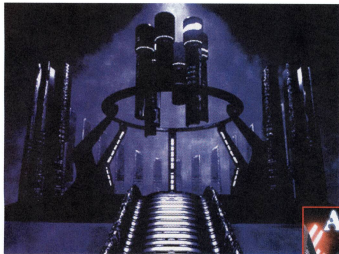
Publisher: Mindscape, 88 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945; 415.897.9900

Website: <http://www.mindscape.com>

Min. system req:
IBM PC 486, 66MHz
8 Megabytes RAM
1 Megabyte RAM SVGA
card
2X CD-ROM drive



When you call on her, your Personal Digital Assistant implant will offer advice.



leave by that route, simply click on it to proceed. Keep in mind that the game occurs in real time, and if you don't move fast, you'll soon be dead. Fortunately the response time is very good, provided you have a Pentium; a 486/66 really doesn't play the game very well at all.

Four compact discs make up *Angel Devoid's* world, and there are more than three hours of better-than-average video. For the most part, the acting is merely adequate, and at times, it looks too much like acting. The entire game involves acting, so this hurts the overall atmosphere. The music is fairly sparse; more

would have helped establish the atmosphere better. The computer-generated cinematics, however, are topnotch and very detailed.



Angel Devoid is still pretty short once you've solved it, and progress is really only accomplished by dying again and again and again—well, dying repeatedly—and when you only want to advance, the detailed death scenes become less interesting with each death. Overall, however, by concentrating on making a full-motion video into a game and not simply decorating a simple game with full-motion video, *Angel Devoid's* makers manage to keep in mind that players want to play, not just click once in a while and watch video; after all, who wants to buy a \$50 movie?



This psycho wants to sharpen his razor glove—on you.

GAME-PLAYING HINTS

- Remember: everything happens in real time.
- Drag the mouse around the screen to look for possible items, people, or exits, and choose them according to your situation. For example, if you know someone is coming to kill you from the right-hand door, don't exit that way.
- Use common sense, and remember which ways are lethal and which exits are safe.
- Death plays such a major role that you should save your game often.



Talk with everyone you can; if you don't, you'll miss clues you can build on.

ANGEL DEVOID: FACE OF THE ENEMY

GENRE: adventure.

CONTENTS: shootouts, puzzles, conversations, and plenty of deaths.

HITS: interesting plot and storyline.

MISSES: easily solved and mediocre character acting.

LAST WORD: *Angel Devoid* is best suited to those who are new to intermediate adventure. It strives to make interactive movies more *interactive* than just being ported FMV video segments.

OVERALL **7**

\$ Value **7**

Originality **9**

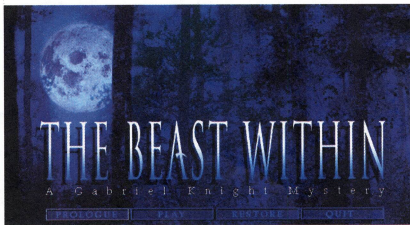
Playability **7**

Graphics **8**

Music **6**

Sound FX **7**

The Beast Within: A Gabriel Knight Mystery



Voodoo. If you never hear the word again, you won't mind. It all started with voodoo, and after solving your first case and publishing a fictionalized account of what happened, you thought you would lead a more or less "settled" life as a researcher/writer...until the local townspeople began banging on your door, asking you to look into the wolf murders.

So begins *The Beast Within*—sequel to the popular *Gabriel Knight: Sins of our Fathers*. This time around, you won't find Tim

Curry voicing Gabriel Knight, although he was great; like most games nowadays, Sierra has taken the bigger budget, full-motion-video approach.

The gameplay is very similar to Sierra's earlier title *Phantasmagoria* in that it uses a hotspot interface that highlights whichever items can be examined, used, or picked up. Not surprisingly, most of what takes up the game's six compact discs are the full-motion-video sequences.

Hotspot interfaces are a drawback because they make games such as *Phantasmagoria* and *The Beast Within* easier; after all, you just drag the mouse cursor around the screen and wait for it to light up; that significantly cuts down on puzzle-solving. With that in mind, *The Beast Within*

steps into Gabriel Knight's haunted shoes and brings a fair amount of humor and roguish charm to the role; he's definitely better than your average CD-ROM actor. During parts of the game, you also play Gabriel Knight's assistant, Grace Nakimura, played by Joanne Takahashi. She's quite capable, but at times, she sounds as if she's reading more than acting. The rest of the supporting cast doesn't fare quite as well, but the storyline is good, and that's essential in an interac-



Though *The Beast Within* warns that it contains mature sexual themes, you'll definitely see hotter action on prime-time TV. The same goes for the violence and language, which are definitely no worse than that on TV.

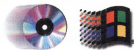
is best categorized as an interactive movie in which the player acts as the catalyst that advances the storyline.

Fortunately, the full-motion-video sequences are well-produced. Dean Erichson



Dean Erichson replaces Tim Curry as Gabriel Knight.

TECHBOX



List price: \$59.95

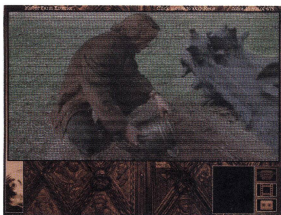
Media: six compact discs

Developer: Sierra

Publisher: Sierra, P.O. Box 85006, Bellevue, WA 98105-8506; 206.644.4343

Website: <http://www.sierra.com>

Min. system req: IBM PC 486, 33MHz
Windows 95
2X CD-ROM drive
8 megabytes RAM
17 megabytes hard disk



Nothing like pouring in a little cement to preserve that special paw print.

tive movie game.

The video quality is slightly disappointing; in terms of resolution and quality, it's no better than Sierra's previous games, and this detracts from the cinematics. Graphically, however, *The Beast Within* is very sharp, although it's not quite on a par with *Phantasmagoria*. The music complements the Gothic atmosphere, but often, it's too quiet.

As in *Phantasmagoria*, you move from chapter to chapter to complete the game. Each chapter has a certain number of puzzles, items and people you need to deal with before you can move on to the next one.

Though *The Beast Within* warns that it contains mature sexual themes, you'll definitely see hotter action on

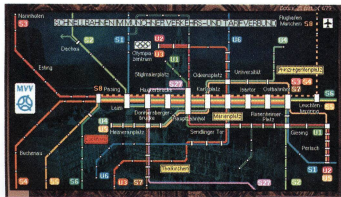
prime-time TV.

The same goes for the violence and language, which are definitely no worse than that on TV. Whereas *Phantasmagoria* deserved its 17+ "mature" rating because of a disturbing and unnecessary rape scene (plus a few cheap gore sequences), *The Beast Within* is much tamer—surprising when the subject matter is werewolves.



It's not the wolves you're worried about; it's the werewolves.

Overall, *The Beast Within* is a better game than *Phantasmagoria*. The pluses include the enhanced interface, higher production values, more convincing acting and no cheap thrills. If you enjoyed the first *Gabriel Knight*, then you'll probably want to check out *The Beast Within*. Unless you don't care for the fact that it has turned into more of an interactive movie than the original game; then you could find yourself howling at the moon.



Whenever you take to the road in the car, a map pops up that shows you where you can go, even if you've already been there.



GAME-PLAYING HINTS

- **THE BEAST WITHIN** uses a chapter-to-chapter style of gameplay. This is a puzzle game, so examine every room thoroughly. With the hotspot interface, simply drag the mouse cursor all over the screen and click whenever it highlights something. Be sure to look at, pick up and use items; if you get stuck, experiment.
- Some items can be merged with other items in your inventory. For example, if you had a staple remover and an envelope stapled shut, you could use the staple remover to open it. Every time you pick up a new object, compare it with other items you have in your inventory, and check to see whether a possible use between two of them is possible.

OVERALL **8**

\$ Value **7**

Originality **8**

Playability **8**

Graphics **8**

Music **6**

Sound FX **8**

THE BEAST WITHIN: A GABRIEL KNIGHT MYSTERY

GENRE: adventure

CONTENTS: puzzles, werewolves, Gabriel and Grace

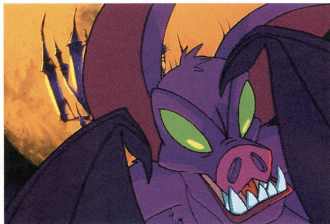
HITS: improved character acting; higher production values.

MISSES: unlike the original game, this is more of an interactive movie.

LAST WORD: though the gameplay is similar to *Phantasmagoria*'s, there is no real improvement of the graphics and playability. Also, don't expect this game to be anything like the first title.

BrainDead 13

When a presumably quick tech job at a local castle offered itself, you figured it would be easy money. The climb up the rocky cliffs and jagged path leading to the ominous abode would ordinarily have changed your mind, but not *this* time. After all, anyone who lives in a castle has to have some serious bucks. Even after meeting Mr. Meat-Hooks-for-Hands Fritz—whose undercoat sports an impressive arsenal of weapons that would make even Freddy Krueger cringe—you still went



Ah, nothing like a routine tech call to a foreboding, dark castle.

Welcome to *BrainDead 13*, where any wrong step will be your last step as you play Lance, the computer tech out for a few extra bucks, whose agenda suddenly changes when he has to save the world from impending doom.

in for the job. It wasn't until you met the evil Dr. Neurosis (who's bent on world domination) that you realized things were going badly. Worse yet, you probably wouldn't be paid.

Welcome to *BrainDead 13*, where any wrong step will be your last step as you play

Lance, the computer tech out for a few extra bucks, whose agenda suddenly changes when he has to save the world from impending doom. From the designers of such classic arcade twitch games as *Dragon's Lair*, *Dragon's Lair II* and *Space Ace*, *BrainDead 13* is ReadySoft's most original twitch game in a while.

What exactly is a twitch game? *BrainDead 13* plays exactly the same as ReadySoft's other offerings, specifically in the sense that the animation happens in real time, and to save Lance's life and advance in the game, you have to time his actions just right. If you react too slowly or move the wrong way, you'll be braindead in no time. That's the definition of a twitch game.

Naturally, gameplay is limited to up, down, left, right and the space bar for performing various actions. If you see a path to the left and you're being pursued by Fritz from the right, it doesn't take a

TECHBOX



List price: \$49.95

Media: compact disc

Developer: ReadySoft

Publisher: ReadySoft,
3375 14th Ave., Units 7 & 8,
Markham, Ontario, Canada
L3R 0H2; 905.475.4801

Website:
www.readysoft.com

Min. system req:
IBM PC 486 DX, 33 MHz
4 megabytes RAM
1 megabyte hard disk
2X CD-ROM drive



Fritz is Dr. Neurosis' primary henchman, and he desperately wants more of you—preferably in many pieces.





brain surgeon to realize you should move left. Fortunately, *BrainDead 13* gives you unlimited continues (no more quar-



You play the computer-turned-world-saver Lance, who must stop the nefarious Dr. Neurosis and escape.

ter-popping here), so you're more than up to the task.

Whether you're being sliced and diced by festive Fritz (who enjoys his job a little too much, I might add), or you're running like mad down the hallway, the animation is very well-detailed. Of course, to have the animation

play reasonably well, you'll need a minimum 486-66 with a double-speed CD-ROM, but the best performance (like every other game out there) requires a Pentium and a quad-speed CD-ROM.

The inherent disadvantage of not playing on a Pentium is that when the animation turns choppy, it's very difficult to time moves and guide Lance through the game. Consequently, the playability suffers drastically if your computer isn't beefed up for the task.

From Fritz's mad incoherent ramblings to Dr. Neurosis' sinister deep voice, the sound effects and voice acting are very well-done—something that's vital in a game of this nature where atmosphere is everything. The music also helps to enhance the game, giving a nice booming score when the action is heavy.



It really all boils down to whether or not you're a fan of twitch games such as *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace*. If you aren't, don't bother with *BrainDead 13*, because it is specifically an arcade twitch game like its predecessors and has nothing really new to offer. Like *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace*, once you've memorized the movements, the game isn't very long. Of course, if you enjoy twitch games, you'll definitely want to shake Fritz's meat hook and dance wildly through the cavernous hallways of *BrainDead 13*, because the animation and playability are easily on par with *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace*.



She's beautiful and has a great figure, but she has eyes (and teeth) only for your neck!

GAME-PLAYING HINTS

- Following *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace*, *BrainDead 13* requires precise timing and reactions if you're to guide Lance through the various trials. The key to moving Lance lies in studying each room and the directions the dangers arrive from. For example, if you have monsters charging you from the left, right and top of the screen, it's fairly obvious that you need to go down.
- Though not everything is that simple (far from it), remember what works and what doesn't. If going left doesn't work, try going right, then down, then up, etc. It may be trial by fire, but more than anything else, getting through *BrainDead 13* really just requires that you memorize moves.



BRAINDEAD 13

- GENRE:** adventure.
- CONTENTS:** evil brain, Fritz, cartoon violence.
- HITS:** amazingly beautiful graphics and animation.
- MISSES:** controls too simplistic; little thought required to play game; not very engaging.
- LAST WORD:** if you're a fan of *Dragon's Lair*-style twitch games, this game is for you; if you aren't, avoid it.

OVERALL 7

- \$ Value** 7
- Originality** 6
- Playability** 7
- Graphics** 9
- Music** 8
- Sound FX** 8

Curse of Dragor



Spiders, headless mummies and giant ants aren't the only things that will kill you. This plant packs one hell of a punch.

To truly understand and appreciate a role-playing game takes a certain type of person—someone who has patience, arcane knowledge, a taste for intrigue and most important, imagination. Such a person should have a yen for distant worlds filled with elves, goblins, clerics, sorcer-



What a motley-looking crew. Out of these 16 wretched souls, four will act as your team.

one of those few. Although I'm intrigued by all types of computer games and have an imagination as vast as the

With Domark's latest release, *Curse of Dragor*, the typical role-playing game (RPG) takes on a slightly new look. Domark has aimed their guns not at the diehard RPG enthusiast, but at the millions of graphic-adventure fans lost out there in computer gaming land. Did they hit their target?—not exactly. Though *Curse of Dragor* is an intriguing game that puts your wits and reflexes to the test, it ultimately misses the mark; it relies too heavily on its RPG backbone, and it's less than entertaining.

**Things are going great in this jolly old place
until one dark day, the evil Prince Dragor
decides to return....**

ers, warriors and thieves. Only a select few can feel at home in such strange and wondrous places; unfortunately, I'm not

solar system, my level of comfort with role-playing games is next to nil.

TECHBOX



List price: \$49.95

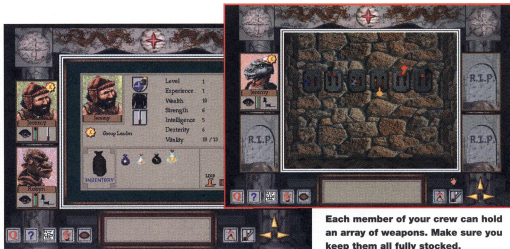
Media: compact disc

Developer: Banshee Software

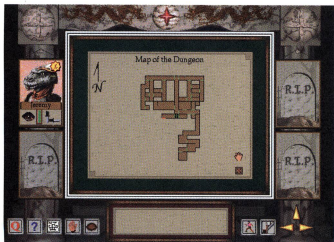
Publisher: Domark Software Inc., 1900 S. Norfolk St., San Mateo, CA 94403; 415.513.8933.

Website: <http://www.domark.com>

Min. system req:
Macintosh 68030, 33MHz
8 megabytes RAM
2X CD-ROM drive
25 to 30 megabytes hard disk



Each member of your crew can hold an array of weapons. Make sure you keep them all fully stocked.



Its story centers on the land of Xorinth and its peaceful inhabitants, which include King Meridian and the Hexaemeron Council. Things are going great in this jolly old place until one dark day, the evil Prince Drago decides to return (he was banished years earlier for trying to overthrow the King). Mad as hell, Drago curses the land and turns the once lush Xorinth into a barren wasteland. Now the fate of the land lies in your hands, as you must try to lift the curse that took the life out of this place.

The game takes place inside a giant castle that Drago calls home. But don't worry; you won't have to venture in by yourself. Prior to entering this wretched place, to represent your party, you'll choose four characters (there are 16 to choose from), to whom you'll assign attributes and occupations; you can be joined by a wizard, cleric, warrior, thief, scholar and alchemist.

Once your party is geared and ready, your adventure truly begins. The game is told in first-person perspective, in which you use three arrow keys (forward, left and right) to maneuver through the castle. You'll assign a leader to the group who will do most of the fighting. As you walk through this pit, you'll come across many things, including giant ants and spitting flowers, which you'll have to defeat by hitting your space bar repeatedly. You'll also come across journal passages and scrolls that will provide clues to some of the tasks you'll encounter. Also, you'll have to pick up many things along the way, including weapons, food and as much healing potion as you can carry.

As far as adventure games go, *Curse of Drago* isn't atrocious, but nor is it thoroughly engrossing. There's enough

combat and intrigue to entertain any patient gamer for hours. It has a creepy feel that keeps you wondering what lurks one step in front of you. Plus, it's an adventure done in such a way that you are constantly searching for clues, potions, passages, keys and other things that keep your mind on the game. Along the way, you'll find locked doors and gates that you'll have to get through somehow: you can pick the locks, or find the control switches that open the doors if you hit the right combination. But as far as a lush gaming experience is concerned, *Curse of Drago* falls flat on its face.

For the most part, it's extremely dull. There are few sound effects (aside from the squeaks of spiders and ants as you attack them with your

sword), no music whatsoever and too few puzzles for a graphic adventure. *Curse of Drago* also suffers from forcing you to constantly keep your party in shape: rather than worrying only about your own health and inventory, you're responsible for four individuals, all of whom must be pampered. This means you must put them to sleep from time to time, give them healing potion, stick the weaklings in the lead so that they can earn experience points and so on. It's an arduous responsibility that becomes tedious after a while. Running around a castle looking for a bottle of Lazarus potion with which to save your dying scholar is not particularly exciting.

If you're looking for a graphic adventure along the lines of *Full Throttle* or *The Riddle of Master Lu*, definitely look elsewhere. *Curse of Drago* is a strange mix of RPG and graphic adventure that ultimately doesn't provide enough interactivity and sheer entertainment to make it a worthy investment. It keeps you in the game by leading you to believe that something really exciting will soon happen. Unfortunately, the thrills remain illusory.



CURSE OF DRAGO

GENRE: adventure.

CONTENTS: good, high-resolution graphics, some animation, potions, giant ants, spiders, mummies, knights, some puzzles and one big castle.

HITS: *Curse of Drago*'s only plus is its rich storyline.

MISSES: there are limited sound effects and no music. Also, the gameplay is extremely dull.

LAST WORD: unfortunately, *Curse of Drago* falls short of being a worthwhile product.

OVERALL **5**

\$ Value **5**

Originality **6**

Playability **6**

Graphics **7**

Music **NA**

Sound FX **4**

GAME-PLAYING HINTS

- You'll definitely want to take your time exploring the castle. You could hurt yourself running through the halls, so slowly walk through every room, and explore all the corners and walls.
- Keep ample amounts of healing potion on hand; you'll use it constantly. Also, keep switching the leader of your party. This will help boost the experience level of each team member.
- Oh, one more thing: your party needs rest, so put them to sleep from time to time!

Shannara

Decades ago, your father and his friends barely managed to vanquish the most dangerous, evil Warlock. But it turns out that the intervening years have only been a temporary respite; now, that same Warlock returns with a vengeance, and this time around, you'll have to deal with him. Thus begins Legend's *Shannara*, based on Terry Brooks' popular seven-book fantasy series.

Shannara follows in the footsteps of successful adaptations of other well-known fantasy novels into computer games. A few years back, Raymond Feist's rift-war came to life in Dynamix's well-

author will enjoy a game, its appeal will be limited.

Fortunately, *Shannara* focuses primarily on gameplay. Though the interface does not break new ground in the puzzle/adventure genre, there are a few bonuses that place *Shannara*'s interface in the "upgraded" category. For instance, a strong built-in "help" system allows you to easily pull up pertinent information as you need it. A



The mighty druid Allanon orders you to begin your quest.

Not everyone is out to join you; most want you dead, so with this group, you'll have to combat enemy forces of various sizes with brute force and magic spells.

six characters. Not everyone is out to join you; most want you dead, so with this group, you'll have to combat enemy forces of various sizes with brute force and magic spells.

Shannara's biggest drawback is the system requirements—specifically, the hard-disk requirements. Even though a 486-33 will run the game fairly well because it isn't graphically intensive, you're given only two installa-

designed *Betrayal at Kronor*, and most recently, Piers Anthony's never-ending-can-you-say-overkill *Xanth* series found its way into the PC gaming world in Legend's so-

Companions of *Xanth*. An important element of any game that's based on the work of a successful author is whether players need to be familiar with that author's work to enjoy the game. Clearly, if only fans of the

handy journal keeps track of current quests and important happenings and eliminates the need for note-taking. If you require some extra notes, you can enter your own in the journal, too. A subject index makes it easy to locate various text

items, and a very useful "find" feature searches the entire journal to pull up occurrences of any word you enter.

Combat also plays a role in the unsettling world of *Shannara*. As you progress through this world, you'll encounter various characters who will want to join you and form a group of up to



When you travel the countryside, *Shannara* reverts to a simple but effective overhead map.

tion types—minimal (3.5 megabytes) and full (107 megabytes). Even with today's common gigabyte hard disks, a compromise would have been better, because if you don't use the full installation, the game is unbearably slow, especially in combat.

Though the engine isn't anything new, the lush SVGA graphics are quite attractive. On the other hand, the animations are limited to non-interactive playbacks during combat and the old lips-moving-

TECHBOX



List price: \$49.95

Media: compact disc

Developer: Legend Entertainment

Publisher: Randomsoft, P.O. Box 10810, 14200 Park Meadow Dr., Chantilly, VA 22021; 703.222.8500

Website: www.randomhouse.com

Min. system req: IBM PC 486, 33MHz
2X CD-ROM drive
SVGA video card
8 megabytes RAM
4 megabytes hard disk

while-they-talk conversations—nothing notable.

From a surprised squawking bird to a yelp of pain when you're hit during combat, the sound effects are adequate, but more would have been better. The voice-acting, on the other hand, is professional and helps establish the characters (although the herbalist's pronounced Scottish accent and dialogue did seem clichéd).

Provided you have a reasonably good sound card, the general MIDI is also very good and helps to establish the



atmosphere. During regular gameplay, it provides a relaxing theme, and in combat, the music builds to add more intensity and strike a fairly

Legend has produced a solid and playable game.

Again, you don't have to be a fan of or even know Terry Brooks' work to enjoy *Shannara*—as long as you like puzzle games, that is. *Shannara* is a very competent adaptation, and it's sure to please adventure/puzzle gamers as well as Brooks' fans (although it's a tad short). As a bonus, Brooks' first novel, *The Sword of Shannara*, is included in the box (now you know why the box is big and heavy). *Shannara* blends puzzle, action, combat and plot into one of the better fantasy role-playing experiences I've had.

One of your first puzzles is to find out what made Menion ill and discover the antidote.

GAME-PLAYING HINTS

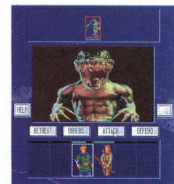
■ **SHANNARA** is divided into two elements: puzzle-solving and combat. While solving puzzles, you must examine each location thoroughly by running the mouse cursor all over the screen so you don't miss anything. Examining means looking, searching, taking what you can, showing and giving others what you have and talking with everyone who is willing to do so.

■ During combat, your primary concern should be Jak Ohmsford. Be sure to keep his health up, and retreat and defend when necessary. If he's knocked unconscious, you won't be able to give orders to the others, and combat will take a turn for the worse when you want them to concentrate on a single, strong foe. Often killing the leader of a group helps to hasten combat, too.



good balance.

I'm a fan of Brooks' work, and I do wish that *Shannara* were more epic in scope; it isn't as innovative and enjoyable as Dynamix's *Betrayal at Krondor*. Still,



During combat, you control Jak directly, but you can also order others to attack certain foes; otherwise, they'll choose their own action.



SHANNARA

GENRE: puzzle/adventure

CONTENTS: puzzles, combat and a novel

HITS: *Shannara*'s strong built-in "help" system allows you to pull up important information.

MISSSES: at minimal installation, *Shannara* is painfully slow.

LAST WORD: *Shannara* is a pleasant blend of adventure and puzzle, but not as innovative and enjoyable as Dynamix *Betrayal at Krondor*.

OVERALL **8**

\$ Value **9**

Originality **7**

Playability **8**

Graphics **8**

Music **9**

Sound FX **8**



NBA Live 96

I've loved basketball ever since I was a geeky pubescent because, growing up in Hawaii, where most of the residents are of teeny-tiny ancestry, even at a puny 6'1", I always got to play center or power forward. (Except for this one really sweaty kid who used to "slime" me every time he went for a lay-up.) So I naturally jumped—as high as a white boy can, anyway—at the chance to review *NBA Live 96*—a major overhaul of last year's quite entertaining *NBA Live 95*.

For those who missed *NBA Live 95* or just like to make me



NBA Live 96 has a mind-boggling 16 views of the court, although EA thankfully left out the planned "inside the ref's left sock" view.

dunks and heavily "tweaked" gameplay in which just about any NBA rule (all the

by a "Virtual Stadium" view of a whopping 16 viewpoints of the action, from a low-angle baseline-cam to a stratospheric sky-cam. Unfortunately, the graphic detail of the stadium and the players has suffered a bit to provide this viewpoint freedom; even in the SVGA mode—which is refreshingly speedy on a 486 and very slick on a Pentium—the player pixels are chunky and the "crowd" is an obviously flat texture map. There are still loads of nice graphic touches: most players are instantly recognizable—Horace Grant has his trademark goggles, Dennis Rodman has his Day-Glo haircut—and every menu screen has a gorgeous backdrop. You even get uncomfortably large close-ups of the players' mugs during the pre-game rundown of each team's starting five.

The gameplay has been left mostly untouched, and that's

...definitely worth buying even if you have *NBA Live 95*—
and easily the best PC basketball sim out there...

talk about old games, it was EA's conversion of the "engine" they originally developed for their hugely

way down to "three in the key") could be toggled on and off.

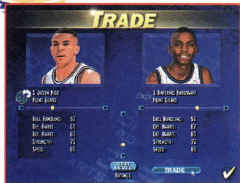
NBA Live 96's biggest and



Basketball was invented by Canadian James Naismith, and *NBA Live 96* was created by the developers at Hitmen Canada—coincidence? Actually, yeah, it is. (Apologies to Canadian-conspiracy buffs.)

popular line of basketball games for the Sega Genesis and Super NES. It had an angled overhead view of the action, a turbo button for bursts of speed, slow-motion

most obvious change is in its graphic engine: the angled overhead view has been replaced



TECH BOX



List price: \$59.95

Media: compact disc

Developer: Hitmen Canada

Publisher: Electronic Arts,
1450 Fashion Island Blvd.,
San Mateo, CA 94404-2064;
415.571.7171

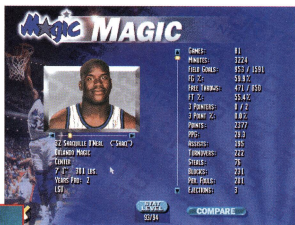
Website:
<http://www.ea.com>

Min. system req:
IBM PC 486 DX2, 66MHz
2X CD-ROM drive or better
SVGA graphics card
8 megabytes RAM
3 megabytes hard disk

a good thing. The controls are hillbilly simple; you use the joystick, mouse, or keyboard to move your players, shoot, block, pass and run the court in "turbo" mode. When you've mastered the basics, you can start learning fancy stuff such as post-up moves, give-and-go plays and

endorsing Taco Bell food (this blatant plug inserted in the hope that I can scam a lifetime supply of double-decker tacos!). New gameplay features in *NBA Live 96* include on-the-fly play calling, animated play diagrams that let you see exactly how they're executed and a coaching mode to let you mess around with your team's offensive and defensive playbooks.

The cacophony of changes continues with the new free-throw system; it has an animated crowd in the background of the "T-Meter" to make it harder to focus on the



ball. The rebounds are slightly more realistic, and the players knock one another around

more, especially in the key. Still too many missed dunks, though.

NBA Live 96's off-the-court options are also plentiful. You can draft, edit and trade any of the 300+ players in the game, or—in the game's keenest feature—roll your own player, adjusting everything from his height and weight to the hand he shoots with and the college he left after his sophomore year to pursue a multi-gazillion-dollar contract. You can play a full NBA season or an exhibition game, or jump straight into the playoffs. You can track, save and

print out player stats. You are a basketball god! Bwah, hah, hah! (Sorry! It's getting late and I'm getting punchy.)

Miscellaneous features I've thrown into this loose-ends paragraph include gobs of completely unnecessary full-motion video, new dunks (tip slams, power dunks), new one-on-one moves, new 3-D rendered courts, a goofy screen saver with NBA team logos, and two All-Star and four customizable teams.

NBA Live 96 is an excellent update of EA's engine—definitely worth buying even if you have *NBA Live 95*—and easily the best PC basketball sim out there, considering the weak competition (at least until GTE Entertainment's *NCAA Championship Basketball* hits the shelves).

GAME-PLAYING HINTS

■ Take advantage of your players' real-life strengths and minimize their real-life weaknesses. Don't try to turn 7'2" Shaq into a three-point shooter, or 5'3" Muggsy Bogues into an inside shooter; you're just asking for massive embarrassment and possible banishment from ever playing basketball games again.

■ In this game, blocking is very easy; even a big man can get snuffed if he tries to shoot with someone in his face. To shake your defender, use the tactics you try to use at the local court: shoot off screens, pass the ball around, or use the turbo boost to soar to the iron. Remember that excessive playing fatigues your player faster than regular-speed running.

■ There are two ways to play defense: stick with a single man, and let the computer run the rest of the defense, or switch from player to player as the ball is passed around. If you stay with one man, you can practice double-teaming the player with the ball, which is a risky defensive strategy, but effective if your player is fast enough.



NBA Live 96 includes all 29 NBA teams, including the league's newest (and worst) franchises, the Vancouver Grizzlies and Toronto Raptors. Two Canadian teams—coincidence? Yep, still is.

NBA LIVE 96

GENRE: sports.

CONTENTS: slammin', jammin' and gargantuan freaks of nature.

HITS: lots of great FMV, tons of play options and a highly playable game engine.

MISSSES: a little more difficult to see the ball than with its predecessor.

LAST WORD: a must on your list of games to buy even if you are not big on sports or basketball. *NBA Live 96* is truly a players game.

OVERALL **9**

\$ Value **8**

Originality **7**

Playability **9**

Graphics **8**

Music **8**

Sound FX **8**

NBA Jam TE

It dominated arcades as the reigning basketball king for years. Then it shot and scored on the home consoles, proving it wasn't just a passing fad. Now *NBA Jam Tournament Edition* has made its way to the PC market in an attempt to slam-dunk other PC basketball games. And, for the most part, with its crisp digitized images of professional basketball players making ugly shots and special moves, *NBA Jam TE* is easily the best arcade basketball to dribble down-court to the home PC. You're limited to two players max, either playing against each other or cooperatively two versus two. All the familiar sound effects, commentary and music are included. As with Acclaim's PC version of *WWF Wrestlemania*, a gamepad is the only way to go; the keyboard will make you look and play like a rookie. The key word for basketball fans is "arcade," however. Those seeking full team versus team action and season play will have to turn to other titles for realism. Still, for gratuitous arcade action, *NBA Jam TE* is great to play with a friend.

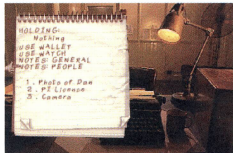


Price: \$49.95
 Genre: sports
 Publisher: Acclaim Entertainment
 Telephone: 516.759.7800
 System: IBM PC CD

OVERALL
 RATING
8

The Dame Was Loaded

What do you rely on when you need to solve a case? Luck? No, Anger—Anger, private detective, to be exact. In *The Dame Was Loaded*, you're Anger, as you move through full-motion-video cinematics interwoven with the game. Like most full-motion video games, *The Dame Was Loaded* suf-



Price: \$49.95
 Genre: puzzle/adventure
 Publisher: Philips Media
 Telephone: 310.444.6626
 Website:
<http://philipsmedia.com/media/games>
 System: IBM PC CD

OVERALL
 RATING
6

fers from some over-acting (or is it under-acting?), but this rarely interferes with the game itself. Like other games in this genre, the interface is limited; your main options are going from place to place,



grabbing and using clues and items and

talking with people. The graphics are topnotch, but they're basically just digitized images, and the cinematic quality is fair. Though the game isn't very long, there are several paths to choose, and they all result in different endings.



Full Tilt! Pinball

What separates *Full Tilt! Pinball* from most other pinball computer games is that it was published by Maxis and not the usual shareware route. This is surprising, because other shareware computer pinball games are more dynamic not only in board designs, but also in sound effects and music. There are three pinball tables, from the Space Cadet table (which was included on the *Microsoft Plus! Companion* for Windows 95) to the new Skulduggery and Dragon's Keep tables. The pinball table really only takes up half the screen; the other half is the title graphics and score. Unless you really enjoyed the Space Cadet table found on *Microsoft Plus!*, you'll probably want to save yourself \$30 worth of quarters.

Price: \$29.95
 Genre: pinball simulation
 Publisher: Maxis
 Telephone: 510.927.3900
 Website: <http://www.maxis.com>
 System: IBM PC/Windows 95

OVERALL
 RATING
6



Defcon 5

Defcon 5 is one of those games that tries to combine different gaming genres in a single product. Instead of limiting itself to being a first-person-perspective shooter, *Defcon 5* wants to make you think things through before you act with your guns. You must find items and uncover what's really going down with your corporation while avoiding deadly berserker robots and alien attacks. Though the first-person-perspective engine is very smooth, that's mostly because of its low graphics detail. Even though they can be customized, the keyboard controls are limiting (the jerky sidestep is very annoying), and the interface when tapping into the computer is unnecessarily confusing. Unfortunately, because of the poor documentation, so is most of what's going on in *Defcon 5*.

Price: \$49.95
 Genre: action/strategy
 Publisher: Nova Spring/Vic Tokai
 Telephone: 310.326.8880
 System: IBM PC CD

OVERALL
 RATING
6



Touché!

The Adventures of the Fifth Musketeer

You've always secretly dreamt of being a musketeer. Suddenly, before you can say *voilà*, *Touché!* gives you the chance to become the most famous, memorable and dashing fifth musketeer! Fifth musketeer? OK, so maybe Geoffroi Le Brun wasn't recorded as the fifth musketeer, but that's who you are in this comedic puzzle adventure. The above-average interface lets you left-click to go places, but by right-clicking on someone or something, you'll obtain an option menu that offers possible actions, seamlessly integrating the gameplay into the story. With its lush SVGA graphics, *Touché!* also looks better than most puzzlers. The voice-acting is great—especially Geoff, as the over-eager trainee musketeer—and the dialogue is sharp. If you're into comedies and enjoy puzzle games, you won't want to pass by *Touché!*

Price: \$49.95
Genre: puzzler
Publisher: U.S. Gold
Telephone: 415.693.0497
System: IBM PC

OVERALL
9
 RATING

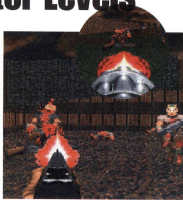


Doom II Master Levels

Price: \$39.95
Genre: action
Publisher: GT Interactive
Telephone: 970.522.1797
Website: <http://gtinteractive.com>
System: IBM PC CD

OVERALL
8
 RATING

You thought you had seen the last of the demon-spawned barons from hell. You thought wrong—very wrong, in fact. The *Doom II Master Levels* expansion features 20 brand-new blood-splattering, death-filled levels that await your itchy trigger finger. But if that isn't enough, there are over 3,000—yes, 3,000!—player-created levels. So if you have absolutely no life and want to put your *Doom* devotion to the maximum test, you can try to play through all of them. The 20 new levels are fairly well-designed and great for fulfilling more of your *Dooming* needs, but they aren't quite up to the caliber of the original *Doom* or *Doom II* levels. Still, the *Doom II Master Levels* provides diehard Doomers with endless opportunities for exploring new levels.



Silverload

You consider yourself the best bounty hunter around. When a distraught cowboy offers you half a grand to retrieve his kidnapped son from some hick town called "Silverload," you figure "Easy money"—until, that is, you reach Silverload. You play a bounty hunter who's trying to rescue the aforementioned son from a town of supernatural happenings, and along the way, you discover the place's dark



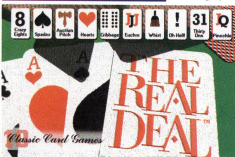
The Real Deal

Price: \$39.95
Genre: card-game simulation
Publisher: Mindscape
Telephone: 415.897.9900
System: Windows 95

OVERALL
9
 RATING

Mindscape's *The Real Deal* attempts to cut and pass other card computer games by offering 10 classic card games, including Auction Pitch, Crazy Eights, Cribbage, Euchre, Hearts, Oh Hell, Pinochle, Spaces, Thirty-One and Whist. Topping *The Real Deal* off is modern and network play—great for those of you who are forever losing card decks or can't find anyone to play against. The SVGA graphics are very sharp, and the

computer-controlled opponents (up to three) make humorous remarks, though they become repetitive in short order. Don't expect any real instructions on these card games; this isn't an instruction card game. Still, with its multitude of games and modern/network play, *The Real Deal* manages to shuffle in front of the competition.



secret. Though *Silverload's* graphics are vibrant, the rest of the game suffers from a poor interface. And the interface is one of the most important items in a puzzle game of any nature, so this definitely detracts from the overall experience. *Silverload*? No. Maybe copper.

OVERALL
6
 RATING

Price: \$49.95
Genre: puzzler
Publisher: Nova Spring/Vic Tokai
Telephone: 310.326.8880
System: IBM PC CD

by Kevin J. McCann

WarCraft II: Tides of Darkness

BLIZZARD FOR IBM PC CD

PART II

Vanquishing the Vile Orcs

I pray I'm not too late to assist you in our holy quest against the evil plague known as the orc horde. I am Sir Landreth, paladin of the highest order, and I humbly ask that you pay heed to my tactical advice to rid the land, once and for all, of this ungodly evil that threatens to destroy us.



General Starting Strategies

In each mission, there are basic guidelines to **set up** your **initial base** and **forces**. Rather than tiresomely repeat this for every mission, I'll tell you the best way to begin each one and cover other pertinent strategies that are effective against the horde.

At the start, most missions require you to **build a town** using your loyal, yet lowly, **peasants**. On most missions, you aren't pressed for time, and it's important to **create a small army of peasants** to **harvest lumber** and **mine gold**. During the **initial building phase** when you **construct facilities** and **amass your forces**—ground, sea, or air—you should have at least **four peasants harvesting lumber** and at least **six mining gold**. Most of your initial **farms** simply allow you to **create more peasants**.

A **useful peasant tactic** is their ability to **speed up** their **building times**. If you wish to have a **lumber mill** or another **structure built faster**, simply have **other peasants** come over and **repair the structure** being built. This will **decrease the time** needed to **build that structure**, while costing you merely a little gold and lumber.

Farms dictate how many **units** you can have at any

time, but if you have a **great hall** and a **barracks** with only one more unit available according to the **farms**, you can **create both a peasant and soldier**. When they arrive, you'll need to compensate with more farms, but this is a way of getting an extra helping hand earlier, which is sometimes useful.

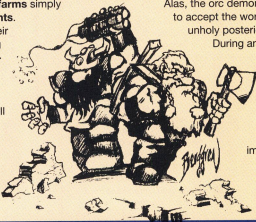


Warfaring Strategies

Alas, the orc demons can neither be reasoned with nor made to accept the word of our god. Thus, we must kick their unholy posteriors to the deepest pits of hell.

During any mission, it's **vital to upgrade your blacksmith completely** in both **attack and defense**. The **upgrades affect footmen, knights and paladins**, so it's well worth the effort and money. In the later missions, you should always **upgrade your ballistas** to their **maximum value**, too, although they aren't quite as important in the early missions.

As the **blacksmith is to land warfare**, the **foundry is to sea warfare**. Likewise, you should always **upgrade your foundry**





completely, both in attack and defense. This will make your **destroyers** and **battleships** both tougher in attack and defense, and it will give a little extra defense to your oil tankers and transports.

Early on, it isn't that necessary to **upgrade the lumber mill**—at least, until you can **create elven rangers**. The archers are never as good as **fully upgraded footmen, knights and paladins**, but **fully upgraded elven rangers** can **direct impressive firepower** at land forces, and the bonus is that they can fire at **airborne opponents** as well. Thus, until you can make them rangers, save most of your money for the **hand-to-hand combatants**.

When taking **transports to enemy shores**, always keep your **destroyers** and **battleships** very close by. A **good tactic** is to **lure enemies into your destroyer and battleship cannon range**. Take your **transport ashore**, but instead of unloading everyone, **unload a ballista**, let it take a shot, then **immediately** have the **ballista** board the **transport** again. The **enemies** will **come charging in** to be mowed down by **ship cannons**.



Last, but not least, **gnomish inventors** are vital to keeping **losses low** and **victories high**. After **upgrading to a keep**, you should always build a **gnomish inventor** and get some **gnome flying machines** into the sky to act as **forward scouts** for your troops. Keep the **gnome flying machines** out of **troll and enemy guard-tower range**, and let your **ground troops** follow the **gnome flying machines**, thereby avoiding any risk of ambush.

Act I. The Shores of Lordaeron

I. Hillsbrad

Objective: build four farms and a barracks.

Starting location: north center of map.

Group your three footmen and have them **patrol the entire map**, killing any **orcs** they encounter. Together, the three footmen are more than enough to take out all opposing

forces. Meanwhile, have your **peasants mine for gold and harvest lumber**. To the southeast of the map, there's a **second mine** that will give you more than enough to **build four farms and a barracks**.



II. Ambush at Tarren Mill

Objective: rescue a captured elven archer and return him to the Circle of Power.

Starting location: south center of map.

Imprisoned elves: northwest corner of map.

Group your seven

footmen and two archers and proceed **northwest**. **Overwhelm the orc** **counters and trolls** you encounter. Using your **two destroyers**, **clear out any orcs** **destroyers**—not necessary, but good practice for later. Make sure the



footmen and archers stick together.

Use your **troop contingent** to **destroy the walls** and **free the elven archers**, then **take them** back to the **Circle of Power** at the **starting location**, and have one step on it.

III. Southshore

Objective: build a shipyard and four oil platforms.

Starting location: north center of map.

Get your **peasants** moving—**mining gold and harvesting lumber**. **Build a barracks** and a **lumberyard**, then **upgrade your archers**.

Construct the shipyard due east of the **gold mine**, across from the **oil field** near your **destroyer**. **Build a pair of oil tankers**, **construct**



the **oil platform**, and start to **ferry the oil** to and fro. **Take a couple of footmen and archers** to **clear a path** to the other **mine** that's **southwest** of your **town hall**.

When funds and lumber permit, **make a fleet of six destroyers**; you have time, so you might as well use excessive force. **Group the destroyers** and **destroy** all the **orcish sea forces** you encounter, to **secure the sea** and to **pinpoint** the other **oil fields**. When the sea has been cleansed of **orc impurity**, **send oil tankers** to **build the three last oil platforms**.

IV. Attack on Zul'Dare

Objective: destroy the orc base.

Starting location: northwest corner of map.

Build a small army of peasants to **mine gold and harvest**



Stratego Guide

lumber. (There's no rush, so take your time.) **Construct your shipyard north of the town as well as the oil refinery and foundry.** There's an **oil field due north of the town.**



Upgrade everything, especially the blacksmith and foundry. Make six fully upgraded destroyers and take to the sea. **Clear all enemy sea forces,** then use the **destroyers** to take out as many **enemy land forces** as possible and pave a secure landing zone for your ground troops.



Now **load two transports,** one with **six archers** and the other with **six footmen,** and

take them to the cleared landing area on the southeastern island. This force should be more than enough to decimate the remaining orcsish demons and raze their base.

Act II. Khaz Modan

V. Tol Barad

Objectives: reclaim Tol Barad and destroy Dun Modr.

Starting location: southwest corner of map.

Tol Barad location: southwest corner of map.

Dun Modr location: northeast corner of map.

Send your gnomish flying machine to scout out the island due northeast. A small contingent of orcs and trolls needs our cleansing fury. **Load your transports with all your troops, and clear the island, retaking Tol Barad and building your town.** Remember to **upgrade the blacksmith completely** because in this mission, there will be a fair share of hand-to-hand.

Build the shipyard, oil refinery and foundry on the north-west side of the island, across from the western oil field. You don't have unlimited lumber, so **save the lumber mostly to build six upgraded destroyers.** After you've amassed your small armada, **head out to sea and wipe out all enemy**



forces; then use the **destroyers** to kill as many **enemy land forces** as possible.

More lumber and another mine can be found north of Tol Barad. Establish another **great hall and lumber mill** to mine and **harvest** each resource as needed. **Upgrade the great hall to a keep and build a gnomish inventor;** this allows you to scout areas with **gnome flying machines.**



After your **destroyers** have cleared a landing zone for your ground forces on the northeastern island of **Dun Modr,** take a **couple of transports with ballistas, footmen and archers to shore.** Before unleashing your own ground forces, use the **unload/load technique** to **blast their guard towers** and some **enemy ground forces** and make your job a little easier and safer.

VI. Dun Algaz

Objective: destroy Dun Algaz.

Starting location: northeast corner of map.
Dun Algaz location: southwest corner of map.



You'll want to **upgrade your great hall to a keep** as soon as possible. **Start mining gold and harvesting lumber** immediately, **building a small peasant army.** After **upgrading to a stronghold, build stables and the gnomish inventor,** and be sure to **upgrade everything at the blacksmith.** You'll primarily want **knights** for this mission, and you **won't need any shipyards.**

Before setting forth, **upgrade your knights** completely. Get some **gnome flying machines** into the air to **scout the area** before your **knights.** **Six knights** make a strong enough **scouting force.** **Another mine is due west, and a third mine is at the middle of the western end of the map.**



Attack Dun Algaz from the southwestern side, using the trees to blockade their troops while you **pummel their village with ballistas.** Have the **knights protect the ballistas,** then **ride in and finish off the orcsish blasphemers.**

VII. Grim Batol

Objective: destroy five oil refineries
Starting location: northwest corner of map.

Take your four knights and ride south, killing the orcs and taking over the three orc catapults in the process; then leave them at the **southern end.** For now, you'll want to protect these catapults at all costs. **Load your**

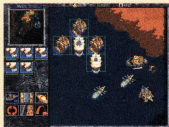


remaining dozen troops onto the transports, and proceed south until you find an area to the east where you can unload them. Take a free transport south and pick up the knights and catapults, proceeding to where you unloaded the others.

Backing them up with knights, archers and footmen, use the catapults to take out the cannon towers; be wary of catapult blasts, however. Keep your peasants out of the action.

To the northeast, you'll find the orc village, which you must first destroy before you can build your town hall and start mining the area. From here on, the rest of the mission is naval warfare, so don't bother with a blacksmith or upgrading your great hall; save all your money for building and upgrading battleships. Construct your shipyard, oil refinery and foundry within the inlet. An oil field is due east.

You have time, so upgrade your foundry completely. Finally, send five fully upgraded battleships out to destroy all enemy ships and oil refineries.



Act III. The Northlands

VIII. Tyr's Hand

Objectives: quell the peasant uprising, build a castle and destroy enemy forces.

Starting location: southeast corner of map.

No sea fighting here. Group the four knights and four footmen and proceed north, eliminating the rebel peasants. Ride past the buildings to take them over, then train more peasants to increase the flow of gold and lumber. Upgrade your blacksmith completely.

Build a barracks and upgrade your great hall to a keep. Build cannon towers to protect the area and a gnomish inventor to get some gnomish flying machines airborne to scout.

Last, but not least, you'll want to construct the stables so you can create knights.

The orc outposts are due west, northwest and north of your village. Upgrade your keep to a castle now. After upgrading to a castle, build a church and promote your knights to paladins. Research the healing spell.

Start with the western orc outpost, securing it from the southern end. Use ballistas to take out catapults and trolls on the other side, then destroy the wall and send in the paladins and kill the remaining orcs, trolls and ogres. After

securing the area, start mining the new settlement and set up cannon towers to protect it. Another barracks is a good idea, too. Also remember to have your paladins heal those in need.

Proceed north, destroying the outpost with paladins and ballistas. There's yet another mine here if you're feeling greedy and want to amass a huge force for the final orc outpost to the east.

IX. The Battle at Darrowmere

Objective: escort the Lightbringer to the Circle of Power at Caer Darrow.

Starting location: northeast corner of map.

Lightbringer's location: northwest corner of map.

Circle of Power location: southeast corner of map.

What you start with is all you've got. Use the gnome flying machines to carefully scout the full map. All you have to worry about are destroyers and troll ax throwers, so if you're careful, you shouldn't suffer much damage at all.

You really won't need to bother with any land battles, so leave your main contingent of trolls.

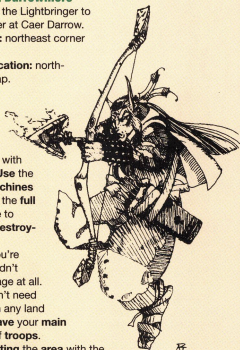
After scouting the area with the flying machines, bring down all your destroyers and battleships to the south side,

following the shoreline; the north shore has catapults and cannon towers, and you want to stay clear of their firing range. Continue southwest until you see the channel that branches to the northwest and leads to Lightbringer.

Bring down a transport now. Group a transport with a destroyer and send them northwest, with the transport in the lead. Pick up Lightbringer and his knights, then proceed southeast with the transport in the lead. Do not pause going either way, or Lightbringer will never again see the light of day.

Once you've managed to get Lightbringer safely through the cannon tower channel, take your destroyers and battleships into the southeast channel leading to the Circle of Power. Have them clear out the enemy ships in the southeast bay, then take your transport carrying Lightbringer swiftly into the bay.

Immediately sail him





to the southeast shore. Simply unload and have Lightbringer ride over the Circle of Power and complete the mission.

X. The Prisoners

Objectives: build transports at Stratholme; transport four Alterac traitors to the Circle of Power at Stratholme.

Starting location: northeast corner of map.

Prisoners' location: southeast corner of map.

You can't do anything with the southeastern location yet, so just concentrate on the northeast point. You have two mines—one immediately visible and another

directly north. Build your town, building pairs of cannon towers to protect against orc landing forces. Keep a small group of upgraded footmen to help the cannon towers defend the area. Upgrade to a castle, and build a church, promoting your knights to paladins, then research the heal spell.

There's an oil field due south where you can start ferrying oil. You'll want to build four fully upgraded battleships and take them west where the orc encampment lies. Use your battleships to clear the seas, and then take a troop of paladins and an upgraded ballista over. With your battleships near shore, use the ballista unload/load tactic to allow your ships to effectively cut down orc scum and reduce risk for your paladins.

Let your paladins loose, and finish off the village. Then bring over your peasants to build a new great hall and mine for gold. Be sure to have your paladins heal one another fully before proceeding onward.

You only have one more land battle left to the south



center of the map. Load your paladins and ballista back on the transport, and bring your battleships as backup. Secure the center area and bring your peasants over to start mining the new mine. Use a ballista to destroy the juggernaut on the other side of the waterway, then build a shipyard at the southeast inlet.

Build two pairs of battleships and a transport at your new shipyard. Send the first pair down to destroy as many cannon towers as possible. When the battleships are close to being sunk, retreat and send the other pair of battleships to finish the cannon towers leading to the prisoners.

Now take your transport down to the prisoners, taking six peasants and boarding them on the transport. Simply return the peasants to the Circle of Power at your starting location, and you've completed the mission.



XI. Betrayal and the destruction of Alterac

Objectives: free the mages and peasants and destroy Alterac. **Starting location:** southwest corner of map.

Back to pure land warfare.

Take five knights, four archers and two ballistas due north. Use the catapults to scout in advance, backing them up with soldiers. Have the ballistas destroy the enemy cannon towers, and use your knights and archers to kill enemy soldiers.



Free the peasants and wizards, and return south to build your village, harvesting lumber and mining gold.

Construct a barracks, a gnomish inventor and stables, and upgrade to a full castle. Get some flying machines airborne to scout the eastern area.

Build a church and mage tower. You'll want to upgrade everything. Research heal for the paladins and flame shield for the mages.

You'll want fully upgraded archer rangers, skilled in long vision, longbow and marksmanship.

Construct a few cannon towers to protect the area.

Casting a flame shield on a paladin going into heavy battle is good for damaging many opponents fast and especially good for destroying enemy catapults. Send a couple of



paladins and six elven rangers east; there's a mine protected by some archers and a dragon. Line the archers up vertically at a safe distance away, then send a paladin in to lure the enemy forces and dragon into your archer fire. The



archers will take care of the dragon and secure the mine area.

The best approach is to **attack Alterac from the south**. Short of the city, build a few guard towers and a cannon tower in close proximity. Bring in a few archers behind the towers, and use paladins to lure enemies to their deaths. Use ballistas to counter enemy catapults and destroy cannon towers. The mage fireballs are also good for weakening and destroying cannon towers. Have your paladins heal those in need and keep your body count low while you finish the mission.

Act IV. Return to Azeroth

XII. The Battle at Crestfall

Objective: destroy orc transports, oil derricks and all shipyards.

Starting location: southwest corner of map.

Immediately move your **gnome flying machine** past your battleships and destroyers to spot enemy submarines; if you don't, your ships will be defenseless. First, take over the island to the northeast, sneaking in with a force of paladins and ballistas aboard the transport.

Have your ballistas safely destroy cannon towers, and leave your paladins to clear out orcish scum. After securing



the area, transport a few peasants over, then build a shipyard, an oil refinery, and a foundry on the eastern side, near the oil field. Build a pair of cannon towers near your shipyard. Set up another great hall, and start to mine the new gold mine.

Next, you'll want to take over the island that's southeast of your newly acquired island. Construct a few fully upgraded battleships and circle the island to the southeast, destroying enemy catapults and all cannon towers. Then land with a force of six paladins—more than enough to kill the hideous orcs that live there. Finally, bring your peasants over and start mining. If you need it, there's also another oil field to the southeast.

You won't need to bother with further land warfare, because the main objective is to wipe out the enemy transports, oil derricks and shipyards. Build a force of six fully upgraded battleships and proceed due north, sinking all of the required objectives. You won't need any landing forces, so just make



more battleships on an as-needed basis, and it should be smooth sailing from here.

XIII. Assault on Blackrock Spire

Objectives: destroy Blackrock Spire and eradicate any and all enemy forces.

Starting location: south center of map.

The detestable orcs have betrayed the Alliance for the last time. Move your **gnome flying machine** over your shipyard and position the catapult near it, too. Quickly upgrade your blacksmith and lumber mill, because enemy transports will

be arriving regularly to the west. Build three cannon towers near your barracks to help deal with this threat.

An oil field is due north of your shipyard. Use gryphons to attack juggernauts. Have three fully upgraded destroyers to take out dragons.



Another mine is due northeast on an unguarded island. After mining it successfully, turn your forces to the island due north of your shipyard.

Build two pairs of three destroyers—one to stay near your shipyard and the other to protect your oil platform from dragons. Make sure both areas have **gnome flying machines** to look out for submarines.

Construct three fully upgraded battleships, and use them to get rid of the guard towers at the island north of your shipyard. Load a transport with three paladins and three wizards. Cast blizzard on the stronghold and remaining guard towers, reducing them to rubble with the paladins standing guard. Then bring your peasants over to mine the area.

The next step is to head northwest to the orange orc stronghold. Exorcism and blizzard spells are very useful here. After securing the area, start another great hall and mine for gold while

increasing your force for the final front to the east.

It's best to head to the southeast corner of the remaining orc base where they don't have much defense. Land there and establish another colony, working your way north, then northwest. The polymorph spell is great for dealing with ogres. Remember that you have to kill every orc before the mission is completed.



XIV. The Great Portal

Objective: destroy the Great Portal.

Starting location: south center of map.

Brew a pot coffee, cancel all appointments, and get ready to tackle the big, bad, final mission. You have no choice but to head west. Take your two destroyers, your battleship and an empty transport west. Use the transport to move diagonally across the shoreline to draw fire and allow the battleship and destroyers to destroy the catapults and guard towers.

Before you take ground forces ashore, it's important to knock out at least two guard towers and both catapults.

After securing the western area, start to build your town



Strategy Guide

where you unloaded your troops. Don't wander up northeast, or you'll come to a quick end. Instead, **start mining, build the great hall and harvest lumber.** Build a barracks and a lumber mill, and start making **archers**—very critical against the **dragons**.

In addition, **build a couple of guard towers to protect against dragons.**

Upgrade your archers to level 3; don't bother with anything else yet. **Form a wall of archers next to your guard towers.** Then start to lure the ogres

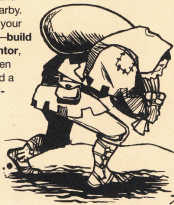


from the north down into **archer and guard-tower range,** cutting down the small remaining **ogre force** and securing a second more valuable **mine**.

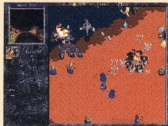
You now have a little time to recuperate and build your forces. **Construct a few guard towers at the bottom of the northeast passageway** to protect against incoming foes, and keep **archers** handy nearby.

For now, focus all of your money on land warfare—**build stables, a gnome inventor, upgrade to a castle, then build a mage tower and a church. Research healing for paladins, and blizzard and polymorph for the wizards.** The immediate orc threat is an **orc city to the east.**

You can initially penetrate the orcs from the south by using a **transport** and taking a couple of **explosive experts**



and dumping them south of the mountain range. Blow up a path that leads to the trees, and use **wizards to cast blizzards** on their city. This is especially useful to **kill their temple**



of the damned and stop their production of death knights.

Use the **polymorph** spell on the ogres and dragons; for this reason alone, you should create several wizards. After taking over the **eastern orc base, start mining, and use a demolition squad** to blow a passageway through the **thin north mountains.** Establish your sea port to the northeast.

You'll find an oil field all the way northeast. Use a **wizard to cast blizzard spells on ships** and lure them

close to shore and finish them off with **cannon towers and ballistas.**

You won't need a huge armada, but you'll still want some **fully upgraded battleships** to secure the **north-east sector;** you'll want to **land on the inner ring island** there. Use **gnome flying machines** to spot submarines.



Bring a few transports over, carrying a **some paladins, a dozen**

elven rangers and at least **six wizards.** Set the archers up as a **double column** in the pass, using a **solitary paladin** to lure the dragons into archer fire.

Work your way down, **dispatching the dragons to their dens.** **Blizzard** is very effective against both buildings and guard towers. Next, **line your archers up horizontally, luring the daemons** from the north down with **blizzard spells.** The archer fire will disperse most of them.

Bring a couple of peasants over now, and build a shipyard in the south of the inner-most water ring.

Build a battleship and three

destroyers and a couple of transports.

Before

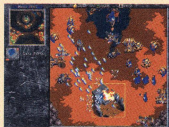
sending them into where the

great portal awaits, use a couple of **flying machines** to scout the inner island, causing the **death knights**

to cast **whirlwinds** about, sometimes killing one another. When the **whirlwinds** have subsided, **bring your battleship and destroyers** in, **shooting the daemons and death knights** within reach.

Last, but not least, **bring in your transports** that carry your **paladins and wizards.** Have your **paladins** exercise the remaining **death knights.**

Now it's time for a blizzard of epic proportions. The **great portal's** time has come, and it's up to the **wizards** to shut the door. **Cast blizzard** repeatedly until the **great portal** is frozen shut forever—or at least until the sequel!



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Computer Player has recently gone through some minor changes, and my esteemed editor has asked me to explain just exactly what this column is about. (If you're a veteran reader of *Computer Player*, you can safely skip the next paragraph and go straight to the thought-provoking messages.)

OK; here's the deal. *Over the Line* isn't another of those 10 kajillion "guide to getting on the infobahn" thingamajigs. Think of it as the magazine equivalent of the TV show *Talk Soup*, bringing you the best and/or most amusing messages from the hordes of computer-gaming news groups on the Internet. When I'm in a restless mood or just looking to score a little cyber-nookie, I'll venture onto the commercial networks (America OnLine, Prodigy, CompuServe), but we'll mostly stick to the wild, woolly, unregulated news groups. And with that, let the Internet plagiarism begin....

WALKTHROUGHS: Are You Cheating Yourself?



ALLIE DAVIDSON WONDERS WHY ALL THESE FOLKS WANT HELP:

As you probably know if you've been on the Internet for more than 10 minutes, the most common messages are those that beg, plead and scream for assistance in getting through a

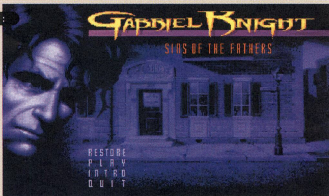
game. (The second most common would be the "Such-and-so-game-sucks!!!" postings, which are charming both in their eloquent use of language and their overuse of exclamation marks.)

A question: why do people want walkthroughs? I'm not condemning the practice, but I just can't imagine why someone would spend \$50 plus on a game, then want a walkthrough. I truly am curious. Can someone who uses walkthroughs tell me why they do it? I'm sure that different folks have different reasons. I enjoy figuring out the puzzles myself; I even hate hints!

SILVIA JANSEN RESPONDS:

I must honestly say that after a few days (no, to be honest, hours) of being stuck, I lose my patience and look up the solution to the puzzle in a walkthrough. (I have lots of magazines with lots of walkthroughs.) As soon as I've found the answer, I'm disappointed that I didn't find it myself, because very often, it's rather logical (though not always!). I once played *Gabriel Knight* while on a holiday; no magazines, no access to the Internet—just me and my brains. I

solved it completely on my own and loved it. I still feel huge satisfaction while thinking of that game. Now I try to stay away from walkthroughs, because I feel a game is much better if I solve it myself, but as soon as I get stuck, I can't stay away from the walkthrough. Now that I read this back, it sounds almost like an addiction. ;-) But walkthroughs are great for reading when you've finished a game! Then you can check whether you've seen everything and solved every puzzle.



IAN NOBLE CHIPS IN WITH ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW:

I normally spend nothing like \$50 on games; I'm currently very well-served by cheap re-releases of stuff I didn't buy the first time around; so I use hints freely or not, according to how much I'm enjoying the game. There is *nothing* that annoys me more than shelling out for a game and getting stuck within 10 minutes, only to find I'm up against a problem in the program interface, or not doing something that is totally illogical. If I'm enjoying the game, and it's non-linear, I'll try for a long time to crack it. For instance, I spent days wrestling with *Sam and Max* without going near a hint; it had too many weird but plausible things to try for me to cop out quickly that way—too much fun. By contrast, I recently bought *Lost In Time*. I found it so linear you could use it as a ruler, with answers that might be logical, but often made little sense in the context of the plot. And the program would stop me from doing things that had worked in other circumstances. I gave most puzzles about 30 minutes' grace before I gave up. No reward for the effort, you see. I might as well skip the frustration and get at least some pleasure for the money.

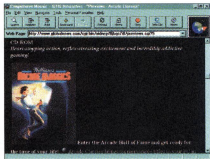
The moral of the story: buy *Computer Player*, but don't read the walkthroughs unless you have to. Strange way to make a living, writing something that people don't read unless they're truly desperate; although I'm sure the writers at *Penthouse* can relate. (Because their readers are desperate for...aw, forget it.)

WILLIAMS ARCADE CLASSICS: Why No Floppy?

As a card-carrying member of the Retro-Gaming Geek Club (see this issue's *Reboot* column for proof), I'm a huge fan of GT Interactive's *Williams Arcade Classics*, a CD-ROM with 100-percent-accurate recreations of several classic coin-ops: *Defender*, *Joust*, *Robotron 2084* and *Sinistar*, among others. Quite a few Internet dudes with older PCs lamented the fact that WAC comes only on CD-ROM, which they don't got.

JEFF VAVASOUR, THE PROGRAMMER OF WAC, REVEALED WHY IT TOOK A CD-ROM TO HOLD A HALF-DOZEN TINY GAMES FROM THE 1980S:

GT Interactive are the distributors, and they wanted it on CD. The "Behind the Scenes" video clip, which is about 250 megs of the CD-ROM, was originally intended to be an exclusive bonus for



the CD-ROM version. If I modify the ARCADE.EXE to skip that "walk-in" slideshow sequence between the credits and the game room, the whole game component fits on a single 3.5-inch HD floppy when zipped. I'd have settled for it on floppy as well, because my 486/66 doesn't have a CD-ROM drive either. I wish it had come out as originally intended. I get the feeling that they considered the "Behind the Scenes" bit an integral part of the package. Maybe they thought the classics wouldn't stand up on their own without some flashy full-motion video to spice them up.

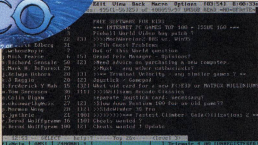
PENTIUM PGS: Speed Kills

As Pentium-based computers reach processing speeds that freak out we who used computers in the 1980s—I still have my beloved Commodore 64, which runs at a

blazing 1MHz—the PC games from those thrilling days of yesteryear become impossible to play unless you're under the influence of a 12-pack of Jolt cola.

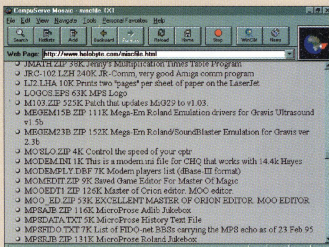
JUSTIN TOLMER IS APPARENTLY JOLT-FREE:

I have *Ecco the Dolphin* that was released for the PC. It was running a little fast, but it wasn't that bad. Yesterday, I installed updated video drivers for my Diamond Stealth card, and now the game runs so fast that it's almost impossible to play. I seem to remember a program or utility that I ran across on the Web that slows gameplay down somehow, but I can't seem to find it now that I need it. Can anyone point me in the right direction? Thanks in advance.



DALE PAULUS TO THE RESCUE:

The program is *MOSLO*. I found it on Spectrum HoloByte's BBS <http://www.holobyte.com>. You might also be able to find it at an ftp site, maybe <ftp://cactus.org>, <ftp://ftp.uwp.edu>, or <ftp://ftp.cdrom.com/pub/dresden>. These are just guesses though.



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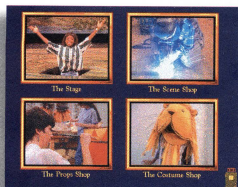
PC GAMER APR 1996 3

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CD-ROM ENTERTAINMENT BEYOND GAMES

Opening Night

Kids love to put on plays, playing dress up and staging the whole thing for their poor parents, who have to act proud as the realization dawns that they're in for 10 to 11 years of ballet and choral recitals. But at first, I guess it's cute. The CD-ROM *Opening Night* is an interactive program that lets more elaborate presentations be made simply and easily. Like Macromind Director's stage metaphor, but with total devotion to the concept and a

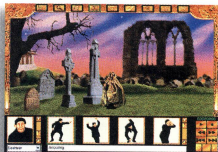


GUI, *Opening Night* has cast members, actions, sounds and events that you place into a score that you can play back at will. You can decorate your set with a dizzying number of props and set pieces and choose from a wide range of character actors and actresses.

The really cool thing is the dialogue interface, which allows you to type in the lines, and then it reads them out in the voice of the character you have designated. It doesn't always work (my Cockney maid kept saying "Egads!"), but it sure is fun. You can also have the play run with subtitles. Save each scene or act separately, then you can have "rehearsal" or run the whole play through at will. You can even pre-program a laugh track or applause, just in case your audience needs a little nudging.

An accompanying CD, produced by the Children's Theater Company of Minneapolis, gives behind-the-scenes info on how a theatrical production works, including trips to the prop shop and explanations of the various roles in a theater company—from stage hand to director. The only flaw in the program is that it doesn't

Computer Player isn't only about computer games. This column covers all those "infotainment" CD-ROM titles that provide hours of entertainment and manage to educate you in the process. So if you need a break from saving the world, or you're getting tired of blowing things up, check out some of these titles.



allow you to upload your own animations or drawings into the play interface, and that would be incredible. As it is, I'd love to see artists get down with this toy and make it into a new art form, much as they did with Fisher Price's pixelvision camera some years ago.

For more information, contact: MECC, 6160 Summit Dr. N, Minneapolis, MN 55430-4003; 612.569.1500.

McKenzie & Co.

For years now, I've been irritating all the *Computer Player* boys by complaining about the CD-ROMs we receive for Point of Reference: "If I get one more freakin' war-plane title, I'm going to go postal!" I'd scream. Yeah, Mikki, they'd say, happily going back to their *Gabriel Knight* competition, or planning to go to *Forbidden Planet* after work for the latest Sandman.



But the day *McKenzie & Co.* came in, I knew the gods had been listening to me. It's a five-CD box set and...it comes with a little mini lipstick! Yes, it does. Go ahead, mock me. I'm wearing it right now. It's called shocking pink satin, and I don't think you can successfully navigate the Madison High School interface without it. Basically, what you get to do is hang out with the junior class for a whole year. You choose if you are going to be Kim or Carly, then spend the rest of the program hanging out with your ethnically correct friends, chasing the cutest boys, having makeovers and going to the mall. You and some friends have all chipped in for a little red sedan which takes you around—to the music store, the community center, or god forbid, to school.

The object of most of the branching stories is to get a guy, or at least, find one. You choose destinations and are presented with more choices (usually in the form of video conversations) as you get farther along. (You will also find yourself changing CDs an incredibly frustrating number of times. *McKenzie & Co.* is the best argument yet for buying a five-CD

array.) Some events occur: the prom and some gymnastics competitions, but the main focus is the love stories. If you pay attention early on (hint: Brandon's roommate), you'll do better later on, and that's probably as good of a lesson about life as any CD-ROM is going to teach you. I might be bored stiff by it if I were actually in the target age group, but as is, I can't stop playing it. I may even send away for the add-on stories.

The coolest thing is the bedroom where you can check your answering machine for messages, check your computer for e-mail, or do your homework (all of these are determined by where you have gone elsewhere in the program). This is also the spot for makeovers and where you can try on outfit after outfit in a really weird kind of vanity situation.

For more information, contact: American Laser Games, Her Interactive Division, 4801 Lincoln Rd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109.



NEXT MONTH'S CP Lineup

Wizardry: Nemesis

Computer Player visits the SirTech dungeons and finds a whole new treasure from the company that brought you the first role-playing game.

Interview

CP gets an exclusive interview with Jeff Vavasour, the man behind Activision's *Commodore 64 15 Pack*.

Strategies

Our gaming experts deliver the goods on how to beat SSI's *Warhammer*, Interplay's *Descent II* and Activision's *Spycraft*.

Reviews

The last word on:

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■ CLASSIC GAMES OF YESTERYEAR



Meet the Elite

Like most computer-game geeks, I can reminisce for hours about all the great old games I used to play. And though most of those games have aged about as gracefully as Keith Richards, there are a few precious titles that are as fun to play in the '90s as they were in the '80s. That's what *Reboot* is all about: taking you back to the golden age of computing to celebrate the best games of days long past and computers long extinct. Join us as we bathe in the warm, inviting waters of the Sea of Nostalgia....

In 1985, David Braben and Ian Bell released a game for the Commodore 64 (and several other European-only, 8-bit computers) that performed the rarest of feats: it set new standards in every aspect of computer gaming with its amazing blend of gameplay styles.

At first, *Elite* seemed to be a simple trading game. As the captain of the Cobra Mk. III freighter, you had to buy cargo from the space station in which you were docked, then call up a galactic map and pick a planet on which you could sell your goods for a profit. Seems like a simple task of flying between space stations and watching your profits grow, right? Nuh-uh. Between you and the safe haven of the stations were a horde of space pirates, just waiting for a feebly armed, cargo-laden vessel such as yours. And while defending yourself, you quickly discovered that flying in space, with no gravity and no atmosphere, was one hell of a challenge.

As you got further into the game, you also realized that they weren't limited to making cargo runs. You could equip your Cobra with mining lasers and a cargo scoop to extract pre-

vious metals from asteroids; you could be an evil sumbitch and run narcotics and slaves between planets, incurring the wrath of the galactic

fuzz patrol; or you could become a bounty hunter, pumping up your ship with lasers-a-mundo and jumping into planetary systems infested with pirates. You could do any or all of these things; that was the beauty of *Elite*. (There were a few "missions" built into the game for quest-oriented players, but you could ignore them.)

The ultimate goal of every *Elite* player, though, was to become elite by destroying enemy ships. You started the game with zero kills and a combat

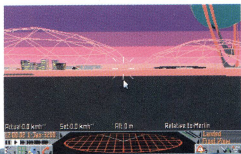
rating of "Harmless," but as you racked up kills, your rating improved and your ego swelled right along with it. To attain the rank of Elite didn't take great skill—just a mind-numbing 11,000 kills or so.

Unfortunately, *Elite*'s story doesn't have a happy ending. In 1993, Braben released *Frontier: Elite I*—an overly ambitious sequel filled with more bugs than a South American rain forest. An add-on disk, *First Encounters*, also had bugs up the yin-yang: there have been six patches since the initial release. In a 1994 magazine interview, Braben said that he was starting up his own development

house and had no plans for an *Elite III*; considering the disaster that was *Frontier*, it's probably just as well.



Calling Captain Jameson: a new game of *Elite* is about to begin.

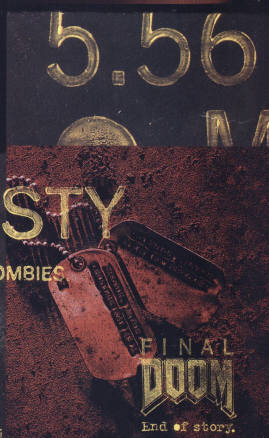




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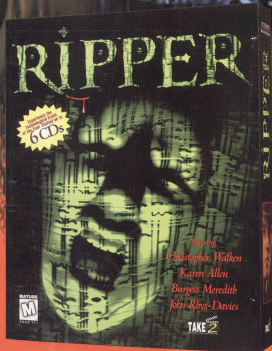
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