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extreme PlayStation • Issue 4 • April 1998

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# extreme PlayStation GAZINE

Issue 4 April 98



## WORLD EXCLUSIVE!

# THE FIFTH ELEMENT

## 8 PAGE GORE-FEST

# RESIDENT EVIL 2



## EXCLUSIVE FIRST REVIEW

# Lucky Luke

## REVIEWED:

- RESIDENT EVIL 2
- NEED FOR SPEED 3
- NBA PRO 98
- DEATHTRAP DUNGEON
- MASTERS OF THE TERÄS KÄSI
- LUCKY LUKE
- DIABLO
- CHILL
- REBOOT
- PITFALL 3D
- NEWMAN HAAS RACING
- DARK OMEN
- POY POY
- STREET FIGHTER COLLECTION
- BUST-A-MOVE 3 DX
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# Editorial

"Big Issue!... Big Issue!..."
Yep, it's not just the interest rates, Man U's injury list and James Major's knob that's getting bigger! This delivery sees a further 16 pages added to the main mag, and a free, yes FREE 16 page supplement containing all the moves, combos and secrets to LucasArts' Masters of the Teräs Käsi and Squaresoft's Bushido Blade.
Capcom's Resident Evil 2 is upon us! This has to be the biggest release of '98 so far, and has had most of the office crapping their leopard skin G-strings. If you're looking for the most informative review of RE2, then you've knocked on the right door - no mag does it better!
Exclusives include Lucky Luke and The Fifth Element, so there's plenty of horny pics of Milla Jovovich, and some not so horny pics of a French cowboy. Milla's not the only wench featured though, there's plenty of ass supplied by Red Lotus in our Deathtrap Dungeon review. And as for the rest of the mag, well, to be honest, there's too much to mention. The extreme team have been working their nuts off this month, in an attempt to bring you the best issue so far - sorted!
Anyway, I'm off to Malibu to comfort grief stricken Pam, and to make a few home movies.

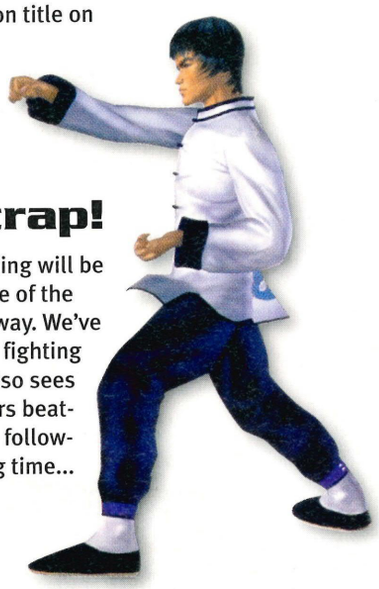
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(the Editor formerly known as Darren)

# Highlights



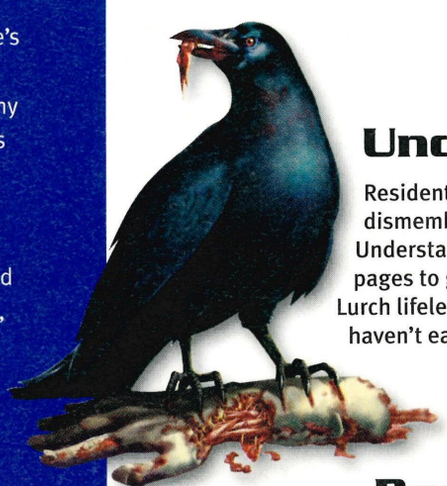
## Ginger Sprite

The Fifth Element is here! Feast your eyes on the delectable digitised figure of Milla Jovovich and admire the sinuous curves of Kalisto's ingenious interpretation with our so-in-depth-it-stings six-page cover feature exposé. See how Luc Besson's 'all style and damn the substance' celluloid tour de force is morphing itself into a cool-running PlayStation title on Page 10.



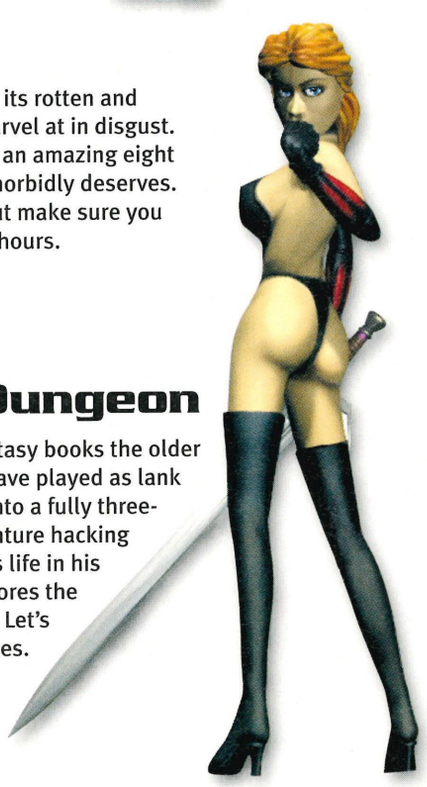
## Scrap! Scrap! Scrap! Scrap!

It's been so long in production that Christ's Second Coming will be cast in its shade. Yep, Tekken 3, the follow-up to one of the roughest, meanest games to stalk the shelves, is on its way. We've got screenshots galore, plus a history and roundup of fighting games to give it all some perspective (p98). This month also sees the release of Masters of Teräs Käsi, the futurefied Star Wars beat-'em-up, and the re-release of that timeless classic (and its follow-ups) Street Fighter. Let's hope they don't all kick off big time...



## Undead Cool

Resident Evil 2 is finally rearing its rotten and dismembered head for all to marvel at in disgust. Understandably, we've set aside an amazing eight pages to give it the attention it morbidly deserves. Lurch lifelessly over to Page 36, but make sure you haven't eaten in the previous six hours.



## Deathtrap Dungeon

Eidos have taken one of the Fighting Fantasy books the older amongst you will undoubtedly have played as lank schoolboys and turned it into a fully three-dimensional action 'n' adventure hacking hoe-down. Saul takes his life in his hands on Page 54 and explores the darkest depths on your behalf. Let's hope he doesn't get the willies.



## Gentlmen, Start your Engines

Gasoline is tipple of the month here again, with two Indy-styled racers and the third outing from the hi-revving Need For Speed garage. Just don't expect us to relinquish the lead in the name of some poxy pre-race 'agreement', OK?

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Carrot-a-like running and jumping character goes all cheap on us.




## Review Guide

**Overall Score - 91-100%**
Dog's bollox, cat's knackers, etc. Buy, beg, borrow or steal this game. Worth pawning your granny's heirlooms for.

**Overall Score - 81-90%**
The dog's bollox, but not quite the cat's knackers. Still worth spending your hard-earned dosh on, and definitely worth stealing.

**Overall Score - 71-80%**
Make sure you play this little critter before you buy or steal it. Many will think it's great, some will think it's crap.

**Overall - 51-70%**
We're getting on the verge of this-ain't-even-worth-stealing territory. It might interest punters who are big fans of the genre.

**Overall - 25-50%**
Okay if you've received it as a present, but parting with cash for this title might be regarded as madness.

**Overall - 0-25%**
If you see this game lying on the pavement, cross over to the other side. If you see it on fire, don't piss on it - let it burn.

# signals

THE HOTTEST HAPPENINGS IN THE HIP AND HAIRY WORLD OF THE PSX

## HAND-HELD PLAYSTATION

Sony are to release a device capable of downloading games from the PSX and playing them independently from the console. The Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) is small enough to hold in the hand and plugs into the PlayStation's memory card port.

Details are hazy at the moment as the device is still in development, but it is believed that the unit can take small sections of a PlayStation game and allow you to play them independently of the console - ideal for long train journeys. For example, you could take a single track of a racing game or one character of a beat-'em-up and store it in the PDA's own internal memory. Whether it could be uploaded back into the console after you played is unknown, as is whether this will work with any game or only those specifically enhanced for the device.

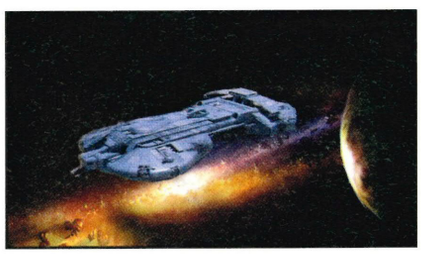
As well as regular PSX games, PDA-specific titles will also be released, all on PlayStation CD (the unit has no cartridge port or CD reader itself). The PDA has an internal clock, making possible Tamagotchi-type games, and an infra-red link enabling two PDA owners to play against each other. Application programs such as personal organisers and electronic diaries are also planned.

The Personal Digital Assistant features a 32-bit RISC processor, so it won't be short on speed. It only has a monochrome LCD screen similar to the Game Boy's, though, so if it can indeed port PlayStation games, it will only offer a simplified version. Its price has yet to be set, but is believed to be between £30 and £50. Launch date is to be announced.




Because the development of the Personal Digital Assistant is at such an early stage, details are understandably hazy - Sony themselves aren't yet sure of the product's final specifications and applications, but big things are planned. "We hope that software developers will come up with various ideas", said a Sony spokesperson. "It's not being positioned as a peripheral for the PlayStation, but as a new product". Rest assured extreme PlayStation will bring you more news on the PDA as it's made.

## WING COMMANDER TO HIT THE BIG SCREEN



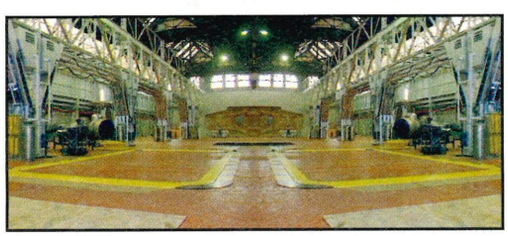


The Wing Commander is the latest console game to be turned into a movie. The film, boasting a $27 million budget, will be directed by Chris Roberts.

The film is to star Freddie Prinze Jr, Matthew Lillard, Saffron Burrows, Malcom McDowell, Tcheky Karyo and Jurgen Prochnow. Unfortunately Mark Hamill, Star Wars' Luke Skywalker and star of Wing Commander IV FMV sequences, will not appear.

Director Chris Roberts created the Wing Commander computer games series while working for developers Origin Systems. He's now chairman and chief executive officer of Digital Anvil, a Texas-based company who bought the rights to the Wing Commander film.

"We're looking forward to continuing our great relationship with Chris Roberts and Digital Anvil", said Neil Young, vice president and general manager of Origin Systems. "This is another ground-breaking first for Wing Commander. The compelling storyline that has been defined will take the tradition of innovation that Wing Commander has established in the gaming world to the silver screen".



At the time of going to press, no details regarding plot are available, but here are three early images from the movie. We'll bring you more details as soon as possible.

## MGM AND EA JOIN FORCES

Electronic Arts and international entertainment company Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer have signed a co-publishing agreement covering MGM's next four game titles. EA will market the games in all territories except North America.

The first title covered by the agreement is War Games, licensed from the MGM movie of the same name, to arrive on the PSX in May. Return Fire 2 will follow in July, with Tomorrow Never Dies (working title) due in November. Rollerball, another film licence, is due in early 1999.

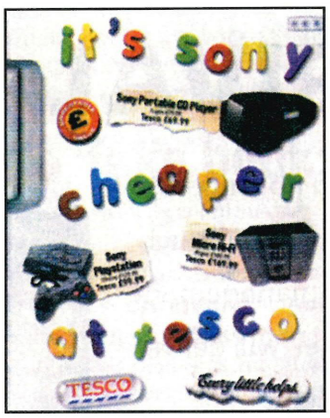
"We have these four titles scheduled at present", said EA's Simi Belo, "but there will probably be more to follow".

## POPULOUS 3 DELAYED (AGAIN)

Populous: The Third Coming, Bullfrog's latest instalment in the acclaimed Populous series, has been put back yet again. Originally due for a Christmas 1997 release, the game was then put back to March of this year. Bullfrog now expect the PC version to be complete by September, with a PSX version to follow.

"Bullfrog is not renowned for hitting release dates", says spokesman David Wilson, "but the titles are always worth the wait. Although the game's a sequel, it's been eight years since the last one and it's totally original".

# TESCO'S PSX PRICE CUT 'MISLEADING'



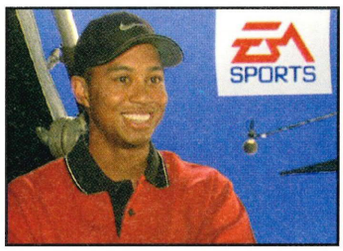

Tesco's came under fire this month for price claims which both Sony and Dixons said were 'misleading'. Their sub-£100 PlayStation bundle, specifically described in adverts as 'cheaper' than Dixons' £130 package, offers 'worse value for money' as the Dixons pack contains additional peripherals of a greater value than the apparent saving.

Unable to secure supplies of PlayStation bundles from Sony through official channels, Tesco imported around £5 million-worth of Sony product from Europe, mostly from German suppliers. This included European PlayStation bundles, which were sold at £99.99, a saving of £30 on Sony's UK Value Pack, priced at £129.99. Both Sony and Dixons dispute that this represents a real saving, pointing out that Tesco's pack includes only a PSX, a single controller and a SCART cable, unusable by most UK gamers. The Value Pack offered by UK retailers, including Dixons, offers a PSX, an RF cable (the one needed by most UK televisions), two controllers and a memory card. The additional items offered by Sony's official pack is £52.97, clearly wiping out any savings offered by Tesco.

"Tesco's claims are misleading and inaccurate", claims Dixons' marketing director Trevor Bish-Jones. "Unless customers have a SCART TV, they will require at the very least an RF connector which will cost an additional £19.99". Tesco concedes that in hindsight the advert was not as clear as it should have been, but argue their pack still offers value for money. "The customer might not want the extra hand controller and memory card", said Tesco spokesman Alan McLaughian. "Sony refuse to supply us with stock unless we set up a Sound and Vision room with dedicated technical staff to display PlayStations. Why doesn't this apply to Argos? There seems to be an ulterior motive here, perhaps to protect prices".

Sony deny this. "It's not a case of us not letting them have PlayStations", said UK PR manager Pete Devery, "they just need to have staff trained to sell them. All Argos staff are trained to sell all Argos products".

# TIGER WOODS IN EA GOLF GAME



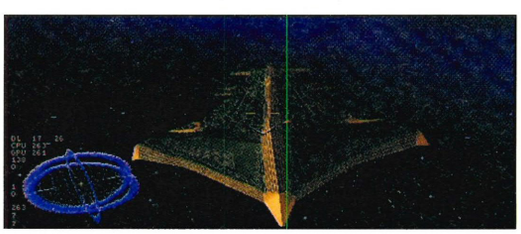

Golfing sensation Tiger Woods has signed an exclusive four-year deal with EA Sports, who are to produce a Tiger Woods PGA Tour golf game for the PlayStation. Tiger himself is to be used to motion capture the golfers' swing action. The game will feature 15 professional golfers, including Peter Jacobsen, Brad Faxon, Tom Kite, Lee Jansen, Dave Love III and of course Tiger Woods himself. Courses include Pebble Beach Golf Links, the Bay Hill Club and Spyglass Hill.

Electronic Arts' sports division, already famous for their PGA golf games, are understandably thrilled with their new signing. "Signing Tiger Woods is a defining act for Electronic Arts and the PGA TOUR Golf series," said Richard Hilleman, vice president and executive producer at Electronic Arts. "Tiger is the ultimate competitor who wins with strength, charisma and creativity. He will contribute to the design and development of a new EA Sports golf game as well as future versions in the PGA TOUR Golf product series."

Woods is equally jubilant. "I am thrilled to join the EA Sports team," he said. "I've played video games for many years. The chance to work with the top brand in sports gaming and play a key role in the design of an interactive golf product will be an exciting challenge."

Tiger Woods & the PGA Tour hits the shelves this summer.

# COLONY WARS 2 TO HIT THE PSX



Colony Wars 2: Codename Vendetta is to hit the PlayStation in November. The plot follows on from the first Colony Wars game, when the League of Free Worlds closed the warphole, trapping the Navy in the Sol system and leaving them to die. Now, after years of unrest, the Navy is reunited and looking for revenge.

Unlike the first game, when you fought for the League, you're now a fighter on the side of the Navy. You must battle the new oppressor, the League.

According to publishers Psygnosis, Colony Wars 2: Codename Vendetta is to feature greater mission complexity, cinematic quality FMVs, 22 weapons (against the original's 15), two new solar systems, characterisation, around 50% more fighters with no loss of speed, enhanced artificial intelligence for the wingmen, an extra camera view, a story with a twist in the tale and a partridge in a pear tree. Expect a Gamespotting update in the near future.

# OFFICIAL: MELINDA'S BOOBS ARE OK

The Advertising Standards Authority have rejected two complaints about Psygnosis' F1 '97 adverts featuring model Melinda Messenger.

The complaints argued the image of Ms Messenger and her sultry pose were inappropriate for a game aimed at children. As Melinda was working for the Jordan F1 team and wearing a dress in their team colours and the game was targeted at 15-35-year-olds, the ASA considered the advert was unlikely to cause offence.




# THIS MONTH WE 'AVE MOSTLY BEEN PLAYIN'

DARREN
Fifth Element
Poy Poy
Ludo

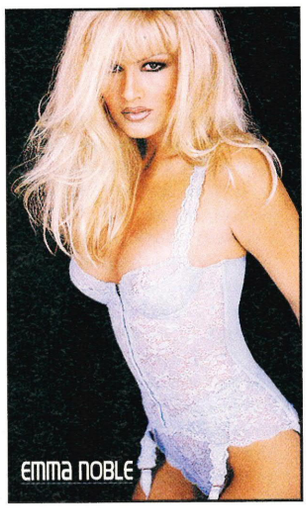
SAUL
Poy Poy
Gran Turismo
Resident Evil 2

IAN
Pang
Game.com
Street Fighter Collection

CHRISTIAN
Kula World
Poy Poy
Dark Omen

GRAHAM
Poy Poy
Circuit Breakers
Coolboarders 2

# LARA - THE MODELS, THE MOVIE, THE MAYBE...

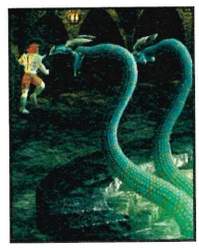



Contrary to last month's news article, French model Vanessa Demouy is not the new face of Lara Croft. "We're going to be using lots of different people", said Core Design's Suzy Hamilton. Actress Rhona Mitra is unlikely to be used again in the near future as, according to Core, the two parties were "going in different directions". Rumours that she was becoming increasingly difficult to deal with were denied. Core are currently working on a digital version of Lara, to be used for interviews and presentations, alongside the models.

Also in the pipeline is Tomb Raider - The Movie. "We're trying to sign up the film, but nothing is confirmed", said Suzy Hamilton. It is definitely to be a live action movie. " A Toy Story-style computer animation would be ideal, but we haven't the time or the resources", she continued. "There's no news on who might play Lara, and that decision might not even be in our hands. The storyline has yet to be decided on, but Core Design hope to retain some sort of control over this".

Core are also 'bouncing ideas around' for the inevitable Tomb Raider 3. "We want to make sure it takes the series a stage further", said Ms Hamilton. "It might not come out this year". In the meantime, here's our latest nomination for someone we'd like to see as Lara Croft. Take it away, Emma Noble...

# HIT AND MYTH AFFAIR...



System 3's Myth has been delayed due to a dispute with rival publishers Eidos. While the System 3 game, an update of their own 8- and 16-bit offering of the same name, was in production, Eidos released an unrelated PC title which was also called Myth, leading to legal action from System 3.

According to the Writ of Summons, issued on February 3rd, the original version of Myth (Commodore 64, 1989) was published through Activision under the 'control and supervision' of Mr Larry Sparks, who was subsequently employed by Eidos in a marketing capacity. Between 1989 and 1994, System 3 converted Myth to other 8- and 16-bit formats, meeting with 'substantial critical acclaim'.

Since early 1997, the writ continues, System 3 has been planning and developing new versions of Myth for the PlayStation, PC, Nintendo and Sega. Despite System 3 enjoying 'substantial reputation and good will' regarding the name 'Myth', Eidos took a licence from Bungie Software Corporation Inc. to publish a game which was also called 'Myth', releasing it in January 1998. System 3 claim Eidos' use of the title 'Myth' was calculated to deceive, leading people to believe they were purchasing an updated or revised version of the System 3 game. System 3 made a presentation to Eidos regarding their own new version of Myth as early as April 1997, and Eidos were aware (through Mr Sparks) of the substantial reputation enjoyed by the title.

Although the System 3 game will still go ahead, the company claim to have suffered substantial loss resulting from Eidos' actions, and that 'very poor sales' of the Eidos title have tarnished the name of 'Myth', and claim compensation.

Eidos refused to comment on the situation.

# DRIVING POWER

G&C Engineering have unleashed the Video Interactor onto an unsuspecting world. The Interactor, a portable arcade-style racing cockpit for any home console, turns your steering wheel/PSX combination into the closest thing to a true driving experience without having to pass a test.

The Video Interactor features adjustable positioning, to fit all drivers, an ergonomic black seat and fittings for your steering wheel and pedals (not supplied). The unit folds away when not in use.

To get your hands on a Video Interactor would normally cost £99.95, but we've got two to give away - check out our crazy competition right here. If you're not one of our worthy winners and you still want one, contact G&C engineering at the above address for ordering details. Alternatively, ring their credit card hotline on 01386 554836.




## COMPETITION

WIN A *VIDEO INTERACTOR*, *TOCA* AND A *GAMESTER LMP STEERING WHEEL MK II.*

G&C Engineering have very kindly sent us two Video Interactors, along with a couple of equally-impressive Gamester LMP Steering Wheel Mk II's and copies of CodeMaster's TOCA to play on them. That means two lucky extreme PlayStation readers set to win almost £200-worth of top kit.

To win one of these wild and wonderful packages, just answer the following question:

▸ WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IDIOTIC REMARKS WAS UTTERED BY MURRAY WALKER WHILE COMMENTATING ON A GRAND PRIX?

A: "IF'S A BIG WORD IN FORMULA 1 - 'IF' IS FORMULA 1 SPELT BACKWARDS".
B: "IT'S NOT WET IN THE TUNNEL BECAUSE THERE'S A ROOF ON IT".
C: "MANSELL IS SLOWING DOWN. HE'S TAKING IT EASY. OH NO HE'S NOT! IT'S A LAP RECORD!"
D: "IT'S DAVID COULTHARD, THE FLYING FIN FROM SCOTLAND".
E: ALL OF THE ABOVE.

Answers on a postcard to Good Old Murray Competition, extreme PlayStation magazine, Quay Magazine Publishing, Quay House, The Quay, Poole, Dorset BH15 1HA

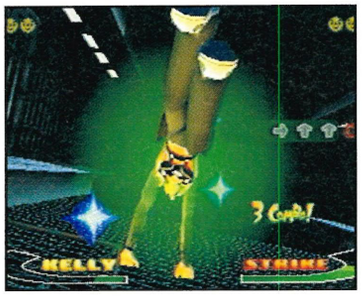
•Entries that arrive after April 27th will be recycled as toilet paper.

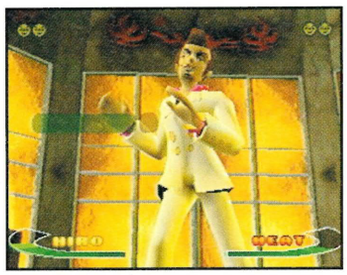
G&C ENGINEERING PLC
Cobham Road, Pershore, Worcestershire WR10 2DL
Tel: (01386) 553934 Fax: (01386) 555725

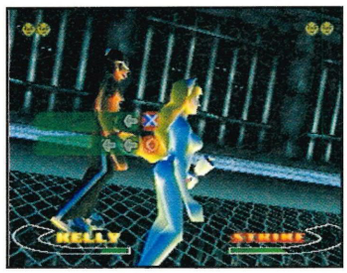
# OVERSEAS

Hi, folks, and welcome to another helping of what's hot and what's not in the world of PlayStation imports. Last month we said we would bring you details of Bomberman World. Well, we would have, but guess what? It's coming out in this country (quick, get the fanfare blowing). It's previewed in this very mag too. We were also hoping to bring you details of Parasite Eve, but things are still a bit sketchy as the release dates have been put back for some reason or another. The games we've covered this month are proving top sellers on the import market as well the official Japanese charts, So let's get stuck in and take a look at what we've got.

## BUST-a-MOVE



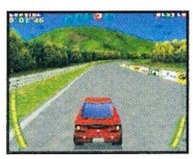



Kicking off this month's import section is a brilliant game you might have read about already. It's name is Bust-A-Move, but not the one where you shoot coloured balls (see review, Page 90). If you thought Parappa The Rappa was a new angle in gaming, you've seen nothing yet. This game has quite literally brought the office to a standstill. You've ten disco-popping groove dudes to choose from at the start, all with their own style of rhythm and dance. If you're good enough and complete sections in the game, you should find a few hidden John Travolta hipsters.

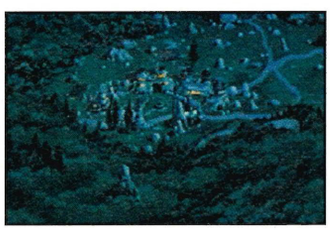
Once you've picked one of these spunky characters, it's time to hit the floor and funk your stuff as you try to out compete your opponent with your moves in a dancing frenzy. There's a total of ten arenas with different tastes in music for you to try. We noticed that Hiro has the same dress sense as our editor, but unfortunately doesn't have the moves to go with it (no wonder he can't get the women). The other surprise to the game was that our own Saul Trewern turned out to be the dancing queen of the office (OOPS, sorry I meant 'king'). The originality of the game should win it awards as well as laughs; this is one that you get out after you've had a few pints or skinned up with the lads. This is without doubt a 'must have' for all people who enjoy a good laugh.

## CHORO Q3

Choro Q3 is the next game we had a look at and to be honest, we were all surprised at how this game's proving to be a hit over in Japan. We know they sometimes have a different taste in things to us, but when the Land of the Rising Sun has things like Gran Turismo to play, why on earth are they playing stuff like this? The game's basically a racing game that allows you to drive around in small cutsey cars on a number of different courses. You first have to do a qualifying session to establish your starting position, then it's a free for all in the main race. 'Nothing different', I hear you all scream, and you would be quite right in saying so. Don't get me wrong, there's nothing that bad about the game, but there's nothing good about it either. In fact it got so boring we ditched this down the bog and loaded Bust-a-Move for a second session of non-stop, down-to-the-ground, groove-moving, office-stopping, gyrating dance floor action.



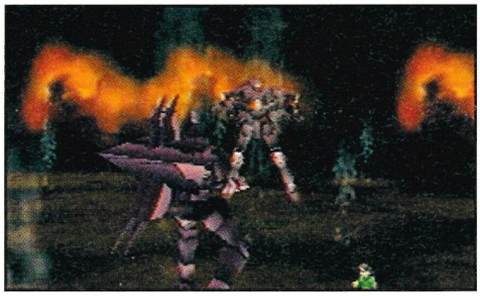
## XENOGEARS



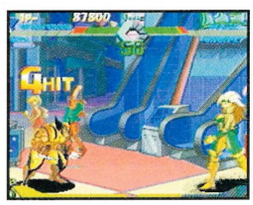
The final game we cover this issue is another Squaresoft role-playing game. We told you about three of their games in the last issue, but they just keep banging out bloody excellent games, and this one's no different. Xenogears is another big, big hit for the guys out in Jap land and all we can hope is that Sony see upon themselves to pursue a translation for either the Americans or us Brits. Watching the intro leaves you with your chin dragging on the ground as you admire the lush graphics and attention to detail that's become so apparent with Squaresoft's games. There have been rumours from America that the game won't be released over there because of its religious overtones, and this could cause a knock-on effect here, but real gamers don't worry about things like that; we just want to play it. So come on, Sony, get your act together. Us Brits do enjoy RPGs as much as the Japanese.



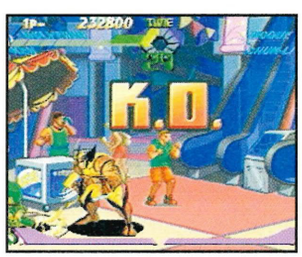


## X-MEN

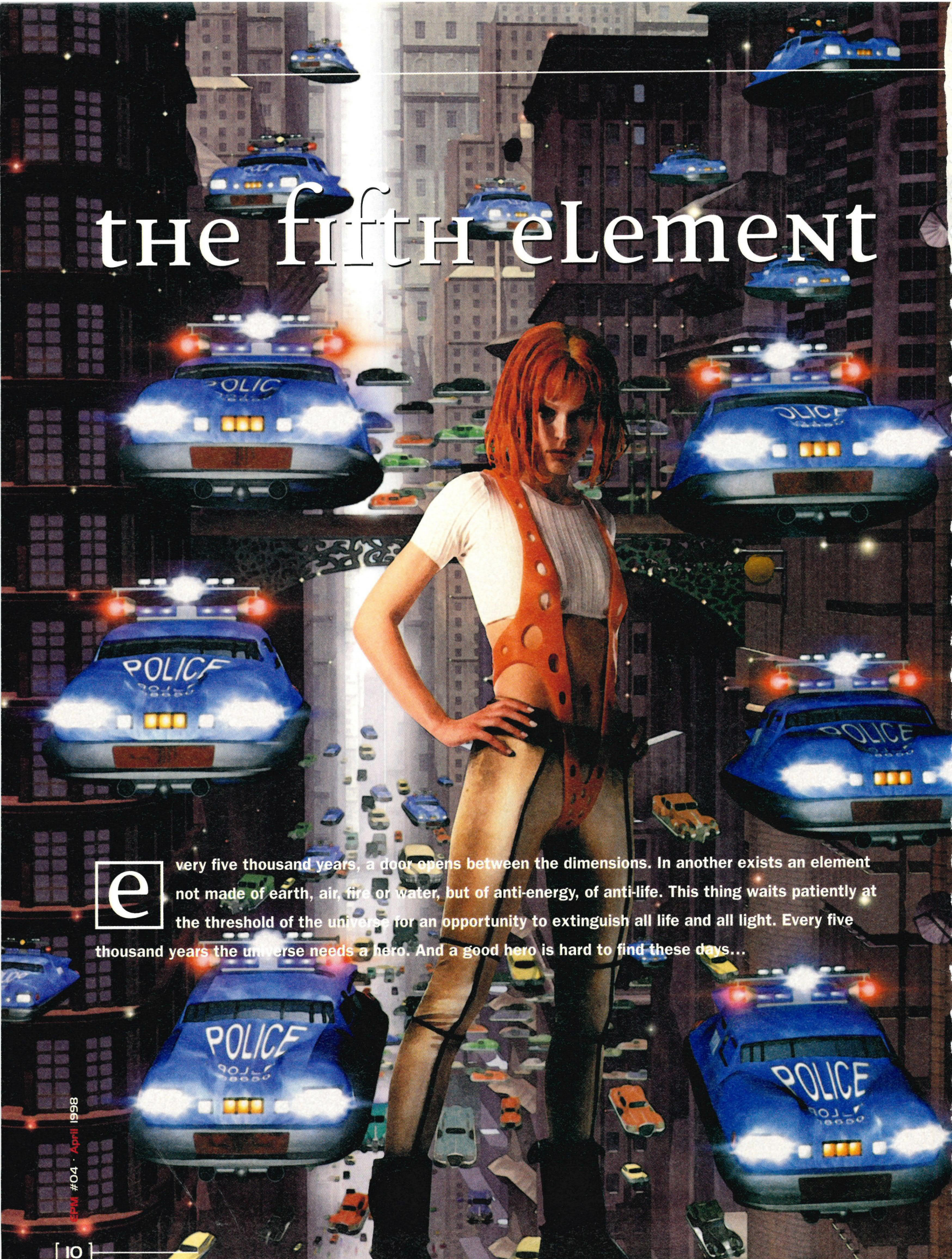



Another game that's proving a big hit is, quelle surprise, another beat-'em-up, but with some famous characters. We recently saw the release of Marvel Super Heroes, and this is being followed up by the X-Men fighting Street Fighter characters. It's very typical of what we've come to expect from Capcom, with big sprites filling the screen, making it fast and furious non-stop action. I've never been a fan of this genre, but I have to admit this is a big favourite of mine. Probably the best option in the game is the Team Battle. This means you get a partner in your fights, who, when your level bar at the bottom of the screen is full, appears and performs a long combo with you to kick the crap out of the opposition. The best I've managed is an eighteen-hit combo that proved vital in winning the round. Anyone who's a fan of fighting games will love this.



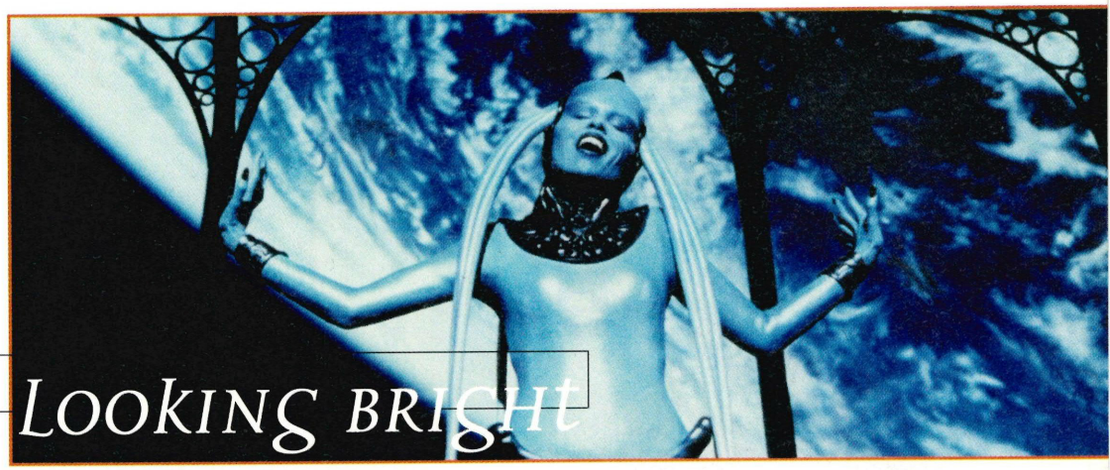

So that's it for another issue. Next month we're hoping to have info on Bushido Blade 2, Tekken 3 (both due for release in Japan next month) and one called Tenchu, that could possibly rival the Tomb Raider games. This time, though, you go round as a ninja rather than a babe. Happy gaming!

# the fifth element




every five thousand years, a door opens between the dimensions. In another exists an element not made of earth, air, fire or water, but of anti-energy, of anti-life. This thing waits patiently at the threshold of the universe for an opportunity to extinguish all life and all light. Every five thousand years the universe needs a hero. And a good hero is hard to find these days...

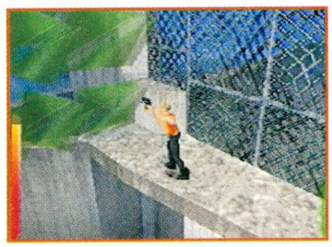


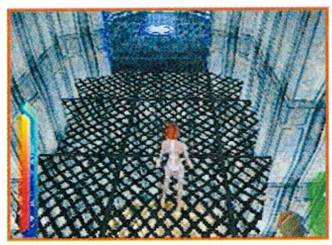


# the future's looking bright

Luckily, the dodgy days of crap film-licensed videogames are a thing of the past. With games selling more than ever - money spinners in their own right - it's more important to get the title right than simply letting the license sell it, or 'getting it out' quickly to coincide with the release of the film. The past has seen punters slowly shy anyway from any title with a film licence, forcing the publishers and developers to change their marketing strategies for the better. Nowadays, it doesn't matter if a film licenced game comes out a year or even two years after the film; as long as the game is quality. GoldenEye, on the N64, hit the streets well over two years after the film, but was an instant hit and an excellent game. Kalisto have taken this to heart, not worrying that people might have forgotten about the film The Fifth Element by the time the videogame counter-part has emerged, but fine-tuning the title so even if people have erased it from their memories, the game will still evoke interest on its merits as a good game.

Obviously by now, you know this title is based around Luc Besson's film, The Fifth Element, which starred celebs like Bruce Willis, Gary Oldman, and the 'frisky' Milla Jovovich. The plot of the game and the film is set 250 years into the future. It all centres around the labours of a band of humans and aliens trying to stop a comet containing the 'ultimate distillation of evil' from crashing into the earth. An alien girl, Leeloo, the key to the Fifth Element, is sent to search out the four ancient stones that represent the basic elements. Activating the stones with the Fifth Element will save the day.

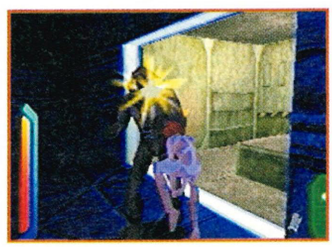




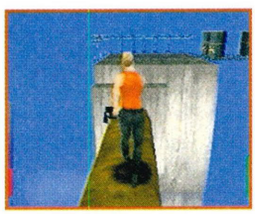
# element exploration

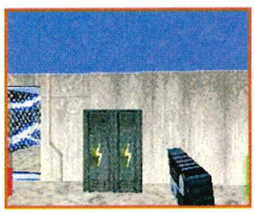


The Fifth Element is a 15-level action/exploration game that delves deep into the universe of Luc Besson's film. The 15 levels are split into different categories. The first and second are a kind of induction/introduction to the two available characters in the game, Leeloo (Milla Jovovich) and Korben Dallas (Bruce Willis). The first is entirely played with Korben, while the second is exclusive to Leeloo. The second group consists of ten levels where each of the two champions must complete a mission, your success relying on the balance between Leeloo and Korben. Lastly, there is a group of three bonus maps that are short levels where speed is of the essence.

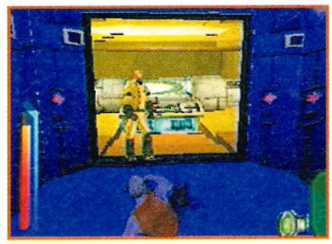


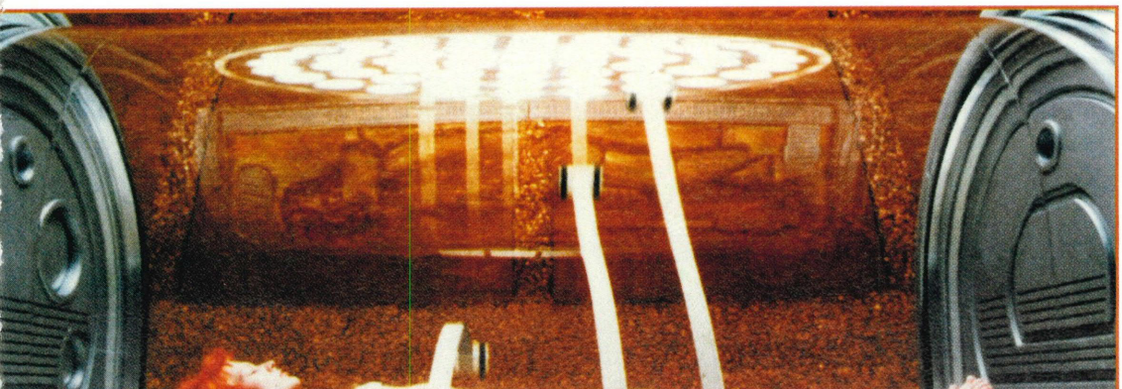


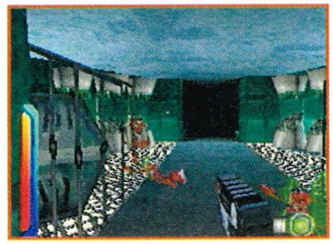












# HORNY LeeLoo OR BALDY BRUCE

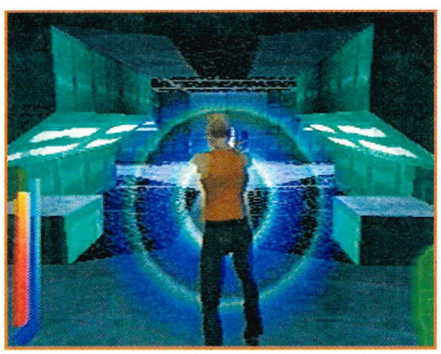


Leeloo appears in both the revealing bandage dress and that strange orange plastic gusset thing. At the beginning, she can only fight with her fists and feet, using a martial arts technique. She's the fastest of the two, and can hang from ceilings enabling her to monkey swing over lasers and other such obstacles. In the later levels, Leeloo finds grenades and bombs. These can be used to destroy attackers and blow out walls to access secret areas - how long you hold down the R2 button determines how far she throws the bomb, a small gauge appearing in the bottom-right corner. She can also throw her explosives while crouching and crawling.

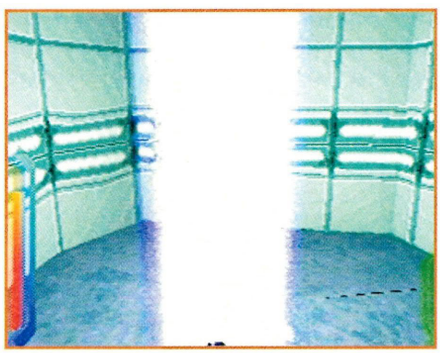
Her fighting moves are punches, kicks and combinations of both, these include a rendition of Street Fighter's Dragon Punch. Leeloo also possesses a devastating special move that explodes everything on the screen with great ferocity. This might sound like an easy option, but the move consists of pressing three different buttons exactly at the same time - repeating the move over and over again is pretty impossible. Kalisto have included the 'specific' move feature, which means that Leeloo is allowed to track paths that are inaccessible to Korben, adding variety and a unity between the friends; 'you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours!'.

Like Leeloo, Korben appears in two costumes worn in the film. He does have a kick move, but his real forte is weapons, picking up new ones left by his enemies. He's definitely slower than Leeloo, but can crouch to hide or to shield himself from bullets. Korben can fire his gun while crouching, but doesn't possess Leeloo's crawl feature.

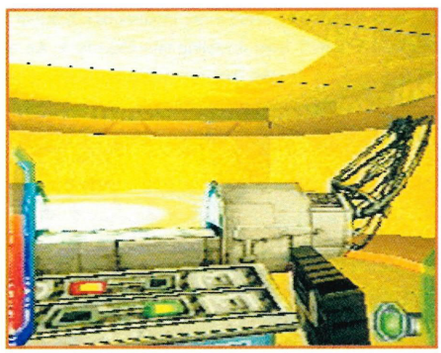
Within the game, you can collect many guns with ordinary bullets, but also a ZF1. A ZF1 was featured in the film also, it was an invention by Zorg; a gun that has flame-thrower, freezer and rocket options - all usable in the game.



There's plenty of power-ups along the way. Here, Korben has collected the all-important Shield.



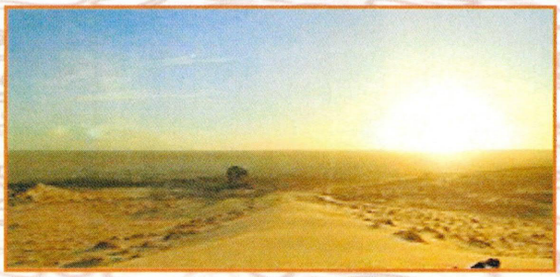
Teleports are used to transport yourself from one area to the next.

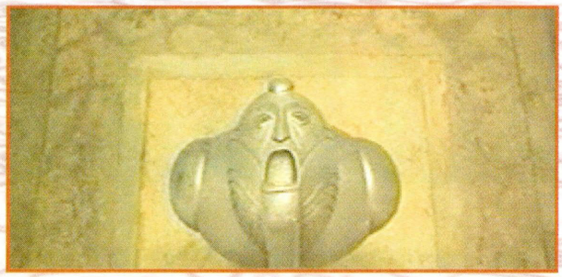


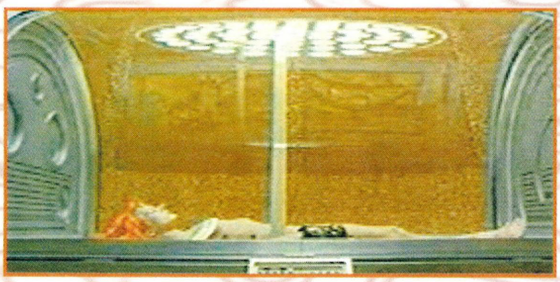
You can also view surroundings from a first-person view, but you cannot traverse in it.

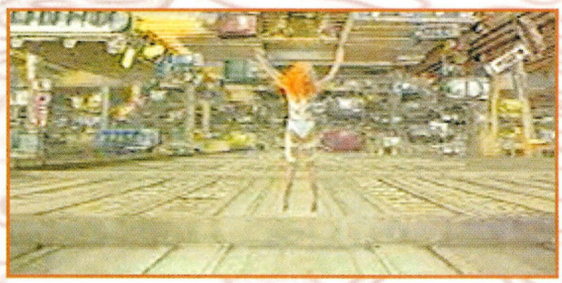
# CUT ABOVE THE REST

Between each level, you're treated to a cut scene taken straight from the film. These correspond to the next level, and heighten the tension within your Fifth Element universe.



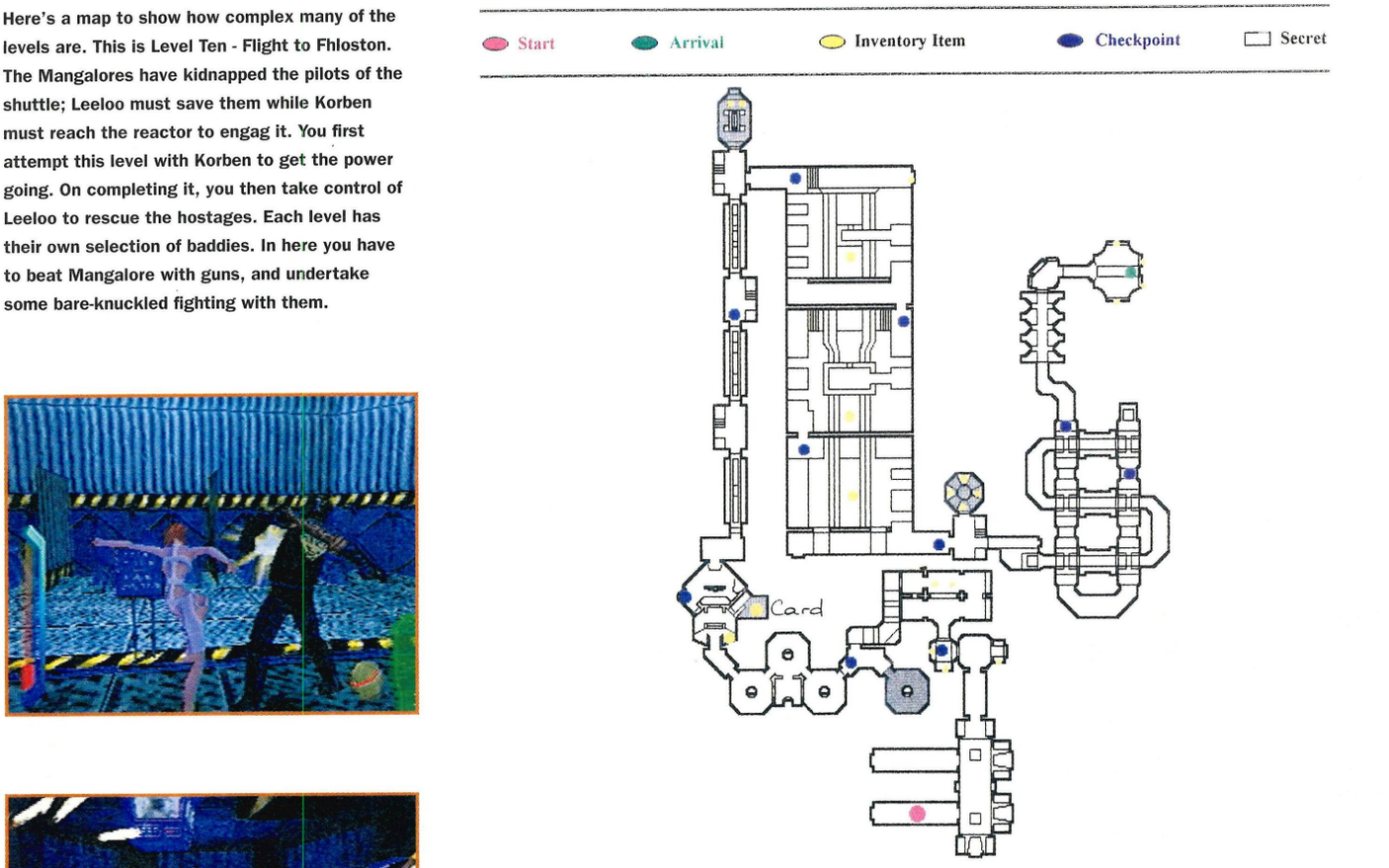






# eLaborate and embeLLished

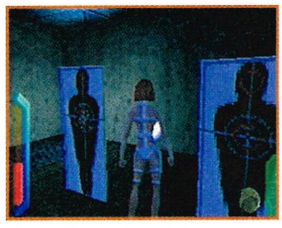
Here's a map to show how complex many of the levels are. This is Level Ten - Flight to Fhloston. The Mangalores have kidnapped the pilots of the shuttle; Leeloo must save them while Korben must reach the reactor to engag it. You first attempt this level with Korben to get the power going. On completing it, you then take control of Leeloo to rescue the hostages. Each level has their own selection of baddies. In here you have to beat Mangalore with guns, and undertake some bare-knuckled fighting with them.

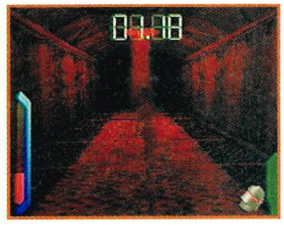


















# krypton element

Keeping in line with the film, all the baddies are incorporated within the game. A player encounters numerous enemies within a level, and has to fight up to three different villains at one time. If you've seen the film, you're already familiar with Zorg, his bodyguards, Mangalores, the Egyptian robots, cops, etc.

As well as kickin' the asses of many runts trying to destroy the earth, you have to negotiate Leeloo and Korben through various traps and mazes. On many of the levels your character is imprisoned by forcefields and lasers, escaping only when a secret passage is found. Huge ventilators scattered around the passages suck you unexpectedly into a trap, with time bombs ticking away simply waiting for you to stumble across them. There's the usual crumbling floors and walls, and the infamous creatures falling from above, and to round it off, moving sidewalks, swing cables, and other miscellaneous pitfalls.

Scenery and the characters' outfits played a huge part in the movie, creating an outrageous futuristic world. Jean-Paul Gautier was hired by Luc Besson to design the charcater's outfits, with the Jean Giraud, alias Moebius, designing the backgrounds. For Kalisto to recreate this feel, they took on board the creativity of Jean's right-hand 'man', his daughter Helene. The graphic artists at Kalsito used colour shading and Gouraud textures to remodel the places and characters from the film into a graphic universe. The game takes on board four of the settings featured in the film. New York in 2213 boasts ultra-modern buildings. The space shuttle has a complex labyrinth of passageways, the Fhloston Paradise, a lavish, richly decorated hotel craft and finally, the Egyptian Temple's ageless architecture, endangered by the shadow of the developing Ultimate Evil.

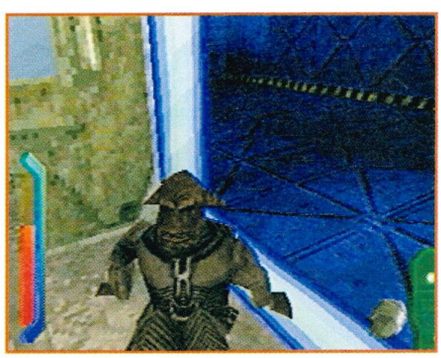


In some levels it's against the clock to access the areas.









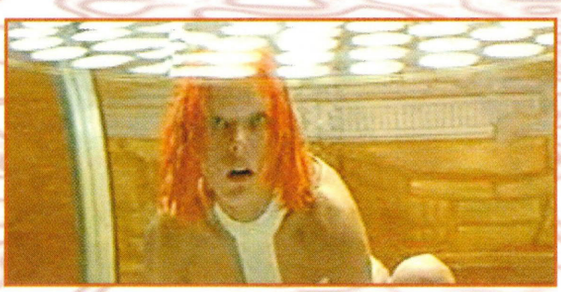
All of the weird and wacky creatures from the film are included.

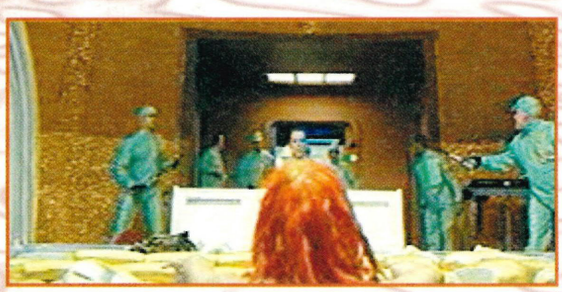
# DNA headrush

This is a mind-blowing scene from the film/game where Leeloo is reborn from a strand of DNA.

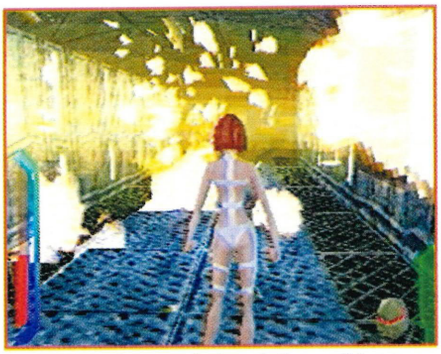




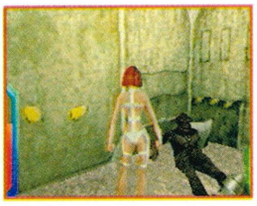




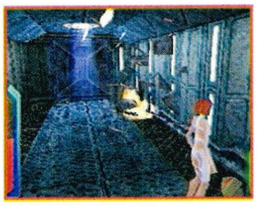




Leeloo's special move is devastating; nothing on the screen is left standing.







## SOUNDS




Most of the in-game themes have been composed by the Kalisto musicians. The music changes depending on which hero is playing, to make things more personal. Additional music has been composed by Eric Serra, who also wrote the score for the film, and is used in the introduction scene. He has also composed an original track for the game and has supplied many samples to add atmosphere to the proceedings.

If you haven't heard of Eric before, you've definitely heard his music. He's scored some classic films including Leon, The Big Blue, GoldenEye and Nikita.

## 'if she was president...'

Fifth Element, the film, boasted many high-profile Hollywood actors, but it also boasted a babe who's clothes barely covered her nips. Milla Jovovich, born in Kiev, Ukraine, grabbed everyone's attention as the sexy alien who could save the earth from certain destruction. Other films under her bandage belt include Two Moon Junction and Chaplin. Her first starring role was in the sexual The Return to Blue Lagoon. And if being a top model and actress isn't enough, she released a CD in 1994 entitled The Divine Comedy which gained her rave reviews. The news on the street is that she's got another album coming out in the summer.



## the future's orange

The version we've been playing isn't totally complete. Kalsito will tweak the backgrounds and fine-tune many of the features, but it's already playing and looking great without the promised refinements. The 3D engine is running at 30 frames per second, and in real-time. With an intelligent camera, disorientation in combat scenes is kept to a minimum, a problem encountered in many third-person action/adventures. Interaction with the scenery has already been implemented, breaking bars, exploding barrels, opening doors, etc. With two main characters working together to complete their quest, Fifth Element takes an established genre into a slightly different direction.

The game overall is pretty tricky; you do have to get your mind into gear to complete the later levels. This only puts more emphasis on the vital life and shield pick-ups along the way. Hidden areas have extra power-ups in them, and these are again essential in concluding a level, placing an importance on discovering the secret areas, instead of simply stumbling across them. With a great storyline, horny characters (well, Leeloo anyway!), instinctive gamplay and plenty of levels to explore, FE is going to be up there with the big boys and girls.

Publisher - SCEE
Developer - Kalisto

Genre - 3D Action/Adventure
Released - May '98

# Gamespotting

This section is dedicated to titles still in development. All the information here has been kindly sent to us by the various publishers involved in releasing the titles. Included are near-complete games like Namco's Tekken 3 and Psygnosis' adidas Power Soccer 98.

## Wild Arms

**Publisher - Sony Interactive**
**Developer - Sony Japan**
**Released - TBA**

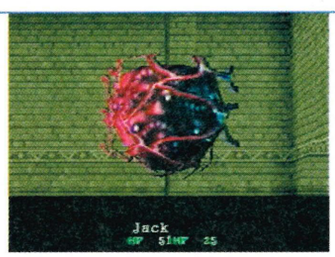


Interesting. This time last year there were very few Japanese-style RPGs on the PlayStation, and now we're facing a forthcoming flood of them. Too bad too many of them look like Zelda, though...
Wild Arms is no exception to the 'ripping off Zelda' rule, but it does have one original element going for it. You choose from three different characters; a wandering youth, a treasure hunter and a girl from the abbey. Each character plots his or her own course through the game, offering you three different openings. We've no details regarding the plot or whether the characters' storylines converge at present, so for now just look at the screenshots and wait for next month's preview.











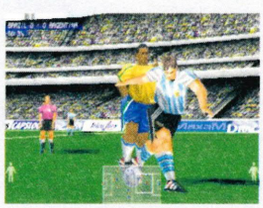


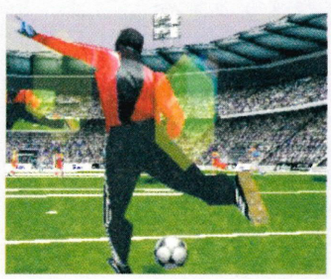
## adidas Power Soccer 98

**Publisher - Psygnosis**
**Developer - Shen**
**Released - 8th June '98**

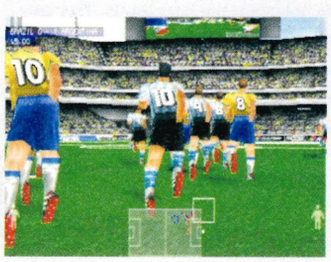








This, the fourth instalment of the lucrative adidas Soccer series, is an all-new game programmed from scratch, despite being inexorably and predictably tied in with the impending World Cup in France. Running in the PSX's little-used hi-res mode at a slick 30 frames per second, it promises an end to robotic sprites milling their way jerkily around the field. Coupled with superior motion capture on the players and their kits, Psygnosis claim near-photo realism in their clarity.
Much of the credit for this is, according to Paris-based developers Shen, thanks to them programming the game in assembly language and not 'C', which peaked out at a lowly 15-20 fps. APS'98 will hopefully avoid any irritating slowdown due to a crowded screen. There's a management game featuring a 10,000-player data base, containing information on a player's build and appearance as well as skills and form. Up to 33 stadiums are available to play in (including some secret ones).
In perhaps the most mercilessly cut-throat, competitive and money-spinning section of the PlayStation games domain, this title looks like being a definite technological cut above the rest, a refreshing attitude in an arena which all-too-often relies on the big licence or celebrity tie-in for its kudos rather than solid programming.



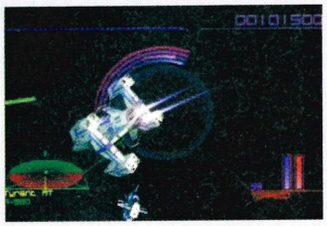





# Blast Radius

**Publisher - Psygnosis**
**Developer - In House**
**Released - 17th July '98**

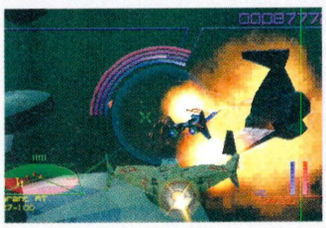




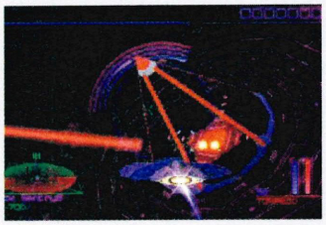


Wolf Squadron, the legendary band of fearless space fighters who fought off an alien invasion at the distant outer rim of the galactic Empire, have been wiped out after a heinous act of betrayal. As their sole survivor, Kayne, you've taken to roaming the stars as a bitter mercenary loner, a career path that brought you into contact with the Vorn, a brainy and noble race under siege by the massed forces of the brutal Kotan-Kai. For the lure of currency and advanced weapons, you have unsurprisingly agreed to fight the tyrannisers, although the risk of death is obviously high.

Taking the baton from the likes of its own Colony Wars, this is Psygnosis' impending depiction of space at its most operatic, a vast galactic flight and combat sim, bristling with meaty upgrades and numerous deadly ships. The mission structure is 'completely linear', (an intriguing boast), consisting of 31 tasks divided into ten sections, with progress dependant on enemy kills and flying through bonus-providing 'Power Rings'. Out to atomise you are 32 different artificially-intelligent enemy ships, or even better, you can link up with a mate and indulge in a one-on-one deathmatch dogfight or undertake co-operative missions ('There's bogies all over me!'). With a 'Big Beat' soundtrack and impressive-looking visuals, it promises adrenaline-pumping 3D action in a Battlestar Galactica style. Expect to see laser bolts flying like long luminous streaks of light in the month of July.









# Spice World

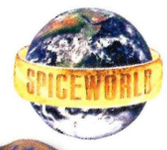
**Publisher - SCEE**
**Developer - SCEE**
**Released - Who knows**

*UPDATE

Bloody hell - this one's been on the go for ages, and we still haven't seen a playable copy. What's the betting it will be slipped onto the shelves on the quiet, earning as many sales as possible before the magazines get to review it? Anyway, here's a few new character pics and a few jokes:

Q: What's the difference between Manchester United and The Spice Girls?
A: This time next year, United will still have Giggs.

Q: What do you call a Spice Girl with two brain cells?
A: Pregnant.




















# Tekken 3

*UPDATE

Publisher - Sony
Developer - Namco
Released - March '98 (Jap)
- April '98 (US)

## The greatest fist-and-foot fighter ever returns!

**The first two Tekken games were landmarks in the history of the PlayStation - check out our beat-'em-up round-up this very issue for details. Tekken 3 wowed in the arcades, and is due for an imminent release on the PSX. Can it shape up? Let's start at the beginning.**




As Tekken fans know, the first two games covered the fabled King of the Iron Fist tournaments, and the new game's no exception. As the second event drew to a close, Jun Kazuma realises Kazuya's supernatural strength comes from the Devil. Bound by a mystic force, she's drawn to him regardless. Eventually the final contest is fought; once more, it's father vs. son as Heihachi faces his offspring Kazuya. Heihachi eventually wins, regaining control over the Mishima Conglomerate. Unaware of Devil's presence, he hurls the stricken Kazuya into a mighty volcano.

As his body is consumed by the volcano's intense heat, Devil appears before the pregnant Jun Kazama and tries to enter the soul of her unborn child. In an immense battle of wills, she defeats her diabolic adversary and retires to the desolate lands of Yakushima to raise Kazuya's son, Jin, alone.

Not satisfied with gaining control of the Mishima Conglomerate, Heihachi seeks to increase his powers by gaining the trust of the world's leaders. Using his incredible wealth, he forms Tekkenshu, a mercenary organisation employed to end wars and stop conflicts, bringing peace to the world. He also helps developing nations to build efficient agricultural systems to sustain their populations and break the cycle of Third World poverty. Through Heihachi's efforts, the world seems to be entering a new age of peace.

### Fifteen years later...

Fifteen years later, the Tekkenshu excavate an archaeological dig in Central America. They discover a new life form and Heihachi orders its capture, but then loses contact with the Tekkenshu. The last he heard was a garbled radio message: "...they're all dead... Toshin... Fighting God". Heihachi sets out for the dig, presumably to make sure he hadn't stepped outside the Tekken storyline and turned up in War Gods by mistake.

On arriving at the excavation site, he finds a field of corpses. Within weeks, the world's top fighters start to disappear. Martial artists, street fighters and those of strong soul (!) vanish into thin air, leaving no trace of their whereabouts. What is happening?

Jun Kazuma feels a dark force encroaching on her life. She doesn't know what it is, but realises it spells 'trouble'. Accepting her destiny, she tells her son Jin, now 15, everything she knows about their troubled life and instructs him to go to his grandfather Heihachi if anything happens to her.

On a cold, stormy night, Toshin makes his move. Charging across the mountains, bringing a freezing rain, he tracks down the mother and son and strikes. "Run away", cries Jun to her teenage offspring, but he opts to attack Toshin instead and is knocked unconscious. When he comes round, their house and land is burned to a cinder, and there's no trace of his mother. Mindful of her fateful instructions, Jin seeks Heihachi and begs his grandfather to train him. Jin will have his revenge! Hearing his tale, Heihachi decides to host the third King of the Iron Fist tournament.

Four years later, and 19 years after the second tourney, it's time to rumble once more. How could the God of Fighting resist such a challenge?

### Tekken: The Next Generation...

Amazingly, not only is the entire arcade game to be included in the forthcoming PlayStation version, but the rumoured memory-enhancing hardware add-on will not be necessary. There are plans to include a few bonus characters not seen in the arcades, too. Aside from a few background animations, the entire game will be ported to CD, making it the most involved fighter ever. These characters are to be included:

### Colourful Characters

As 19 years have passed since the last Tekken tourney, it's not surprising (and certainly not unwelcome) that the character list has changed considerably since the last event. All the arcade machine's fighters are included, though. Here's a low-down on who's who...



















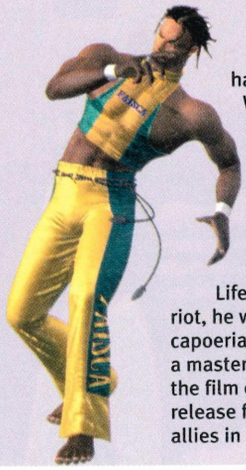







# main CHARACTERS

These are the guys and gals you can control from the beginning.



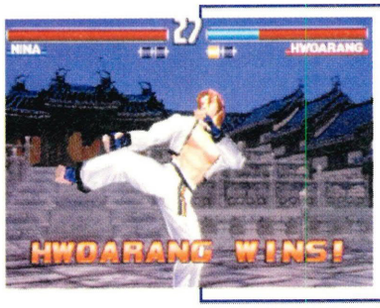
## Eddy Gordo

Gordo was the heir to one of the richest family businesses in Brazil. His hard work and amiable nature made him extremely popular.

When he was 19, Eddy noticed his brave, strong father becoming more and more nervous. A few weeks later Eddy came home from school to find him gunned down. Unknown to his offspring, Gordo Senior had been working to break the power of the drug cartels in Brazil. He had just obtained enough solid evidence to send down the godfathers of crime when he met with his fate. Cradling his dying father in his arms, Eddy was told to claim that he killed his father; only in prison would he be safe. Following this perverse logic, he went from being a rich student to a convicted murderer.

Life inside one of Brazil's notoriously rough prisons was tough. One day, during a riot, he watched an old man taking apart a gang of thugs using a martial art called capoeria. For the next eight years the old man taught him these skills, until he became a master, a 'lethal weapon' (so that's where the programmers heard about capoeria - the film of this name used an expert in this martial art as a fight choreographer). Upon release from the nick he decided to enter the King of the Iron Fist tournament to seek allies in his quest for revenge.

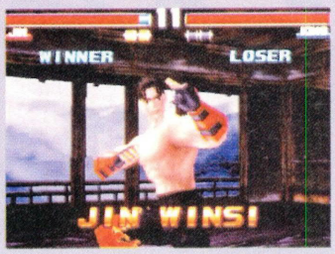



## Hwoarang

Hwoarang, a tae kwon do student who trains at Baek Doo San's dojo, makes his money by picking fights and gambling on the outcome. He fools the punters into thinking he's a useless fighter, then makes a bet on himself when the odds are favourable. Hwoarang's only failure was when he was pitched against Jin Kazuma, a fighter unknown to him. He could only manage a draw, causing him to hang his head in shame, vowing to practice every day to ensure it wouldn't happen again. His master and mentor, Baek, was later taken by the God of Fighting as one of the strong souls. Hwoarang, therefore, has two solid reasons for entering the tournament. To beat Jin Kazama and avenge his master against the God of Fighting.





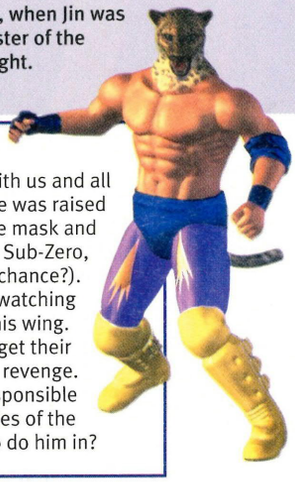



## Jin Kazama

When he was 15, Jin learned he was Kazuya Mishima's son. Also that year, his mother, Jun Kazama, was mysteriously killed. Training under the mastership of his grandfather Heihachi, he vowed to kill the God of Fighting, sometimes known as Toshin, who he believed had killed his mother.

For four years the old master taught the young pretender until, when Jin was 19, he called the third tournament. Jin is now a formidable master of the Kazama style of judo and Mishima style of karate in his own right.





## King

This bio has more Kings than the Wars of the Roses, but bear with us and all will be clear. King isn't the King seen in the first fights. Instead he was raised in the original King's orphanage. When he was 24, the first King was killed - he donned the mask and took the place of his mentor to defend the orphanage (shades of Mortal Kombat's Sub-Zero, perchance?).

The younger King had no formal training in the martial arts, and only learned his trade by watching the older King. Thus Armour King, a sub-boss in the second Tekken game, took him under his wing. He knew who killed the original King, and through his young replacement, they would get their revenge.

Four years later the new King, now a successful wrestler, learns the God of Fighting was responsible for the death of the original masked grappler. Thus the motive is again revenge - why don't the enemies of the God of Fighting gang up on their mysterious foe instead of pummelling each other to win the right to do him in?

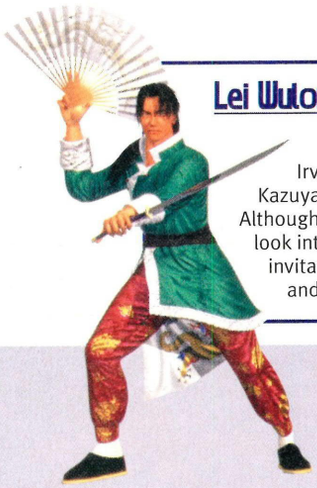


## Forest Law

Take this guy seriously, despite his forename. He's the son of Marshall Law, the character from the earlier outings with the equally-silly moniker. Forest trains at his father's dojo, hoping to achieve the same level of greatness. His father, though, forbids him to enter any contests outside the dojo.

His friend Paul Phoenix turns up every three months to spar with Forest. During one of these sparring sessions, he suggests the young Law should enter King of the Iron Fist tournament 3, unaware that Marshall has forbidden such actions. Forest at first refuses, but eventually gives in when Paul tells him he's a better fighter than his old man. Marshall is enraged when he finds out. To him, his son might as well have been kidnapped.





## Lei Wulong

In the second tourney, he was almost defeated by Bruce Irvin, but won through in the end. He won't meet his old adversary this time, though - Irvin's plane crashed on the way home, killing all aboard. It's rumoured that Kazuya's corps were involved in this, but Lei doubts Bruce is really dead.

Although 45, Lei Wulong is a tough fighter and excellent investigator. It falls on him to look into the mysterious disappearances of martial artists. He's baffled by Heihachi's invitation to join the third King of the Iron Fist tournament, but Lei believes in fate and feels the meeting will guide him to his destiny. Some detective!





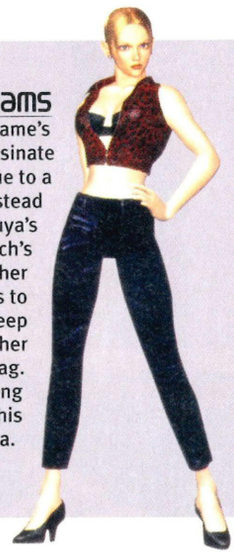


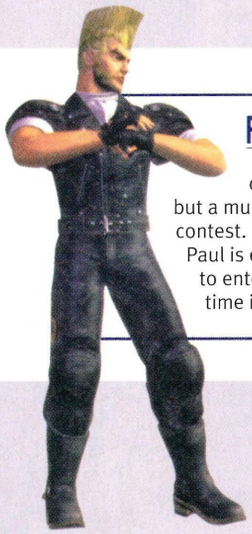


## Nina Williams

Nina, the Irish assassin and the game's inevitable babe, failed to assassinate Kazuya in the last tourney due to a quarrel with her sister, Anna. Instead they were both captured by Kazuya's corps and used by Dr Boskonovitch's cryogenic experiments, causing her to sleep for 15 years. Needless to say, this is just an excuse to keep her in the game without making her boobs sag.

Nina was awakened when the rising God of Fighting raised her fighting spirit. She's now under his command, and under orders to assassinate Jin Kazama.

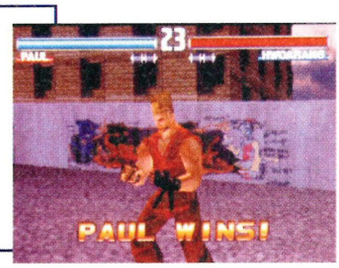




## Paul Phoenix

Paul Phoenix, one of the most popular characters in the Tekken series, was robbed of the chance of victory in the last tournament by cruel fate. He earned the right to fight Kazuya, but a multiple pile-up on the motorway stopped him getting there, forcing him to forfeit the contest. He has yet to win a contest that would mark him as a true great.

Paul is experienced, to say the least. He's 46, and still considers himself in peak condition. Invited to enter the third King of the Iron Fist tournament, there could only be one answer - Paul knows time is against him, and victory is his only motive for entering.



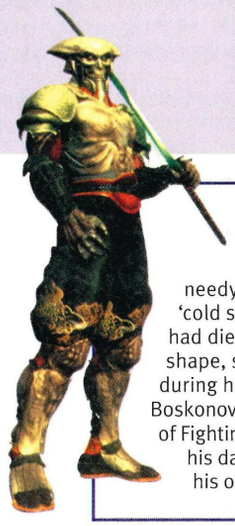





## Ling Xiaoyu

Bloody kids... this one's a 16-year-old amusement park freak who's dream is to build a park in her native China. Despite her size, Ling is a respected martial artist. She sought out Heihachi for finding for her amusement park. She stowed away on board a yacht belonging to the Mishima Financial Empire, but Heihachi was not on board. She was soon discovered, and Heihachi himself informed. When the main man arrived, he found his troops battered and bruised, a defiant Ling Xiaoyu threatening to go berserk again if her demands weren't met. Heihachi promises her the park of her dreams if she enters and wins the King of the Iron Fist tournament.







## Yoshimitsu

This guy raises research funds for Dr Boskonovitch, who once saved his life, and also helps the poor and needy. He visits Boskonovitch, who used his still-unproven 'cold sleep' technology to preserve his young daughter, who had died suddenly. Boskonovitch himself is also in poor shape, suffering from a pathological organism contracted during his studies.

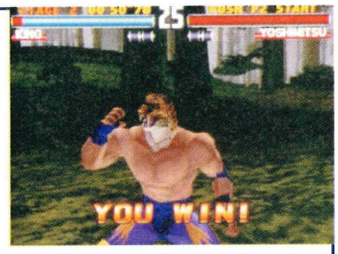
Boskonovitch claims he needs the blood of the newly-raised God of Fighting to complete his studies, restore his health and return his daughter to life. Versatile, isn't it? Yoshimitsu, indebted to his old friend and saviour, enters the third King of the Iron Fist tournament.



# OTHER CHARACTERS

**These include sub-bosses, secret characters and other featured fighters.**

## Julia Chang




Remember Native American Michelle Chang from the earlier games? she raised Julia Chang, who was abandoned as a baby. Julia, now an archaeology student, loves Michelle and trained to protect her adopted homeland.
Julia was 18 when stories of the disappearance of martial artists began. Her tribe knew the cause, which was enshrined in their folk lore. Michelle, who wore a pendant which held the key to the Native Americans' most sacred treasure, thought her jewel might have something to do with the disappearances. She left for Japan to ask Heihachi why he sought to take it during the second tournament. She did not return. Julia suspects treachery by Heihachi, and now seeks him out to discover the truth. Thus, she enters the third King of the Iron Fist tournament...

## Bryan Fury

Fury was an officer in the International Police Organisation until he was brutally gunned down in a Hong Kong shoot-out. Inevitably (or his role in the game would be very short), his body was stolen by the 88-year-old mad scientist Dr Abel.



Although infamous in the criminal underground, he was often beaten to discoveries and findings by his arch-nemesis Dr. Boskonovitch. Desperate to beat his rival, he came up with an evil plan; he would create a cyborg army. As Dr. Boskonovitch was the acknowledged master of cybernetics, Abel reanimated Fury's corpse and got him to spy on his rival creator. As he's already capable of reanimating corpses, you wonder why he needs to create cyborg armies, but we'll let that pass. Fury is duly sent to collect the required data.
Although a skilful detective, Fury's career was dogged by dark rumours of criminal involvement. While investigating various drug gangs in Hong Kong, Lei Wulong was disgusted to find Fury had connections with the dealers. Before this could be revealed, however, the unfortunate Fury was gunned down.
So what connects Bryan Fury with the tournament? Simple - Yoshimitsu, who has dealings with Boskonovitch.




## Gun Jack

Remember the Jack robots from the earlier games? Remember Jack 2's friend Jane? Well, when she was eight, the Russian-built droid rescued her from a bacteriological war, only to be destroyed by a satellite weapon as she watched. Jane went on to train as a physicist, and tried to rebuild Jack 2. After ten years she had him up and running at 90% efficiency, but he seemed to have lost the humane characteristics that distinguished the robot from his prototype, Jack 1.
Jane continued to search for the missing protocols that would return Jack 2 to his former gentle state, analysing the software over and again. She found most of the software was written by Mishima Heavy Industry, a subsidiary of the Mishima Financial Empire. She also discovered a hidden program, Project Gun Jack, laying the groundwork for a piece of intelligent artillery. Jane installed the program and took the renamed Gun Jack to Mishima...



## Kuma/Panda




The original Kuma, bodyguard to Heihachi, is a freak in the fighting games world - he died of old age. His child, also called Kuma (conveniently enough), became his replacement.
The current Kuma is considerably smarter than his father, even to the point of operating and using a television set. While watching the box, he saw martial artist Paul Phoenix in action and decided he must train until he's good enough to beat him - so much for him being smart! The God of Fighting is an irrelevance to Kuma, who is secretly in love with Xiaoyu's Panda. Perhaps he should buy her a teddy human...

## Heihachi Mishima




After defeating his son in the second tournament, Heihachi sought to further his ambitions by winning influence among the world leaders. He formed Tekkenshu as a group of trouble-shooting mercenaries and peace-keeping force, ending the troubles of war. He also gave the Third World a decent system of agriculture.
Fifteen years after he beat his son, the Tekkenshu uncovered a secret life form in Central America and were annihilated. Heihachi realised this must be the mysterious God of Fighting.
When the then-15-year-old Jin Kazama, Heihachi's grandson, explained what had happened to his mother, the old man realised the Fighting God must be feeding on strong souls. He then trained Jin, intending to use him as a decoy to bait the trap for the God of Fighting (family values, eh?).




On Jin's 19th birthday, Heihachi announced the third King of the Iron Fist tournament open. He also noticed the youngest of his bloodline had begun to display the same dangerous power which had caused his son to rebel. After the tournament, Heihachi must dispose of him.

## Ogres

There are two ogres in the game. An old Native American saga tells of creatures from outer space and their war weapon, the ogre. It understands all living things, and strides the Earth in search of strong souls. Could this be the God of Fighting?

## Mokujin

Now here's a weird one - Mokujin is a training dummy made from a 2000-year-old oak tree. When the God of Fighting awoke, he became a sentient being in his own right and gained a life of his own. Is he in any way connected with the God? No one knows for sure, but what is known is that Mokujin fights by imitating his adversary.

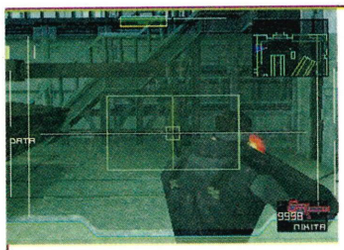
## Gon

One of the secret characters unique to the PlayStation is Gon, a dragon from a Japanese cartoon. Here he is in action, in some screens from Namco of Japan.



# Metal Gear Solid

Publisher - Konami
Developer - Konami
Released - 3rd Quarter '98





**Metal Gear Solid is under the media spotlight at the moment as one of the most promising games of 1998, and from what we've seen it could well become the best game of the year.**

You play Solid Snake, a man with abilities beyond the capabilities of most human beings. He has an IQ over 180 and can converse fluently in six languages. Add to this his superb fighting abilities and his expertise in activities such as scuba diving and free climbing and you've got a hero that's worthy of a game of these proportions.

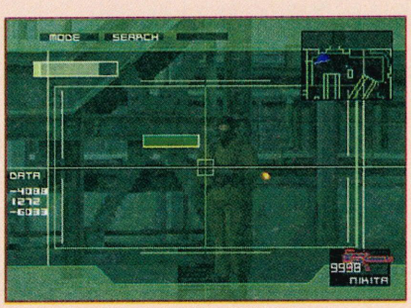
Solid Snake is an ex-member of Foxhound, an organisation of scientifically-altered super soldiers. Now, though, his ex-comrades have turned terrorist and taken over an Alaskan Nuclear missile base and are threatening to cause the biggest nuclear disaster that the world has ever seen. It's your job, as super soldier Solid Snake, to infiltrate the base, eliminate the terrorists, locate the nuclear warheads and disarm them. Time is against you though, as Foxhound have given a 24-hour ultimatum.











Konami could have opted for the usual full-on blast fest with Metal Gear Solid, and it would still look like a great game. They weren't happy with this game format, though, so they've added a new element to the proceedings; rather than just gunning your opponents down you have to sneak around the complex in a Mission Impossible/James Bond style. Shooting the enemy only causes the alarm to be raised so you have to take them out covertly, in silence. Of course, the opportunity for some full-on gun-fighting arises, but the main aim of the game is stealth.

Metal Gear Solid appears to be much like Resident Evil 2, and on the surface this would be true. The graphical style of the game is the same in that it is true 3D, but instead of the camera being set, it can follow you around. The 3D aspect is where the comparison ends, though. For a start, there's the espionage/stealth tie-in and Metal Gear Solid also has a larger range of weapons and gadgets that can be utilised to help you progress. It's also been said that Metal Gear Solid's storyline is less linear than Resident Evil 2, which would be great if true, because we reckon that RE2's storyline is superlative.

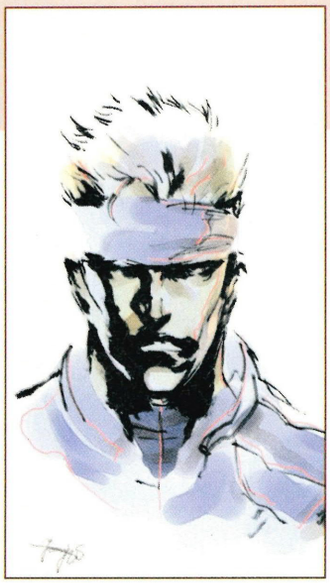
The game is being hailed as a political espionage thriller and it's not just a case of you entering the base and finding the missiles. There's a plethora of characters to interact with, and there's even reported to be a love interest within the storyline. The game doesn't simply concentrate on the task at hand and thus is reported to have a very film-like feeling to it.

We've yet to play Metal Gear Solid because Konami are keeping a tight lid on it until nearer the Autumn release date. The images we've seen so far are very impressive, though, and we can't wait to get our hands on the preview copy. Hopefully we won't have to wait for too long before we get a chance to play what could be 1998's best game.

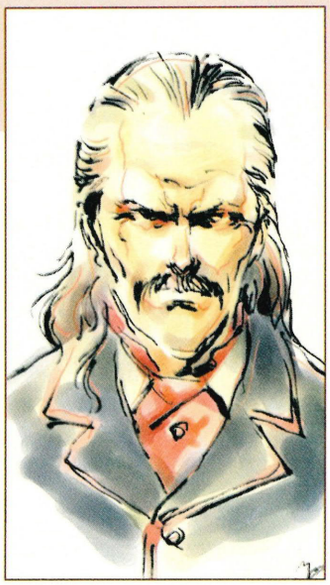




# CHARACTERS



## SOLID SNAKE
The hero of the game, Solid Snake is the ultimate fighting machine and has a ridiculous amount of abilities.



## REVOLVER OCELOT
Revolver Ocelot is a former Russian agent who has been recruited to Foxhound.



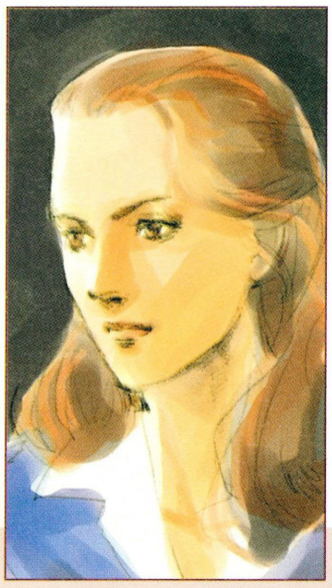
## MERYL SILVERBURGH
Meryl is Snake's partner. She was born into a family of soldiers, which makes her bloody hard.



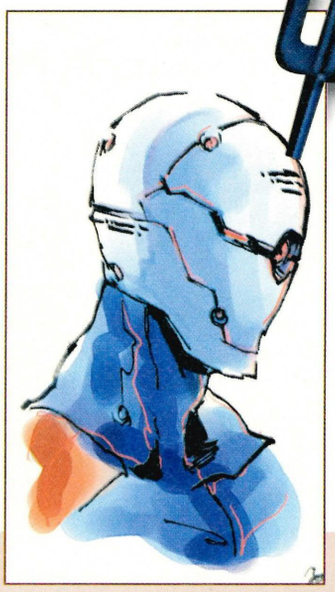
## LIQUID SNAKE
Liquid snake is the leader of Foxhound but this is the only information we have on him at this time.

## VULCAN RAVEN
Vulcan's role in the game is an unknown quantity but we do know that he is half Alaskan Indian, half Eskimo, which means he has an almost inhuman resistance to cold, which is pretty handy in these climates.

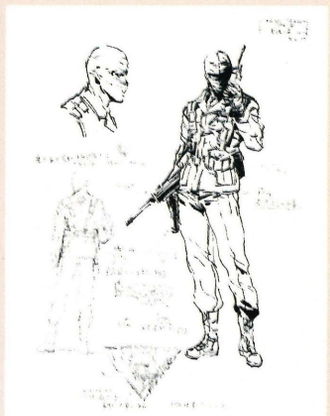
## PSYCHO MANTIS
This former KGB spy has unknown supernatural powers. After the KGB he joined the FBI and subsequently ended up in Foxhound.



## DR. NAOMI
Dr Naomi is the co-star of the game. She is the medical chief of the Foxhound organisation although she is on Solid Snake's side. She keeps in contact throughout the game via radio.

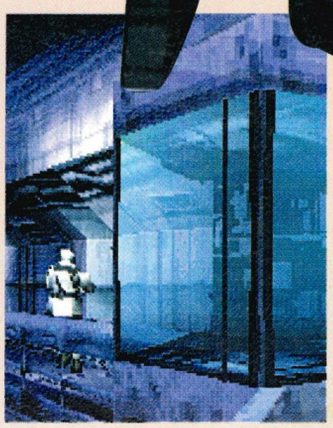


## NINJA
The Ninja is a bit of a mystery; nobody knows whether he is an ally or an enemy.



TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION
METAL GEAR
SOLID





# Surfing the CYBERCAFE

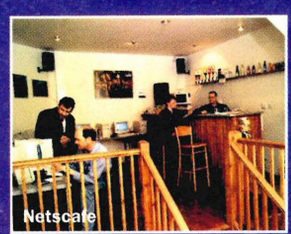
cybercafe

## How to make the most of your half hour in cyberspace

The internet's jam-packed full of all the latest hints, cheats, news, reviews and solutions to your favourite PSX games, but not everyone has access to it at home, work or school. How can the average Joe Joypad get on the .net, and what should he look for when he does?

If you can't afford two grand for a multi-media computer with internet access, you try your local Cybercafe.

Cybercafes are springing up everywhere. There's one in most major towns and cities - check the Yellow Pages under Internet Service Providers to find your nearest outlet. Like a normal cafe, they serve the usual eats and drinks, but unlike a normal cafe, for a small fee you can use one of their computers to access the internet. £3 for half an hour is about an average price. If you've never used the internet before, though, you could waste your time on fruitless searching and less-than-wonderful sites. These guidelines don't offer a comprehensive guide to the internet, but instead give the bare basics to help you get the most from your first trip into cyberspace.


Netscafe

A typical such Cybercafe is Netscafe of Bennington Street, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. Here you can use one of their nine Pentium 120 PCs for only £2.50 for half an hour. "Lots of customers use it to find out about PlayStation games", says manager William Rendell. "It's a trendy place to hang out too". Netscafe (how did they get away with that name?) also offer half an hour's individual internet tuition for £10, as well as beginners' and advanced courses - if you're serious about your surfing, find out if your local Cybercafe offers similar services. There's always a member of staff on hand to help you if you're stuck too.

Like most Cybercafes, Netscafe allow you to print from the internet, or save information to disk, which they also sell. They charge 10p per A4 sheet of black and white, or 40p for a colour print. Again, your local outlet probably provides a similar service.

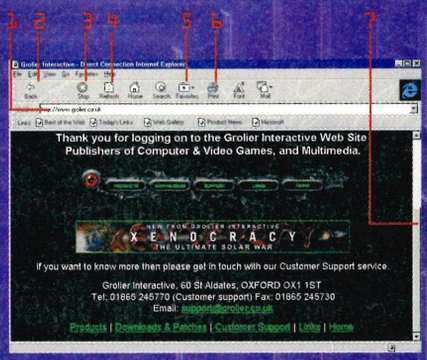
If you're thinking of using the .net to look for porn, you might just get away with it. Netscafe have a clear policy, which they say is typical of Cybercafes everywhere. "It depends on the age of the customers present, the time of day and the type of porn involved", said Mr Rendell. "If it's pictures of Jennifer Aniston with her boobs out we turn a blind eye, but we don't allow anything stronger".

Let's get on the web.

# Wandering the Web

## - Browsers

An internet browser is a program which lets you use the internet. The two most popular are Netscape Navigator and MicroSoft Explorer - your local Cybercafe is bound to use one or the other. You could write a book on the high-level, techie functions of these browsers, but for basic netsurfing, the functions you need are as follows:



MicroSoft Explorer

**1: ADDRESS/LOCATION** This is the web site that's currently open. You can highlight the text by dragging the mouse pointer across it with the button held down (left button for PCs). You can then type another internet address and press Enter to go straight to that site.

**2: BACK/FORWARD BUTTON** Clicking on Back takes you to the web page you just left. Clicking on Forward then takes you forward again.

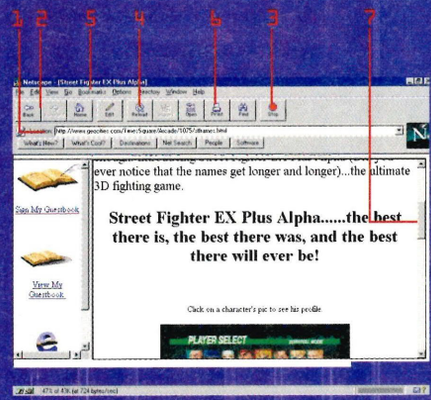
**3: STOP** Abandons the current task, whether loading a page or searching for a site.

**4: RELOAD/REFRESH** Reloads the current page.

**5: BOOKMARKS/FAVOURITES** Takes you to sites you've previously bookmarked. Most Cybercafes keep search engines bookmarked - ask about this.

**6: PRINT** Most cafes offer this function, for a fee. Check whether you're using black and white or the more expensive colour option, though.

**7: SCROLL BAR** If a page is too big to fit on the screen, use the arrows at the top and bottom to scroll up and down.



Netscape Navigator

How you save a file to disk depends on whether you want to save a picture, the text or the layout. If you want to save, talk to the Cybercafe staff.

# Wot's a Web Site?

Think of the internet as a library, and each web site as a book. A search engine helps you find the 'book' you need, and usually points you to the page too. When you've read that particular page (or decided it isn't the one you want), you need to turn to another. On the web, this is achieved by using links as explained elsewhere. When you've finished with the 'book' (ie. web site), you can turn to another by pressing the Back button on your browser to get back to the search engine and choose again, or use a link offered by the current site which takes you to another. Most sites have a page of links to other sites, so if you've found a site which offers the subject you're looking for but not the information you want, you should head for this.

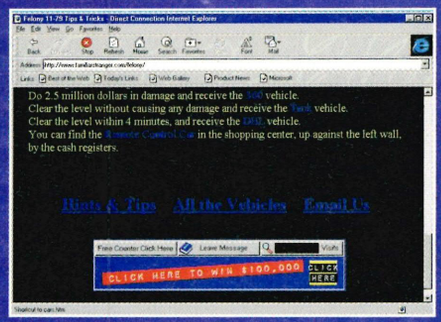
# Using Links

Links take you to other pages within a site or on to another site all together. There are two sorts of links used on the internet. Text links are underlined and usually a different colour to the page's main text, and picture links either have a heavy coloured border or specific instructions to use the pic as a link. Move the mouse pointer onto either sort of link and it changes from an arrow to a hand. Clicking the mouse button takes you to another page or site.

In the example here, from a web site dedicated to Felony 11-79, the text links take you to pages titled Hints & Tips, All the Vehicles and one from where you can send the site creator an e-mail message. The advert labelled 'click here to win $100,000' is a link too - note the blue border.

If you use a link then return to the previous page with the Back button, the link you followed has changed colour - this just shows you where you've been.

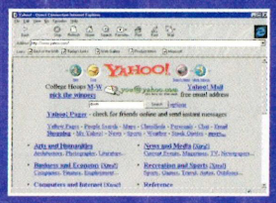
Now you're familiar with the basic functions of the browsers, let's look at some search engines.




# Search Engines

The internet is vast. There's nothing more frustrating than desperately searching for something you're sure is there, but turning up nothing but irrelevant sites when searching. By following these simple tips, you can greatly increase your chances of finding what you want.

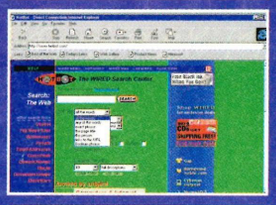
To use a search engine, type the information you want in the area provided then click on the Search button. There are numerous search engines to be found on the internet, the best one to use depending on the task in hand. When looking for pearls of PlayStation information, the most useful search engines are Yahoo!, Hotbot and Lycos. Let's look at them in turn.




**Yahoo!: http://www.yahoo.com**

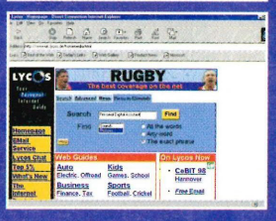
The main advantage of Yahoo! is that it groups sites according to subject. For example, if you look for Doom, it offers seven categories including ones for the Monks of Doom rock band and the comic Doom Patrol as well as the 3D computer game. Each of these categories offers a collection of individual sites. This makes Yahoo! ideal for looking for general information such as PlayStation cheats or fighting games - half the work has been done for you.

Having found the category of your choice, you can narrow the search if you wish. For example, having found Doom and moved on to the category for the computer game, you can enter 'PlayStation' in the text box and use 'search only in Doom' before searching again. This narrows the search further.



**Hotbot: http://www.hotbot.com**

Hotbot doesn't group sites like Yahoo!, but it's incredibly powerful and versatile. It's great for finding specific information. By setting the search menu, you can look for any or all of the words you type into the text box, or the exact phrase requested. You can also search only for title pages or for people too. This limits the number of irrelevant sites offered. For example, look for PRIMAL RAGE and you might get a music site with the low-down on PRIMAL Scream and RAGE Against the Machine. Set the search to 'exact phrase' and this is avoided.




**Lycos: http://www.uk.lycos.de/**

Lycos isn't the best search engine for PlayStation information, but it's a mean tool for finding pictures. Click on the 'pictures & sounds' file above the text box and set the search to All the Words, Any Word or Exact Phrase as needed. You can then make a search for pictures and sounds instead of general sites.

# Top Tips for Successful Searches

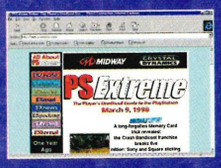
When searching for your fave PSX game on the internet, bear in mind the following:

- Give the search engine as much information as possible. If you're looking for a solution to Acclaim's D, for example, typing 'D' gives every site containing that letter. Instead, enter 'D Acclaim'.
- If you're getting too many irrelevant hits, narrow your search and try again. For example, if you enter 'PGA Tour', you'll probably get a lot of sites offering the sporting event rather than the PlayStation game. Try again, entering 'PGA Tour Electronic Arts' or 'PGA Tour PSX'.
- If you find a site you like, write down its address. You might want to come back to it on another cybervisit.
- If you're looking for comprehensive information on a game, including tips and cheats, look for its FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions). These are generally very useful.
- If in doubt, ask. The cafe proprietor or its staff will be only too happy to help.

# Top Sites

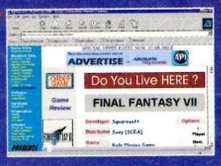
So much for the search engines; let's have a look at some of the best PSX and gaming sites on the web.

### • PS Extreme
**http://www.psextreme.com**




Nothing to do with this magazine - in fact it's the internet site of an American mag. The animated menus are a little unclear, but the content's good, especially for US news and reviews.

### • Absolute PlayStation
**http://www.absolute-playstation.com**




Part of this site is members only, but the open area is great for recent reviews.

### • Games Domain
**http://www.gamesdomain.com**




A comprehensive all-formats on-line magazine, though some tips need a special reader program, available through the site.

### • Secrets of the Game Sages
**http://www.segasages.com**




Despite the URL, this site covers virtually every console ever, from the Atari 2600 to the PlayStation. A fantastic tips site.

### • Datel Electronics
**http://www.datel.co.uk**



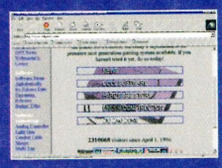

Contains reams of Datel Action Replay codes - make sure you look at the UK/European codes. If you've an Action Replay cart, this site alone is worth the Cybercafe and printing fees.

### • Sony's PSX Page
**http://www.playstation.com/global.html**



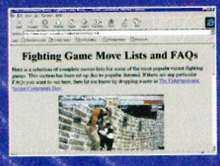
Sony's official site, covering all territories.

### • PlayStation Galleria
**http://www.vidgames.com**



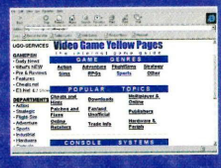
The oldest PSX site, and still one of the best. It lists games that utilise peripherals such as the light gun and Multi tap.

### • Fighting Game Moves
**http://www.student.uwa.edu.au/student/predator/faqs.html**




Moves lists for all the latest fighting games. It covers all new formats and arcades, but hasn't a huge list of games.

### • Video Game Yellow Pages
**http://www.ugo.net/yellowpages/**

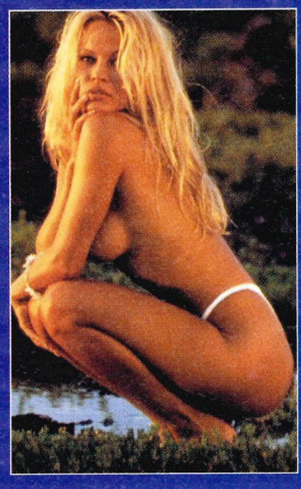



A great links site that organises its links according to genre and game, but also tips and reviews. A fine foot in the door.

# Five Minutes Spare?







If you've a spare five minutes after you've found all the PlayStation goodies you want, why not look for a little porn? Remember what William Rendell of Netscape said, though; if there are no kids in the room, pictures of Jennifer Aniston with her boobs out are usually tolerated. Fuzzy photos of people crapping into each others' mouths are certainly not.

# Glossary

| | |
|---|---|
| **Bookmark** | A menu listing web sites. Use it to take you directly to a bookmarked site (on MicroSoft Explorer, the menu is labelled 'Favourites'). |
| **Browser** | Piece of software that lets you search the internet. |
| **Error 404** | This means the site you want is no longer available. |
| **Explorer** | MicroSoft Explorer, a browser. |
| **FAQ** | Frequently Asked Questions. |
| **Hits** | Sites offered by a search engine after a search. |
| **Links** | A piece of text or graphic which takes you to another internet site or a different page on the same site. |
| **Navigator** | Netscape Navigator, a browser. |
| **Newsgroup** | A place where people with a common interest can write and reply to messages (posts). |
| **Search Engine** | Used to find information on the internet. |
| **URL** | Universal Resource Location. In short, a web site address. |
| **Web Ring** | A group of sites on a similar subject who have joined forces, allowing easy access from one to the others in the ring. |
| **World Wide Web** | The part of the internet which features web sites. |

**So now you know what to expect as you take those first, tentative steps into the amazing world of cyberspace. Are you up for it? If you follow our advice and surf a Cybercafe, let us know how you get on.**

# SNOW RACER 98
## competition



To tie in with last month's exclusive review of the awesome Snow Racer 98 (90%), Ocean have thrown a couple of thousand pounds-worth of prizes our way. We gratefully caught them, and are now throwing them in your direction..Instead of just giving away skiing gear and have you chuck it in the cupboard because you can't afford a holiday to use it, we're giving away a skiing trip to Aviemore worth over £1000 as well. And believe me, £1000 in Scotland goes a long way. It will be a five star hotel, full board, the works. First prize consists of a holiday, a snowboard and a pair of skis. Nice! Second prize is a snowboard and a pair of skis. And the next 25 entries pulled out get a Snow Racer 98 snow hat and T-shirt. To win these pristine prizes, answer the following question:

**In which Winter Olympics was snowboarding an event?**

A: Bognor Regis '91
B: Perth '72
C: Nagano '98
D: Glasgow '54

Entries on a postcard, preferably with naked women on it, to:

Snow Racer 98 Competition
extreme PlayStation magazine
Quay House
The Quay
Poole
Dorset
BH15 1HA

*If you can't get it to us by April 24th, don't bother. You'll be wasting a stamp.

ocean

POWER AND MAGIC DEVELOPMENT

DYNASTAR SKIS

NIDECKER

Publisher - Grolier Interactive  Developer - Simis  Release Date - April '98  Genre - Strategy/Combat

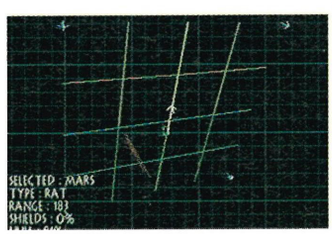
# Xenocracy

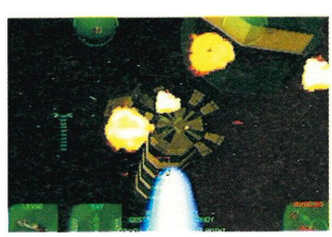
## The fate of mankind is in your hands (again).





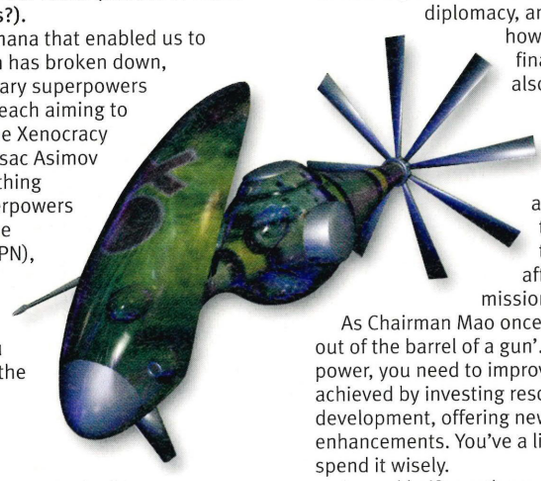


**It had to happen. Mankind's toying with space travel in the middle-to-late 20th Century developed into a full-scale colonization of the universe. By 10,600 Common Era (whatever that means) our own solar system has been tamed (or at least the useful parts of it), with four planetary superpowers, namely the Earth Dominion, the Mars Combine, the Venus Alliance and the Mercury League vying for supremacy. The extreme PlayStation crew look forward to seeing how humanity conquered Mercury - it's hotter than a Bournemouth nudist beach on a sunny Summer bank holiday. Mankind's conquest of the solar system was made possible by the discovery of the liquonide mineral lycosite, a source of fuel that brought even the outermost planets within our reach (shades of Frank Herbert's Dune, methinks?).**

True to form, the pax humana that enabled us to colonise the solar system has broken down, and the four great planetary superpowers are waging a covert war, each aiming to be the most powerful - the Xenocracy universe owes more to Issac Asimov than Star Trek. Only one thing stands between the superpowers and all-out war - that's the United Planet Nations (UPN), an organisation to which the four planetary powers are signatories. It's up to you (quelle surprise) to stop the skirmishes and raids erupting into all-out interplanetary warfare.



You play WingToucher, commander of Rei Squadron, attached to the UPN's Special Operations Executive (who comes up with these names?). You serve each of the planetary superpowers equally, ensuring no single power gains supermacy. If one of the powers gets too big, cut it down to size. If a planet's losing out, accede to one of its requests and bolster its power. Pay attention to this complex juggling act - if two planets get too disillusioned with the UPN and leave, you lose.

### Juggling with Planets

So much for the plot; what about the gameplay? You start with all planets equally powerful, but as one force gains the upper hand the others request you undertake a mission to reduce its power. This might involve destroying a lunar mining operation (some of the planetary moons are teeming with minerals), smashing a convoy or other such violent actions. Your popularity with the planet you assisted increases, while the one you attacked are understandably pissed off. Next mission, you might attack the planet you helped in the previous skirmish. You must juggle the powers in this way to prevent all-out war (who said 'fighting for peace is like, ahem, copulating for virginity?) and to prevent any of them becoming so annoyed with you that they leave the UPN. This had the extreme PlayStation crew scratching our heads. The UPN's authority (and presumably its funding) comes from the four planets themselves. Are they really going to tolerate such blatant acts of war? Your actions as a 'peace'keeper verge on terrorism - surely all you would achieve is to unite the planets against you? The game needs something more subtle than shallow gunboat diplomacy, and we look forward to seeing how Grolier resolve this one in the final version. The solar system is also plagued by pirates - destroying these keeps everyone happy. Complete ten progressively harder missions to win. Your actions on each mission affect the political situation between the planets and therefore also affect future missions, so no two missions are the same.

As Chairman Mao once said, 'Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun'. If you're to grow in political power, you need to improve your firepower. This is achieved by investing resources in research and development, offering new weapons and improved ship enhancements. You've a limited budget, though, so spend it wisely.

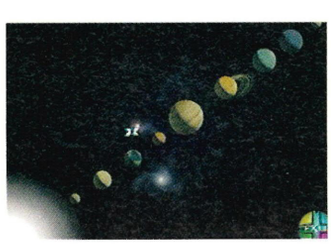
Around half way through the game, politics get even more complicated. The human territories are invaded by aliens from another solar system, and you must lead the fight-back. If you're to have any chance at all of defeating them, you must keep the planets together and present a united front. Unless you played well and are respected by the planetary superpowers, you won't have enough allies to repel the alien invasion.

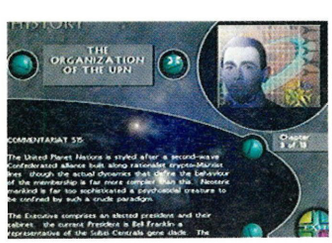
Xenocracy isn't entirely original. The combat elements have their origins in Elite and the Wing Commander games, among others, and the politics bear more than a passing resemblance to the old eight-bit game Armageddon Man, but it takes the genre a stage further, so who cares?

A storyline which doesn't make sense could destroy a strategy outing such as this, but as long as the political management simulation aspect of the game holds together, it could be a real winner.







# Simis Speak...

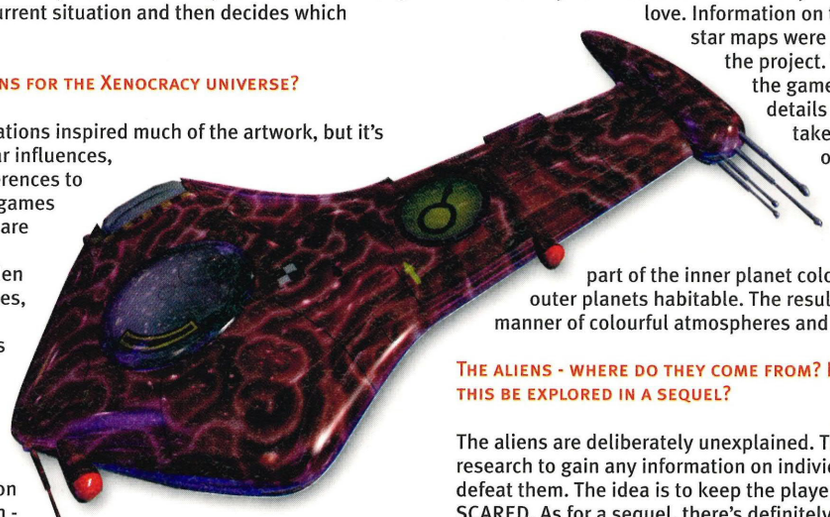
We get the low-down on the game from those who really know; its developers, Simis.

### Xenocracy obviously takes up where Wing Commander and Elite leave off. What does it offer technically over these games?

Xenocracy's mission structure and use of video are the key advances in game design, but the overall graphical style is the first thing that hits you. Xenocracy is set far, far in the future - in the year 10,600 - much more futuristic than most games and this gives us a quite different atmosphere. The human race has moved on a great deal and we believe the technology reflects this. Most games seem to have ships that look like modern US navy fighters transplanted into space - all gun metal grey, wings, cockpits, etc. We were after a look that went beyond that and showed how spaceship design could evolve over the next hundred centuries.
With the possible exception of Elite, no previous space sim allowed the player to make strategic decisions. The idea of playing peacekeeper was an original one, and full of resonances with recent world affairs. The FMV used in Xenocracy is for video messages from the planetary representatives (a sort of video conferencing). Each planetary ambassador argues his or her case which reflects the essence of the conflict between the nations. The player uses the information gained from these messages in conjunction with news reports and the planetary nations' stability and economic ratings to build up a picture of the current situation and then decides which mission to accept each turn.

### What were your inspirations for the Xenocracy universe?

Early sci-fi novels and illustrations inspired much of the artwork, but it's hard to point to any particular influences, although there are some references to favourite novels, shows and games in Xenocracy (some of which are very obscure and reflect the designer's penchant for 'golden age' SF!). With regard to games, the biggest influence on Xenocracy was X-Wing versus TIE Fighter, and to a lesser extent Wing Commander. The look of the game, especially the aliens and the organic-style spacecraft, has been compared to Babylon 5. This was never an intention - in fact Guy Ratcliffe, the lead artist, had never seen the program before he worked on Xenocracy. Admittedly, there are some similarities to B5 - like the peacekeeping between the powers, the space politics and big battles, but the inspiration to create unusual, colourful-looking ships came from the '70s SF artist Chris Foss, with whom Lee Brimmicombe-Wood, Senior Games Designer, had once worked. The result is that the Xenocracy spaceships are tall, asymmetric shapes with bright, colour-coded camouflage schemes and wasp stripes.



### What were the main difficulties in programming a game such as Xenocracy?

Our primary difficulty has been fitting the massive scope of Xenocracy into the PlayStation's 2Mb of memory. The code is almost that big, before you add any data! We solved the problem by having two versions of the code, one for the strategic game and one for the sim which we swap as needed.

### What are the key features which make it 'the most advanced space combat game to date'?

In addition to the features mentioned above, the use of state-of-the-art 3D graphics. Xenocracy has been developed with Simis' Icarus engine which features Translucency, Fog, Flare FX, Lens flare, Dynamic lighting, Animated sky and seascapes.

### The solar system - is it based on a realistic model, or have liberties been taken to fit the game?

The solar system featured in Xenocracy is the real one that we know and love. Information on the planets, moons and detailed star maps were researched in the early stages of the project. This data can be accessed within the game giving the player physical details of our solar system. We have only taken a liberty with the atmospheres of the planets and moons. Considering that Xenocracy is set eight centuries in the future, we have assumed some advanced terraforming on the part of the inner planet colonists to make the moons of the outer planets habitable. The result of this is that the moons have all manner of colourful atmospheres and plant growths on the surfaces.

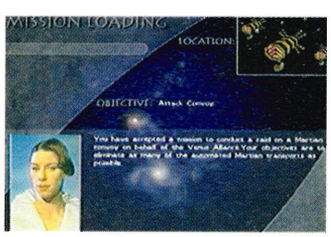
### The aliens - where do they come from? Does the player know? Could this be explored in a sequel?

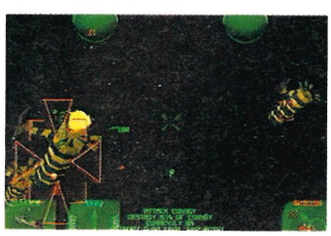
The aliens are deliberately unexplained. The player needs to carry out research to gain any information on individual types and learn how to defeat them. The idea is to keep the player confused and, more importantly, SCARED. As for a sequel, there's definitely scope for exploring their origin.

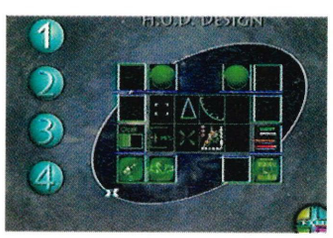
### What are the main differences between the alien ships and your own?

Are the aliens' crafts significantly better? Mmmm; difficult to answer without giving too much away. The aliens do not have ships, they ARE the ships - their technology is based in bio-engineering. The more powerful aliens are better than the militia vessels of the inner planets, but the player is capable of researching new weapons and systems for UPN ships.







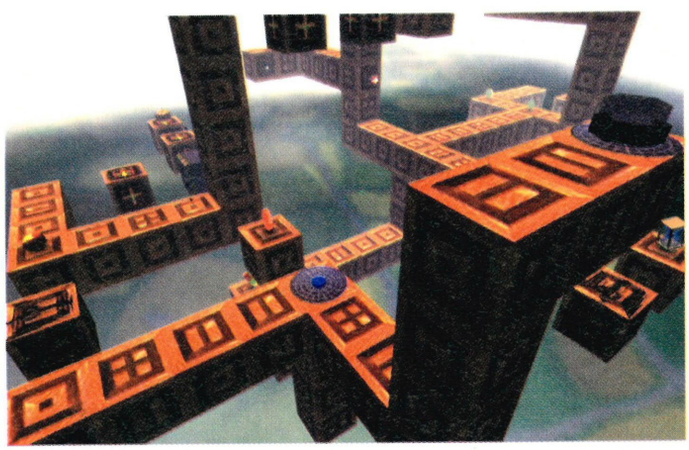



Publisher - SCEE  Developer - Game Design Sweden  Release Date - 2nd Quarter '98  Genre - Puzzle

# Kula World

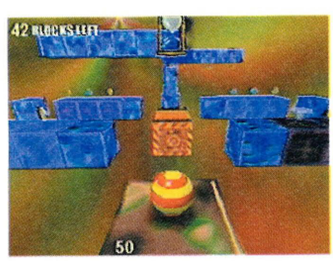
## Don't diss the orientation, man

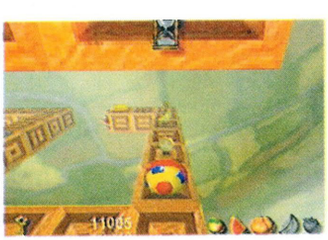


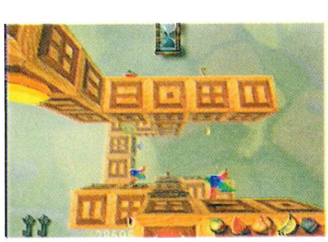




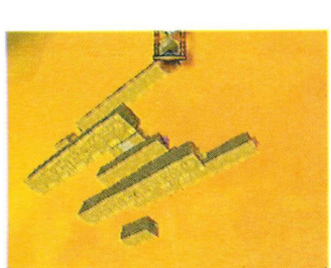










**For a good while now puzzle games have revolved around the 'falling blocks' axis, obviously inspired by the all-time classic hour-guzzler Tetris. However, Game Design Sweden's impending release, Kula World, moves away from this formula by turning the spotlight onto the conundrum-busting antics of a simple beach ball. This defiantly-abstract game (thankfully nothing to do with Crispian Mills' band of right-wing prog tosspots) is set on a never-ending succession of blocks (stationary, of course) suspended high in the stratosphere, which form lattices of gradually increasing fiendishness and complexity. The aim is to collect the slices of fruit and keys dotted about the grids within a dwindling time limit so as to unlock the exit without falling off into the empty air or being snagged by the variety of obstacles cunningly placed in your path.**

While the objective from level-to-level remains sparse and virtually-unchanging, this is nicely balanced by the differing approaches required to solve each section, which usually requires the need to stop, view, and think. However, you can't just hit pause and look - the game infuriatingly blanks the screen, making all observations and decision-making subject to time and pressure. The slant seems definitely angled towards logic and timing rather than precise manoeuvring and pin-point accuracy, as the ball only drops off if you jump foolishly or move onto an unstable cube, but despite this things still remain resolutely action-packed and tense. Gameplay is strongly reminiscent of Jurassic-era favourites Spindizzy and Marble Madness, with its one-screen-at-a-time rhythm, and the lateral-thinking demands placed on your hapless lobes.

The main cause for this brain strain is the absence of any specific 'up' or 'down', as the ball clings to whatever surface it's in contact with, and falls according to whichever way it is pointing. At first this subjective gravity is as easy to get your head around as an episode of Twin Peaks, but before too long you've ditched any hackneyed concepts of conventional physics, using the switchable force of attraction to thumb your nose at Newton, as formerly unreachable high ledges become distant lowly points to drop onto. However the drawback of this is an unavoidable trip to Disorientation Central as the beautifully rendered backdrops pinwheel crazily around our inflatable hero in a nausea-inducing whirl. These landscapes (although essentially irrelevant to the game) are superb naturalistic depictions of rustic farmland, barren deserts, Aztec ziggurats and so on, with special bonus levels (accessed by grabbing every object on a grid) set in swirly psychedelic space-scapes. There is, in fact, a scantily-concealed undercurrent of chemically-adjusted mischief at work, particularly when the ball runs onto one of the suspicious red and yellow capsules that are dotted about. Things go a bit wobbly and slo-mo, the sound goes all echoey and objects leave traces behind them. Hmmm...



Other obstacles are less benign. Crumbling blocks fall away underneath on contact, often leaving the ball teetering on a single solid cube. Spikes burst the ball on impact, and ice provides no traction, sending you slip-sliding away onto some inevitable harmful hazard. Griddles heat up the ball until it pops, unless they're rolled over sharpishly, while invisible blocks lurk about the play area and only become visible when sat upon directly or if the player collects the spinning Ray-Ban sunglasses which grant a Doris Stokes-like second sight for a limited period. Time is, of course, of the essence, but assistance is at hand in the shape of egg-timers that reverse your own master version at the top of the screen, which means that a nearly-empty timer can be spun into a virtually full one. However, these must be used tactically as running over an icon too early (by cruelly-engineered accident especially) can scupper your chances wholesale.

At this stage the finished-feeling version we've been playing is looking slick and polished, with a stylish and unusual front-end plus a loose 'n' funky soundtrack. Kula World promises to be a fresh-faced addition to the PlayStation's lexicon of increasingly self-similar games.

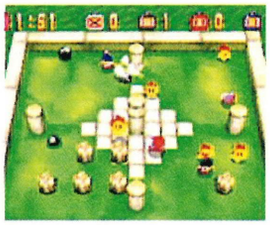
Publisher - SCEE | Developer - Hudson Soft | Release Date - 2nd Quarter '98 | Genre - Action Puzzler

# Bomberman World



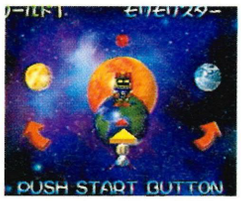
## Timothy McVeigh has nothing on this guy...





Hudson Soft seem to have learned from their less-than-wonderful Bomberman 64. The game was updated from the 16-bit offerings, but in ways that ruined the endearing simplicity of the gameplay. The N64 one-player game was a platform adventure, and nothing to do with traditional Bomberman. It was fun, but short-lived. The game really fell down in multiplayer mode, the heart of any Bomberman opus. Like the PSX Bomberman World, battles were fought in 3D arenas. Unfortunately, some clown decided to make the bomb blasts more realistic, expanding in a dome instead of flaring in a cross shape like earlier outings. This made it impossible to plant a bomb and hide around the corner. Also, the arenas allowed much more freedom of movement, featuring wide open spaces instead of maze-like pitches with some permanent obstacles and some that are destroyed by explosions. This made it impossible to trap a fleeing foe by planting a bomb in his path. These two cosmetic 'improvements' together destroyed the seat-of-your pants strategy which made Bomberman so much fun. Thankfully, although the PSX game offers a 3D perspective, the arenas owe more to the early offerings than the Nintendo 64 monstrosity.









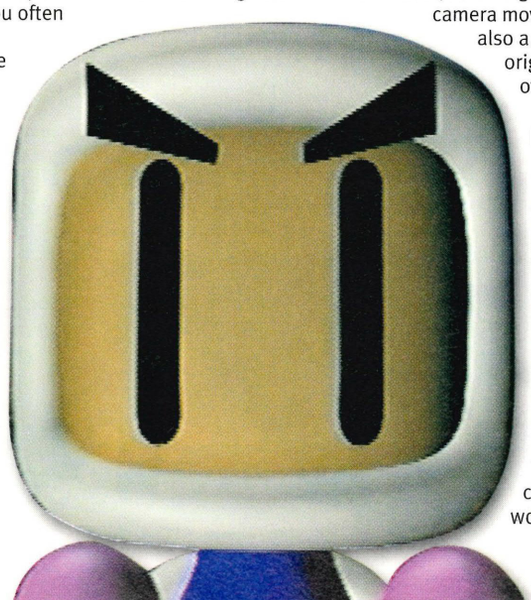




**Bomberman's back, and he's back with a vengeance! He might look like a reject from a box of Lego, but he's starred in some of the best games ever to hit the home console, and now he's on the PlayStation.**

Gameplay is simple. Each level takes place on a flat piece of ground - imagine it's divided into invisible squares. Some squares are blocked by permanent objects which can never be removed, others by more brittle barriers - lay a bomb nearby and they blow. You, as the eponymous Bomberman, run around between them. In practice, this leaves you narrow maze-like passages to traverse.

To open the level exit, you must collect all the gems. To get to the gems, you often have to blow the aforementioned brittle barriers by laying a bomb nearby. A few seconds after release, the bomb blows, sending a fiery flame extending for a few 'squares' in all directions vertically and horizontally. Catch a fragile object or one of the many monsters in the blast and it's destroyed. Make sure you don't blow yourself up, though.



### Multiplayer Madness

Bomberman is most fun in multiplayer mode, where you face your friends instead of foes. They have the same abilities and weaknesses as Bomberman, ie. they can lay bombs, but are vulnerable to the blasts, their own and other peoples'. The heart of the game is in the neat little strategies available, like planting bombs which block an opponent's path, forcing them to wait for certain doom. Both multiplayer mode and the one-player game feature power-ups which enhance your bombing abilities.

The game's shaping up pretty well on the PSX. It offers a 3D perspective instead of the original's top-down view, but the game's basically 2D with only the camera moved. This is no bad thing. There's also a greater puzzle element than in the original, eg. blast the tree to knock it over and create a bridge.

There are one or two flaws on our preview disc. It takes too long to get back into the game after being killed by one of the end-of-world bosses, the player being forced to sit through the animation which introduced said foe every time he dies. Also, why do you have to restart a level every time you fall? What's wrong with starting where you left off? The learning curve's a little sharp too, with easy levels giving way to a terribly tricky boss.

Despite these minor niggles, the game looks very promising. With a bit of spit and polish, it could prove one of the year's worthy winners.





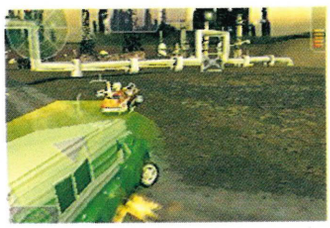


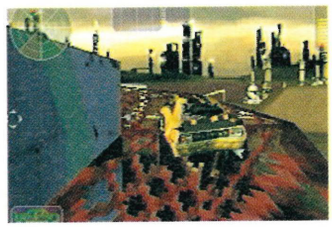

**Publisher** - Activision **Developer** - Luxaflex **Release Date** - 2nd Quarter '98 **Genre** - Combat Driving

# Vigilante 8

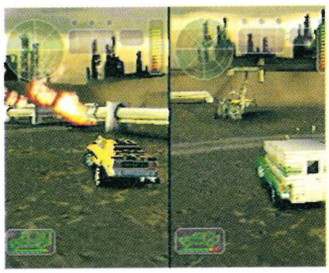
## It's like, groovy, maaan.











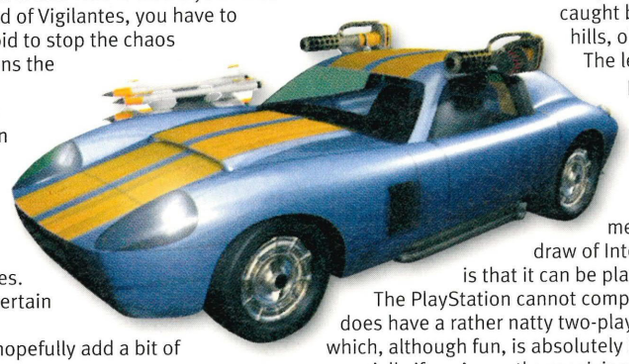




**Get out your dusty flares, afro wigs and platform shoes, 'cos the PlayStation is about to go all Seventies on us. To be exact, it's going to 1976 because Vigilante 8 is the PlayStation version of the very popular PC game, Interstate '76. The biggest thing about the PC version is that it can be played over the internet, which is obviously something that can't be done with a PlayStation, so let's hope that Vigilante 8 has enough to it to make it a worthy purchase as a stand-alone game.**

The game is set in south-western America, where a gang of villains is hell-bent on destroying the country's economy by targeting the oil industry as well as industrial and commercial areas. This is where you come in. As a member of a band of Vigilantes, you have to take on the villains in a bid to stop the chaos they're causing. This opens the door for all sorts of car-related battle antics that suit the PlayStation down to the ground.

The finished game will give the player a choice of eight vehicles, all with their own strengths and weaknesses. Each vehicle also has a certain character with their own personality that should hopefully add a bit of humour to the proceedings.



### Battle arena...

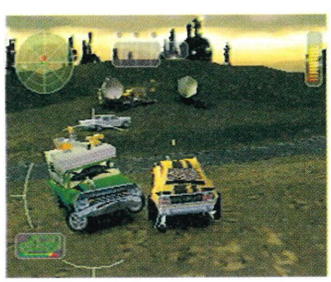
Although the final version will have eight massive battle arenas, the preview disc only had one level to choose from, but even from this paltry selection you can see the makings of a great car battle game. It's like Twisted Metal in game style, but the action does seem to be much more intense. The level we played was set in a vast Texas oil-field where you can literally go anywhere and blow everything up. There's plenty of pumping stations, nodding donkeys and flaming oil pipes all waiting to be vaporised by your standard machine gun or any one of the special weapons you can find.

It's not the scenery you should be concentrating on, though. There's also the small fact of about five other vehicles who are all out to send you to the scrapyard. Your opponents range from pick-up trucks to mobile homes to Chevvies, and all of them are just as tooled up as you are. This makes for some excellent cat and mouse chasing as you hair around the level looking for the best weapons and trying to dodge the enemy, who are usually in hot pursuit.

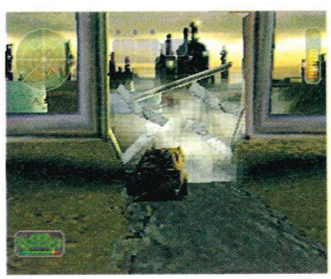
All of this action is actually looking very solid and extremely fast, even at this early stage in the game. Surprisingly, there is hardly any glitching and the camera seems to follow the car perfectly, without getting caught behind objects or hills, obscuring your view. The level we've been playing is so solid it leads us to think Vigilante 8 is a bit closer to completion than we think.

As we've already mentioned, the main draw of Interstate '76 on the PC is that it can be played over the internet. The PlayStation cannot compete with that, but it does have a rather natty two-player split screen game which, although fun, is absolutely infuriating - especially if you're on the receiving end of a mortar or missile that's been fired from the other side of the arena. We've been caning the two player mode and although it can never live up to an eight-way internet death match, it's still pretty entertaining.

The preview disc was limited as only two cars and one area were available for play, but it did show off the basis of what could be a very playable and enjoyable battle-fest. If the completed version lives up to the standard of what we've played so far, we could be looking at a possible score above ninety percent and a potential Twisted Metal World Tour-beater. Find out for sure in next month's review.









Publisher- SCEE Developer- Namco Release Date- 2nd Quarter '98 Genre- Platform/Adventure

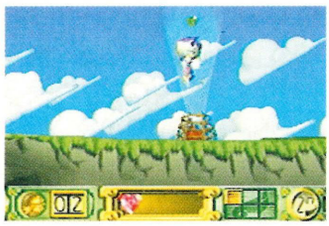


# Klonoa

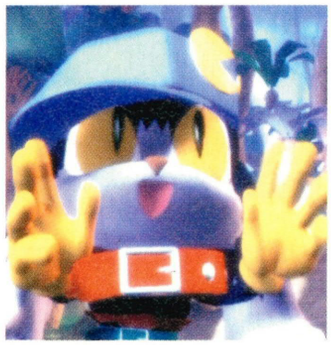


## Cute 'n' fluffy terror from Namco





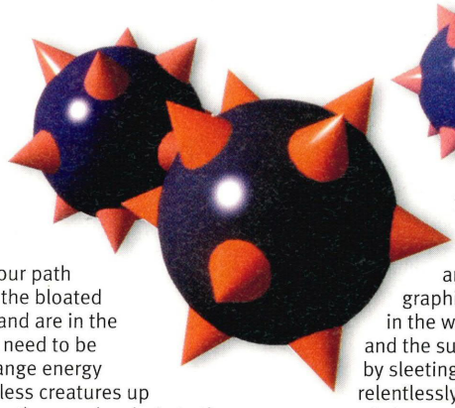




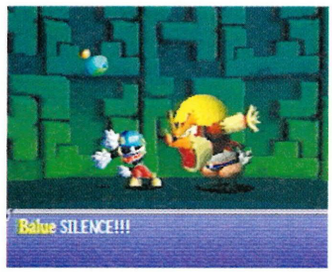
**The fairly young are not often targeted by makers of PSX software, either because of their lack of hardcore spending power or the perception that Nintendo have this corner of the market well and truly sewn up. Because of this industry-wide tendency, Namco's Klonoa stands out as a plucky soul among the more adult-orientated (and less risky) field of games.** The story concerns the cuddly, dog-like Klonoa and his sidekick Huepow's adventures as they try to fathom the mystery of an unexplained object falling from the sky onto their home, The Windy Village, while avoiding the wrath of the mysterious and sinister villain Ghadius. Exploration and jumpy platform action are the key elements in Klonoa, punctuated by various exchanges of faintly-disturbing dialogue from some of the more affable characters you encounter. Most others are less friendly though, and are predominantly strange roly-poly creatures that run, hop or bounce into your path (most baffling of which is the bloated bunny that spits spikes), and are in the main mute obstacles that need to be dispatched with a short range energy weapon that flips the hapless creatures up on top of your head, where they can be shot at other targets or used as a handy springboard to reach high platforms and the green and blue gems scattered around the landscape. Various objects can be manipulated to progress, such as toppling huge obelisks to form a bridge, or riding currents of wind and geysers to great altitudes. Best of all, though, is the Indiana Jones-esque runaway mining cart sequence that springs up unannounced, and acts as a kind of impromptu bonus level.

Life loss is set to a gentle 'three strikes per three hearts per life' system, presumably to reduce frustration for kiddies whose attention span has been lowered by too much orange squash. It seems a little easy to die repeatedly, though (in a Jet Set Willy way) as Klonoa often re-materialises right next to the creature that killed him in the first place. However, none of the creatures we've yet encountered seem particularly vicious or deadly, needing just a smidgen of patience and/or timing to slip past. There are the ubiquitous end-of-level bosses to deal with too, and so far they seem a great deal more imaginative in their design and methods of attack than one would expect for a youngster's title.

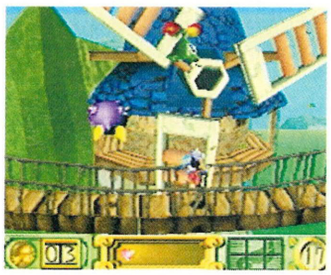
The pseudo-3D environment also looks surprisingly good for a game aimed at children, with the many changes of camera perspective distancing Klonoa from being the straightforward side-on platformer it might first appear. In some sections it's reminiscent of the C64 favourite Parallax, with a distinctive cylindrical scrolling technique used, especially when ascending buildings and exploring their interiors. Other nice graphical touches include leaves being tossed in the wind, puff clocks bobbing in the breeze and the sudden darkening of the skies, followed by sleeting rain. The music is unsurprisingly a relentlessly cheery tune, FX are chunky and wholesome, (including a great gusting wind sound when atop high points) while the wittering baby-talk dialogue of the characters as they discuss matters of the story is well executed (even if it is in a slightly impenetrable Japanese-English translated style).



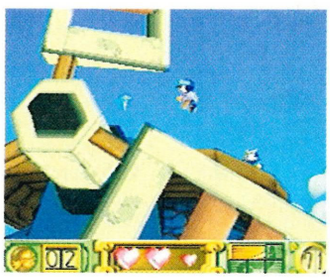
At the moment Klonoa looks like being a rarity - a kid's game that has technical accomplishment and crunchy gameplay nuggets to chew on, as well as being quite atmospheric in a non-threatening kind of way thanks to its detailed environment and visual sheen. One to get your little cousin for their birthday (and then steal back for yourself).

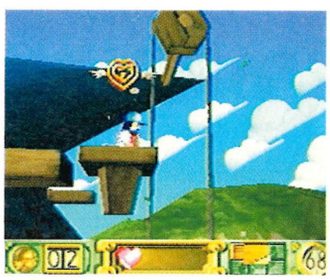


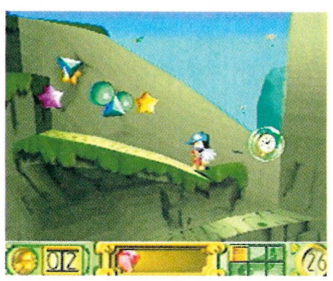




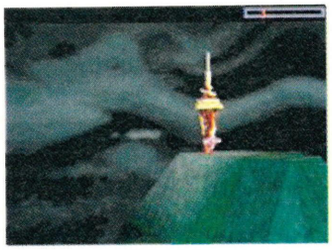
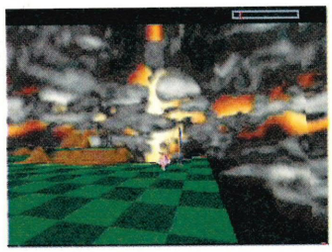
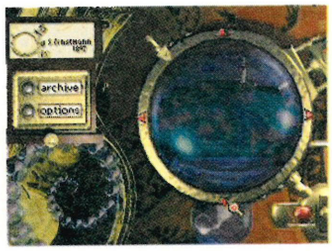




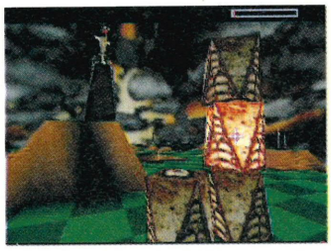


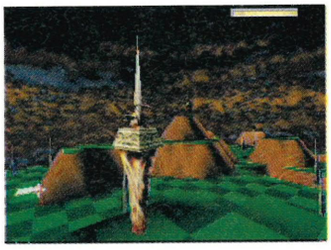
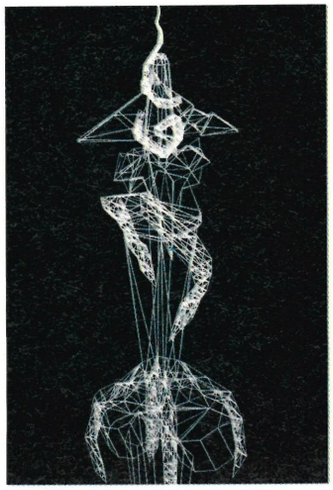
Publisher- Psygnosis Developer- Hookstone Release Date- 12th July '98 Genre- Unknown

# Sentinel Returns





**John Cook, the man responsible for resurrecting the almost-forgotten classic of yore Sentinel, is by his own admission a man obsessed. Having completed all 1000 levels of the original not once, but twice, he's arguably the best qualified man in the world to take Geoff Crammond's abstract masterpiece into the 90s.** "The original was perfect, so the task was to better perfection", he says, "and to expand on such elegance and genius, Sentinel Returns had to be a homage as well as taking it a step further in visual and gameplay terms". His reverence for the original is obvious, notwithstanding the countless hours the man has invested in playing it, and he is quietly confident to say the least that the new version is a worthy successor to what some have called one of the top five best games ever.

For the uninitiated, the plot (as such) is mysterious and sparse; your ultimate purpose unclear. You control an "energy pool with consciousness" that can only move by transferring between the shells of the rigid robot bodies it creates, moving around a seemingly random mountainous landscape that is watched over impassively by the Sentinel. A limited amount of energy is available around the landscape in the form of trees that can be absorbed and turned into either new bodies or boulders can act as platforms for these to stand on. Trouble is, the Sentinel rotates relentlessly through every point of the compass, and if his gaze falls on your position he drains the scant reserves of energy you carry until you wink out of existence, ably assisted by a clutch of mini-sentries that also sap your strength. To survive you must elevate your position to a high enough point where you can turn the tables and absorb the Sentinel, and thus progress to the next, more fiendish level.



## Evolution of a Game...

John compares the evolution of the game from concept through to its finished state as being "as close to being a perfect relationship as possible", describing it (tellingly) in terms of an actual romantic attachment. The all-important air of intense paranoia and panic has transferred to the Nineties incarnation more than satisfactorily, according to him. The graphics retain the stark lines of before, but are augmented with an "organic, alien, surreal" quality that perfectly compliments the weird experience of playing. Even the menu screen is in an 'alternative Victorian' style, a kind of baroque Jules Verne take on technology. Much of the credit for this individual look is, according to Cook, thanks to lead programmer Jason McGann, who, being a bona fide artist, sketched the pen-and-ink prototype drawings for the new-look Sentinel and then went on to program them personally, so the translation from concept to actuality was as pure as possible.

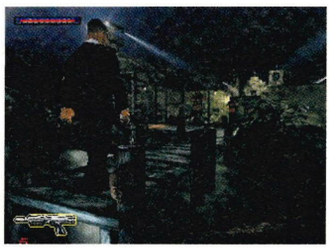
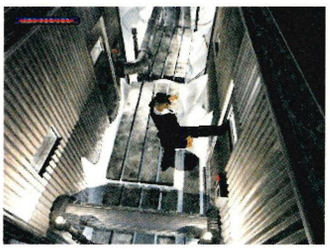
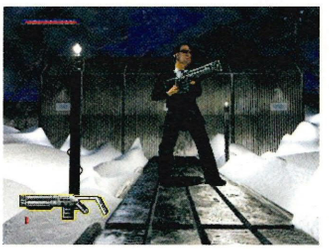
Another important difference is in how the learning curve and overall difficulty levels have been tweaked from the original version so as to be more forgiving and gradual initially, while not 'peaking out' at a fairly early point, correcting one of the first game's few flaws. Sentinel Returns now has all-new variables that allow fine values such as the rate at which sentries turn and how swiftly they drain energy to be adjusted, so the quirks of each level are not just reliant on the 'amplitude' of the terrain or the straightforward number of predatory enemies or available trees. Another aspect that Cook considers vital to the atmosphere created is the audio element. It is Q-sound compatible, allowing a fully-surrounding immersive sound field that will actively assist the player to orient him or herself in relation to those hunting him. In addition Psygnosis have scored a major coup in recruiting the god-like talents of John Carpenter (who directed and scored such seminal tension-flicks as Assault on Precinct 13 and Halloween). He contributes at least six tracks of icy, menacing ambience that John reckons meshes with the brooding look and claustrophobic sensations of the game like clockwork. As you can probably tell, this is not your run-of-the-mill PSX game, eschewing the predilection for 'realism' that currently rules the software roost, and thus presents a risk even for a software (and marketing) giant like Psygnosis. However, Cook is bullish, steadfastly sticking to his guns. "A good game is a good game".

"Strong gameplay", he says, is dictated solely by a title's ability to "make you sweat", and he believes the sheer playing power of Sentinel Returns is bound to turn the increasingly unadventurous public's heads.

Finally, on the related subjects of retro gaming and his follow-up project, he's keen to get going on the next unearthed gem he has secured the rights for: Carrier Command! Yes, the Amiga 3D tactical classic is going to get the 90s treatment at the hands of this dedicated perfectionist. I for one cannot wait...

**Publisher** - Gremlin **Developer** - Gigawatt Studios **Release Date** - April **Genre** - Action Adventure

# Men In Black


**An alien race is collecting human brains to construct a galaxy-sized consciousness processor. Using a chemical compound found in a rare Amazonian spore-bearing flower, the aliens plan to exterminate humankind, turning the Earth into a giant organic computer chip. Bloody hell! If the aliens started their campaign at St Andrews football ground they'd have concluded humanity didn't have the brains to run a pocket calculator and left us alone. Birmingham City fans perform a useful function - that would be a first. Also, I wonder if Bill Gates would own the operating system that runs this organic computer chip? Enough wisecracking, let's get on with the preview.**

Men In Black, from Gremlin Interactive, is a third-person action adventure in the Tomb Raider mould. The action takes place over a multitude of locations, including frigid wastelands, dense jungles, urban blight and underworld lairs. No surprises there, then. Better news is that Will Smith (he of the crappy theme tune fame), Tommy Lee-Jones and Linda Fiorentino have given permission for their likenesses to be used in the game. Gremlin claim this has led to 'some of the finest character rendering ever seen in a video game'.



The player controls the Will Smith geezer, New York cop Jay Edwards. Perhaps he should be called Jayded - he thinks he's seen it all, but a routine call one summer's night proves him wrong. Instead of eating doughnuts and driving into empty cardboard boxes, this rootin' tootin' air polutin' yank cop is drawn into the best-kept secret of the century and swaps his uniform and badge for a dapper suit and Ray-Bans. It is he that must save humanity from a fate worse than the ZX81.

## Back in Black

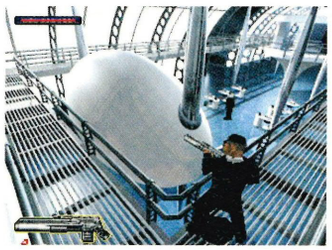
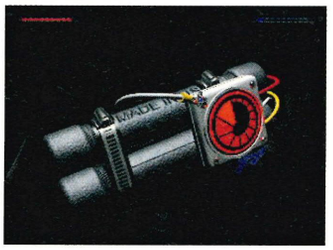
Gremlin claim to offer more with Men in Black than is found in the usual movie conversion. "It's not just another empty license", claims a Gremlin spokesperson. "It contains all the ingredients of a classic adventure game, but adds superb graphics and absorbing gameplay as well as the explosive firepower of the film. All the weapons, such as the 'noisy cricket' and the reverberating atomiser are there".

The game, which sold by the bucketload on the PC, is already drawing industry plaudits. "Now Men in Black fans can continue the excitement and fun of the film by immersing themselves in a game that really places them in the thick of the action", said Mark Caplan, senior account manager for Sony Signatures. An accountant likes it so it must be good; hmmm...

In the cinema, Men in Black did really well, selling on the back of The X-Files. It broke all box-office records in America (but has since been bested by Titanic), An animated series and a sequel are already in the pipeline, and no doubt these will produce PSX spin-offs too. Gremlin claim it will be 'in the public's imagination' into the millennium, and will 'provide headline writers with more punning opportunities than Sex, Lies and Video Tape'.

True, but the game had better be good - don't forget 'black' rhymes with 'cack'.

From what we've seen so far, the game looks very promising, albeit not very original. Look out for a full review soon, unless we're all kidnapped by triple-breasted whores from the planet Horus, forced into having rampant sex with up to three of their young, nubile virgins per night to repopulate their dying planet and then returned to Earth with no memory of what happened.







# Resident Evil 2

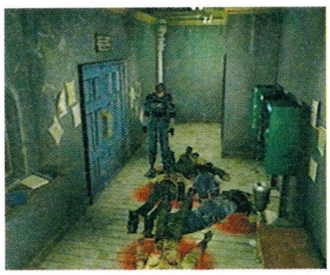


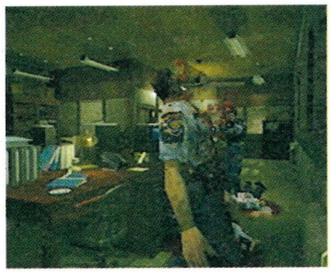
BLOOD! Gallons and gallons of bright red blood flowing from your PlayStation. Severed limbs, headless bodies, burning zombies and gallons and gallons of delicious bright red blood. Mmmmm...

This is Resident Evil 2. The world's scariest, goriest and most atmospheric video game, on any format, home or arcade. Oh, and not to mention the sickest. We've been ploughing our way through Resident Evil 2 for some time now, and besides soiling a few packs of Marks & Spencers undies, we've also discovered that, for once, we've been given a true sequel and not just an update on a successful original. If you thought the original was pant-filling, though, you'd better prepare yourself for some serious skid-marks...

Resident Evil 2 is here. Be afraid... be very, very afraid.







First things first; Resident Evil 2 comes on two discs, one for each of the two new characters that star in it. Each disc is played separately, but actions on one disc change the events on the next . In effect, no two games are the same and Resident Evil 2 can be played over and over again. You may think this an odd thing to mention right at the start of a humungous review, but in my eyes it's one of the most important upgrades from the original game. Okay, there were a few different endings in the original, but as a whole the game was exactly the same for each of the characters. To me this didn't offer a whole lot of replay value, unlike Resident Evil 2, which offers hours and hours of frightening, survival horror gameplay. You have to complete both discs to get the full ending, although each disc does tie up its particular story. It's only when you get deep into the game that you realise the complexities at work here, and RE2 is far, far better for it.



The plot is set a few months after the incident at the mansion house in the first game, where most of the original STARS team were massacred by mutant zombies, created by the Umbrella Corporation. This tragedy has not halted Umbrella's research into the T-Virus. The result? A new, more powerful strain, imaginatively named the G-Virus. The residents of Racoon City have somehow become infected with the virus, and now all that remains, besides a few survivors, is a town full of living dead. There really is something afoot at the Circle K.



This guy is hot!

**"...there are far more zombies on screen than were ever seen in the original game..."**

The are two brand-new characters to play; Leon Alexander, a rookie cop who's just arrived in town to start with Racoon City Police Department, and Claire Redfield, sister of Chris from the first game. Besides each immediate plot, the characters also have a hidden agenda. In the case of Claire it's the quest to find out what happened to her brother. Leon and Claire both follow similar paths throughout the game (at least, first time around), but as the plot unfolds both characters veer off in different directions to complete alternative tasks and plot strands. Once you finish a disc and start on the next you find that the monsters and the route you take are completely different. This second part of the adventure provides a much deeper insight into the plot in the way of new cut scenes and set pieces. You also find the puzzles you face as each character are either different, or found in another area. Something which foxed me right from the start is that Leon comes equipped with a lighter and Claire only has a lock-pick. This means both characters have to get around some puzzles in a different fashion. On the whole, the puzzles are all pretty simple and anyone with an ounce of savvy will be able to overcome them. This doesn't detract from the game, though, as each puzzle usually opens up a new area for you to explore, which is really what the game is about.





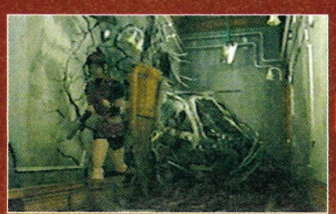


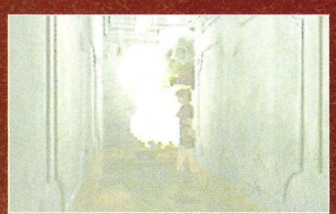
## Heroism or Cowardice?

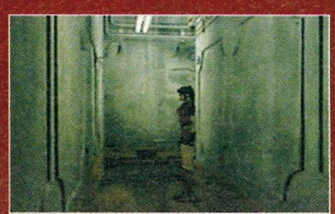
Resident Evil was set in a countryside mansion (duh! - Darren) which really didn't lend itself to much in the way of surprises. RE2, however, covers several different areas, though the majority of play takes place in the vast Racoon City Police building. Before you start on

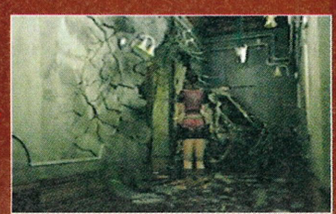
## KABOOM

Find the explosives and detonator then set them up to blow a hole in the wall blocked by the crashed chopper.





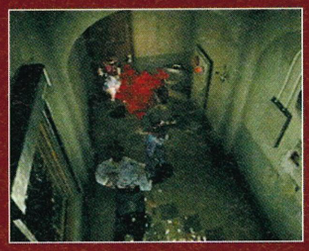




## GUNS 'R' US

Both Leon and Claire have access to a range of powerful and not-so-powerful weapons. Each character has their own weapons, so Claire can't use Leon's shotgun and Leon can't use her crossbow or grenade launcher. This means you have to play the game differently with each character, which again adds to the longevity of the game. Some of the weapons found in RE2 can be absolutely devastating, such as the Gattling gun or the rocket launcher which can only be acquired by completing the game in a certain amount of time. Most of the weapons available are useful against zombies, but when it comes to other types of monster you need at least a crossbow or shotgun. Another good feature about the weapons is that for some, you can find custom parts which increase its firepower. One problem is that ammo is in very short supply throughout the game. This means you must make quick decisions on whether to stay and fight or peg it, leaving a yellow streak on the tarmac as you go.







the bulk of play, though, you must reach the cop shop through the mean streets of the city.

After the cinematic intro (which, incidentally, is different on both disks), you immediately find yourself on the streets of Racoon City, surrounded by a throng of hauling, heaving flesh. No, it's not two in the morning at your local rave, and these throngs of flesh aren't blowing whistles and waving



The poor kid runs along attacked by mutant cockroaches.

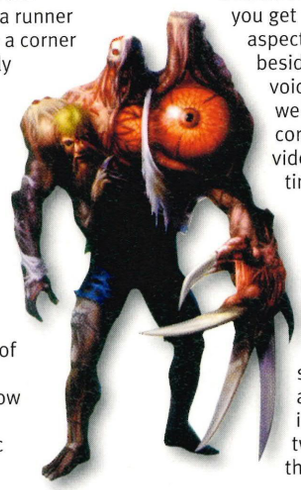




light sticks. In fact, this flesh isn't even alive - they're zombies, you see. The first thing that hits you with this scene is that already there are far more zombies on screen than were ever seen in the original game. At times you have five or six undead mooching towards you, and although they walk slowly and sound pretty docile, you find yourself crapping your pants from the very start. You have two courses of action here; you can either peg it through the streets to the relative safety of the gun shop down the side alley, or stand your ground and try to gun down the advancing zombie hoards. I suggest running, because ammo is scarce and at times it's better to take the cowardly route and do a runner than back yourself into a corner and find yourself rapidly running out of firepower. The programmers have added a new ability to the characters in the form of a push, activated by the Triangle button. This helps when you're completely trapped, although the zombies usually take a bite out of your shoulder before you've managed to throw them to the ground.

After the initial panic of finding yourself surrounded by undead Cure fans, you find a little rest-bite at the gun shop, which isn't very well stocked. It's here you first come across the terrible B-movie voice acting. These clowns couldn't even get a job covering for Bouncer in Neighbours, yet surprisingly it works very well.

**"...Capcom have done an excellent job in making the story feel almost like a film..."**



The over-acting seems to add to the excitement and edgy feel you get from the other aspects of the game, and besides the dodgy voicing, the lines are well written (if a little corny, but hey this is a videogame). Every time you come across a cut scene like this, a little more of the plot is given away.

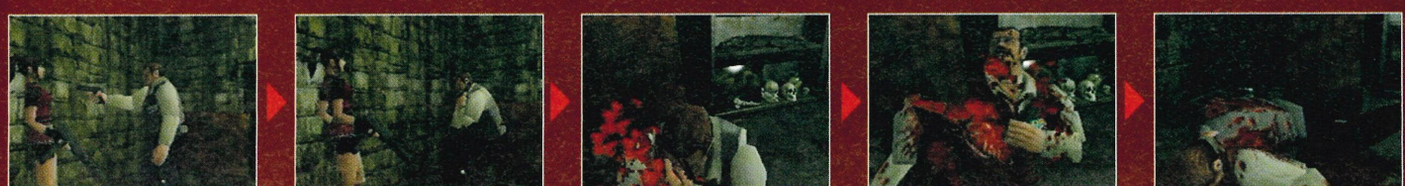
I played through both discs before starting this review, and I was impressed by the twists and turns in the storyline. The





## DODGY COPPER

The evil Chief of Police gets his dues!



first game was a little limp on this side of things, but Capcom have done an excellent job in making the story feel almost like a film. It isn't as immense as Final Fantasy VII, but it's just as immersive and stimulating - in fact, Resident Evil 2 ranks in my book as one of the best game storylines ever.

**"...We haven't been witness to such a polished looking visual experience as this since we first laid eyes on Final fantasy VII..."**

This is backed up by the superbly atmospheric feel that the game gives off. From some of the coolest lighting and camera angles to the eerie incidental music and sound effects. Resident Evil 2 has been heavily influenced by George Romero, director of the cult Evil Dead films. This influence shines through in all areas of the game, making it more creepy and



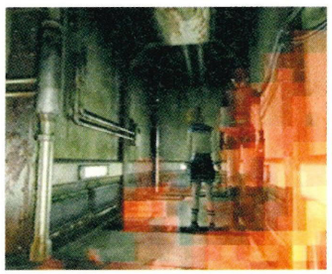
frightening than you can ever imagine.

### The Willies

I'm a bit of a cynic when it comes to being scared by video games. When people used to tell me how scary the original Resident Evil was, I'd tell them to piss off and go back to their knitting. And to tell the truth, I was right (wind your neck in Saul - Darren). Resident Evil was not in any way scary, which is why I was







## SECRETS

Resident Evil 2 contains a plethora of secrets and hidden extras for you to find. It could be a special weapon, a hidden room or even a secret character with which to play the game once more. Finding a secret character means you can play from a whole different perspective with different storylines and events taking place. One of the secret characters is called Hunk. He's one of those elite army types with the gas mask and machine gun, but we're not going to tell you how to get him, yet.

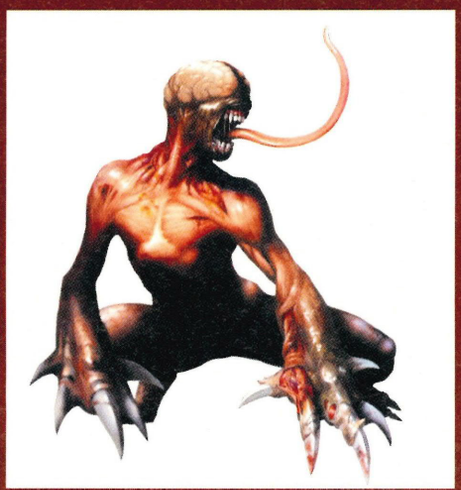


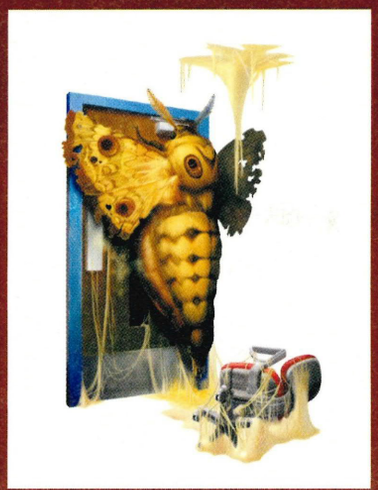



You get to play as Ada on Leon's disc.

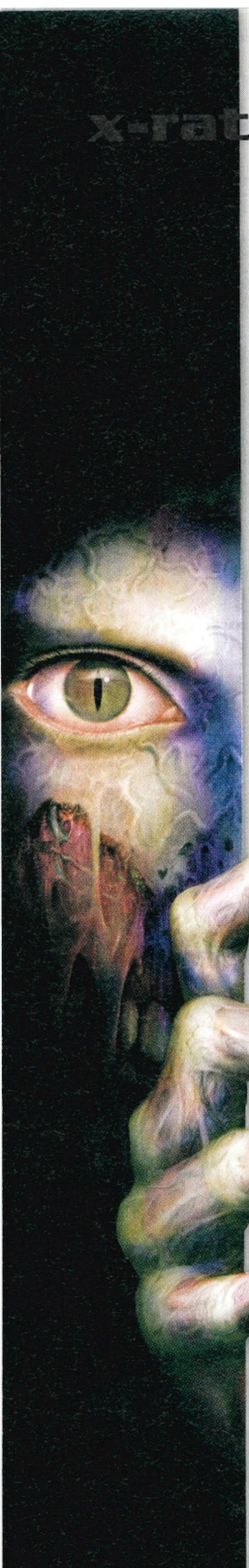
## MUTANT BLOOD-SUCKING SCUM

The basic threat in Resident Evil 2 is the glut of zombies that just keep coming at you. These can be dispatched with relative ease, especially when you get some of the more powerful weapons. It's the mutant monsters which cause the most trouble, though. The first non-zombie threat you encounter is the licker. This thing has a tongue that women would pay for, but it's not out to give anyone pleasure. When this thing pounces it pounces fast - if you're not ready, you end up as toast. Other mutants include plants with huge tentacles that lash out at you and a giant moth that gets mighty pissed when you disturb him.







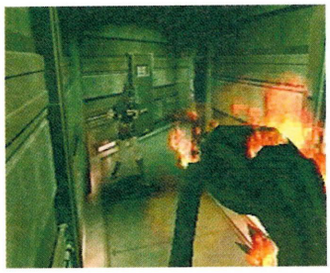


not prepared for the heart-stopping scenes that confronted me when I played the sequel. I don't want to give too much away on this front, as many of the pant-filling moments work on the shock factor - if you know what's coming, it won't work as well. Playing RE2 in a brightly-lit office with loads of people milling around isn't the same as playing in a darkened room on your own, but I can still testify that I literally jumped out of my seat on many occasions- often to



outbursts of laughter from the rest of the extreme team. In some of the more intense moments, you end up a gibbering wreck as you are drawn so deep into the action that you almost believe you're there.





There are two things that go to make up a horror film, or in this a case a horror game. The first is the tension filled, intense, chilling atmosphere to get the adrenaline flowing. This is something that RE2 does with the class of directors such as Wes Craven and George Romero. The second essential ingredient is blood. More precisely, blood and guts. If you're even a little squeamish, RE2 may be a little too much for you to handle, hence the 18 certificate. The blood count here is far higher than anything the Blood Transfusion Service could ever hope to get in a year of free tea and biscuits. At times the floor is literally covered in blood and bodies. When you manage to fend off a mass of attacking zombies, the sight on the floor is unbelievable. You see heads, limbs, mutant bodies and rivers of blood all over the shop. It's really sick, but it's also satisfying to look at your handiwork after you've filled five zombies full of hot, high-velocity lead. The gore goes beyond this, though. It's possible to stamp on zombies' heads or even kick their decaying bonces off their shoulders. This doesn't compare with the effect a close up blast from a shotgun or bazooka has on those poor, pathetic zombies. Get close enough to one of them and point your weapons at their mid-rift and you blow them clean in half. The zombies have a few tricks up their collective bloody sleeves, though. Being undead means the zombies still attack until they're completely finished off, so you may find yourself beaten up by a headless, armless torso that just refuses to die. You may also find a zombie's hand sticking to your shoulder after you've blown it off the body. These limbless and headless capers look quite comical, which keeps in style with Romero's Evil Dead films.

## Full 3D

One thing keeps the plot, the atmosphere, the gore and the tension together in RE2 - the absolutely gob-smacking visuals. We haven't been witness to such a polished looking visual experience as this since we first laid eyes on Final fantasy VII. The problem with FFVII was that although the graphics were astounding in themselves, you didn't actually feel part of them, unlike RE2 where you feel as though you're there (there it is again). The whole of the game oozes sumptuous, high-res quality that's rarely seen to this standard on a PlayStation game. You'd expect scenes like this to be simply backgrounds, but you can literally go anywhere you like providing you've opened up the areas.

**"...The improvements over Resident Evil are instantly noticeable, and the size of the game makes its prequel look pathetic in comparison..."**

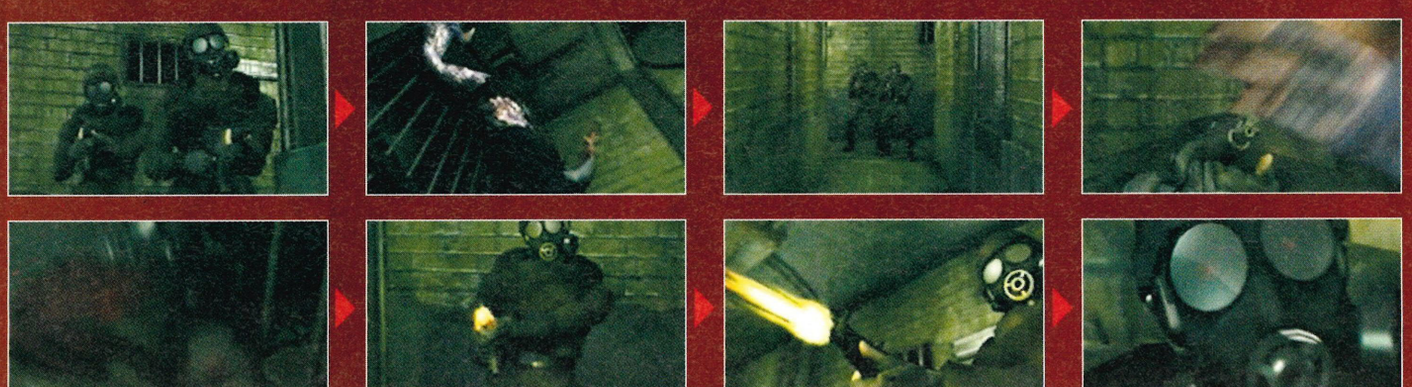
Everything is done in true 3D, so every part of the environment is explorable, giving the game an edge over its contemporaries. The



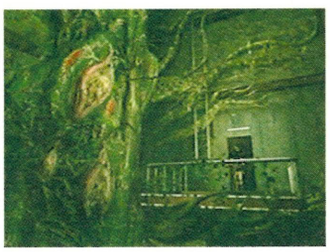
▲ Claire and Leon meet for some dodgy voice acting.

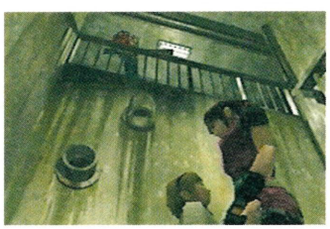
## COOL CG ▼

Here's a



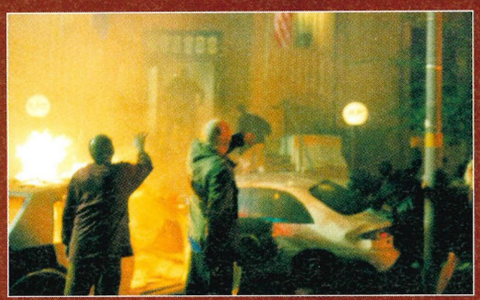


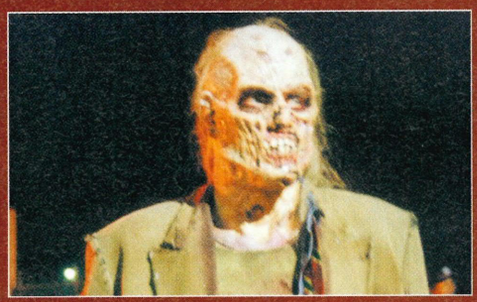


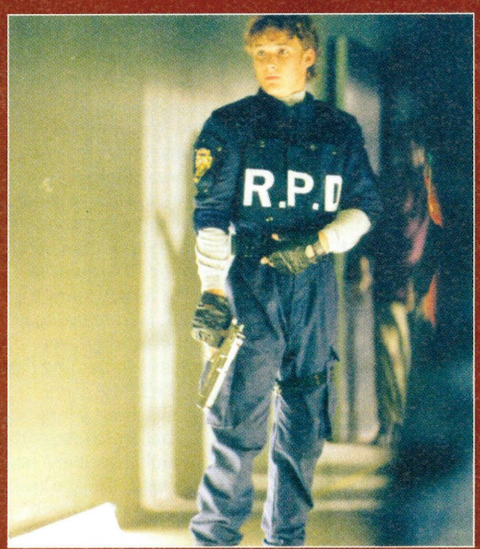


## EVIL DEAD '98

The infamous director George Romero has had a real influence on Resident Evil 2. From the camera angles to the sound effects and music, RE2 could literally be an Evil Dead film. This is taken one step further as Capcom have commissioned Mr Romero to direct the chilling TV advert. Here are some stills...










lighting also deserves a mention. In fact, RE2 utilises some amazing lighting effects to give the game a highly unique and eerie atmosphere. Some of the best lighting is seen at the start of the game when running through the street between street-lamped roads to dark dingy back alleys. The plentiful fire effects are also a sight to be seen, especially when you come across the burning wreck of a helicopter lodged into the side of the police station. Just take a look at the screenshots if you want proof of quality visuals.

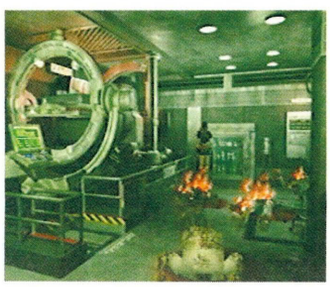
There are four main areas for you to work your way through. The police station is a maze of interview rooms, staff areas, car parks and cells. At first only part of the station is open to you, but as you work your way through you find secret areas and new rooms to explore. The basement and outside of the station leads on to the sewers, but not in a linear fashion. You find yourself going back and forth to perform different tasks. To cut down on the time this takes there are a number of ladders and fire escapes you can use for short cuts, but you have to open them up first. The sewer area comes after the police station and it contains some amazing water and lighting effects. The sewer also offers some of the more hideous monsters, such as giant acid-spitting spiders and pissed-off crocodiles who seem to have been feasting on testosterone. Making your way through the sewers to get to the abandoned factory, which in turn leads to the superb umbrella laboratory complex. This final area has a completely different, almost futuristic feel to it. I don't want to give too much away here, but there are some exemplary twists, turns and surprises in this part of the game.

**"...Everything is done in true 3D, so every part of the environment is explorable, giving the game an edge over its contemporaries..."**

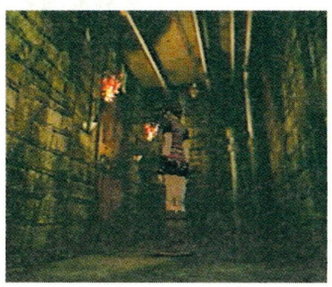
One of RE2's strong points is that it's so full of surprises. When wandering into an unexplored area, you're on tender-hooks as you turn every corner. This really is so nerve-jangling that at times you're loath to turn into that dark corridor or enter that room with the odd noises emanating from it, just in case you get jumped by a zombie.

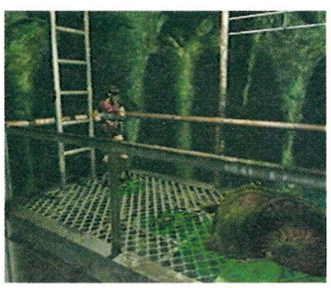
Adding to the tension is the chronically eerie music that emanates from the speakers as you play the game. In fact, it's not so much music as atmospherics. The sound effects are also top notch, especially the weapon sounds. A shot from your pistol sounds





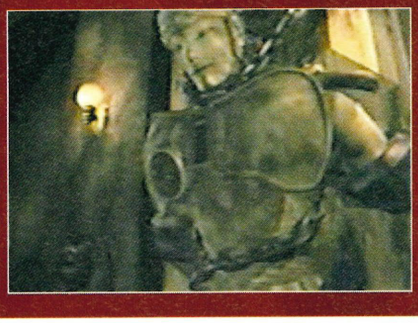


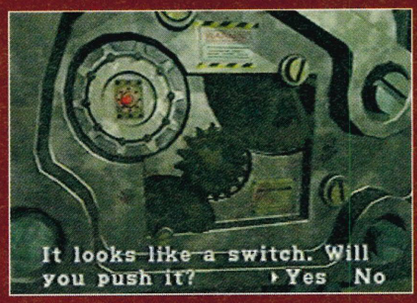




## PUZZLING TIMES?

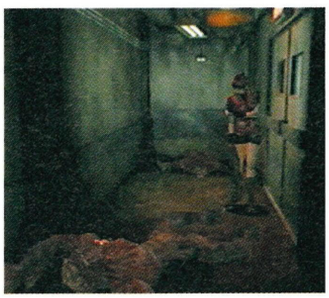
A slight disappointment for me is that the puzzles in RE2 aren't really that puzzling. At first you may find yourself foxed by them, but after you get into the swing of things they won't give you much bother. It's usually a case of finding an object and placing it into another to activate a door or a switch somewhere else.
This doesn't cause too much worry, though, as completing puzzles is usually just a device to open up new areas in the game, which is always rewarding anyway.











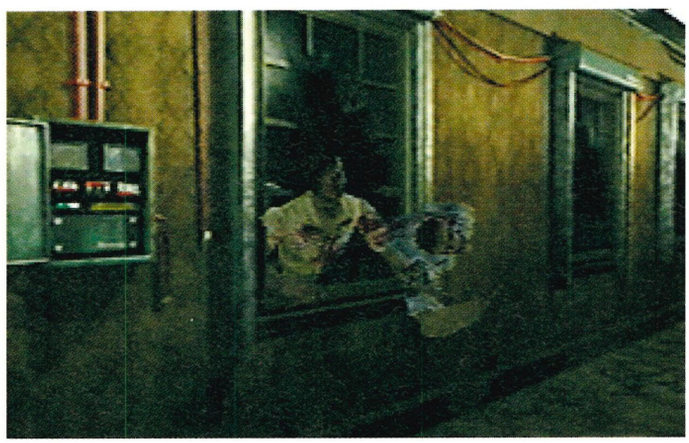
suitably sharp, whereas firing Claire's crossbow results in a dull thud. The chilling atmosphere is also helped by the ghastly noises the zombies and monsters make. The moaning and groaning would sound comical if it wasn't for the fact that it comes from creatures that want your blood. On the whole, the sound effects are easily on par with the rest of the game, especially when you reach the last part for the grand visual and aural finale. That's enough about this, though - you'll have to play it for yourself.

### Any Flaws Mate?

Does RE2 have anything wrong with it, then? Well yes, but there are only a few minor niggles that need to be mentioned. Firstly, the inventory system becomes annoying at times. You can only carry eight items at once, and when your inventory is full you won't be able to collect anything else - even if you're in desperate need of a life-giving herb or life-saving ammunition. To empty your inventory you have to find one of the trunks dotted about the game, and place any unwanted items into it. You then have to go back to collect whatever it was that you didn't have room for. This gets very frustrating when you find yourself running to and fro just to pick up a poxy herb that could have been eaten on the spot. I also think there are far too many save points in the game (a problem which bugged Tomb Raider 2). RE2 uses the same 'typewriter and ink ribbon' saving method as the original, but there seems to be far more opportunity to save than in the previous game. This leads to complacency, as you know it's always possible to return to a position close to where you perish (which is something that happens quite often).

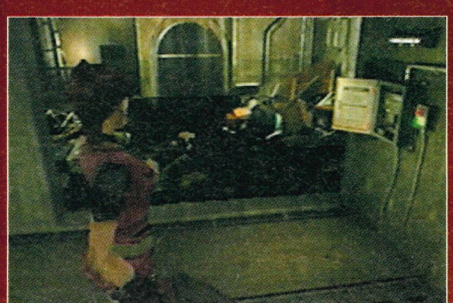
Resident Evil 2 was a long time in the making, but for results of this standard I would have been happy to wait another year. The atmosphere created by the combination of

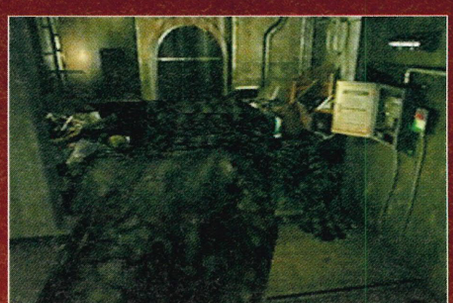
**"...One of RE2's strong points is that it's so full of surprises. When wandering into an unexplored area, you're on tender-hooks as you turn every corner..."**

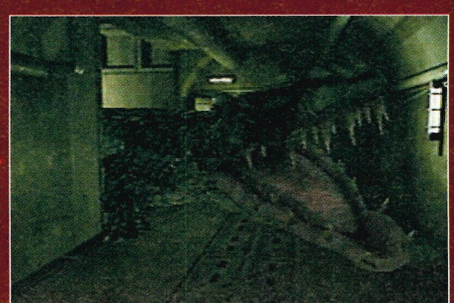


Killed all the zombies? Never mind, there's more to come.

## SEE YA' LATER ALLIGATA'





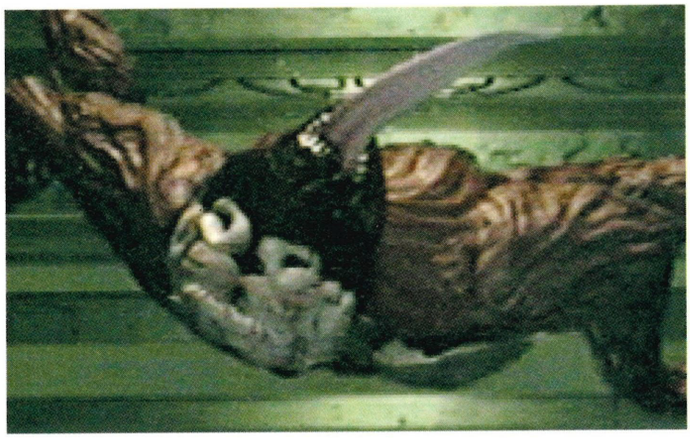


**"...RE 2 was a long time in the making, but for results of this standard I would have been happy to wait another year..."**

sound, visuals, gameplay and tension is second to none. The improvements over Resident Evil are instantly noticeable, and the size of the game makes its prequel look pathetic in comparison. RE2 is everything you want in a game. It's a visually stunning journey into a world of dark nightmare realities that could only ever exist on the screen. Capcom have out-done themselves in providing a true sequel to an already-excellent game. It could easily have been a case of rehashing the old formula and putting it into a new setting, but thankfully this isn't the case. Survival horror is back, and this time Resident Evil is bigger, badder and a damn site better looking.

EPM
*SAUL*





The Licker - every woman's dream. He cunningly lingers...




Here's proof of how great RE2 really is, the Japs will queue all day to get hold of it and it whitewashed FFVII Stateside.

## IN COMPARISON

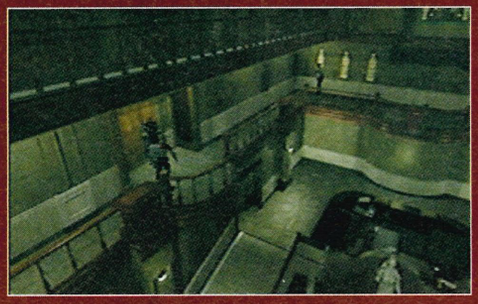
If you want proof of RE2's graphical improvement over the original, here it is...













## Second Opinion

I usually hate games with fixed cameras that change as you move, but clever design has ensured RE2's aren't even slightly confusing. You're always in control in this wonderfully atmospheric bloodbath. So far, this is the best game of the year.

Ian

## The Score

| | |
|---|---|
| Publisher | VIRGIN |
| Developer | CAPCOM |
| Released | APRIL '98 |
| Version | UK |
| Price | £39.99 |
| Genre | ACTION/ ADVENTURE |
| Players | 1 |
| Memory Card | ✔ |

GAMEPLAY
10

ORIGINALITY
9

LIFESPAN
9

SOUND
9

GRAPHICS
10

OVERALL
97%

in summary

One of the best looking, most playable and scariest games ever!



# CHILL

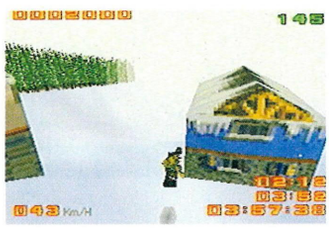


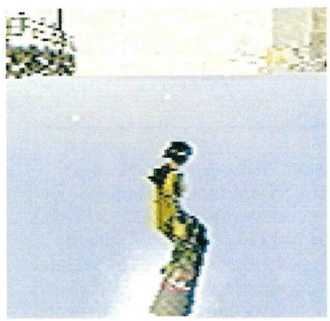
## Ragged Little Chill?

**There I was, enjoying a swift pint in the local, when some bloke sat down and started spouted off, "if Eidos came round my 'ouse, and stuck Tomb Raider on my PlayStation, and then started playing, in my lounge, I'd let it go. But if Eidos came round, in my lounge, when I woz sat watchin' Corrie, on the sofa, wiv the missus, and started playing CHILL, I'd say, 'EIDOS! NO! You may very well 'av 'ad massiv' hits wiv Tomb Raider and Tomb Raider 2, but you come round my 'ouse, while I'm watching Corrie, wiv the missus, and put this sub-standard attempt at a snowboarding game on my telly, that's just out of order'. I would, I'd say, 'EIDOS! NO!'"**

The bloke in the pub definitely had a point. How Eidos can give us two of the best PlayStation games ever and then come along with Chill is beyond me. Have last year's Q&A testers been replaced by blind, bungalling, three-fingered buffoons? Or is it that Chill had to be out before the end of the winter season? I suspect the latter.

Chill's main problem is it's extremely shoddy. This is mostly in the graphical department, but it's also evident in the gameplay and on the control of your snowboarders. The biggest fault is the heinous draw-in as you wing your way down the slopes. Actually, you don't wing your way down the slopes; it's more of a dawdle.



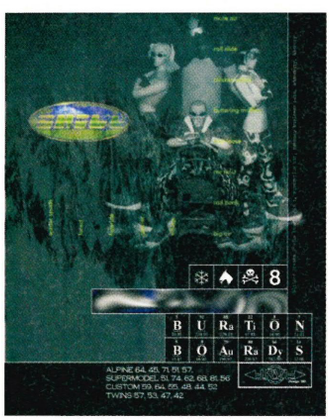


> **"...Chill takes the angle that snowboarding is about freedom..."**

Anyway, back to the draw-in, which is completely and utterly unforgiveable. The slopes draw themselves about halfway down, so most of the time you find yourself riding down half a slope. It's not as bad on the flatter section of a slopes, but once you start going down the steeper parts it really shows itself up. This problem is made even worse by the sumptuous-looking digitised backgrounds on some of the slopes. 'Chalk and cheese' springs to mind here as the slopes do not in any way blend in with the background. Even if the snowboarding was the best seen on the PlayStation, this problem is so bad that you couldn't forgive it.

The rest of the visuals aren't that bad. The snow looks better than Snow Racer 98 or Coolboarders 2, and the bumps and jumps in the slopes are very well drawn and implemented. There's also obstacles such as trees, fences, bridges, houses, cars and roads around the slopes, which are all drawn to a high standard; this, however, all pales into insignificance when you witness that ridiculous draw in.





### Chill Boarders

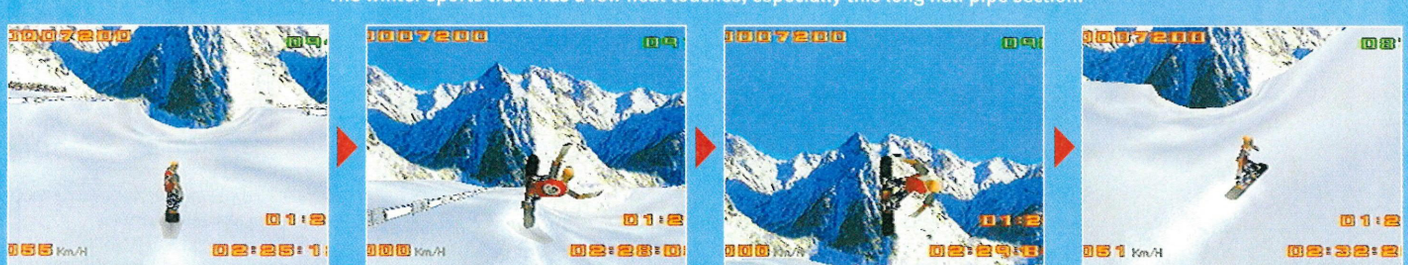
Chill offers four characters to choose from, namely Bone, Goat, Trix and Yo-Yo (check out the preview in Issue Three for a full run-down on them). Each has a different personality, which doesn't make any difference to the game. Like Coolboarders 2, the characters also have a change of clothing, although on Chill this amounts to nothing more than a colour change on the character's exisiting togs.

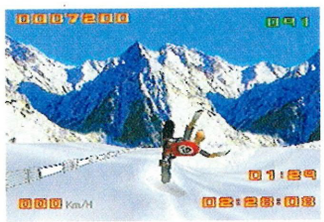


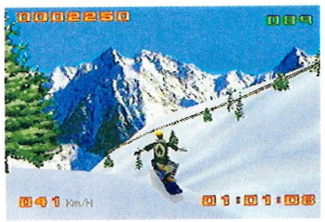
Once you've chosen a character and one of the many boards available, it's time to hit the slopes. The boards are different in handling, speed and balance - the fastest ones are usually the best, though. Chill doesn't put the onus on the racing aspect of snowboarding, which is evident in the speed, but that's another story. Chill takes the angle that snowboarding is about freedom. Snowboarders want to do what they want, to have a good time, to have a party and get loaded (just ask the Winter Olympics competitors for proof).

## CHILLED OUT

The winter sports track has a few neat touches, especially this long half pipe section.



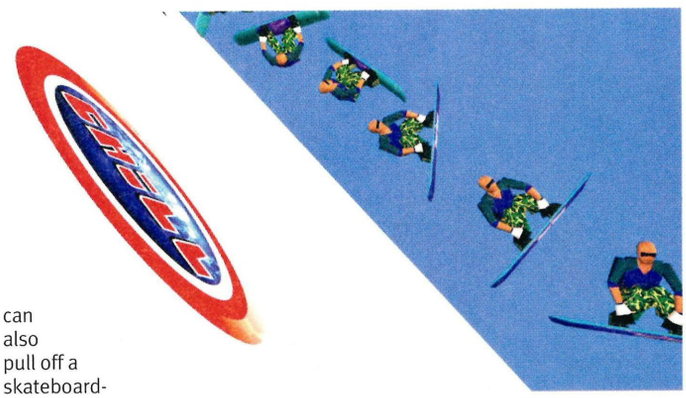





Unfortunately, Chill doesn't offer the chance to have a good time, have a party or get loaded, but it does offer you a chance to do what you want to do; sort of. All of the slopes are pretty huge and the idea is to use all of the bumps, jumps, ruts and obstacles to pull off stunts and manouveres to get yourself points.

**"...playing against the clock doesn't give you the chance to explore all of the slope, which is supposedly the idea of the game..."**

This would be all well and good if it wasn't for two things; firstly, you still have to keep within a time limit, and secondly, the control system, especially for stunts and jumps, is awkward. For a start, having a time limit destroys the fact that you are supposed to have freedom on the slopes. I mean playing against the clock doesn't give you the chance to explore all of the slope, which is supposedly the idea of the game. Also for a game that puts emphasis on performing tricks, there aren't actually that many. The stunts simply consist of spins, flips and grabs which are really hard to combine for spectacular results. Against Coolboarders 2 the stunt section on Chill is actually pretty pathetic but it does have one saving grace in the stunt animation, which is fairly cool. As well as stunts you can also perform a 'Bonk' (fnar, fnar) which simply amounts to jumping onto and bouncing off an object. You



can also pull off a skateboard-style rail slide in which you slide down long objects such as fences or pipes. These extra moves don't save the stunts section of Chill in any way.

Controlling your boarder isn't exactly taxing, but it does get annoying. As I've said, the idea of the game is to explore the slopes, but you often find your boarder getting stuck for no apparent reason. When this happens you can't go any further and it's a simple case of turning around and going in the direction that the natural angle of the slope takes you; so much for freedom. The boarders do respond to your commands quite quickly, although setting off a trick or a jump feels a little sticky. The control is also hampered by the speed that the game runs at, which is positively slow compared to its rivals, Snow Racer and Coolboarders 2.

## Saving Graces?

So, does Chill have anything going for it at all? Well, yes and no. All of the tracks are very well designed and they're much bigger than those of any other game of this type. There are five in all, which doesn't sound like a lot but Eidos have gone for size, and not technique on Chill. Also the scenery on the tracks looks the business, but with the game running at such a slow speed it can't be hard to make the track scenery look cool. Any neat graphical touches instantly take a back seat when you take into account the other flaws that Chill holds. The characters, although a little small, are probably the best graphical touch of the game. They have a number of different animations for when they land or bounce into something and there are separate sound effects for each of your boarders. All together, though, no amount of little touches can save the dull gameplay and rushed design of Chill.

The music doesn't even add to the game. It's a mix between hardcore and drum 'n' bass which, if done properly would really compliment a snowboarding game. As it stands, the tunes sound like they've been knocked up on a Spectrum with an eight-bit sampler and a Casio keyboard. Is this another case of the rush job?

Chill was always going to have a hard job breaking into the snowboarding genre, simply because the competition is of such a high quality. Whilst Chill is on the starting line, Coolboarders 2 and Snow Racer 98 are already in the bar wearing Ray-Bans and drinking Martini on the rocks. If Chill was the only snowboarding game around I may just recommend it to you; the problem is that it isn't, so I won't. It's so obvious that Chill has been rushed out to tag onto the end of the winter season; maybe they could have spent more time tweaking, and released it next winter. If you want a snowboading game, buy one of the aforementioned; just don't buy Chill. In the immortal words of the man in the pub, "EIDOS! NO!" EPM

*SAUL*

## Second Opinion

"Only me", said the man in the flat cap and light blue anorak. Addressing Chill while holding aloft a copy of Coolborders 2, he squawked, "You don't want to do it like that, you want to do it like that".

Ian

## The Score

| | |
|---|---|
| Publisher | EIDOS |
| Developer | SILICON DREAMS |
| Released | OUT NOW |
| Version | UK |
| Price | £39.99 |
| Genre | WINTER SPORTS |
| Players | 1-2 |
| Analog | ✔ |

GAMEPLAY
5

ORIGINALITY
7

LIFESPAN
5

SOUND
5

GRAPHICS
4

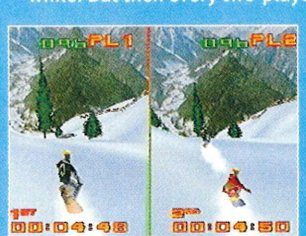
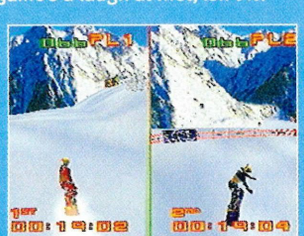
OVERALL
46%

**in summary**

Inexplicably flawed and not much fun either.

## TWO-PLAYER

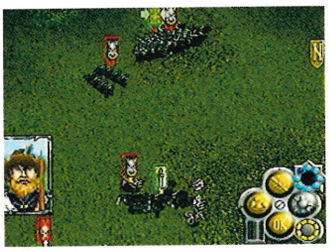
**Chill has a two player mode which is a good laugh, for a little while. But then every two-player game's a laugh at first, isn't it?**

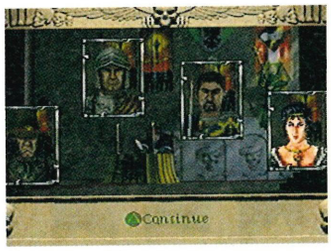
# Dark Omen

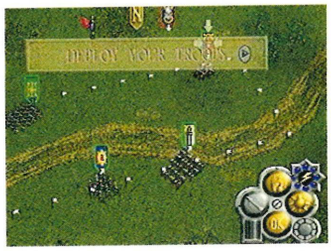
## Blood on the Joypad

Back in the days of pimply skin and Metallica T-shirts, I and others like me used to while away the hours reading gargantuan Games Workshop rule books, painting tiny lead miniatures and creating enormous battlefields upon which mighty conflicts could be fought (and the need to get a girlfriend neatly avoided). Now it's the digital Nineties, and the hobby of the socially dispossessed has been translated to the PSX, wiping out the need for painstaking study, eyesight-shrivelling brushwork and friends at a stroke. But does it measure up to the pencils-and-dice of the real thing? Only the bravest and most epic of warriors should read on...








Dark Omen is Electronic Arts' follow-up to its previous patchy attempt at converting the rules system of the Warhammer battle game into a computerised incarnation, Shadow of the Horned Rat. Set in a twisted version of medieval Europe (replete with magic, goblins, zombies etc.), you take the role of bloodthirsty but charismatic mercenary Morgan Bernhardt and his band of hired warriors. At first your battles are fought for gold coins, but before too long the army gets caught up in an Empire-wide battle against the marauding legions of Undead which are sweeping north to join with the necromantic Dread King, who has risen again thanks to an inconvenient alignment of the heavens. This unfolding scenario is detailed in the spine-chilling opening movie sequence and incidental FMVs that punctuate your progress, and most ingeniously in the real-time renderings of Bernhardt and his allies as they discuss events with full speech lip-synched to their 3-D digital portraits (see boxout).

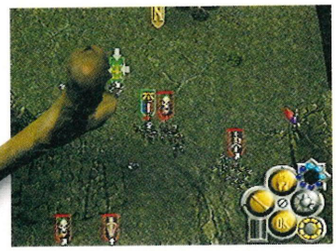
## Meat on the Bone

The true meat of the game, though, is in the head-splitting fight sequences played out on various beautifully-drawn three-dimensional battlefields that run from lush meadows to barren wastes. Each arena can be fully rotated and zoomed in and out, allowing a canny general to spot advantageous high ground or cover on which to position his troops (although sometimes the view does not quite depress close enough to the ground to get a really good soldier's-eye view).

**"...The resolution is so fine it's usually possible to tell what kind of fighters they are without looking at their marker banner..."**

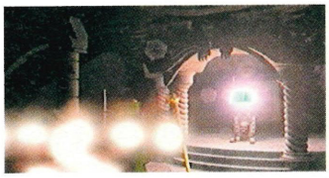
Various features which dot the landscape, such as the wicked enormous windmills and pyramids, loom up to great heights, dwarfing troops so they look like ants. The particle water effects as your units wade through a river are top-notch, and make C&C Red Alert's rudimentary visuals look very shabby indeed. This high graphical standard is also obvious in the various warriors that make up the units. The resolution is so fine it's usually possible to tell what kind of fighters they are without looking at their marker banner, and during a scrap individual can be seen desperately fighting individual.

Control over your available forces is via all four fire buttons and a multi-form on-screen pointer that changes function depending on its position relative to a unit, and its relevant status and abilities. It can, for example, signify a 'charge' command, a 'turn about' order or denote if a missile unit has clear line of sight on a target. Friendly units can be cycled through via the shoulder buttons and be given orders even when not in view, as their banners line the edge of the screen in the direction they are relative to your 'window' onto the field, helping the hapless commander to keep track of his probably-dwindling forces. Unfortunately, there is no 'skip to selected unit' function, which would have proved especially useful when a large army is split far apart on the battlefield.













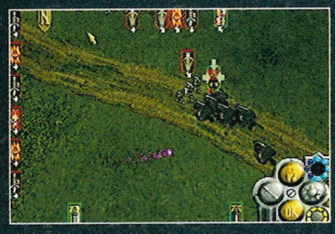
## HOW THE WEST WAS'NT WON



With twin wizards in tow you move to engage...



Suddenly hordes of enemy units swarm out of nowhere!



Your troops in decimated disarray are now bombarded with magic bolts...



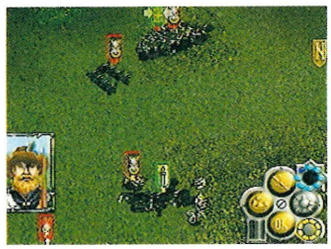
...and inevitably they rout, with almost a dozen hostile formations in hot pursuit. Run Away! Run Away!

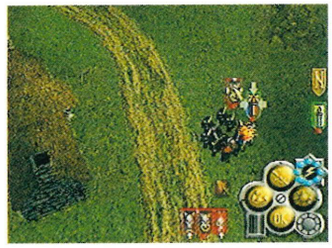
## TALKING HEADS



Each individual Bernhardt encounters and converses with has their own fully-rendered three-dimensional portrait which is slaved to their speech, a feature that brings an interesting slant to how the plot evolves. The relationships between characters are surprisingly well played out for a strategy game, with bitter rivalries and soap opera overtones adding a welcome spice to proceedings. Nice touches and humour abound in the voice-acting, such as the salt-of-the-earth, Yorkshire-accented Dwarf Warriors and ridiculously sinister Witchfinder-General ("There is sin everywhere!"), all of which help to create an emotional bond of sorts with your forces, and even makes one feel a little sorry when sending them to almost-certain death.

Making units move or attack is straightforward, as an enemy's banners can be point-and-clicked at when out of sight, sending your chaps running off to engage them. Indirect routes for movement can be plotted allowing for flanking manoeuvres and patrol loops to be tactically employed. Unfortunately once hostilities commence these carefully-laid plans tend to go out of the window in a blare of panic as fresh enemy forces pop up and wade in, turning your previously steadfast elite band of warriors into a gaggle of terrified fleeing chickens. This feature, although initially frustrating ("Fight you cowards! Fight damn you!"), is nicely realistic as soldiers are not mindless fighting robots, and do tend to run off if they are being decimated in real life. Some troops are less likely to 'rout', as this is called, especially if they hate a particular foe, while the presence of undead, enormous or creepy-crawly enemies shake even the stoutest fighter's resolve. Assistance comes though in the shape of the Hero button, which can be hammered Track and Field-style to inspire a shaky formation to greater heights of bravery. In addition, long-range but immobile artillery can lob destruction into an enemies' hearts, while wizards and magic items can add an extra mystic punch to your forces (see box). After a successful battle, gold is awarded. This can be used to buy better armour, more troops to replace those slain and various enchanted artefacts. In addition, units that have fought well gain experience points, increasing their fighting proficiency over time, letting you nurture crack troops into a well-oiled killing machine. Lose a fight and not only do you fail to win booty, but as a result your dead troops cannot be replaced, making your chances of victory cumulatively smaller. This does make campaign play a bit unforgiving, but life shouldn't be easy in the cut-throat world of the mercenary now, should it?







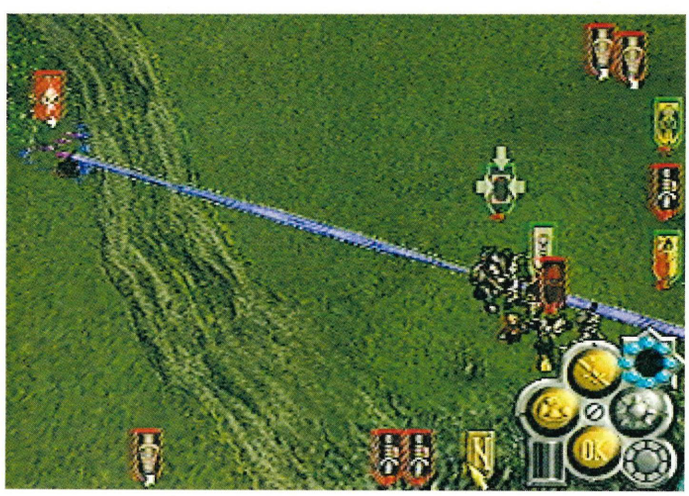
### Flame On!

Dark Omen is such a depthy game that this review only really skims over the main features, as much of the game's polish and appeal lies in its fine attention to detail (such as the perfect-trajectory flights of crossbow bolts that are lifted straight from Braveheart, and the way troops hit by fire attacks turn into human torches and run screaming across the field). However, extended play does show up some fairly minor niggles. The button sensitivity setting seems a little sluggish (although mouse control would probably help this), and sometimes the markers on a unit's banner signalling whether they are retreating, fighting or awaiting orders are a little difficult to see, but the multitude of good points easily swamp these gripes.

Especially noteworthy are the various audio effects throughout the game, best of which is the bloodcurdling battle soundtrack, replete with the clash of steel on steel and agonised cries of injured fighters. In fact, these were so realistic and disturbing I was made to turn the speakers down on my PSX by the others in the office as they couldn't concentrate for dread. Additionally there's a link-up option on the final finished version, which if Red Alert is anything to go by will be a blast (especially as in this mode you can play as Greenskin or Undead armies as well as Human). Basically Dark Omen provides everything a wargame on the PlayStation should, and will prove a lengthy and stern challenge for even the most gung-ho of armchair generals.

EPM

*CHRISTIAN*



This wizard doesn't shoot his bolt early.



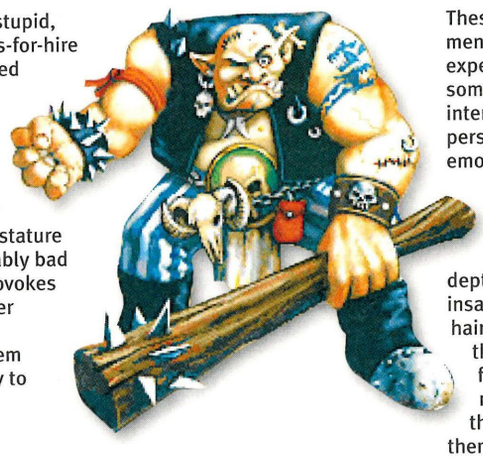
Your massed ranks await their orders (and likely death).

# Hard as Nails

Some of the troops available to you are exotic to say the least. Here are the meanest of the bunch...

## Mercenary Ogres

Huge and stupid, these clubs-for-hire aren't fussed about who they smash as long as they get paid. Their enormous stature (and probably bad breath) provokes fear in other creatures, making them more likely to flee.



## Flagellants

These are tragic men who have experienced some form of intense personal and emotional trauma which has driven them to the depths of insanity (and hairstyles). Whipping themselves into a frenzy, their madness grants them superhuman strength and ferocity, making them fearsome in battle.



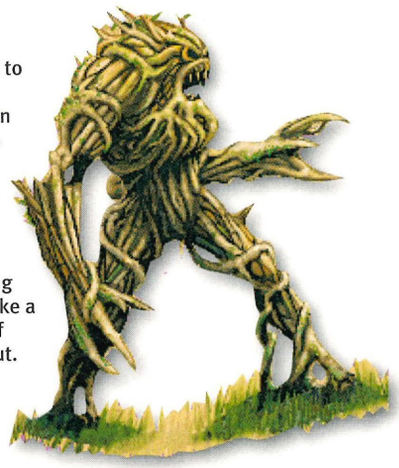
## Imperial Steam Tank

This primitive kettle-driven version of a Challenger simply runs over any enemies foolish enough to engage it hand-to-hand, and packs a nasty but inaccurate cannon under its armoured hide.



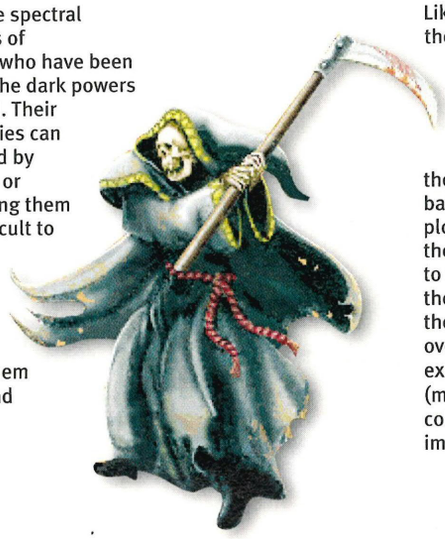
## Treeman

With a bark definitely equal to their bite these timber titans can tear Greenskins limb from limb with ease, but are unsurprisingly susceptible to flames, requiring them to make like a tree and leave if there's fire about.



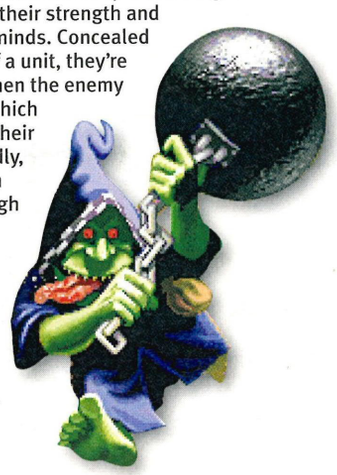
## Wraiths

Wraiths are the spectral manifestations of necromancers who have been consumed by the dark powers they employed. Their intangible bodies can only be harmed by magical spells or weapons making them extremely difficult to slay, and they cause terror in any unlucky individuals who engage them in hand-to-hand combat.



## Goblin Fanatics

Like green and scaley East European athletes, these crazed lunatics drink suspicious fungus brews to boost their strength and dement their minds. Concealed in the ranks of a unit, they're pushed out when the enemy is near, after which they start to spin their ball and chain wildly, ploughing through those stupid enough to try and fight them. Eventually they either fall over with exhaustion or (more comically) collide with an immovable object.





## Second Opinion

Tricky to get to grips with at first, due to the complex control method and savage opponents. This does ease with play, and soon becomes an addictive blood bath. Accessing the camera is inspiring.

Darren

## The Score

| | |
|---|---|
| Publisher | ELEC. ARTS |
| Developer | MINDSCAPE |
| Released | OUT NOW |
| Version | UK |
| Price | £39.99 |
| Genre | STRATEGY |
| Players | 1-2 |
| Memory Card | ✔ |
| Mouse | ✔ |
| Link-Up | ✔ |

GAMEPLAY
7

ORIGINALITY
7

LIFESPAN
9

SOUND
9

GRAPHICS
9

OVERALL
90%

in summary

A classy way of re-enacting Zulu with freaky-deaky creatures.

# Super Pang

## I'm forever bursting bubbles...

**Sometimes the simplest games are the best. Tetris became an all-time classic despite no graphical sophistication, Shanghai, a simple tile-matching exercise, works much better as a video game as the tiles are laid out for you, and the best Chess sims sacrifice aesthetic indulgence and concentrate on flexibility and artificial intelligence. Even Asteroids, that archaic shoot-'em-up, has a sizeable cult following. It's from Asteroids the Pang outings get their inspiration, as this three-game compilation clearly shows. Super Pang Collection brings together three raves from the grave, offering arcade-perfect versions of 1989's Pomping World, Super Pang, released the following year and the brilliant-but-obscure Pang! 3 from 1995.**

The controls couldn't be simpler. You play a geezer who walks along the bottom of the screen. All you can do is move left, move right or fire his harpoon weapon - no running, no jumping, no special moves, no secret teleport ability and definitely no Supa-Dupa 78-Hit Ultra Shadow Combos™. On later levels, he climbs ladders too. Your foes are equally simplistic. They start as enormous balloons, falling from the sky and bouncing in a very predictable arc. When they hit a wall on the edge of the screen or an obstacle they, erm... bounce back again. The big buggers aren't much of a threat as they bounce the entire height of the screen, making them easy to avoid. Shoot one, though, and it splits into two medium-sized balloons which also travel in an arc but don't bounce as high. These in turn break into two small balloons that bounce even lower, and these themselves separate into two tiny ones which barely clear your head - shoot these and they disappear. See where the Asteroids influences are? It's best to clear the balloons one at a time, taking care of the progressively smaller ones before toppling another big bubble.

> **"...While predictability is usually a damning indictment of a boring title offering no surprises, here it's the game's greatest asset..."**

The harpoon trails a long chain - if a bubble bounces into it, it's burst. The chain disappears when it claims a victim or when it hits the ceiling, whichever comes first. You can only have one chain on the screen at a time, though this can be affected by the various power-ups on offer, as outlined elsewhere.

As the game progresses, various features are introduced. Mid-air platforms affect the bubbles' bounce - you think you've plenty of time to get under a bouncing balloon, but it hits a platform and returns to Earth earlier than expected. Some platforms can be shot away, others just act as low ceilings, making your shots disappear sooner. Later still, certain balls are initially trapped. You must clear them all before the time limit runs out, but releasing them is a risk. Also risky is climbing the ladders scattered around later stages. Some are essential as they get you over walls and blocks that bedevil by restricting your left/right movement. Remember, there's no jumping.

The heart of these three games (make no mistake, the later ones are updates rather than sequels) is their simplicity and the fact that they're totally and utterly predictable. While predictability is usually a damning indictment of a boring title offering no surprises, here it's the game's greatest asset. You know EXACTLY where the balloons are going to bounce. When you shoot them, you know EXACTLY where the smaller ones will fly. Even when the level is scattered with platforms, walls and other such irritating obstacles, it's possible to predict their paths with complete accuracy. Obviously, the more balloons on the screen the harder it gets, but if you die, it's your own fault - you moved too slowly or didn't think far enough ahead.

As stated before, the three games are more like updates than sequels, but there are subtle differences between them. We'll take a look at each game in turn.

### In Conclusion...

Pang is a wonderful game. Its beauty is in its simplicity, its addictiveness in the predictable nature of the gameplay - if you lose, you know its your fault and you have to have just one more go. The two-player game is a dream, with two characters blasting the balloons. The collection's only real drawback is its lack of variety. Super Pang is merely the original game with its wrinkles ironed out, and Pang! 3 is more of an update than a sequel. As a budget release its score would be in the high nineties, but even as a full-pricer it's a worthy winner. EPM

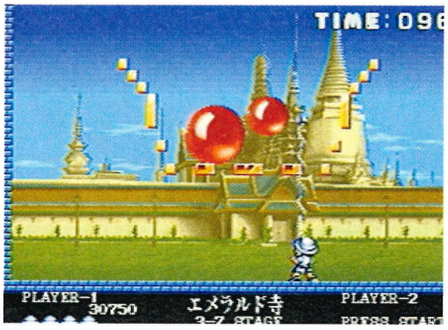
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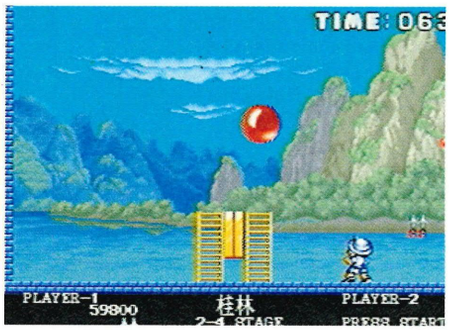
## Pomping World: 1989

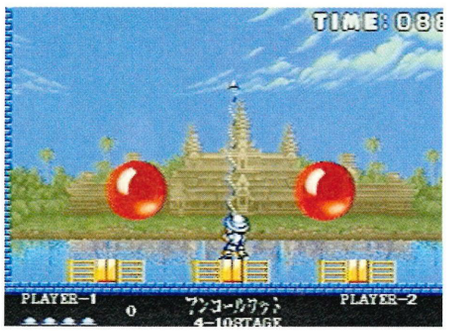
**Pomping World is showing its age. The collision detection is decidedly dodgy at times, the player often being struck by balls which should have floated past his shoulder. Power-ups sit on the floor for too long, which is a major gameplay flaw. You can't avoid picking one up if you walk over it, nor can you jump over it. You're often forced to pick up an item you simply didn't want.**

Another annoyance is that you can't jump off a ladder unless you're on the top, your restricted movement leaving you vulnerable. This is less serious as it's possible for the player to compensate for this by thinking ahead - don't get yourself into a position where you're on a ladder when a balloon is near.

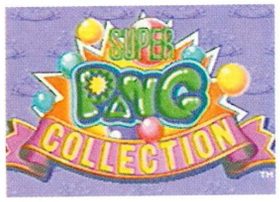
Pomping World isn't a bad game; in fact, in its day it was bloody brilliant for all the reasons which made the other two absolute classics. It's just that the later Pang titles corrected these very small flaws, making this largely redundant.



# Collection




## Super Pang: 1990

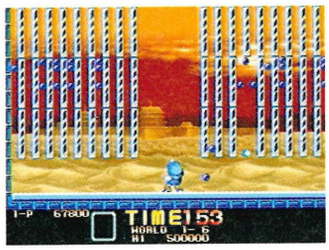
**This is the classic Pang game you know and love from the arcades (and possibly the SNES too). You can now jump off ladders without getting to the top, making the game much more intuitive. The graphics are (slightly) crisper, and the collision detection far more forgiving.**

Octagonal enemies split like bubbles, but travel in straight lines, bouncing off walls, floors, ceilings and platforms with no regard for gravity. There are also bubbles that bounce higher than normal, and flashing balloons which split into four instead of two. Watch out for roving aliens too - they're no real threat to yourself, but they make the balloons bounce awkwardly.

The power-ups remain on the screen for less time, making it easier to ignore an unwanted item, and the gun now scatters its shots so you don't have to be directly under the bubbles to blast 'em. Take care, though - it's easy to release an item you didn't want straight on top of you. The levels themselves are tougher and more complex - I think we can forgive the game its occasional slow-down.

Also worth a mention is the Panic Mode. Set on a single level, the bubbles just keep coming - how long will you last?













## Pang! 3: 1995

**The collision detection here is more generous still. There are four different characters to choose from, each has their own advantages and disadvantages. You have limited choices about which stages to tackle next, too. The Panic Mode is still here, as well as the normal game.**

There are a few additional features here; watch out for bombs that bounce in the same manner as the bubbles, but when hit explode, taking nearby balloons with them. The grappling hook is much improved - now firing a second time cancels the first wire, making it a useful tool instead of a liability which leaves you vulnerable. The alarm clock freezes the bubbles for longer too. Power-up icons remain on the screen for longer, though, and the re-drawn dynamite is larger and therefore harder to avoid.





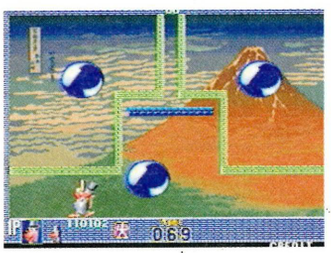


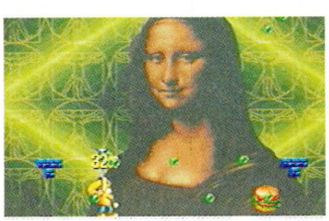


## Power Up!

Most of these power-ups are common to all three games, with occasional slight variations, mostly graphical.

- GUN: A rapid-fire weapon. Take out larger balls in the air, blasting the smaller ones before they hit the ground.
- DOUBLE HARPOON: You can now have two shots on the screen at once.
- DOUBLE WIRE: The chain can burst two balloons before it disappears.
- GRAPPLING HOOK: This clings to the ceiling and holds the wire on the screen for a few seconds. In the first two games, this leaves you vulnerable if you miss.
- DYNAMITE: Splits balloons until they're the smallest bubble. This is a disaster if there are a lot of larger ones on the screen.
- SHIELDS: This is fairly self-explanatory. Lasts for one hit.
- HOUR GLASS: Gives you more time to complete the level.
- ALARM CLOCK: Freezes the bubbles for a few seconds.
- 1-UP: Extra Life





## Second Opinion

Three versions of a classic game, but sadly slightly over-priced. With the game already written, surely lower development costs should result in a cut in price? But at the end of the day, quality gameplay shines through.

Darren

## The Score

| | |
|---|---|
| Publisher | OCEAN |
| Developer | CAPCOM |
| Released | APRIL '98 |
| Version | UK |
| Price | £44.99 |
| Genre | RETRO COMPILATION |
| Players | 1-2 |
| Memory Card | ✓ |

GAMEPLAY
9

ORIGINALITY
8

LIFESPAN
8

SOUND
6

GRAPHICS
6

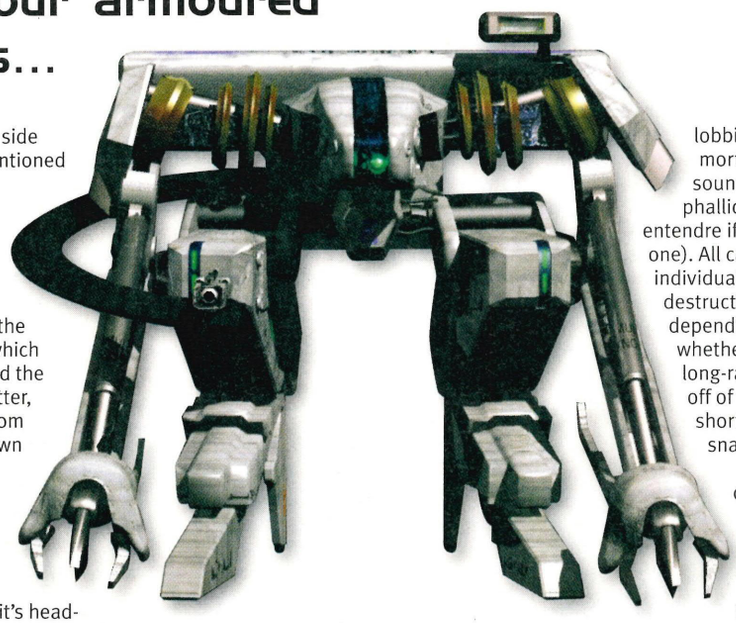
OVERALL
82%

### in summary

Three versions of the same game, but great gameplay wins through.

# Brahma Force

## Now YOU can fulfil your armoured space opera fantasies...



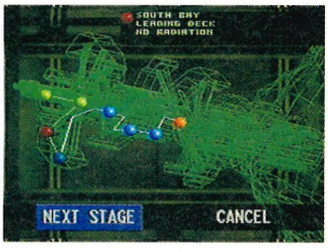
**On the distant mining colony of Beltlogger 9, things are going distinctly pear-shaped. 'Pickman's Syndrome', a terrifying new form of space schizophrenia, has taken hold of the unfortunate workers, robbing them of the ability to control their destructive impulses. Their mayday a week ago, followed by an ominous dead silence, has necessitated the dispatch of a rescue mission. Guess who's in charge of that?**

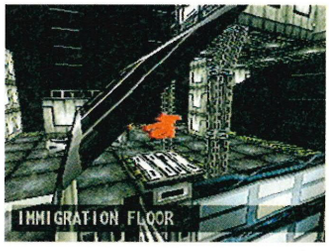
As the squadron leader of Brahma Force, it's down to you, techno-muggins, to sort out what the blinking flip went on at the beleaguered outpost. However, as the exhaustive intro movie spells out, all your comrades are briskly wasted on arrival by the complex's automated defence systems, leaving you alone with only your 'Bronx' unit (basically a mech/gundam) around you for protection. Doom-style exploration and blasting action then ensues, with the added twist of a gradually unfolding sub-plot regarding what actually caused the outbreak of insanity, and who (or what?) now controls the station and destroyed your team. On your side there's the aforementioned bit of kit, which although at the outset is not exactly bristling with weaponry, can be upgraded to buggery if you find the right components which are scattered around the station (or, even better, cannibalise parts from enemies you've blown to bits).

As you can probably see from the screenshots, there's no lack of information presented in the unit's head-up-display, which is dominated by an enormous gunsight that helpfully fades out when you're not blazing away. Weapons status, health, shield energy, altimeter and a rotating map help you keep your bearings and avoid the violent deaths lurking around every turn in the form of various robot guardians. These begin as simple flying red sentries which can (quite alarmingly) kill the Bronx unit with three or four shots unless you're quick with the energy-sapping shield button or nippy enough to dodge their projectiles. They gradually increase in power the deeper you go, and come in the shape of scurrying roller-skate droids, mean flapping robots (with a nasty stare) and chunky ED-209 clones. To deal with these, a meaty array of big shooty things are at your disposal, including a standard assault rifle, rapid-fire laser, useful homing missiles and a bomb-lobbing trench mortar (which sounds like a phallic double-entendre if I ever heard one). All can be individually boosted in destructive potential, depending on whether you want long-range picking off of targets or short distance snap-shooting.

Each offensive system has an in-depth schematic description of its destructive vital statistics, replete with full speech, which although adding to the overall atmosphere of the game and impression of great depth are really just nice window dressing (much like the cute but useless ship rundown section in Colony Wars). Fighting is frantic at close range, with a healthy dose of luck thrown in if things become confused and spun-about. A much preferable way of fighting is to remove targets surgically while they're far off using the homing missiles, assisted by the auto lock-on feature that makes the job as easy as the Gulf pilots' over Baghdad. However, get too close and the tracking can go awry, often needing a quick switch to guns and a panicked spray of rifle bolts.

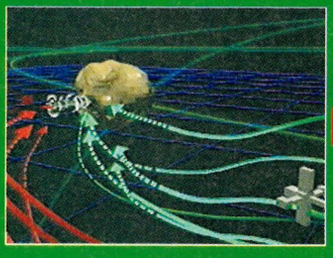
To help get out of trouble the Bronx unit can jump (with a limited jet pack assistance), slide to the left and right at a press of a shoulder



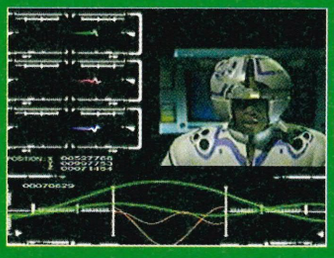





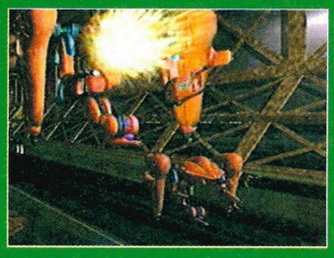

## FULL MOTION JACKET



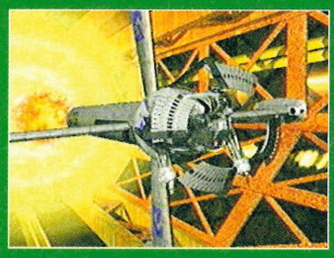
You and your doomed comrades swarm in on the godforsaken rock that is Beltlogger 9.



Suddenly an incoming communication arrives from your commanding officer, Major Ping-Pong Ball Head, warning of danger.

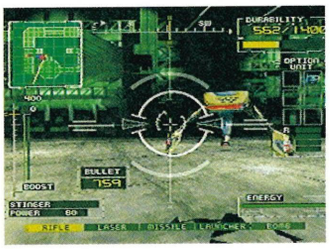


The nasty robot defence ships are an easy target at first, but...



...Goodness gracious, great balls of fire! They blow your mates to atoms! Now you're up that certain creek without a paddle for sure.







button (especially useful when fighting on open ground), and employ various automatic and manual defensive shields. The trouble is, unlike most other games in this style you can effectively 'see' through walls with your radar, the as-yet invisible target monacled by your HUD. This removes the tension of not knowing what lies beyond a door or round a corner, a vital element of this genre's enjoyment. In addition, the combat tends to be frenetic without being bloodthirsty, with each fight turning into a process of looking at dots on the radar screen rather than peering desperately into the murky darkness for prey. Frustration can rear its head whilst fighting, as even the smallest droids can quite easily destroy the Brahma unit in a few shots, in spite of the technological warning systems and having a full-to-the-brim durability rating. In itself this would not be an insurmountable flaw in the gameplay, as the best way to fight (ie. at a long distance) soon becomes obvious and straightforward, though it becomes a little unsatisfying when employed repeatedly.

## Annoying niggles

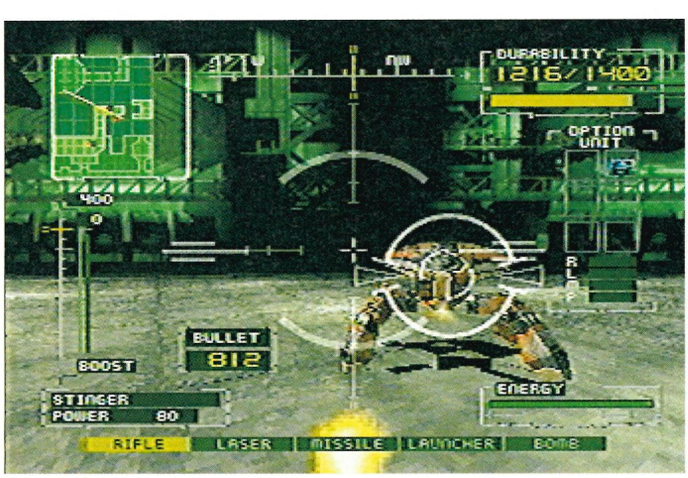
There's no single factor that denies Brahma Force's status as a Division One title, only a string of annoying niggles that break up the flow of play. For example, incoming communications stop the action dead, and the information they provide is 50% cosmetic and 50% relevant, and even then usually only of little actual bearing on the way the game progresses (being primarily a showcase for various B-movie voice actors to ham it up, it seems). On the other hand, clues are concealed in the messages left dotted around the complex by its previous inhabitants, leaving it down to you to piece together what has befallen them. For what is essentially a 'stalk and shoot' game this is a welcome addition and a decent attempt at weaving blasting and sleuthing in an unusual context. Level-to-level, though, the objectives tend to be fairly dull; turn on the lift power supply and ride it, destroy the airlock controls to escape, etc, and are mainly explained in black and white, requiring only a little logic to solve. This fairly repetitive pulse is not helped by the similarity in landscape you encounter, which although being well-drawn and atmospheric in a metallic way does start looking the same after an hour or two (to be fair, though, the distant backdrops look lovely, especially from a high vantage point looking down).

Basically, the game is excellent presentation-wise, headed by the enormous FMV that sets out the scenario with a great degree of filmic style and multi-imaging techniques. The attention to detail on the sonics is also top-notch, particularly the extensive speech which has been painstakingly 'roughed up' to sound like authentic radio crackle, the mechanical 'whirrr' of looking up or down and the clump of heavy metal boots on alloy decking (which surprisingly does not become quickly tiresome). Unfortunately a less welcome kind of heavy metal invades in the shape of the widdly Joe Satriani-style guitar solos that pop up in the intro movie's otherwise-rousing sci-fi Wagnerisms, while the in-game soundtrack of whistles, clanks and other moody echoes is pleasantly eerie.

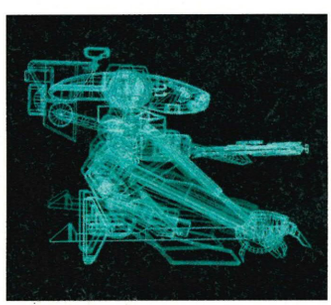
> "...the game is excellent presentation-wise, headed by the enormous FMV that sets out the scenario with a great degree of filmic style..."

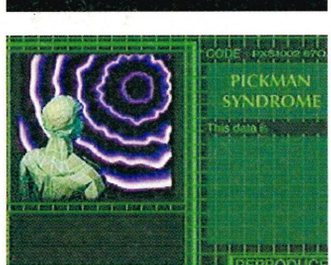
A lot of effort and care has gone into Brahma Force, and it almost seems a pity to give it a mark that falls just short of 'great game' status as the creators have obviously tried to take the genre a step further than its usual testosterone-ruled confines. Unfortunately all the various elements don't hang together quite flush, a problem magnified by the handful of unnecessary playing flaws present in the action and overall rhythm of the game.

EPM
CHRISTIAN




"You now have 20 seconds to comply..."






## Second Opinion

Post Doom evolution of this genre tries to take the RPG/puzzle slant. The main game engine isn't the dog's bollox, but at the end of the day the game is still fun to play.

Darren

## The Score

| | |
|---|---|
| Publisher | JVC |
| Developer | GENKI |
| Released | OUT NOW |
| Version | UK |
| Price | £39.99 |
| Genre | IST PERSON SHOOT-'EM-UP |
| Players | 1 |
| Memory Card | ✔ |

GAMEPLAY
7

ORIGINALITY
7

LIFESPAN
8

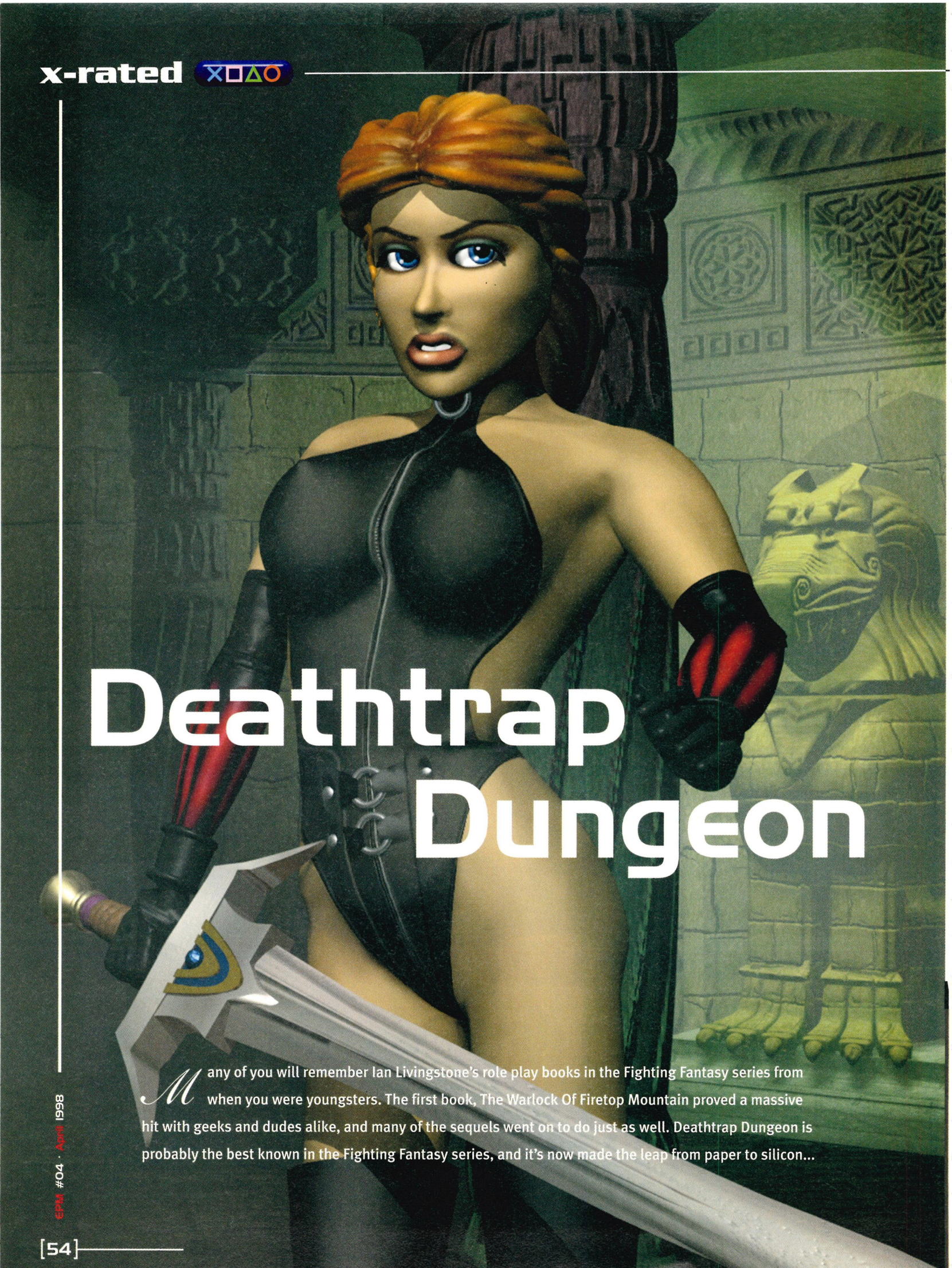
SOUND
7

GRAPHICS
7

OVERALL
80%

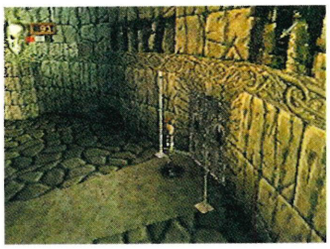
### in summary

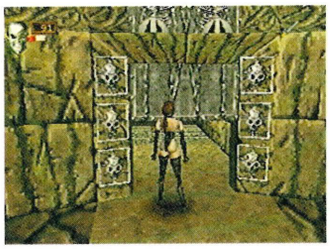
A brave but imperfect attempt to push the Doom/Quake envelope.

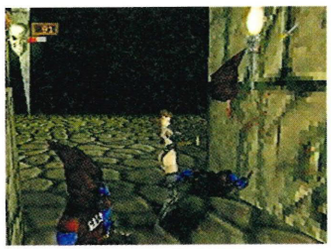


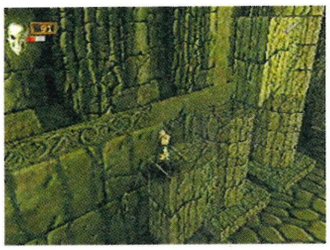
# Deathtrap Dungeon

Many of you will remember Ian Livingstone's role play books in the Fighting Fantasy series from when you were youngsters. The first book, The Warlock Of Firetop Mountain proved a massive hit with geeks and dudes alike, and many of the sequels went on to do just as well. Deathtrap Dungeon is probably the best known in the Fighting Fantasy series, and it's now made the leap from paper to silicon...









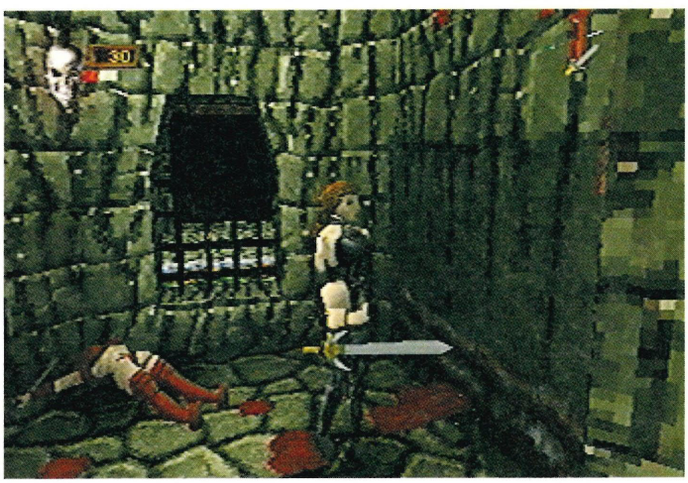
**You don't have to be a fan of Fighting Fantasy to appreciate Eidos' latest offering. If you did spend your pre-pubescent years hidden away in your room, rolling dice and writing spells on scraps of paper, then you'll probably appreciate it a little more but Deathtrap Dungeon is still a decent game in its own right.**

The game takes place in the dungeons built by evil-tyrant-cum-dictator, Baron Sukumvit. The baron is an evil man who has complete control over the town of Fang - also known as the Town of Lost Souls. The dungeon is filled with hideous creatures, labyrinth-like passageways and, worst of all, deadly traps, hence the name Deathtrap Dungeon. Anyone who opposes the Baron is thrown into the dungeon, never to be seen again. It amuses the Baron to see these helpless souls sent to their doom, and being a gambling man, he decided to open the dungeons to all-comers. Anyone who could negotiate them and come out alive would receive a reward of 10,000 gold pieces. The real prize, though, is the freedom of Fang. The first year of opening saw many hapless heroes perish in the dungeon, and it looked as though Fang was destined to be oppressed by the Baron forever. Until you arrived, that is.

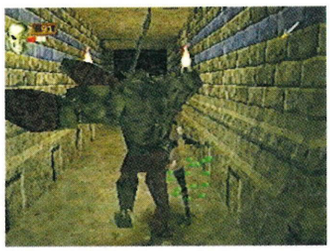
**"... it's simply a choice of either staring at a bloke with pecks the size of Pammy's tits or a bird with only a g-string covering her back doors. Hmm, that's a hard one..."**

You have the choice of two heroes to take on the perils of Deathtrap Dungeon - Chaindog, a psychopathic warrior who wants to settle down in a two up-two down after he's completed his quest, and Red Lotus, a man-hating, leather-clad temptress who could squash Conan between her thighs while doing the washing up, and wants to spend her prize money on the Licker from Resident Evil 2. Both characters behave in basically the same way so it's simply a choice of either staring at a bloke with pecks the size of Pammy's tits or a bird with only a g-string covering her back doors. Hmm, that's a hard one.

Once you've chosen Red Lotus it's time to enter the full 3D world of Tomb Raider, sorry, Deathtrap Dungeon. The first level is a training area of sorts, where you get used to the control of your character, which incidentally, won't take long. For once on a game of this type, the control has been looked at and overhauled to make it much more intuitive to the circumstances. This means one major change, really. Instead of pushing forward to run you hold the Square button.

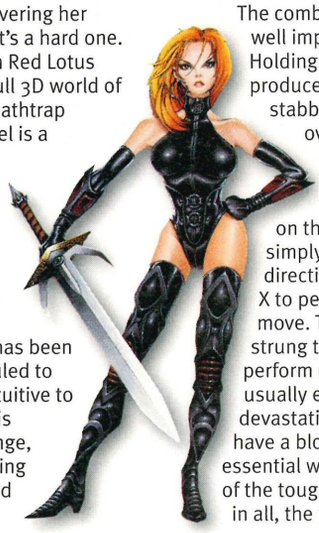


▲ Nice handiwork!



Once you're running, it's just a case of steering your character in the right direction. Although it's a different approach, this new method works very well and before long you're totally at ease with it. To walk you have to push forward on the pad, but this doesn't cause a problem with precise movements. The game doesn't utilise the analog pad, though, so it's not as precise as it could be.

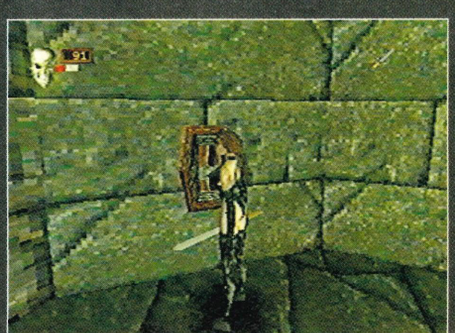
## Hack and Slay...



The combat is also very well implemented. Holding the X button produces a forward stabbing motion, or an overhead swing if you're using a blunt weapon. To get variation on this type of strike, simply push any direction whilst holding X to perform a different move. The moves can be strung together to perform combos, which usually end in a more devastating move. You also have a block, which is essential when fighting some of the tougher creatures. All in all, the fighting method

## TURNING THE TABLES

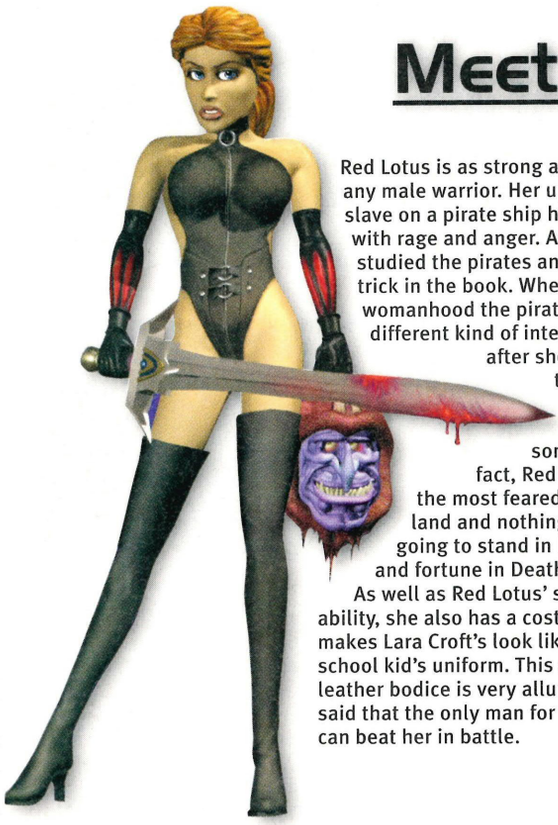
The traps can also work in your favour; pulling this lever launches explosives on to the unsuspecting Imps below.





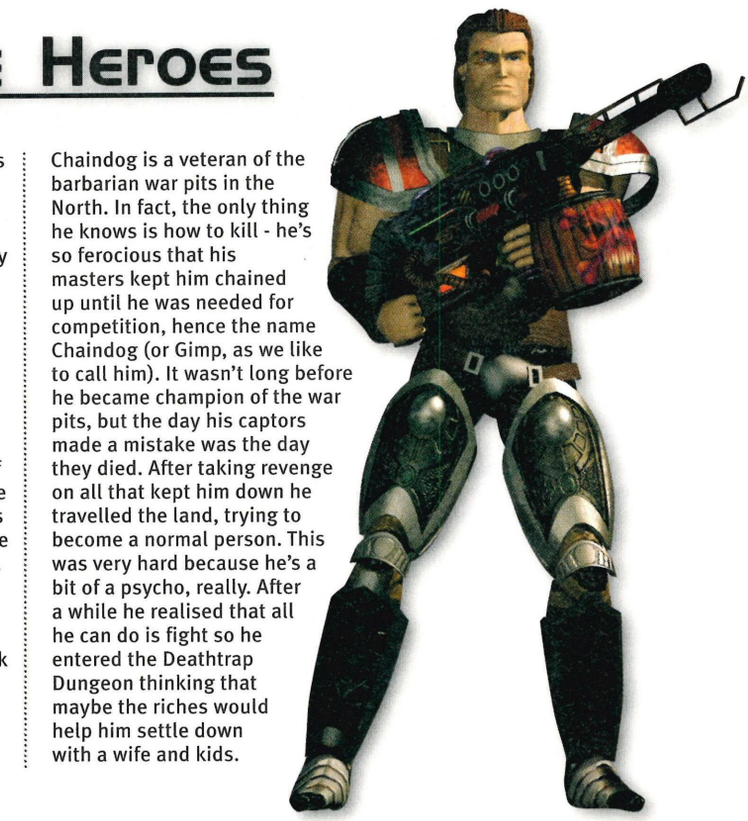


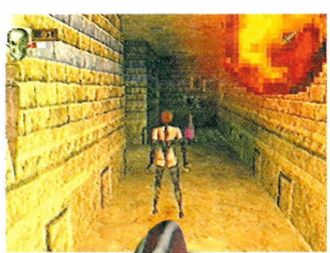
# Meet the Heroes

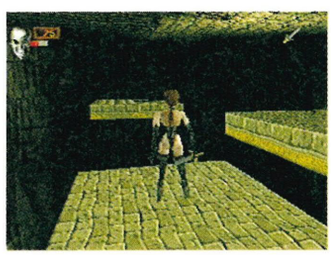


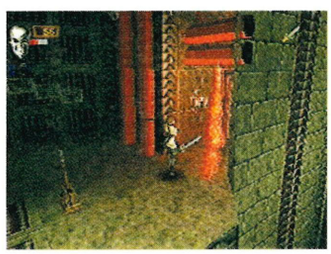
Red Lotus is as strong and fearsome as any male warrior. Her upbringing as a slave on a pirate ship has filled her with rage and anger. As a child she studied the pirates and learned every trick in the book. When she reached womanhood the pirates took a different kind of interest in her, but after she killed five of them they started to give her some respect. In fact, Red Lotus is one of the most feared warriors in the land and nothing and no-one is going to stand in her way of fame and fortune in Deathtrap Dungeon. As well as Red Lotus' superb fighting ability, she also has a costume that makes Lara Croft's look like a posh prep school kid's uniform. This all-in-one black leather bodice is very alluring, but it's said that the only man for her is one that can beat her in battle.

Chaindog is a veteran of the barbarian war pits in the North. In fact, the only thing he knows is how to kill - he's so ferocious that his masters kept him chained up until he was needed for competition, hence the name Chaindog (or Gimp, as we like to call him). It wasn't long before he became champion of the war pits, but the day his captors made a mistake was the day they died. After taking revenge on all that kept him down he travelled the land, trying to become a normal person. This was very hard because he's a bit of a psycho, really. After a while he realised that all he can do is fight so he entered the Deathtrap Dungeon thinking that maybe the riches would help him settle down with a wife and kids.











works perfectly and is fun, although frustrating at times. Once you're used to it, though, the close combat stuff becomes a cinch, and much less frustrating.

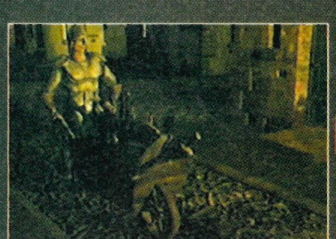
On top of close combat, you also have access to long range weapons and spells which allow you to dispatch your foe without having to use a sword or warhammer. Some of these can be extremely destructive, but you must look hard for some of the most powerful tools of destruction.

You need all the weapons you can get in Deathtrap Dungeon, because there's a horde of the Baron's henchmen all out to get you. You're eased into the combat at the beginning, but after the initial Spire levels you encounter some rock-hard baddies that take more than a few slices to the head to dispatch. Also, some creatures need to be attacked by a specific weapon if you're to do any real damage. There's a massive variety of enemies throughout the dungeon, and you always find a new one which you have to take out in a different manner. The baddies are one of Deathtrap Dungeon's strongest features. There are all manner of undead and living creatures out to get you, and each one is designed and drawn to a high standard. You come across imps that throw knives and forks and laugh like Beavis and Butthead, serpent women that attack with ball and chains, butchers that throw bombs at you, machines called two-wheeled knackerers that carve you up if you get in the way, clowns,

"...after the initial Spire levels you encounter some rock-hard baddies that take more than a few slices to the head to dispatch..."

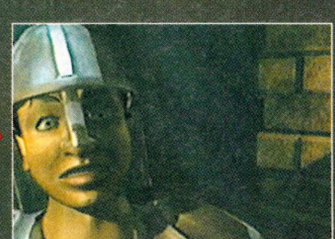
## CHAIN REACTION

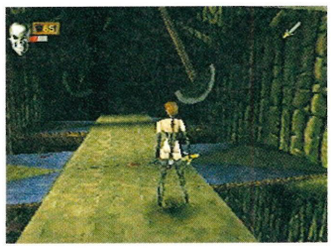
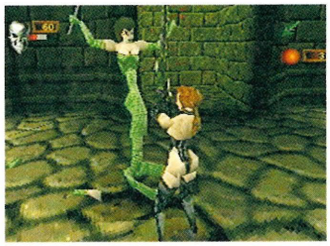
The intro shows the real dangers of Deathtrap Dungeon. This hapless hero finds out the hard way when he triggers a trap which puts him on a rollercoaster ride to his doom.





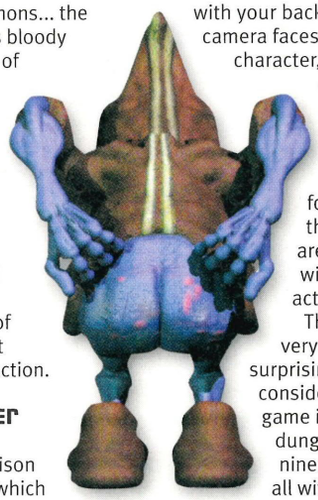






skeletons, dragons, demons... the list isn't endless, but it's bloody long! The massive array of baddies is made even better by the way they die. Some just fall to the floor, whereas others can be chopped up into little bits which fly off and splat against the walls and ceiling, leaving bright red blood dripping everywhere. If you're a regular reader of EPM you know we're not adverse to this type of action.



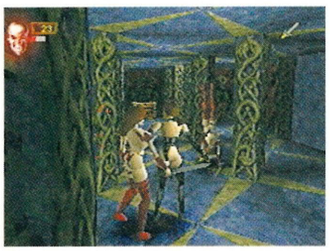
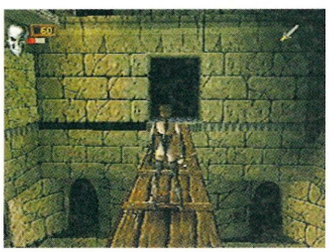
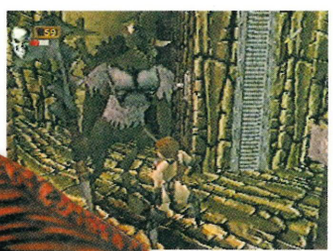
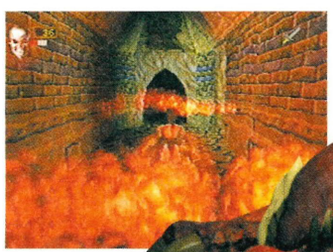
## Tomb Raider Too?

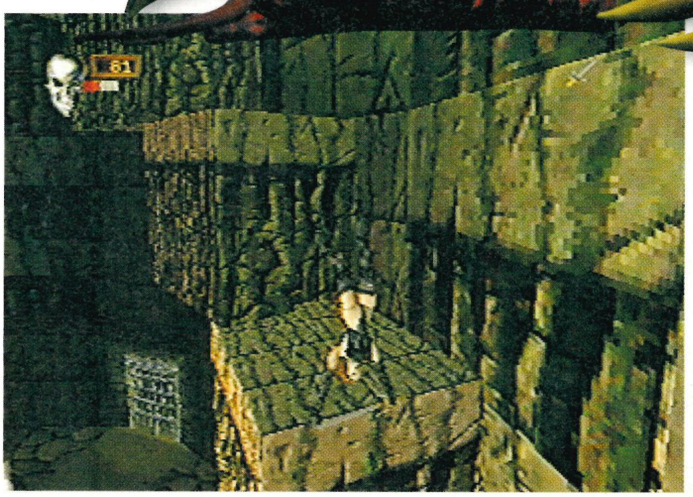
I made a subtle comparison to Tomb Raider earlier, which was due to the way the game looks. The 3D is almost the same style as Tomb Raider, although the camera on Deathtrap Dungeon seems more active than Tomb Raider's. This means you often see the action from different angles and not just from directly behind your character. This works extremely well most of the time, although it does get annoying at times. When stood with your back to a wall, the camera faces the front of your character, meaning you can't see what's in front of you. This can be remedied by stepping forward, and things like this are to be expected with such an active camera.

The levels are all very solid and surprisingly varied, considering the whole game is set in a dungeon. There are nine different areas, all with a varying amount of parts. In total there are 38 parts to the game, all of which give you different objectives or goals so you won't find yourself getting bored. The levels range from the belfry through to the sewers and the pit. On your travels you find yourself at the circus, in a graveyard, in a weapons store and anywhere you can really imagine with a medieval setting. The levels start off quite small, but get further into the game and they become sprawling masses of corridors and rooms and are very complex to negotiate. Instead of a map you have access to a limited supply of chalk which you can use to mark the wall in a 'follow the leader' style. This fits in better with the atmosphere the game creates. I mean, a great big 3D map doesn't really fit in with the medieval feel does it?

> **"...you often see the action from different angles and not just from directly behind your character..."**

Getting through the game isn't simply a case of warding off



▲ Anyone for a handstand contest?



▲ Teleports, to teleport you elsewhere.

## INSTRUMENTS OF DEATH

There are three types of weapon at your disposal as you battle your way through Deathtrap Dungeon. Only one weapon can be carried at a time, although you can use a spell as a weapon at the same time.

### CLOSE COMBAT WEAPONS

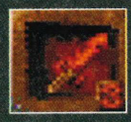
**SWORD**
*TYPE: EDGED*
This is your standard weapon. It's OK for the first few levels, but you need something a little more powerful as you progress.



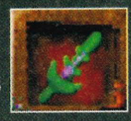
**WARHAMMER**
*TYPE: BLUNT*
The preferred tool of the psycho adventurer. This thing is great for pounding heads, but is a little slow to use.



**RED SWORD**
*TYPE: EDGED/MAGICAL*
The red sword utilises magic for added pizzaz and is particularly useful against dragons and demons. Being magical means its power runs out after a while.



**VENOM SWORD**
*TYPE: EDGED/POISONED*
The elves created the venom sword to use against the more dangerous, venomous residents of the underworld. The blade has been soaked in some of the deadliest poison in the land, and is best used against poisonous foes such as spiders and scorpions.



**MAGIC WARHAMMER**
*TYPE: BLUNT/MAGICAL*
This weapon was forge by a dwarven blacksmith called Arakad Stinkbeard. It's the only weapon in the game that harms the rockmen, and it's also pretty devastating in its own right.



**BLACK SPIRITSWORD**
*TYPE: EDGED/MAGICAL*
Although the black spiritsword is rock hard, it does have one rather big drawback. For every wound you inflict on an enemy, you lose health yourself. This sword should only be used in desperate situations.



**SILVER SWORD**
*TYPE: EDGED/MAGICAL*
The silver sword contains white magic, and thus is excellent for sending the undead back to hell where they belong. Once the white sword runs out of magic, it dissolves and you have to find another one.



### RANGED WEAPONS

**BLUNDERBUSS**
*TYPE: BALLISTIC*
The blunderbuss was invented by the dwarves. It uses the black powder made by the alchemists to fire nails and lead at the enemy. Although the blunderbuss is a powerful weapon, ammunition is hard to come by.



**BOMB**
*TYPE: EXPLOSIVE*
The bomb can take out multiple enemies, but you have to be careful not to get caught in the blast yourself. It can be thrown short or long, depending on how long you keep the button pressed.



**FIRETHROWER**
*TYPE: FIRE*
The fuel for the fire thrower is dragons' bile, which again is not easy to come by. If you can get some, you can bathe your enemy in walls of flame which are very devastating.



**FLAMELANCE**
*TYPE: ENERGY*
The flamelance fires pulses of energy that make your target disintegrate. Once you've used up its energy, though, the flamelance disintegrates itself.



**GRENADIERS COMPANION**
*TYPE: EXPLOSIVE*
This is one of the rat men's weapons. It launches deadly sulphurous grenades at your target.



**INFERNAL DEVICE**
*TYPE: EXPLOSIVE*
These are very rare, but if you can find one, it's worth it. Again they use the alchemist's black powder, but this time instead of nails, you get to launch exploding fireworks.



### SPELLS

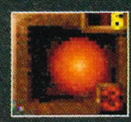
**FIREFLY**
*TYPE: LIGHT*
The Firefly can be used to bathe your body in light to help you find your way through some of the darker areas of the dungeon.



**STARSPELL**
*TYPE: LIGHT/ENERGY*
The Starspell also lights the way for you, but this time it fires a bolt into the darkness that also harms the undead.



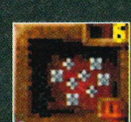
**FIREBALL**
*TYPE: EXPLOSIVE/MAGICAL*
The Fireball is the standard weapon for sorcerers, and it fires a ball of fire at the enemy. Pretty devastating.



**RAZORSPELL**
*TYPE: EDGED/MAGICAL*
These spells are in plentiful supply which is lucky because they are quite useful. The spell fires razor-sharp blades, which aren't intended to give the enemy a close shave.



**JETSPELL**
*TYPE: BLUNT/MAGICAL*
Stone him! This spell fires a flurry of rocks at your chosen targets. This spell is very powerful, thus only one can be held at a time.



**GREAT RAZORSPELL**
*TYPE: EDGED/MAGICAL*
Far, far more powerful than the Razorspell and again, only one can be carried at a time.



**ARC OF POWER**
*TYPE: ENERGY/MAGICAL*
The Arc of Power can take out three enemies at a time. It uses the power of the Storm Gods to create three destructive bolts of lightning, aimed at the enemy.

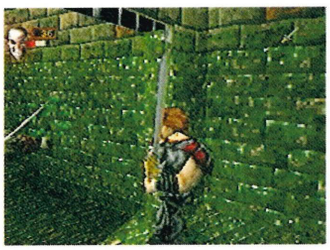


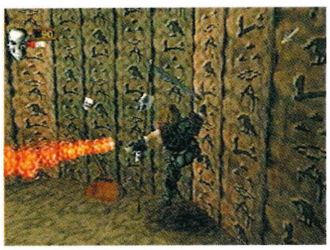
**WAR PIGS OF DOOM**
*TYPE: SUICIDAL BACON*
Pork chops with a death wish aren't something you'd expect to see alongside all of the weaponry here, but nonetheless, the War Pigs Of Doom are devastating. The pigs are summoned from another dimension and they have one goal in life; to explode. Make sure you don't fire one when you are the only person around though, as it comes after you.











the hordes and finding your way through the levels, though. Deathtrap Dungeon is so called because of one thing and one thing only - traps. The place is filled with them. From collapsing floors to exploding walls to booby trapped switches, Deathtrap Dungeon is a veritable feast of devious and deadly booby-traps. It usually takes at least one death to find out about a trap, although most of them do have a little clue that something may happen. For instance, if you see a skeleton on the floor near to a switch it's a good indication that the switch activates a trap. Knowing that anything you touch may have an adverse reaction really keeps you on the edge of your seat, which adds immensely to the enjoyment.

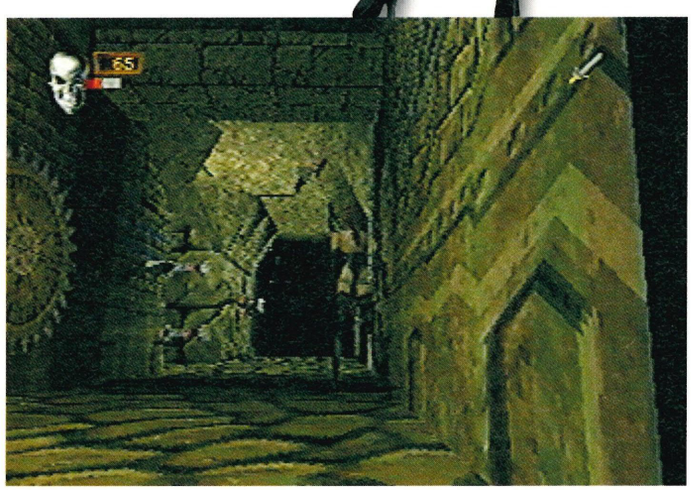
Another thing which adds to the enjoyment and atmosphere of Deathtrap Dungeon is the sound. The music is very minimal and made up of atmospheric noises, but the sound effects are much more prominent. You hear massive machinery working away in the background of some of the levels, and others just sound downright eerie. There's also a range of different sound effects for the monsters you face and some of them are smile raising, especially the Beavis and Butthead sound-a-like imps.

Deathtrap Dungeon is bound to be compared to Tomb Raider, and I'm guilty of this myself. Any 3D game, especially one from Eidos, is going to be compared to Tomb Raider but Deathtrap Dungeon is pretty far removed from Lara Croft's adventures. Deathtrap Dungeon requires you to solve puzzles and find items, but the onus is much more on the combat and action, rather than the puzzle element. Also a new dimension has been added by the excellent traps and tricks encountered throughout the dungeon. You can only compare the two games in graphical style, and Deathtrap Dungeon doesn't come far behind Tomb Raider. In places it's not quite as solid and polished, but there are no real complaints. The gameplay is varied, fun and very challenging. In fact I think that it may be just a little too difficult, but at least this adds to the longevity. Eidos have done a great job in bringing Deathtrap Dungeon to the PlayStation, which means that you no longer have to sit in your room and roll a dice to experience Ian Livingstone's Fighting Fantasy.

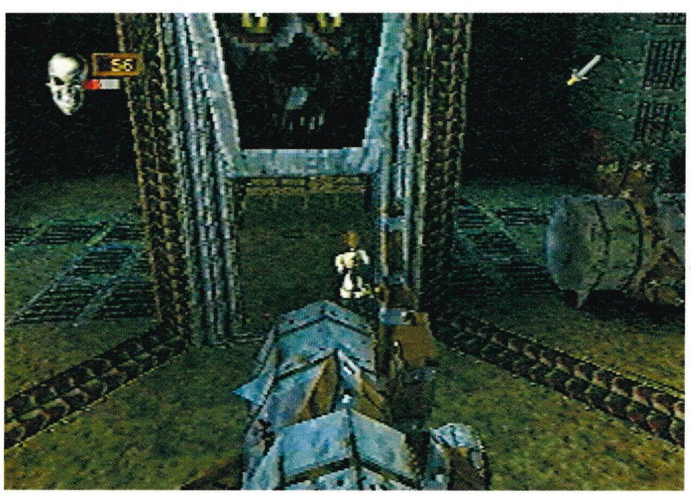
Deathtrap Dungeon isn't the best 3D game you'll play, but it has enough quantity, and more importantly gameplay, to keep you coming back for more. EPM

*SAUL*





▲ Open the door and you're faced with a barrage of arrows.



▲ Beware the two wheeled knackerer!

## Second Opinion

Graphically this isn't quite up to Tomb Raider's lofty standards, but it's a very different game. Deathtrap Dungeon's 'tricks and traps' approach works very well most of the time. Chaindog and Red lotus are strong characters, even if they are blatant rip-offs of Conan and Red Sonja. Gameplay-wise, it's good but not outstanding.

Ian

## The Score

| | |
|---|---|
| Publisher | EIDOS |
| Developer | IN HOUSE |
| Released | OUT NOW |
| Version | UK |
| Price | £39.99 |
| Genre | ACTION/ ADVENTURE |
| Players | 1 |
| Memory Card | ✔ |

GAMEPLAY
8

ORIGINALITY
8

LIFESPAN
9

SOUND
9

GRAPHICS
8

OVERALL
88%

### in summary

A great take on Fighting Fantasy and 3D action games in general.

# Poy Poy

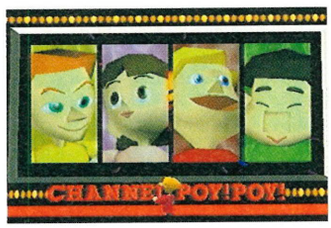
## It's Japanese for Ouch! Ouch! presumably.

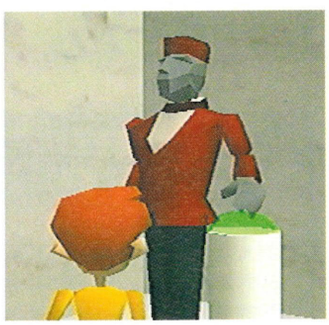










This cryptically-monikered game from Konami sets out to cover the rarely-seen but fertile intersection between Japanese cartoon cuteness and relentlessly-violent hand-to-hand conflict. Up to four players take control of various podgy protagonists whose sole goal is to inflict as much damage as possible on their fellow players until they fall over unconscious. Sounds a little bloodthirsty, yes, but as you can probably tell from the screenshots it's hardly a Resident Evil guts-fest.

The fighting is strictly from the Wile E. Coyote school of thought, with enormous boulders and 'Acme'-style bombs being the primary weapons available, the characters hefting them above their heads and lobbing them at one another. For small objects this only takes a couple of heaves, but the larger ones require a time-consuming number of tugs before they're finally held aloft, leaving the player vulnerable for a longer period of time. Combat style tends to be a balance between using these higher-impact massive objects and employing speed and guerrilla tactics to chip away at the opposition's energy, represented by a dwindling heart meter at the bottom of the screen, with more easily chuckable weapons.

The action takes place on a variety of differently-themed battlegrounds, each of which has its own set of quirks and pitfalls (see boxout).There are varied amounts of cover to cower behind and differing objects that can be used to ingeniously bash the other characters with. The Flat Land level, for example, has stacks of sawn logs some lumberjack has seemingly left scattered around, which roll thunderously along after being thrown, while Moai Island has huge Easter Island style heads that munch on anyone unfortunate enough to be close to them on landing.

> "...The funniest and most satisfying weapons of all are your opponents, who can be hilariously picked up and hurled..."

### Cum UFO

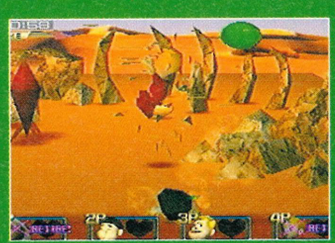
To help avoid being crushed, the characters can jump and roll niftily, and if the need arises crawl away on hands and knees like yellow-bellied chickens. A Magic Carpet cum UFO orbits the field, beaming down random boulders or bombs with great frequency and rapidity, meaning there's always a profusion of weapons readily available for your dastardly needs. Attacking throws can be long lobs, short-range slams or crafty-rearward suplexes that are cool at catching out potential ambushees.

Each player can choose a particular weapon 'glove' that grants them a limited number of special attacks, spanning from straightforward bomb bursts and long-range shots through to a guided missile effect, and a strange 'Seeker' glove which causes the object thrown to scuttle around looking for a target to trample. The funniest and most satisfying weapons of all, though, are your opponents, who can be hilariously picked up and hurled, their little legs wiggling frantically (although this does require some neat timing and manoeuvring). However it's even better to do this after they've collapsed, as their

## LEVEL DEVILS



At the start of the Park level, a huge scaly egg sits dormant at the centre, minding its own business. Knock it with a throw or impact and it cracks open to reveal an angry Godzilla-like creature that stomps after whoever is closest to hand. Run for your lives!



The Desert stage is plagued by a strong and constant wind that gusts across the whole area, blowing at both the characters and hurled objects, making movement and throwing especially tricky. Sporadically a twister sweeps in, picking up the players and dumping them painfully down on the other side of the screen.



A hi-tech droid dominates the Robots level, with his cruel clawing pincers that snatch up stray players and chuck them about. Every so often a cyclops death ray flickers into life and rotates relentlessly through 360 degrees, forcing the characters to duck, jump or be fried.

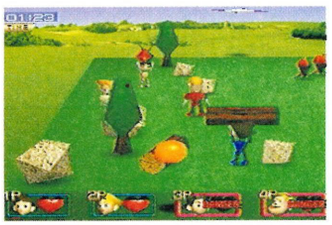


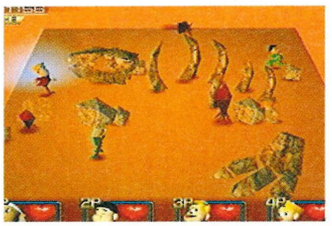
Grumpy penguins orbit the slippy floes on the Iceberg screen, and then pop-up in finest 'Living Planet' style and slide across, pestily pecking at players or worse, unexploded bombs. Traction is limited, making escaping from their waddling hassle a drag.















limp bodies conveniently stay on screen after they are out of energy, allowing you to casually toss them around like rag dolls. This is especially galling for the unfortunate player in question.

**"...Even though it's excellent in single-player mode, with a Multi tap it's raised to a whole new level of enjoyment and crush-lust..."**

Tactics generally involve either picking off the opposition from a distance, which needs some tricky aiming but carries the advantage of making you a harder target, or the more bullish approach of getting down 'n' dirty at close quarters, which generally yields more inflicted damage, but things do tend to end up as a chancy chaotic melee. An ideal approach is to throw something at one of the bombs lying around, thus exploding it and hopefully taking out a swathe of hapless protagonists (and maybe chain-reactioning other bombs into going off as well).

At certain points treasure chests appear that split open on impact and spill out coloured jelly beans, some of which restore energy, but others (particularly the dreaded blue bean) have less benign effects, in this case effectively slipping your character a Mogadon so he or she slopes around soporifically, their head hung low, a sitting duck for a rock on the head.

Play can either take the form of a one-off exhibition 'best of three' or the more long-term Poy Poy Cup. Your chosen character can progress from Junior through to Master levels in a tournament based around Channel Poy Poy, a glitzy game show with a searingly cheesy compere. Victory yields increasing prize money that can be used to buy more powerful gloves, and presumably it unlocks hidden levels as well (although I've not progressed too far yet as the CPU, even on the easiest level, is pretty vicious). Cleverly, scoring is not just based around who is left standing at the end, but is rated separately on how many direct hits you scored, how lucky you were (ie how many times you were struck), a Round Bonus for the survivor and a Technical Bonus. This means aggressive and skilful play is rewarded more than merely staying alive, and this can bring the welcome and unusual possibility of the winner not necessarily being the last one left standing.

## Fizzy Explosions

Apart from the drab shopping and position save incidental vignettes, Poy Poy is excellently crafted and executed graphically, with its bright pastels and fizzy explosions pleasing the retina, while the level design is packed with glib touches (despite each arena being basically only a screen wide), such as the neat whirling dervish wind effect on the Desert level and the multiple staticky viewscreens dotted around the control room on the Robot stage, upon which the action can be distractingly viewed in real time. It does in fact have a very N64-ish look to it (which, remember, isn't necessarily a bad thing), and this is I suppose more or less unavoidable when doing a game with Japanese-styled twee/tubby characters. This Nintendo echo even carries over into the cracking sound FX, which has shades of Super Mario to mine ears, unless they deceive me, of course. Musically, the jaunty theme tune is a first cousin of its equivalent in Micro Machines V3, which is highly apt as Poy Poy shares the multi-player funtastic genes of the classic car party game.

Even though it's excellent in single-player mode, with a Multi tap it's raised to a whole new level of enjoyment and crush-lust, allowing all those involved to reveal their true colours and allowed scores to be settled when before there were none, and all in the name of fun. Don't be fooled by its stupid name, simple concept and non-PSXiness; this is one mean motherflipper of a game. EPM

*CHRISTIAN*




Don't point your log my way! Timber terrorises on the Flat Land.

## Second Opinion

Any game that allows you to throw rocks and logs at your mates is fine by me. Poy Poy allows you to do just that, making it one of the most enjoyable games I've played in ages.

Saul

## The Score

| | |
|---|---|
| Publisher | KONAMI |
| Developer | IN HOUSE |
| Released | OUT NOW |
| Version | UK |
| Price | £39.99 |
| Genre | MULTI PLAYER BRAWLING |
| Players | 1-4 |
| Memory Card | ✔ |
| Multi Tap | ✔ |

GAMEPLAY **9**

ORIGINALITY **8**

LIFESPAN **6**

SOUND **7**

GRAPHICS **8**

OVERALL **89%**

### in summary

The best way to crush your friends and enemies alike.



# Reboot:
## Countdown to Chaos

Being handed a game that's based on a (let's face it) pretty crappy kids' television series isn't the way to start your week on a Monday morning. That sicky seems like a good idea now...






**On playing Reboot, I'm pleasantly surprised to find that underneath yet another TV/Film licence there's a pretty decent game, with - wait for it - some original ideas. The game takes place in a full 3D world, situated inside a computer (don't get excited Ian - it's not a Spectrum). This land is called Mainframe, and it's where your character Bob (yes, Bob) and friends reside. Bob, besides having one of the most mundane video character names ever, is a guardian of Mainframe and it's his job to sort out any dodgy goings-on in his computer based world - cue all sorts of crime fighting shenanigans.**

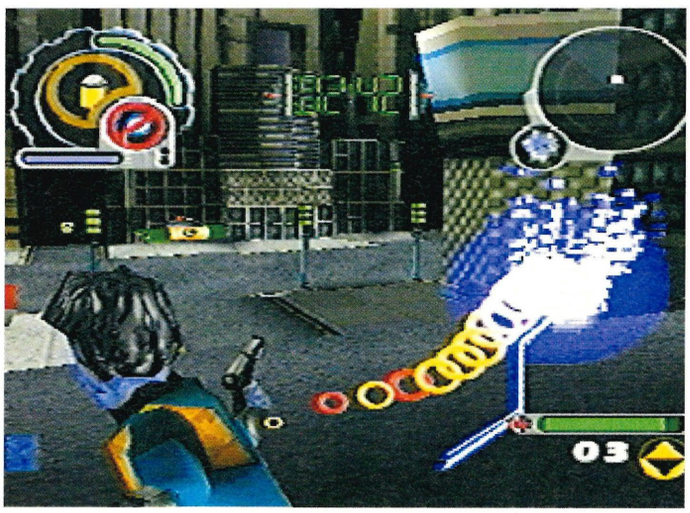
Bob's biggest adversary is Megabyte, an evil villain who's hell-bent on destroying the land of Mainframe, and this time he has come up with his most dastardly plot yet. Megabyte has designed tears that invade Mainframe and allow viruses to make their way inside. Bob has to repair these tears in the very fabric of his world before they become too powerful, which means you must search them out and fix them up one at a time, within a set time limit.

Of course, nothing's ever that easy in the world of video games, and Megabyte has ensured every one of the 21 levels are choc-a-bloc with his evil virus robots. These little blighters come in all shapes and sizes, and obviously some are a lot tougher to kill than others. Megabyte's hordes range from tiny moving guns to intelligent 'bots that attack you in fork-lift trucks. Thankfully, Bob has a good arsenal of heavy and not so heavy weaponry. His basic weapon is a gun, but this can be upgraded to fire three bullets at a time, which in effect makes it almost automatic. Bob can collect a few other weapons such as an energy blaster, but the real firepower comes in the form of glitches that can be found throughout the game.



**"...after a while (and a lot of frustration) controlling Bob becomes a pleasure..."**

Your basic glitch is used to repair Megabyte's tears, but as well as this you can collect a glut of extremely powerful weapons and items. These include bombs, a flame thrower, an extremely devastating boomerang and some green thingy which freezes your enemy into bogey-coloured rectangles. Cool. Other power-ups to be found are simple health pick-ups and blaster replenish icons. These are often deposited after you've taken out one of Megabyte's robots, but you also come across icons that completely replenish your health or blaster, although these are usually much harder to come by.



▲ Glitch that tear, Bob!

## Zipboarding

The game isn't simply a case of running around each level trying to find and repair these tears. For a start, you have to get to grips with the finicky control system. This is because Bob doesn't fight crime on foot, or even in a car. Oh no, Bob has to be an annoying little shite and fight crime on a bloody Zipboard, which is in fact a flying skateboard, á là Back To the Future 2. This thing is stupidly hard to get to grips with, enough so that it may put some people off. It's just as bad with analog or digital control, although the problems are different with each method. If you've got a digital pad, you find Bob is slow to react and when he does, his movements are jerky. With the analog, Bob is just too damn quick so you find yourself skating from side to side in a zig-zag fashion.

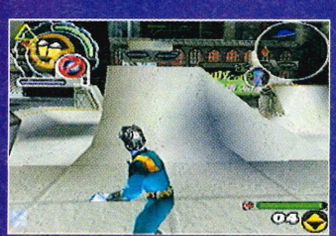
The control problem isn't terminal, though. Stick with it and





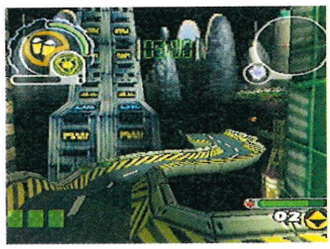
## ON THE SKATE PARK ▼

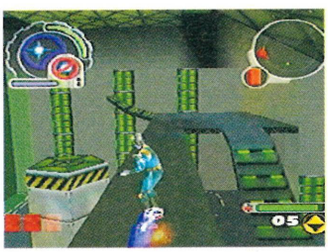
Perform a series of jumps at the skatepark on Level One to find the exit key.

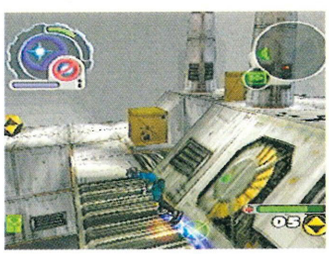










you have Bob zipping around the levels pulling off table-tops, jumping ridiculous gaps and sliding banked corners whilst taking out or avoiding Megabyte's cohorts. In fact after a while (and a lot of frustration) controlling Bob becomes a pleasure. Once you're used to the controls, Bob looks graceful as he floats around Mainframe in search of Megabyte's tears. This is partly due to the way that the levels are designed, though.

Rather than just keeping the levels on a flat plain, most of them have at least two different heights for you to explore. Getting up to the higher platforms isn't always easy as you often have to take some pretty outrageous jumps onto floating platforms or tiny lifts. The 'skateboard' feel of the game is reflected in the way these jumps and slopes are laid out. You come across this type of level design from the word 'go'. On the first level is a skateboard park area, which at first looks as though it's just for fun, but after a few minutes of pulling off table tops, etc, you realise you need to get right to the top to get the key that opens up the exit for you. Throughout the game you have to find and take on some extremely tricky and exciting jumping. Luckily, you don't just have to rely on the ramps to get some air as Bob's Zipboard has a pretty cool jump, although again it's pretty hard to get used to.

## Bunny Hops

Holding the jump button down makes Bob crouch ready for the jump and releasing it sends him careering into the air. Bob jumps higher if you hold the button down longer, which is where it becomes tricky for some of the bigger jumps. Your timing has to be perfect to succeed because of this method, and it becomes frustrating when trying to take a simple jump up onto some crates or a low platform. This could have been made much more intuitive if the height of Bob's jumps depended on how long you hold the button AFTER the jump and not before. As it is, though, you just have to get used to it and it's bloody annoying.



Apart from some dodgy draw-in on most of the levels, Reboot is a real graphical treat. Surprisingly for this type of full 3D game, there's no glitching of any type. This is because the camera has been cleverly implemented so you don't lose your view when you go behind a wall. The camera isn't totally perfect, though, as it often gets too close to Bob - so much so that you can't see the edge of the platform. Also it isn't changeable so you only have one view at all times, and you can't look up or down which I feel is essential in this type of game.

The in-game environments are all extremely solid and well designed. The level design is excellent, although at times a map would be quite handy! The levels aren't huge, but at times they become very complex and you often find yourself getting lost. You start out in the city, but as the game progresses you come across multi-layered sewers, downtown streets, docklands and huge suspended highways. If it wasn't for the draw-in evident on the highway levels, they would be some of the best looking game environments seen on this type of game. The roller coaster feel here is excellent and the sheer size and complexity of the roads make this one of the most difficult levels I came across. The draw-in, however, isn't just a minor flaw. It completely spoils a few of the better levels, something which could have been remedied with a little fogging. I mean, a bit of fog is a damn site better than seeing the road build in front of you. My favourite level, which, incidentally, doesn't suffer as badly in the draw-in department, is the sewer level. Apart from dealing with a huge monster at the bottom, you find yourself negotiating some of the trickiest platforming you've come across as you make your way from bottom to top in search of tears and keys.



▲ Find the keys to open the exit windows.

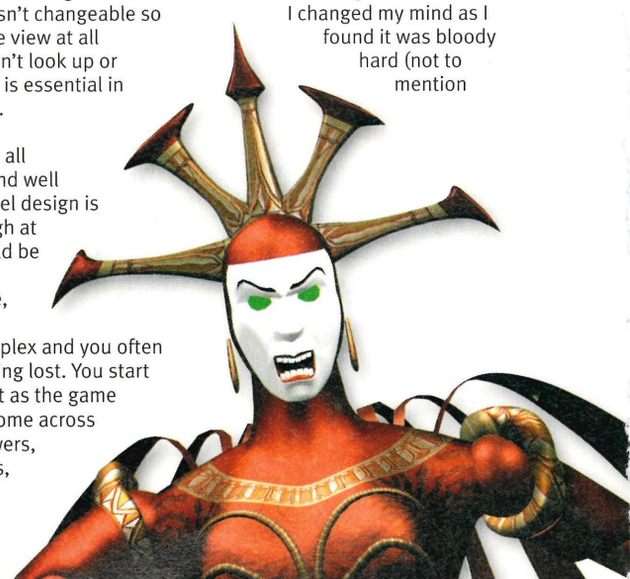
> "...Apart from some dodgy draw-in on most of the levels, Reboot is a real graphical treat..."

## Lastability?

The problem is that not all of the levels are this tricky, so I'm a little doubtful about the longevity of Reboot. At first I thought it was going to be easy, as I thought it was a kids' game. After a while I changed my mind as I found it was bloody hard (not to mention



▲ Oh Bob, you're my hero.



frustrating) to control Bob. Then again, after more play it was back to being easy. A bit of a boomerang challenge, then. You won't complete Reboot in a day, but it will never last you as long as some of its contemporaries. I think this is partly because Reboot is completely and utterly puzzle-less. It's simply a case of finding the tears (which, incidentally, are pointed out to you once they appear), repairing them and then onto the next one. The most trouble comes in finding the keys to get out of the level, but this isn't exactly a puzzle as you simply have to look for them. This isn't to say that what you do have to do in Reboot isn't fun, it's just that the lack of puzzles make the gameplay a little samey, as you always know exactly what's coming.

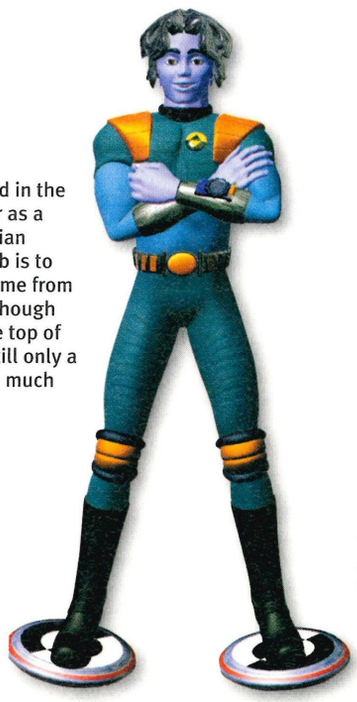
Reboot's redeeming features are enough to make it a worthy purchase to most PlayStation owners, but the flaws in the control and visuals are a little too much to make it an essential buy. The game sticks closely to its licence and is very playable if a little hard to get into at first. As it stands, Reboot will never be a great game, but if you're a fan of the TV series or games like Rosco McQueen and Croc, Reboot should sit nicely in your collection.

EPM

SAUL

# Mainframe:
## The Characters

Reboot, the cartoon/computer graphic series, has been around for some time, though it hasn't really taken off in Britain. The series concentrates on the adventures of Bob and friends as they battle to save their homeland from the evil Megabyte, who's hell bent on destroying it. There are loads of characters in the cartoon, but these are the main players...



### Bob

Bob was created in the super computer as a top-level guardian program. His job is to protect Mainframe from viruses, and although he's risen to the top of his field, he's still only a small pawn in a much bigger game.



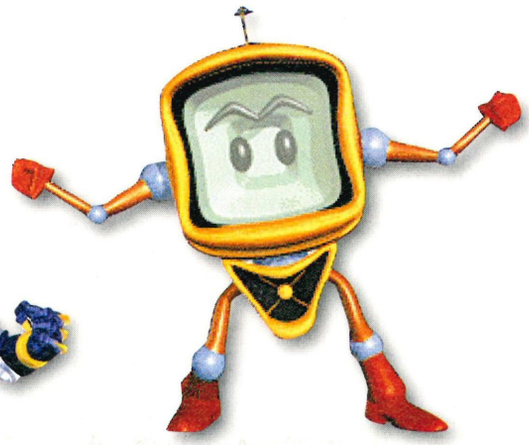
### Enzo

Enzo doesn't just want to be like Bob, he actually wants to be Bob. In fact, he follows Bob around everywhere just so that he can learn from him, but at times he does get a little annoying.



### Megabyte

Megabyte was created by a computer hacker and his one aim in life is to spread his virus throughout Mainframe and the super computer. Bob has a hard time dealing with Megabyte and his virus hordes, but if Mainframe is to survive, Bob must dispose of Megabyte.



### Mike TV

Mike is more than your average TV. he follows Bob around and gives him the latest news. Like Enzo, though, Mike TV is very annoying but Bob can't turn him off as the remote control has done a runner.

## Second Opinion

The hover board idea adds a new dimension to what is actually a pretty decent game. Okay, it may be a licence of a crappy American kids show but it's actually quite enjoyable.

Darren

## The Score

| | |
|---|---|
| Publisher | ELEC ARTS |
| Developer | CLIMAX |
| Released | OUT NOW |
| Version | UK |
| Price | £39.99 |
| Genre | 3D PLATFORM /ADVENTURE |
| Players | 1 |
| Memory Card | ✔ |
| Analog | ✔ |

GAMEPLAY
8

ORIGINALITY
8

LIFESPAN
7

SOUND
8

GRAPHICS
8

OVERALL

80%

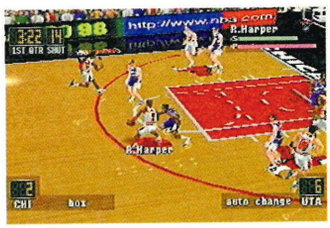
in summary

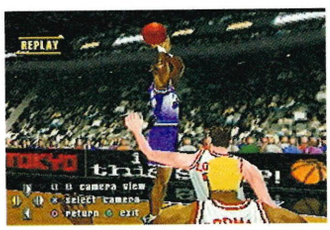
Good fun but in the end it's not quite up there with the best of 'em.

# NBA Pro '98

## YOU can fill Magic Johnson's soon to-be-empty shoes.





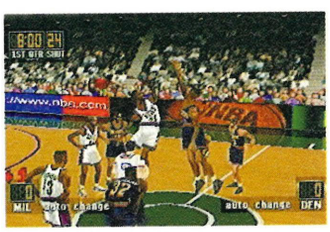



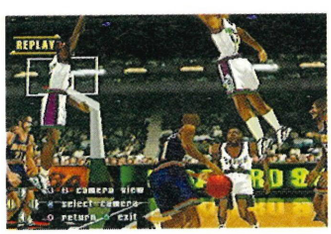




**Another day, another basketball game, eh? Following hard on the trainered heels of NBA FastBreak (previewed last month), this offering from Konami's XXL Sports Series tries to grasp the hotly-contended basketball sim crown and stuff it through a lofty metal hoop.**

Pitching itself squarely between the arcade playability of NBA Jam and the comprehensive tactical nuances of more realism-centred titles, Pro '98 combines the full three-dimensional graphical environment that's becoming the norm for sports games with an instinctive, easy-to-grasp control system and the usual reams of impenetrable statistics. Visually, the player graphics are excellent, running smoothly and fluidly, replete with a plethora of genuine-looking special moves and attacks that often need smug replaying through the comprehensive playback option.




> **"...The level of detail on their faces especially is so good it can even become a little eerie..."**

Each team member is an accurate, to-scale representation of their real-life counterparts, including once again Dennis Rodman, but this time with purple or blonde dyed-hair. This definitely adds an extra frisson for avid Channel Four-on-a-Sunday afternoon basketball fanatics, as it becomes possible to control your favourite stars. The level of detail on their faces especially is so good it can even become a little eerie, particularly when rotating around them stock-still during a paused replay, while the expressions some of the players wear is also strangely comical. An interesting side effect of this graphical excellence is that you half expect them to show signs of exertion or grimacing in time with the action, but of course they remain resolutely impassive and robot-like at all times.

The court and surrounding arena are all nicely represented, with plenty of quality touches such as the fine grain of the playing surface's wood planking being clearly visible (and the floodlights reflecting off its varnish coating), while the crowd graphics are acceptable from some angles, but extremely flat-looking from lower elevations (most obvious during replays).

### Stab the Pink Square

NBA Pro is surprisingly easy to pick up quickly, as the controls are nicely reactive and are bereft of the annoying lag that dogs many games of this type. You're soon whipping the ball from player to player and 'driving' at the basket aggressively with a tap of the triangle button. Standard offensive and defensive formations can be changed during play with the shoulder buttons, with each play conveniently shown diagramatically in the manual (useful for non-basketball experts).

Passes are simple enough to execute as the CPU automatically selects the best player to throw the ball to, while shots and dunks rely on either press-and-release precision or a well-timed run and stab at the old pink square control. Some players cannot score like this, which can cause a tinge of confused frustration when the action is hot, but the situation arises only sporadically.

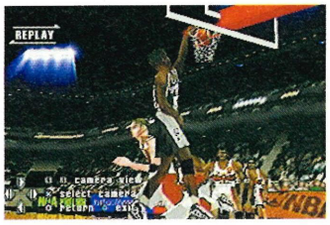
A problem does make itself obvious here, though - it's almost too easy to score. Within about ten minutes of playing I was regularly pulling off highly spectacular slams, let alone popping in both long- and short-range baskets. With most other basketball sims I've played, it's taken a good while to even stay in possession, even though the computer can rain shots in with glee. However, Pro 98's opposition seems strangely timid, even on the hardest of the (scant) three difficulty settings. As an experiment, I let my team stand rigid, just passing often enough to avoid fouling, and the other team hardly made a move towards me, let alone tried to snatch the ball or apply jumping-type pressure on my chaps. Conversely, getting possession from them is simply a case of tapping the Steal button repeatedly until you inevitably grab the ball, and even with the Foul Sensitivity setting on full it's very forgiving and generous. While this is initially quite gratifying, it doesn't

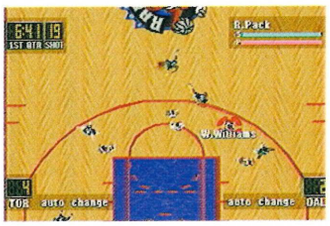
## PSYCHE-OUT SLAM DUNKING

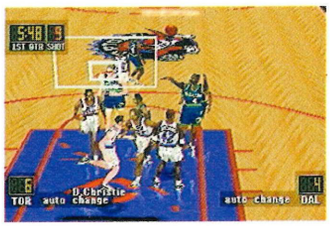


The movie intro is a rush of multi-coloured wire-frame basketballers pulling some radical manoeuvres in a tripped-out sequence that seems awfully far removed from the sweaty-armpits reality of the game. Still, far out, man...

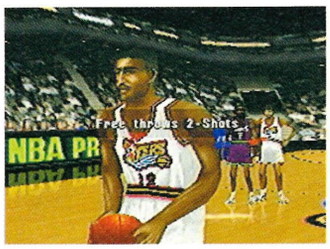


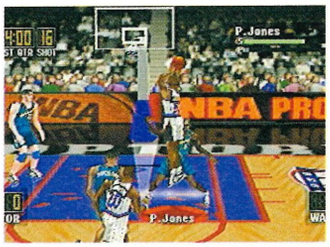



> **"...the game is set up for double Multi tap play, which allows up to eight players on screen at one time..."**




really bode well for long-term playing prospects, at least against a silicon opponent. Luckily, the game is set up for double Multi tap play, which allows up to eight players on screen at one time. While neatly solving the sappy opposition problem, this is an all-too-familiar story with sports titles of every type these days. It takes an injection of human unpredictability to infuse a game with pep. To be fair, the CPU player does make mistakes such as conceding fouls and running out of bounds, but this good feature is unfortunately unbalanced by its chronic lack of aggression.

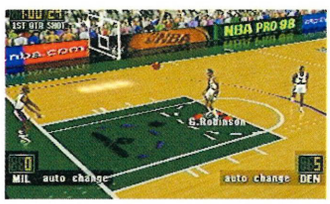
## Vested Godzillas

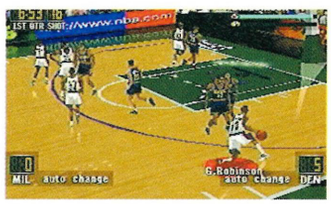
Apart from its lysergic FMV intro (see below), the front end of Pro '98 doesn't set any new standards in presentation, being somewhat bare in its layout, with the typography unnecessarily small and squinty. Numerous statistics of both teams and players can be recalled, which go into a level of historically accurate detail that couldn't possibly be of any relevance to the game, but for the truly obsessive are reproduced lovingly. More interesting is the Create Player option that allows custom beanpoles to be constructed from scratch, right down to their skin tone and face type, which can theoretically lead to a team full of perfect master-basketballers, all 7' 10" and 300 lbs-plus, with perfect skills and superhuman levels of stamina, thundering down the court like a herd of vested Godzillas.

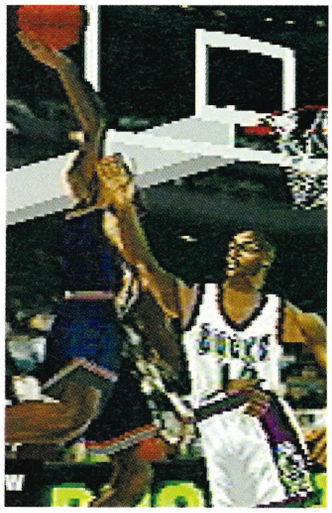
Sound-wise, NBA Pro '98 falls short of the ever-rising benchmark for sports titles, despite the not-too-unpleasant guitar/jungle strings that pop up on certain screens. The in-game FX are decidedly run of the mill, with scrappy over-repeating crowd samples and trainer squeaks grating very quickly. On the other hand, the commentary is so sparse as to be almost non-existent, consisting predominantly of the odd bland exclamation punctuating great shots. While this bucks the current trend for over-usage, it does smack of a rushed job. That said, there are plenty of deft touches and non-essential detail present in the game, such as your team-mates putting their hands on their hips in exasperation if you hog the ball for too long with one player, and the authentic courtside revolving advertising hoardings, but these are still mainly cosmetic and visual in nature.

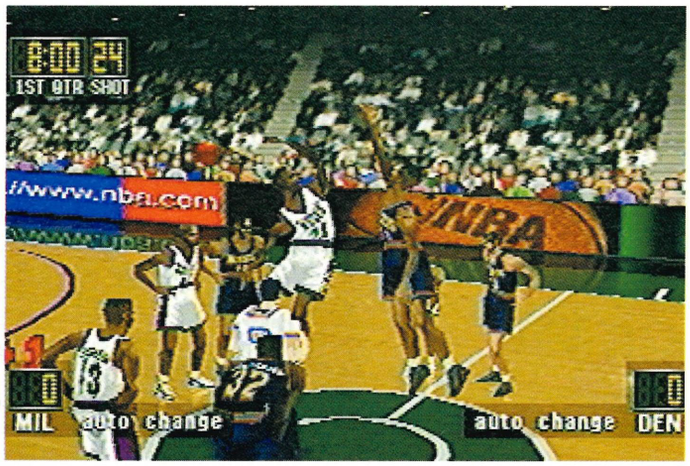
As a knockabout multi-player experience and graphical treat, NBA Pro '98 holds its own; as a lasting challenge, though, it might be found wanting by hard-core ball bouncers due to its over-friendliness. Nonetheless, it should by no means be dismissed for this shortfall as it is a highly playable and slick release. Middle ground perhaps, but definitely not middling.

EPM
CHRISTIAN






Here's a tip - winning the ball's a bit easy here as well.

## Second Opinion

If you like running up and down taking it in turns to score a basket then this game's for you. So is any other bloody basketball game. Anyway, as far as they go, this one's alright.

Saul

## The Score

| | |
|---|---|
| Publisher | KONAMI |
| Developer | KCET |
| Released | OUT NOW |
| Version | UK |
| Price | £39.99 |
| Genre | BASKETBALL SIM |
| Players | 1-8 |
| Memory Card | ✓ |
| Multi Tap | ✓ |

GAMEPLAY
8

ORIGINALITY
5

LIFESPAN
5

SOUND
5

GRAPHICS
9

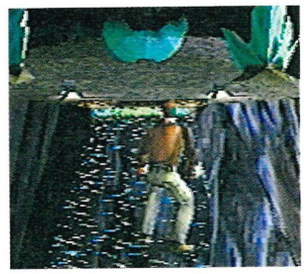
OVERALL
71%

### in summary

Get some mates round with the right hardware and you're laughing.

# Pitfall 3D

## Indiana Jones with a pickaxe?















**Bridges to another dimension, evil temptress, ancient civilisations... if you've read last month's preview, you know the score. No time to pursue the perplexingly puzzling platform plot here; let's get straight on with the review.**

Pitfall 3D is a 3D action platformer starring Pitfall Harry Jr, son of that old battler, the original Pitfall Harry first seen on the Atari 2600 in 1982. Harry is an Indiana Jones-type character, but wielding a pickaxe instead of a whip. It's just as versatile as Indy's tool, though - as well as battering the 20 types of monster encountered along the way, he also uses it to swing from floating hooks or to pull high-up leavers. The only thing Indiana's whip can do that Harry's pickaxe can't is to indulge in sado-masochistic foreplay, but we won't go into that. The game is spread across 20 levels covering four different worlds, namely The Ruins, The Volcano, The Prison Colony (don't drop the soap) and Scourge's Lair. Each level offers a specific task to complete, explained in a series of cartoon stills during loading, but they all boil down to finding X amount of objects and collecting or activating them. There's little exploration involved - just follow the arrows. Perfect for those who hate platformers where you lose your way easily.

The first thing you notice about Pitfall 3D is that it's, erm... 3D. No, really. This is no paper tiger Pandemonium-type offering with a 3D perspective but distinctly 2D action, the main character running around as if on rails (visible or otherwise). In this game, you have full control and can go anywhere you can logically reach. This is a bit of a shock to the system at first, but you soon get used to it.

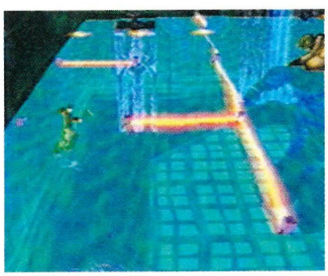
> **"...Pitfall 3D is a superb technical achievement, and extremely well designed..."**

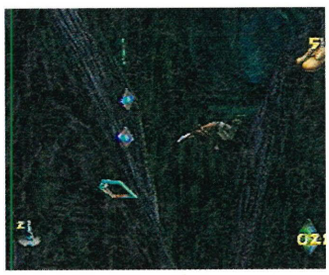
The camera rotates to give you the best view of the action, though it can't be controlled by the player. This is no great loss - the viewpoint offered is almost invariably the one you want, and only very rarely does it swing at an inconvenient moment.

On the whole, the game is very generous to the novice player. The difficulty curve is paced well, allowing you to get a reasonable distance and so get used to the controls before it gets too taxing. Devices such as swinging ropes, jump pads, the ice-like substance you float over rather than slide on and floating platforms are introduced at an intelligent pace. For example, the first few floating platforms move very slowly. The first time you see the blue icy goo (whatever the smeg it is), you cannot slide to your doom as you traverse it to collect crystals which you can later exchange for energy by standing in a pillar of blue light (you know it when you see it). By the time these devices are used in life-threatening situations, you're already used to using them. This takes the frustration out of the game.

### Double Deaths

There are two ways Harry can die; he can fall to his doom by mis-timing a jump or have his energy bar reduced to zero by marauding monsters, rotating blades, manic

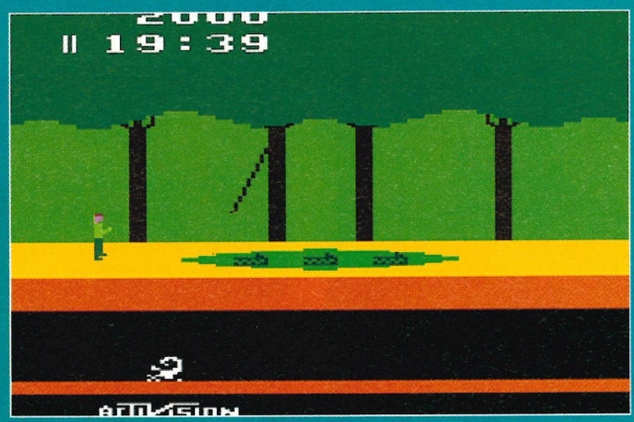







▲ Walk into this to exchange crystals for energy.

### AGEING INSPIRATION




Pitfall 3D is a modern-day interpretation of Activision's old (and we mean 'old' Atari 2600 classic, 1982's Pitfall. Apparently, there's a playable version of the old game to be found within the new offering. We can't wait to find it...



It's hard to fall off a platform; you teeter on the edge.

missiles or other such life-threatening oddities. Losing all your energy should be quite rare as long as you collect the crystals. You're never too far from a blue replenishment point, and there aren't too many monsters to mash anyway, which is probably just as well - they're dull and uninteresting, and combat is very much a 'hit and hope' affair. This is because of the 3D perspective, which makes it difficult to find your range. The once-only special weapons you find make it easier to kill the critters; use them at will, there's no point saving them for a rainy day.

Thankfully, clever design ensures the perspective works well for the platform aspects of the game. You're unlikely to fall off the edge of the plateau-like platforms; attempt to do so and Harry teeters on the edge, then steps back. This is an excellent touch. You can still fall when attempting a jump, so it doesn't make the game too easy. Instead it focuses the difficulty exactly where it should be instead of forcing the player to watch every tedious step he takes. When leaping forward onto a platform or to a swinging rope, you're given a marker showing you where to jump from. This is essential in a game such as this; because the camera isn't directly behind the sprite, you've no other way of making sure you're directly in line with what you're trying to reach (and if it were, the device's movement would confuse). If further proof is needed, try swinging on a rope then swinging back again the other way - it's damn-near impossible. The difficulty in Pitfall 3D is timing your leaps, not working out from where you should jump, and the game is no poorer for this. Also, Harry offers helpful hints from time to time, probably the only notable element in some very sparse sound.

Pitfall 3D's only real fault is the lack of atmosphere offered by each level. Think of your favourite PlayStation platformer - I bet each level painted a picture, offering a distinct and consistent environment. Whether a jungle world or a space level, a sweetshop-inspired offering or a cyberpunk city, an icy wilderness or a crowded supermarket, each stage must have a distinct feel of its own. Pitfall's often muddy graphics fail to achieve this, making it difficult to relate to the world you're in. Look at the shots - can you tell which of the four worlds mentioned earlier each one is taken from? Would you know you were in another dimension if I hadn't already told you? Thought not.

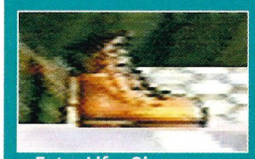
Moaning aside, Pitfall 3D is a superb technical achievement, and extremely well designed. Frustrations are kept to a minimum, and when you die, there's no blaming the program. The difficulty curve lets you learn before putting you to the test too. Despite its dull and unimaginative worlds, it kept me coming back for more. This is what video games are all about.

EPM

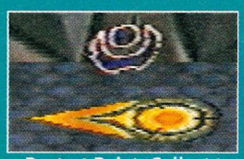
*IAN*

## A HELPING HAND

Here are some of the power-ups and other helpful widgets you find along the way...



• Extra Life: Gives you (ahem) an extra life.



• Restart Point: Collect to claim the restart point, then follow the arrow.



• Jump Point: Stand on this and jump.



• Save: Save here. Pitfall 3D also offers passwords after each level.



• Crystal: Collect these, and swap them for energy replenishments.



• Five Crystals: Gives you five crystals.



• Red Weapon: Gives you the firey special weapon.



• Blue Weapon: Gives you the icy special weapon.



• Gold Bar: Points.



• Smart Weapon: Kill all nearby enemies for a short time.



• Jump Pad: Run across it for a super leap.



• Red Shield: Red device swirls around your head clobbering monsters.



## Second Opinion

Pitfall Harry has arrived on the PlayStation in fine style. The classic Atari game has been given a new lease of 3D life and it works a treat. Although 81% is a decent enough score I reckon Beaver Boy's still been a little harsh. Give it 90, I say!

Saul

## The Score

| | |
|---|---|
| Publisher | ACTIVISION |
| Developer | IN HOUSE |
| Released | MAY '98 |
| Version | UK |
| Price | £39.99 |
| Genre | PLATFORM |
| Players | 1 |
| Memory Card | ✔ |

GAMEPLAY
8

ORIGINALITY
9

LIFESPAN
8

SOUND
6

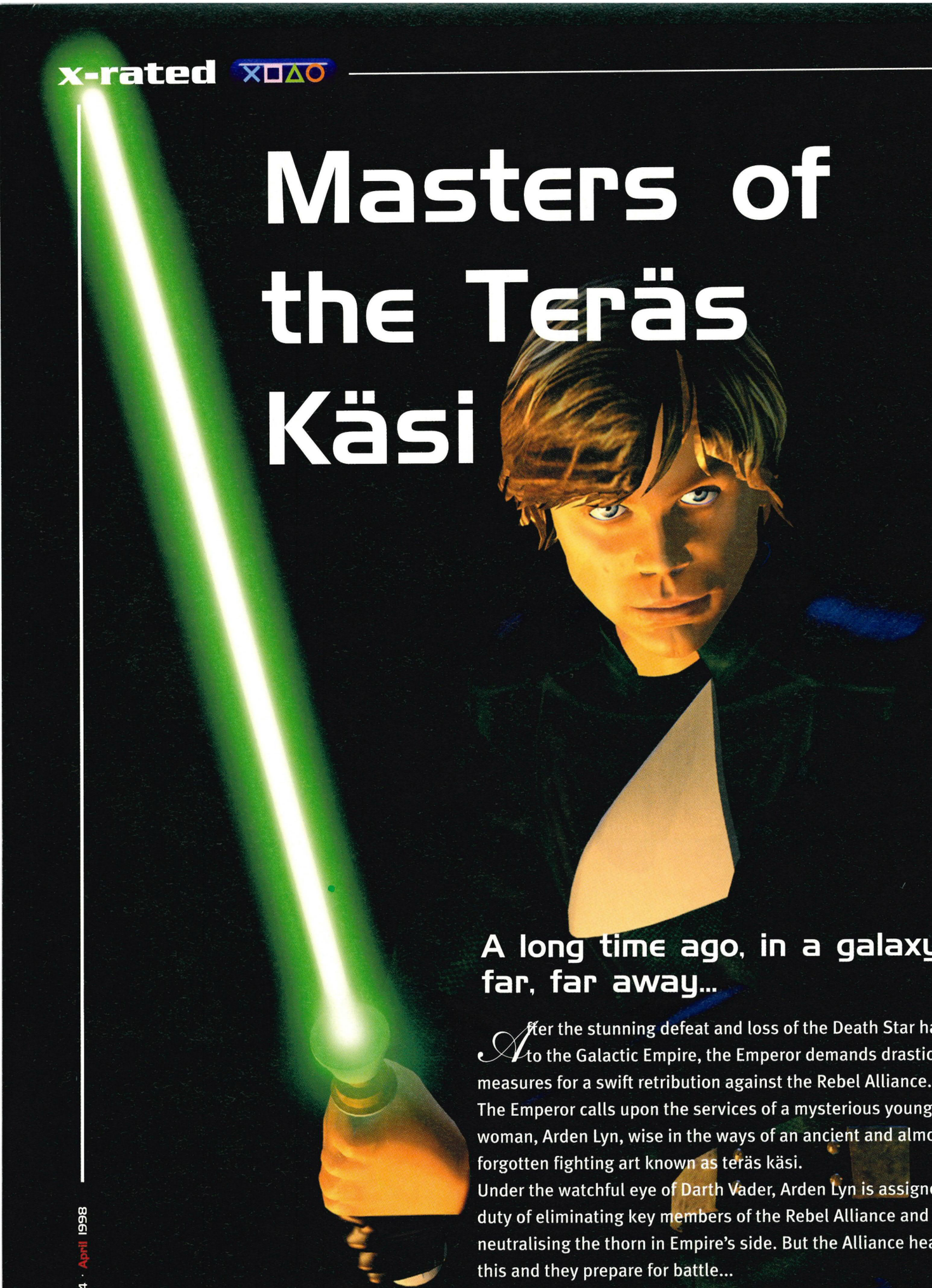
GRAPHICS
6

OVERALL
81%

in summary

Plays a hell of a lot better than it looks.

# Masters of the Teräs Käsi



## A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away...

After the stunning defeat and loss of the Death Star handed to the Galactic Empire, the Emperor demands drastic measures for a swift retribution against the Rebel Alliance. The Emperor calls upon the services of a mysterious young woman, Arden Lyn, wise in the ways of an ancient and almost-forgotten fighting art known as teräs käsi.

Under the watchful eye of Darth Vader, Arden Lyn is assigned the duty of eliminating key members of the Rebel Alliance and thus neutralising the thorn in Empire's side. But the Alliance hears of this and they prepare for battle...

**This is LucasArts' first attempt at a beat-'em-up and to be honest, it shows. Okay, I wasn't expecting a game on a par with Namco's Tekken series, but I did expect a fighter as good as, say, Bloody Roar. Unfortunately this isn't the case, but on saying that it doesn't really matter either. Now you might be thinking, "What the hell is he talking about?", but as soon as you start playing Masters of the Teräs Käsi you're sucked into the Star Wars phenomena all over again. When Luke and Darth face up to each other, good against evil, the Rebel Alliance against the Empire, all thoughts that this hasn't taken the beat-'em-up genre any further are eradicated.**

As soon as you boot up Masters of the Teräs Käsi, you're treated to a front end made famous by the Star Wars films. The logo appears, with the celebrated scrolling text relating the story so far. On entering the selection screen, you're given the option to pick various battle modes. 'Arcade'; fight every character in turn, beat them all and you're rewarded with your character's ending. 'Vs'; take on a mate and 'Survival' pits you against a string of fighters. It's a one- round-per-opponent scenario without your energy refilling after every bout - how long can you last? 'Team Mode' allows you to pick a crew of six fighters to do battle against a CPU squad of six. Again, one-round fights with the winner staying on. Lastly, 'Practice' allows you to fine-tune your fighting skills. After choosing your desired contest, you're treated to an exceptional character selection screen with stars rotating in the background and your selected character appearing as a hologram in the centre of the screen.

> "...Luke Skywalker's light saber throw is breathtaking, especially when Darth Vader is on the receiving end..."







## "Feel The Force"

All the characters have weapons at their disposal; Luke's light sabre, Hans' pistol, Hoar's Gaffi stick, etc. A weapon can be drawn at any time during a fight simply by pressing the R2 button. It can be withdrawn with the same button too. There's plenty of moves for each character, with or without a weapon. Included in the moves are huge combinations and some awesome-looking specials. The special moves are accessed by turning the four bars at the bottom of the screen gold by hitting your opponent - more hits more gold, simple! Once you've filled one bar you can access a selection of one bar moves, two bars accesses more, and so on. Filling four bars allows you to perform the super gold moves which are obviously the most devastating.

Linking combinations is fairly tricky, as the animation really isn't fluent enough to undertake long button sequences, but with practice this can be overcome. With characters like Han Solo dependant on long combos to win a round, you have to persevere. The special moves are fairly easy to pull off once you've discovered them (see supplement for a full run down), and this saves the day on the move side of things. Luke Skywalker's light saber throw is breathtaking, especially when Darth Vader is on the receiving end. Many of the characters are kited with guns, where the gold bars count as shots. You perform the move then add button presses at the end of the move to dictate how many shots are fired. This feature is very handy if you know only a couple of shots will finish off your opponent, leaving your gold energy bar with energy for the next round. But, as with many of the good features with this game, it's flawed. The















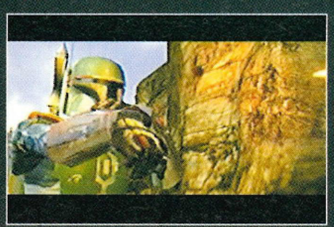



▲ After accessing Slave Leia, you can try to find moves to get a better view of her tits and ass!

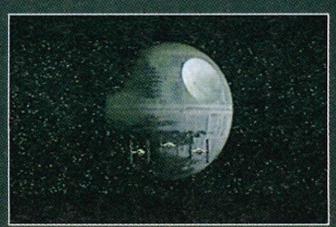
## ▼ STAR SCENE

The intro scene is comprised of rendered clips from the original Star Wars trilogy. It's a shame that LucasArts didn't include more of them.







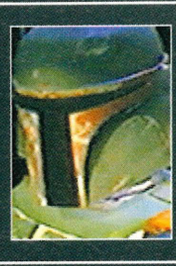


## STAR CHARACTERS

### Arden Lyn - Teräs Käsi Master
*Weapon - Ancient Droid Arm*
She is a master of teräs käsi. A Palawan warrior who's youthfulness hides her real age. Her expertise as one of the last remaining masters of the teräs käsi enticed the focus of the Emperor and Darth Vader, who utilised her to hunt down and eliminate Rebel Alliance personnel. However, she has her own plans...



### Boba Fett - Bounty Hunter
*Weapon - Blaster Rifle*
The most feared bounty hunter in the galaxy. Boba is armed with manadalore battle armour and a huge arrangement of lethal weapons. He has a savage character.



### Luke Skywalker - Young Jedi
*Weapon - Light Saber*
As with his father, the force is strong in Luke. He still has much to learn about accepting the ways of the Jedi, while still evading the dark side. He is determined to proceed with the Jedi Knight's teaching.



### Han Solo - Pilot and Smuggler
*Weapon - Blaster Pistol*
Started space life as a smuggler, but was steered by the Alliance into a head-on collision with the Empire. There is a reward for his capture after a bungled smuggling expedition. While in Cantinas, he witnessed the teräs käsi fighting styles.



### Leia Organa - Princess
*Weapon - Battle Staff*
Her home planet, Alderaan, has been destroyed by the Empire. Her deep-rooted determination has forced the Rebellion's battle against the Empire. As with her brother, Luke Skywalker, the force is strong. She is a malignant and effective warrior.



### Chewbacca - Wookie
*Weapon - Bowcaster*
His attachment with Han Solo is exemplary and unquestioned. His enemies see a dumb animal with a fierce nature, but his friends see an intelligent and loyal ally. An awesome fighter, his strength and accuracy with a bowcaster are his main fighting assets.



### Thok - Gamorrean Warrior
*Weapon - Axe*
Excellent at hand-to-hand combat due to his enormous size. Even though his fighting skills seem a mere case of random fury, Thok can actually turn his moves into well-timed lethal combinations.

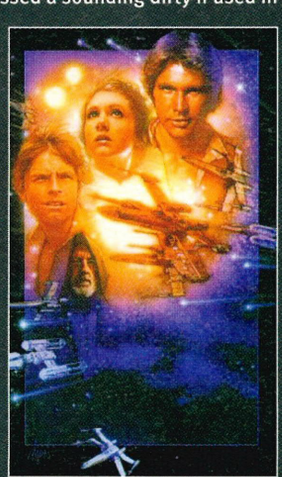


### Hoar - Tusken Raider
*Weapon - Gaderffi "Gaffi" Stick*
He is a nomadic bandit, feared throughout his native Tatooine. The Gaffi stick is a traditional weapon of the Tusken Raiders. He became a student of Arden Lyn, and with her teachings perfected his fighting skills and mastery of teräs käsi. In battle he wears the infamous Tusken Raider's battle mask to protect the throat and jaw from a direct hit.



## SMUTTY WARS

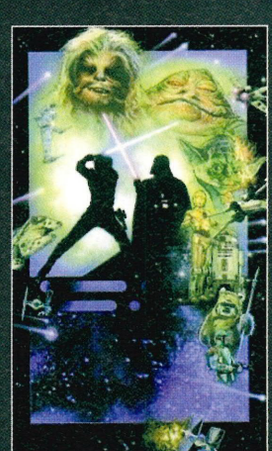
We couldn't do a review of a Star Wars game without doing something about the films. So here's the top three quotes from each film that could be classed a sounding dirty if used in a different context.



**STAR WARS**
1. "You're all clear kid, now let's blow this thing and go home!" - Han to Luke before Luke makes his shot.
2. "You came in that thing? You're braver than I thought" - Leia to Han, while in the Death Star.
3. "Get in there you big, furry oaf! I don't care what you smell!" - Han to Chewbacca before Chewy jumps down the rubbish chute.



**THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK**
1. "I must have hit pretty close to the mark to get her riled up like that, huh kid?" - Han to Luke in Luke's recovery room.
2. "Well you didn't see us in the south passage... she expressed her true feelings for me." - Han to Luke and Chewy after Luke has recovered.
3. "That's alright, I'd like to keep it on manual control for a while." - Luke to R2D2 while going to Dagobah.



**RETURN OF THE JEDI**
1. "Hey, Luke, thanks... thanks for coming after me... now I owe YOU one!" - Han to Luke after they escape from Hoth.
2. "Back door, huh? Good idea!" - Han to an Ewok before attacking the force field generator.
3. "She's gonna blow!" - Lando to all.




Darth and Luke fighting to the death; inspiring stuff.

super gold gun moves have the character performing the move by raising his or her gun skywards, the bullets or missiles are then launched upwards, leaving the screen and then homing back down onto the opponent. Now, on first seeing this you assume that each character possesses a 'special move breaker', allowing the character to perform it while the projectiles are airborne, thus protecting them from the attack and breaking the attacker's special move - but they don't. As soon your opponent implements the move, it's just a case of waiting for your ass to be kicked.

The fighting arenas are varied but not hugely detailed. Many of them have famous Star Wars characters wandering around them, including R2-D2 and the magnificent AT-AT Walkers, but recreating the Star Wars atmosphere around the battle platforms hasn't really happened.

**"...The arenas are varied but not hugely detailed. Many of them have famous Star Wars characters wandering around them..."**

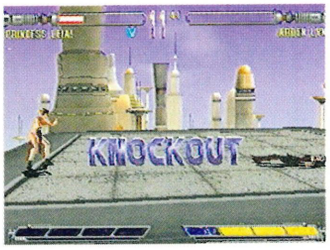
## The Dark Side

Simply as a beat-'em-up, Master of the Teräs Käsi doesn't really stand up there with the Soul Edge and Tekken big boys, but what gives it that credibility is the Star Wars phenomena. It contains characters that are known worldwide. I'm not scared to admit that as a child, Luke Skywalker was my hero, and Leia appeared in many of my kiddie fantasies - come to think of it, she still does! You can't really knock a game which allows you to be the young Jedi Knight of the Rebel Alliance, and face Darth Vader with light sabres drawn, the fate of the universe resting on the outcome. MTK will sell, there's no doubt about that. Star Wars fans may pick holes in it, but again deep down it's a dream come true. As a basic fighter, this would have tipped the score scales at around 70%, or even slightly less. But with characters that had me jumping around the playground as a kid, dodgy white drain pipe in hand, swiping at my best mate clothed in black bin liners and sounding like he had a bad case of asthma - this has to be up there in the eighties. Can't wait for the film, and what did ever happen to Mick Sway?

EPM

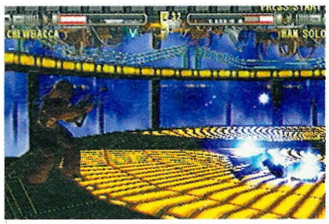
*DARREN*











## Second Opinion

Definitely not the best fighter I've seen, but as Dazza has explained, Star Wars fever grabs ya balls and shakes ya into liking it. If you're looking for a great beat-'em-up, then this isn't for you. If you're a fan, buy it.

Saul

## The Score

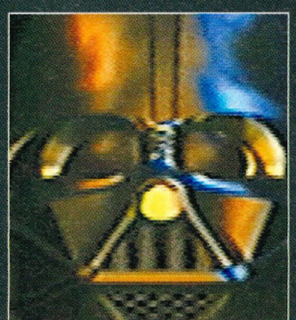
| | |
|---|---|
| Publisher | VIRGIN |
| Developer | LUCASARTS |
| Released | APRIL |
| Version | UK |
| Price | £39.99 |
| Genre | BEAT-'EM-UP |
| Players | 1-2 |
| Memory Card | ✔ |

GAMEPLAY
8
ORIGINALITY
6
LIFESPAN
7
SOUND
8
GRAPHICS
7
OVERALL
82%

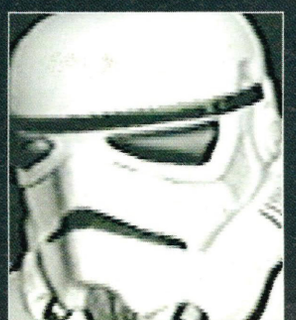
in summary

The force is strong with this one.

## STAR SECRETS



As with every other beat-'em-up, there are hidden characters within the game that can be accessed by completing the game in a certain way. On offer are the evil and awesome Darth Vader, the lovely Mara Jade, a slave version of Princess Leia (Yeah!), a Stormtrooper, and finally Jodo Kast. Unlocking these is pretty difficult, but if you want to know how, simply turn to the free 16-page supplement with this mag to get the run-down of every secret and every move in the game.



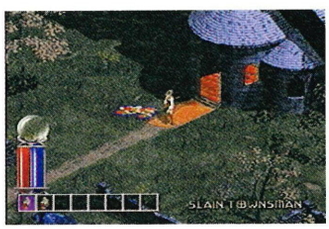




# Diablo

## Get to see plenty of axe wounds with EA

**Something's rotten in Khondaras for sure. According to legend, a titanic battle between the forces of Order and Chaos has been raging across time and space with the fate of the universe and reality itself hanging in the balance. The fairly recent arrival of humans has thrown a spanner into the works, though, as mankind's self-determinism in deciding their own alignment towards good or evil puts them beyond the influence of the warring powers. As a result, the actions of we simple mortals are the pivotal piece in the whole pan-dimensional shenanigans, with the noble and demonic interests vying to woo or terrify homo sapiens into taking sides.**








Chief amongst the nasty generals are the three most powerful devilish entities, Baal the God of Destruction, Mephisto, Lord of Hatred and Diablo the Lord of Terror. Exiled to the Earth, they have turned father against son and naturally trailed destruction and sorrow in their wake for centuries. Fearing for the future of life on the planet, a group of magi banded together to form a group of mystic hunters called the Horadrim, powerful sorcerers whose sole task is to hunt down the deadly triumvirate and imprison them in enchanted artefacts called Soulstones. At the cost of countless lives, they succeeded in snaring the evil trio, finally capturing Diablo in the swirling spiritual constraints of a stone which they took to the land of Khondaras and buried in a deep and unreachable cave. A monastery and catacombs were built atop the site to ensure the artefact's safety, which became the sacred home of the Horadrim for countless decades until it gradually faded into obscurity and ruin. However, the dark influence of Diablo has leaked out from its lowly prison and corrupted the mind of the now-king Leoric and his most trusted advisor, twisting them into paranoid puppet warmongers. Under his warped rule, the once-noble army of Khondaras has soiled its good name and bearing through pointless conflict, leading ultimately to their reluctant mutiny and the execution of the insane king. However, it was too late for the kingdom, now in the psychic grip of Diablo, and the derelict monastery became suffused with mysterious lights and sounds. The final straw came with the kidnapping of the dead king's son and other children of the realm, forcing many to flee in abject terror. Now guess what? Its down to you to go in to the depths and put a stop to the encroachment of Hell into the world in all its forms (apart from hammy and verbose background scenarios, presumably).

> **"...Diablo combines hack 'n' slash exploration with RPG overtones as you take the role of a grizzly warrior..."**

### Go for a Slash

Diablo combines hack 'n' slash exploration with RPG overtones as you take the role of a grizzly warrior, sultry rogue or stern sorcerer in your quest to uncover the awful secrets at the heart of the catacombs. The action begins in the now-almost deserted village near the monastery, sparsely populated by some characters with whom you can interact and gain clues, including Farnham the Drunk who slurs legends of subterranean gold at you and Gillian the Barmaid, who dips your change in a pile of beer on the bar before she tells you to ask



## NIFTY QUESTORS

One of the three available characters should cater for your personal taste in fighting.



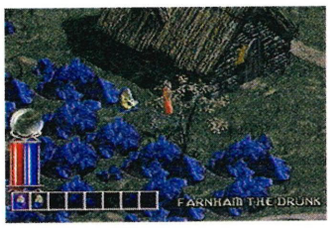

The beefcake warrior loves to stick his weapon into soft yielding flesh; just don't criticise the size of his helmet. Here he is taking on a squad of skeletons. Roll the Bones!



The lovable rogue is a mean shot with her bow and arrow, tougher than the magic-user, but not as strong as the warrior. Mind you, look at the size of that chest!




Magic is the sorcerer's speciality, shooting torrents of electricity and flame from the tip of his enlarged wand. Don't get into a toe-to-toe scrap with him though or he ends up looking like a Friday night chip shop incident victim.



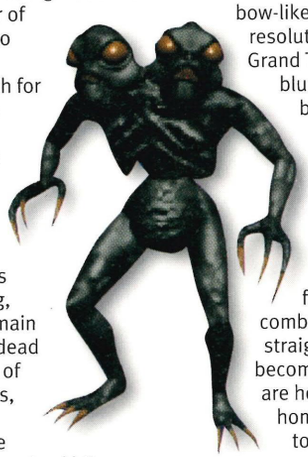







someone else the way. Equipment can be bought or sold from the Blacksmith (whose voice is an entertaining cross between Billy Conolly and Groundskeeper Willy from 'The Simpsons'), augmenting your weaponry or stash of healing potions in exchange for gold.

The first sign that things are badly amiss is the mangled almost-corpse at the door of the monastery who croaks you a dire warning and a wish for vengeance before messily expiring. From here on its a journey down and down further still into the maze of tunnels and rooms under the building, populated in the main by unpleasant undead types and legions of annoyed skeletons, who try their damnedest to dice you into stock cube-sized bits.



Depending on which character you've chosen, your method of attack varies. The rogue has a bow that more or less auto-aims, with a rate of fire that quite honestly rivals a machine gun. The warrior has a sword and buckler at the outset, which makes short shrift of the more mundane enemies but is a little coy when they are eight feet tall and nicknamed 'The Butcher'. Magic is, unsurprisingly, the Sorcerer's main method of attack, backed up by a hefty swipe with his staff if the need should arise. Values of strength, dexterity, and vitality vary for each character as you would expect, with the lithe rogue being the most skilful, the warrior the strongest, etc. Combat is also very different from one discipline to the next. Ranged weapons (in particular the bow) seem to have infinite shots, leading to it being used pretty indiscriminately and in a very un-bow-like manner. The resolution of its aim (Like Grand Theft Auto) is fairly blunt as well, which, bizarrely, makes shots 'suck' onto the target even when they appear to be missing thanks to the 'point and shoot' system of aiming, which seems just a little too forgiving. Hand-to-hand combat is again quite straightforward, and only becomes tricky when there are hordes of attackers homing in, which can lead to a very sudden death as only three or four blows can despatch even an armoured player with impunity.

Each of the character types can also use magic with varying degrees of power, depending on their level of available, mana and what forbidden scrolls and mystic grimoires you find.

## Dreaded Rails

The structure of the game allows for a limited amount of decision-making as to what path is best to follow, avoiding the dreaded 'on rails' syndrome of some adventure titles, which is just as well as the RPG-slanted village sections are fairly dull in themselves, and serve effectively as very complex menu screens rather than a true active element of play. Indeed, much of the enveloping scenario (including the yawnsome FMV) is, to be honest, largely superfluous and horrifically cheesy to boot, replete with all the usual cliches; the Runesword Azurewrath... Dark Demonblade ShadowFang... aaargh!




The action sequences make up for this to some degree, although there are a few stray flies in the visual ointment. Sprite animation is fairly low-rent, the characters stiffly walking about at one frustrating pace, while enemies are often haloed by a blue corona that looks a bit too much like a bad special effects matte shot. In addition, when using the short bow as a main weapon things can start to feel like an inferior one-player version of Gauntlet with slightly moodier graphics, as floods of ghouls and gits attack and attack. In combination with the automatic aiming described above, a melee can either be a tedious process of extermination or a hopeless running-away-athon with not much scope in between. Either way, it's not greatly satisfying for much of the time, gameplay being an uncomplex affair that seems to be statistic not sadistic at its heart.

Nonetheless, the dark 'n' dingy visuals are suitably oppressive, despite the transparency effects when walls should obscure the view being somewhat muddy. The decidedly workmanlike effects and music don't add to the overall patina either, sounding more Xena the Warrior Princess than Conan the Barbarian.

Diablo offers the parched throats of PSX RPGers some relief, but I suspect that anyone weaned on a hardcore history of the genre will find this a little too lightweight and arcade-centric. Nonetheless, it does present a considerable challenge and promises some truly diabolical encounters at its deepest, darkest depths.

EPM

*CHRISTIAN*




▲ The butcher's Abbatoir. Doesn't meet EU hygeine standards.

## Second Opinion

Diablo takes on the hack 'n' slash genre, but fails to hit the mark. Features like 'auto aim' kills the atmosphere, making it a case of 'fire or run'. Less enemies and more emphasis on weaponry skill could have saved the day.

Darren

## The Score

| | |
|---|---|
| Publisher | ELEC. ARTS |
| Developer | BLIZZARD |
| Released | OUT NOW |
| Version | UK |
| Price | £39.99 |
| Genre | RPG/SLASHING |
| Players | 1-2 |
| Memory Card | ✓ |

GAMEPLAY
5

ORIGINALITY
7

LIFESPAN
7

SOUND
4

GRAPHICS
6

OVERALL
64%

in summary

Lacks the killing edge that cuts to the bone underneath.

# Street Fighter Collection



## A hoary hoard of hand-to-hand hostility. Hooray!

**This compendium of Super Street Fighter 2, Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo and Street Fighter Alpha Gold is Capcom's generous look-back at the old war-horse fighting series, now in at least its tenth year, reined together in one convenient lump. As Ex Plus Alpha struggles into limited 3D existence, it's interesting to see where this bona fide games phenomenon sprang from all those moons ago to rule the arcades, dominate home cartridge sales and spawn so many iffy imitations.**





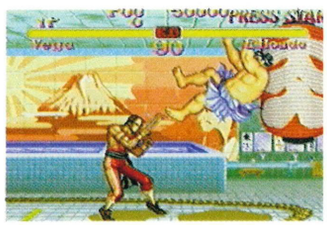
Being a relative Street Fighter virgin I wasn't prepared for the 16-bitty look and feel of the first two instalments. You can hardly expect PlayStation-standard fluidity here (this is a retro compilation after all), but those new to the world of video gaming will curse the limited animation. Those reared on Street Fighter games could well find they have to revise their rose-coloured memories in this department too. As you would expect, the Turbo options are all intact, which speeds the games up and reduces the aesthetic damage caused by the not-up-to-the-minute animation.

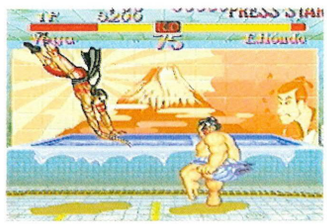
All the characters we have known and loved are here, from solidly dependable Ryu and Ken through to Plasticene-limbed Dhalsim and slapping fat boy R. Honda. They have it out in front of a clutch of comic book-style backgrounds that give the game a real cartoony, larger-than-life feel. The variety of moves available revolves around your basic jumping, squatting and standing attacks, with the hidden special moves usually requiring the now-ubiquitous 'roll-round-the-pad' trick to activate them. The clever fighter can integrate these special moves with more basic attacks to produce hard-hitting combos that carve up your enemy's health. Indeed, this is the real strength of Street Fighter games. Instead of throwing a punch and waiting to see what happens, you can follow it up with another punch, a kick and maybe a special, the attacks flowing freely in a seemingly seamless battery of blows. The game doesn't seek to emulate the smooth-running 'ballet-with-knives' rhythm of Soul Blade, but instead offers hard-hitting arcade action with the emphasis on power and tactics rather than fluidity and realism. I mean, how realistic can a game be when it allows humans to throw fireballs and offers a semi-human green creature who can charge himself up like an electric eel?

> **"...Street Fighter Alpha Gold takes the baton and does add a limited element of 90's sheen and depth to its creaking prequels..."**

Perhaps the main criticism of the first two games on the compilation, though, is that they're so damned similar. Early nineties SNES reviews on the Street Fighter games invariably ended with, 'what's here is great, but it's not worth buying if you've already got the previous game'. Here, you're presented with the almost-identical Super Street







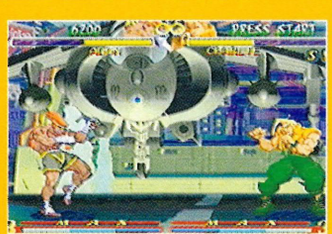
## BACKDROP ZONE



"Walking in a Winter Wonderland..." This snowy paradise is a veritable Lapland in which the characters can slug it out. Will the winner piss his name in the snow in Chun Li's handwriting?



A genteel birthday party on board a luxury yacht is an interesting place to get a broken nose (and ribs, and arm)...



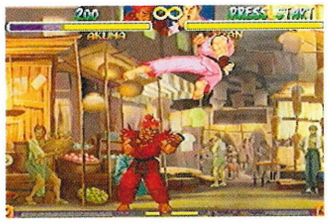
Quite why you would carry on fighting when there's a damned-great fully-armed Harrier hovering ten feet away is anyone's guess.



A dingy toilet in an English pub is the unpleasant-smelling venue for a clash of mighty fighters. Note the two blokes pointing Percy at the porcelain!









Fighter 2 and Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo, the only significant difference between them being the latter's second power bar, charged by hitting a foe and expended on power moves which strike in a flash of white light. The hidden character Akuma appears here too, but even this doesn't make up for the fact that two of the games showcased here are almost identical.

> "...thankfully, the game introduced a significant number of new characters in addition to the established favourites..."

## Creaking Prequels

Street Fighter Alpha Gold takes the baton and does add a limited element of 90's sheen and depth to its creaking prequels. Extra frames of animation make a substantial difference to how the fighters look when in action, and as the game engine is essentially identical, all the fist-flying fighting fun is there.

Tweaks have been made that make the characters seem less puppet-like, although their movements are still light years away from the almost-human presence of the Namco stable's top titles. Thankfully, the game introduced a significant number of new characters in addition to the established favourites. Gen is a grey-haired old geezer who appears to fight in the scuttling monkey style of Kung-fu, and there's Adon, a strangely-coifed Muay Thai boxer. The intriguingly-named Sodom is a burly bloke armed with sai swords and Dynasty-sized shoulder pads, first seen in Capcom's Double Dragon-style scenario-based beat-'em-up Final Fight, while Rolento is a homicidal man with a stick. Watch out for Rose, a scarlet witch armed with some kind of enchanted scarf, Charlie, a buff blonde beefcake with a lifejacket who's somehow related to the absent Guile, while Birdie is a manacled mohicaned maniac with a terrible skin problem. Best of all, though, is Sakura, a teenager in a delightful schoolgirl-cum-sailor outfit, replete with a short skirt that compliments her high-kicking attacks beautifully.



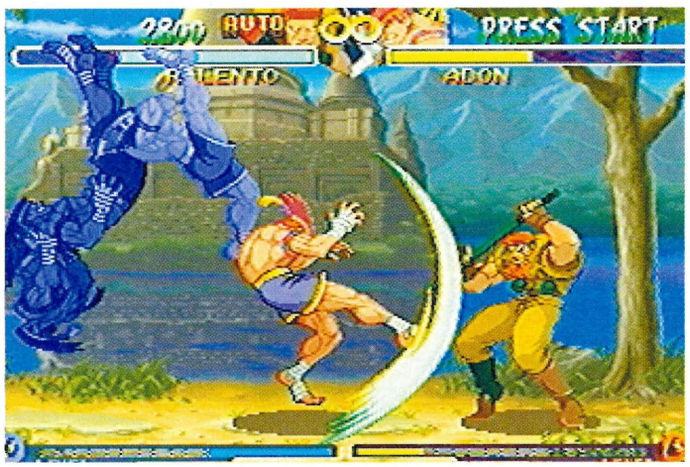
The original's graphics have been enriched to a degree, lending them a little more visual impact than before but without losing the game's hard-hitting, no-shitting cartoon feel. The various shadow moves, variations on super attacks and combos, leave groovy full-body traces behind the characters if successful. Unfortunately the CPU opponents seem to use the same techniques over and over again, which is irritating to say the least, especially as they insist on shouting one of their (still-limited) phrases every time they use that attack. Sound FX are better, echoing the krunch krunch krunch school of audio that, while not up to today's CD-quality sample-rich arena, offers a real Saturday afternoon action cartoon atmosphere. The backgrounds of the originals have been improved considerably in visual appeal and humour, though (see boxout), and the overall presentation has moved up a notch.

## Misty Eyes

Although this collection does offer value for money, it should be borne in mind that the first two games are virtually doppelgangers of one another, though the third instalment is different enough to earn its place on the discs. With a decade's-worth of games under their belts, why were two such similar offerings used? If it were purely for historical reasons, the original Street Fighter 2 should replace its Super version (or even, dare I say it, the original and oft-forgotten Street Fighter could be used). Failing that, how about a price cut? Sure it's on two CDs, but they cost virtually nothing to produce and as the games are already written, development costs are almost zero. Why do companies insist on putting out retro games at modern prices? Beats the hell out of me...

EPM

IAN




Peacock-hatted Adon scythes unsuccessfully at Rolento.





## Second Opinion

The Street Fighter series will probably run longer than EastEnders; both are past their sell by date! Capcom should let this sleeping dog lie, and concentrate their efforts elsewhere.

Darren

## The Score

| | |
|---|---|
| Publisher | VIRGIN |
| Developer | CAPCOM |
| Released | OUT NOW |
| Version | UK |
| Price | £39.99 |
| Genre | BEAT-'EM-UP |
| Players | 1-2 |
| Memory Card | ✔ |

GAMEPLAY
8

ORIGINALITY
8

LIFESPAN
8

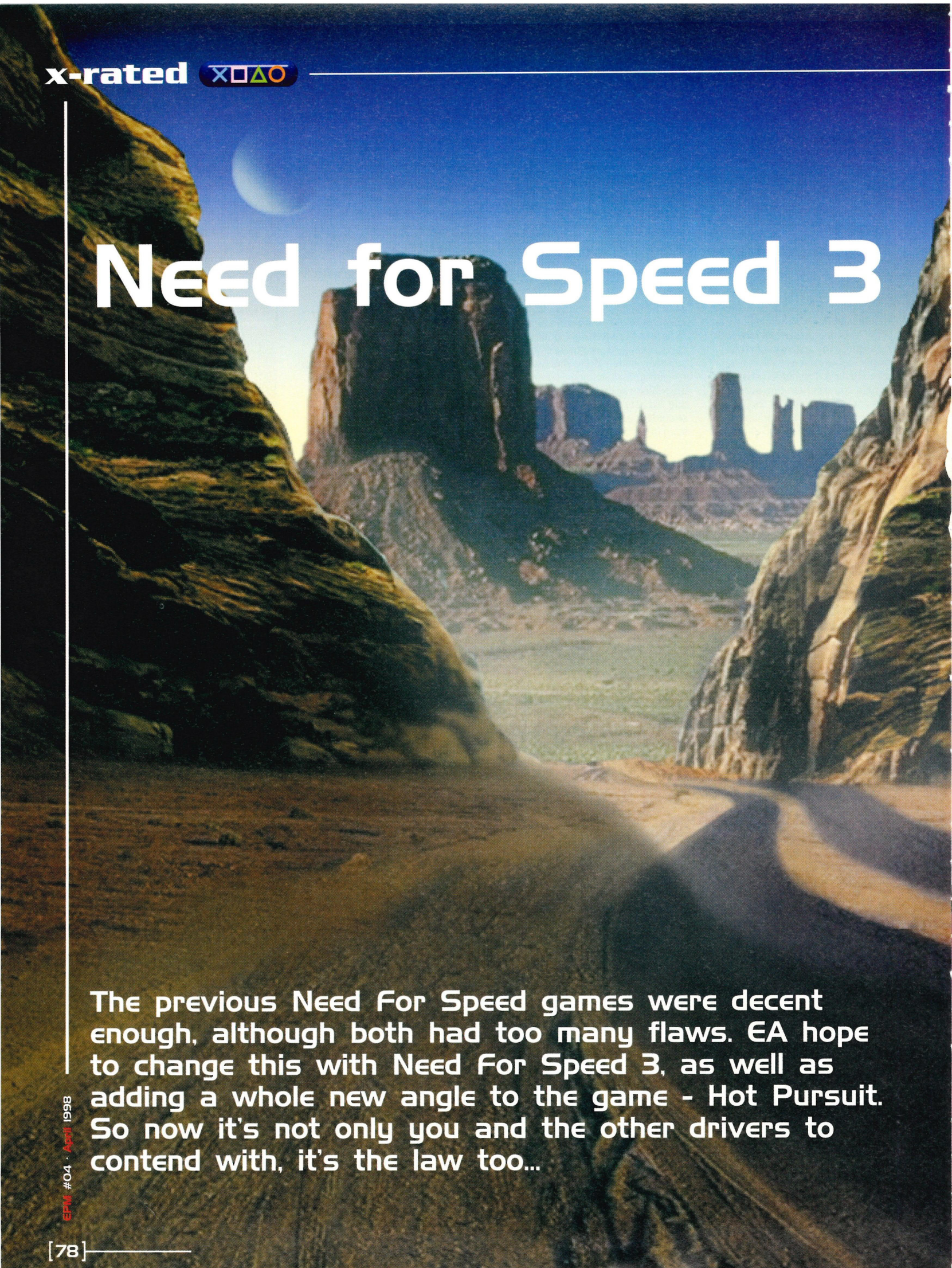
SOUND
7

GRAPHICS
7

OVERALL
70%

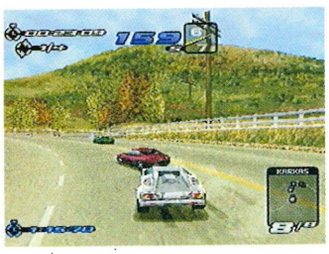
### in summary

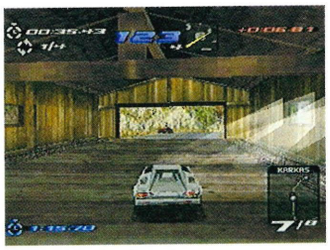
This is a twin-pack rather than a three-gamer, but a good one.

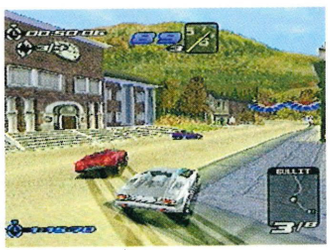


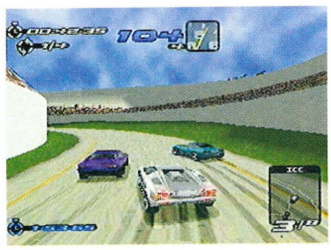
# Need for Speed 3

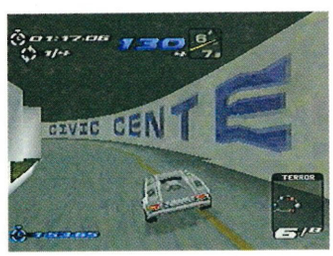
The previous Need For Speed games were decent enough, although both had too many flaws. EA hope to change this with Need For Speed 3, as well as adding a whole new angle to the game - Hot Pursuit. So now it's not only you and the other drivers to contend with, it's the law too...











**Like the original and its sequel, Need for Speed 3 puts you in control of eight of the world's most powerful sports cars. Unlike the original and its sequel, though, Need For Speed 3 delivers true speed. The previous games lived up to their titles perfectly - they were definitely in need of some speed!**

As well as adding speed to the third instalment in the series, EA have added something that's just as important in a driving game - control. In fact the control isn't quite as good as it could have been, but in my eyes, it's a massive improvement over the former games. There are two types of control method in NFS3. The arcade control method allows the cars to perform some amazing power-slides as well as offering good, intuitive overall control. The simulation mode, however, harps back to the previous games and provides neither a realistic nor an enjoyable ride. It's also hard to tame, so much so that it becomes frustrating after a very short time. Perseverance allows you to tame the simulation control, but NFS3 plays so much better using the arcade method.

EA have made sure that the game plays well with all types of control device, and if you've got a steering wheel, you're laughing. We haven't had so much fun using a steering wheel on a driving game for ages, and as long as you calibrate your wheel correctly, you should find it a joy to play. This also goes for the analog pad, but it's definitely full marks to EA for making the steering wheel option about as good as it gets.

> **"...Many driving games ignore the fact that hitting a sign or a lamp post in real life has an effect on your car, but EA have made sure every piece of scenery has collision detection..."**

Need For Speed has always put the emphasis on the cars, and NFS3 is no exception. There are eight vehicles to race, all with different speed and handling. Of course it wouldn't be a Need For Speed game if there wasn't a comprehensive list of stats and a mass of pictures for each car. These are all well and good, but after a couple of looks you won't find yourself coming back to them. Maybe the space this section takes up could have been used for something else. Anyway, not all of the cars are accessible at the start of the game, but as you progress through the tournament more become available to you. The cars available at the start are slow compared to the Mercs and Jags found later, but this doesn't show on the screen because NFS3 moves at a fast pace (30fps) no matter what car you're driving.

## Setting the Scene...

For a driving game running at such a pace, there's a surprising amount of scenery on the eight tracks available to play. You find yourself caning past cornfields, through cities, over farmland, between snowy mountain roads, through rocky deserts and even along an underwater tube! Everything holds together, and although some of the scenery is pixellated when close up, it's all drawn to a high standard. Many driving games ignore the fact that hitting a sign or a lamp post in real life has an effect on your car, but EA have made sure every piece of scenery has collision detection, meaning you can't simply drive through a lamp post or sign without something happening.

The tracks themselves range from being fairly challenging to an absolutely bloody ridiculous challenge. You need to practice on the earlier tracks to become successful later on in the game as things become very tough very early. As well as being deviously designed, ie. full of snaking bends and hairpin turns, the tracks are also very long. An average four-lap race takes over six minutes, which is plenty of time to get into the swing of things and give yourself at least half a chance. Also, the tracks can be mirrored or raced in the opposite direction without having to find a cheat or beat the game.

The cars you race against are drawn to a very high standard. They're also very detailed, with effects such as smoke and window reflections adding to the feel of the game. Something which annoys me, though, is that the rest of the traffic on the road looks very blocky and at times a bit wonky. Getting close to the normal traffic makes the game look really ugly. To me this is an oversight, because on the whole NFS3 is a great-looking game.

This, however, isn't a problem when checking out the excellent replay facilities available at the end of every race on NFS3. If you read Issue Three you might remember our ranting about the replays on Gran Turismo. We thought we'd never see anything like the GT replays, but NFS3 gets pretty close.

## YOU CAN'T OUTRUN THE LAW!

**This sequence shows one of the excellent night-time police chases on the Red Rock Ridge stage. All looks good for a while, but once they surround you in numbers, you soon find yourself busted; just like this guy here.**



## YOU COULD PULL IN THAT

The Need For Speed series has always put an emphasis on the cars, and it's the same for the third instalment. there are eight cars to choose from, all with a boot-full of stats and slides to ponder over. Here's the low-down:

### FERRARI 355 F1

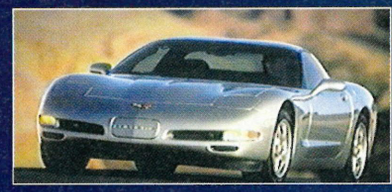
| | |
|---|---|
| Price | £85,000 |
| Status | Production |
| Weight | 2976lbs |
| Length | 167.3" |
| Width | 74.8" |
| Height | 46.1" |
| 0-60 | 4.6sec |
| Top speed | 183mph |



The Ferrari 355 F1 is one of the best-handling sports cars available today, and the 375hp is very impressive for the car's weight. One of its most outstanding features, besides its elegant looks, is the steering wheel gear shifter. Without a clutch, this allows for an approximate 50% quicker gear shifting times.

### CHEVROLET CORVETTE

| | |
|---|---|
| Price | £23,250 |
| Status | Production |
| Weight | 3245lbs |
| Length | 179.1" |
| Width | 73.6" |
| Height | 47.7" |
| 0-60 | 4.7sec |
| Top speed | 175mph |



The Chevrolet Corvette is the cheapest sports car in Need For Speed 3. The body is made from strengthened fibreglass and the shape reflects that of the past Corvettes. The engine is made of aluminium, and can produce a respectable 345hp. This may not sound like much against the other cars here, but it can hold its own in the game.

### LAMBORGHINI COUNTACH

| | |
|---|---|
| Price | N/A |
| Status | Prod. (ceased) |
| Weight | 3685lbs |
| Length | 177.2" |
| Width | 80.6" |
| Height | 42.8" |
| 0-60 | 4.4sec |
| Top speed | 180mph+ |

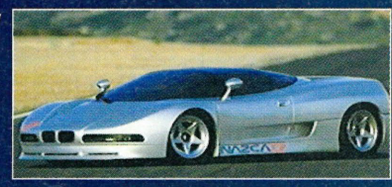


The Countach is the classic sports car. Its stunning aluminium-based shape has lead to it being dubbed the Stealth Fighter of sports cars. Alas, the Countach is no longer made, although Lamborghini did produce a number of limited edition models for their 25th anniversary in 1988.

### ITALDESIGN NAZCA C2

| | |
|---|---|
| Price | You'd be lucky |
| Status | Prototype |
| weight | 2293lbs |
| Length | 173" |
| width | 82.1" |
| Height | 43.5" |
| 0-60 | 3.6sec |
| Top speed | 193mph+ |

Available halfway through Beginners' Tournament



The Nazca is the fastest on acceleration with a lip-curling 0-60 of 3.6 seconds. The German engineering and Italian styling are combined to make one of the most powerful and elegant cars ever. But you can't have one, even if you can afford it.

### FERRARI 550 MARANELLO

| | |
|---|---|
| Price | £125,000 |
| Status | Production |
| Weight | 3726lbs |
| Length | 179.1" |
| Width | 76.2" |
| Height | 50.3" |
| 0-60 | 4.3sec |
| Top speed | 199mph |

Available halfway through Beginners' Tournament



This car signifies a new direction for Ferrari in that it is front-engined and significantly changed in style. The name Maranello comes from the town where all Ferraris are developed, and the V12, 485hp engine can propel you to a cool 200mph (give or take a couple). This car really is the nuts.

### LAMBORGHINI DIABLO

| | |
|---|---|
| Price | £119,000 |
| Status | production |
| Weight | 3575lbs |
| Length | 178.8" |
| Width | 81.6" |
| Height | 44.2" |
| 0-60 | 3.8sec |
| Top speed | 208mph |

Available halfway through Beginners' Tournament

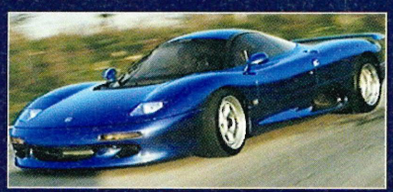


The Diablo is a the natural successor to the classic Countach. The semi-active suspension gives great handling and the Formula One brakes ensure you can stop yourself after you've reached the massive top speed of 208mph.

### JAGUAR XJR-15

| | |
|---|---|
| Price | £500,000 |
| Status | Race |
| Weight | 2310lbs |
| Length | 183.2" |
| Width | 74" |
| Height | 45.5" |
| 0-60 | 3.8sec |
| Top speed | 190mph |

Available on winning Beginners' Tournament

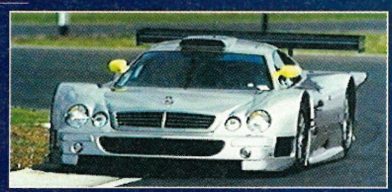


This fantastic looking Jag has a 470hp engine that delivers a stupid amount of speed and acceleration. The XJR-15 is the stuff of dreams - it was built specifically for racing and there are only 50 in the world. One of the most desirable cars in the world - even Ian could pull in this.

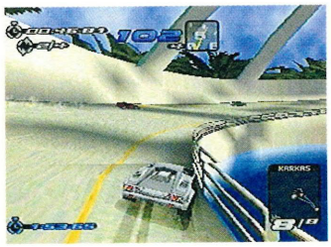
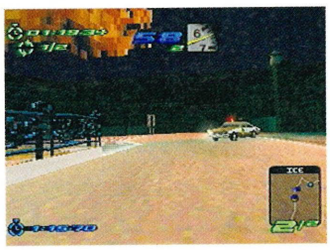
### MERCEDES CLK-GTR

| | |
|---|---|
| Price | N/A |
| Status | Race |
| Weight | 2200lbs |
| Length | 194.2" |
| Width | 78" |
| Height | 44" |
| 0-60 | 4sec (estimated) |
| Top speed | 200mph (estimated) |

Available on winning Beginners' Tournament



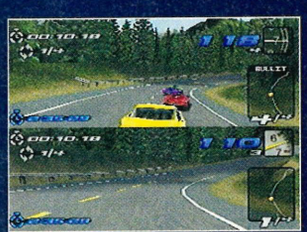
The CLK-GTR won the FIA GT series in its debut season! This must be something to do with the carbon fibre body, 600hp engine and F1 brakes that help you get around corners at ridiculous speeds.



## SPLIT SCREEN SPEED

The split-screen two-player game loses nothing in the speed or control department, unlike plenty of other racing games that can be mentioned. This is quite a programming sensation, because the CPU has to handle twice as much information as for the one-player game. Most split-screen racers have a 'driving through treacle' feel, but NFS3 manages to keep the racing as exciting and fast-paced as a single-player game. The only thing missing is the full grid, but as well as your human opponent there are still two computer-controlled cars to take on.





They don't surpass GT, but they're pretty damn good in their own right. There are eleven camera angles to watch the replay on, which is especially useful for watching the high-octane Smokey & The Bandit action of the excellent Hot Pursuit Mode.

### Pig-Picking Fun

Playing the Hot Pursuit Mode pits you against just one other racer, but you also have to contend with the doughnut-dunkin' coppers of the county you're racing in. Once you break the speed limit the sirens start wailing, and from here on in it's a roller-coaster ride to Hazard County and back. The coppers have a number of different cars, ranging from Corvettes to common-or-garden police cars, but no matter what they're driving, they try their utmost to ram you off the road. As well as blocking and ramming you, the police set up road blocks to try and halt your progress. The first few times you're busted, you're warned, but push it too far and it's off to jail without passing 'Go'.

The Hot Pursuit Mode is made even better by a number of quirky little touches such as the police shouting some hilarious stuff at you as you try to evade arrest. Things like "You are leaving me no choice", or "You are pushing your luck" don't sound funny on paper, but when you hear them in a number of different accents for each track you're pissing yourself. The best way to play Hot Pursuit is in the Night Driving Mode. Here you can only see as far as your headlights let you - when the rozzers arrive, though, the game goes into trippy disco mode. The police lights are excellent when darkness falls, especially when there are loads of cop cars in the area.

The artificial intelligence on the police cars is very good, if a little aggressive at times. The problem is when playing in the non-Pursuit modes the other race cars are as bad as the cop cars in Hot Pursuit Mode. Each has a different driver, so you find that they react differently to your actions. Some of the drivers are just too aggressive, though. Being pushed into a wall is fine if it's done by a police car in Hot Pursuit Mode, but it shouldn't happen when racing normally. This isn't Destruction Derby, ya' know!

NFS3 doesn't rely on the Hot Pursuit Mode to make it a worthwhile purchase, as the Tournament and Knockout Modes are very playable. Progressing through these opens up extra tracks and cars. Even in Beginners' Mode it's very challenging, but it's worthwhile sticking at it to get some of the faster cars.

It's good to see that EA have made some significant changes to the Need For Speed series on the third outing. The Hot Pursuit Mode is a very worthy addition to the game, but the changes to the control and extra feeling of speed are also very welcome. It also looks better than the two previous games. Ultimately, though, eight cars and eight tracks just isn't enough to lift Need For Speed into the PlayStation triple 'A' racing league alongside TOCA, F1 and GT. It's still a great drive, though, and it should quench your racing game thirst until the world-conquering GT arrives in May.

EPM

*SAUL*

## Second Opinion

The Need for Speed series comes of age. This is certainly the best NFS offering yet, but can it withstand the forthcoming onslaught of Gran Turismo?

Ian

## The Score

| | |
|---|---|
| Publisher | ELEC. ARTS |
| Developer | IN HOUSE |
| Released | £39.99 |
| Version | UK |
| Price | APRIL |
| Genre | RACING |
| Players | 1-2 |
| Memory Card | ✔ |
| Analog | ✔ |
| Steering Wheel | ✔ |

GAMEPLAY
8

ORIGINALITY
7

LIFESPAN
8

SOUND
8

GRAPHICS
8

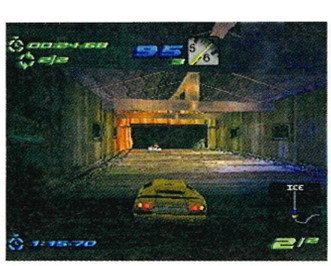
OVERALL

83%

### in summary

The Need For Speed series finally makes it good.





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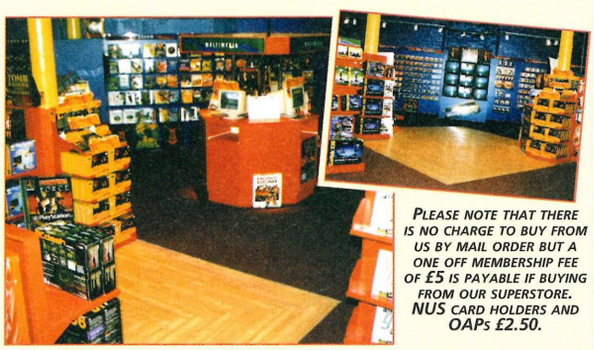
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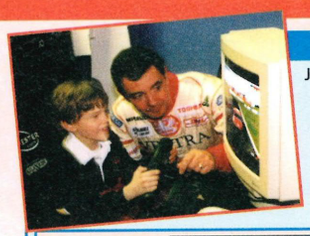
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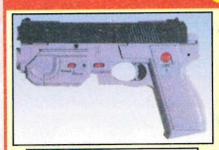


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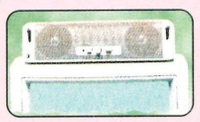
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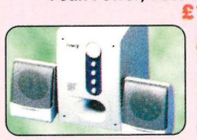
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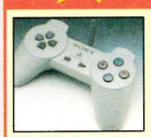


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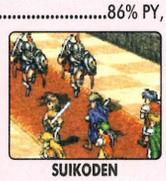
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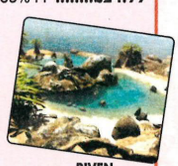



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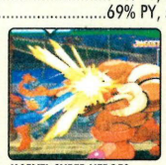
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*Streetfighter in 3D! 23 characters, stunning combos and special attacks and gorgeous Hi-Res Graphics.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Bloody Roar | 92% PP | £34.99 |
| **Bushido Blade** | **94% PY, 83% PP** | **£29.99** |
| Dark Stalkers Revenge: Night Warriors | 88% PY, 78% PP | £19.99 |
| Dynasty Warriors | 71% PY, 68% PP | £33.99 |
| Fantastic 4 | 69% PY, 59% PP | £19.99 |

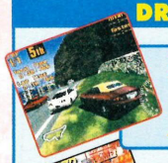

SOUL BLADE


MARVEL SUPER HEROES


TEKKEN 3

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Fatal Fury | N/A | £29.99 |
| Fighting Force | 89% PY, 66% PP | £25.99 |
| King of the Fighters | 62% PY | £29.99 |
| Mace: The Dark Age | Due 16th April | £32.99 |
| **Marvel Super Heroes** | **90% PP** | **£32.99** |
| Mortal Kombat Trilogy | 92% PY, 91% PP | £18.99 |
| Mortal Kombat Mythology | 71% PY, 50% PP | £27.99 |
| Pitball | 66% PY, 73% PP | £19.99 |
| Perfect Weapon | 65% PY, 51% PP | £33.99 |
| Rise of the Robots 2:The Resurrection | 88% PY, 78% PP | £16.99 |
| Samurai Shodown '97 | 62% PY | £34.99 |
| Soul Blade | 96% PY, 94% PP | £18.99 |
| **Star Wars: Masters of Teras Kasi** | **Due 27th March** | **£32.99** |
| Streetfighter Collection | Due 24th April | £CALL |
| Streetfighter Ex Plus | 91% PY, 93% PP | £30.99 |
| Tekken | 95% PY, 90% PP | £17.99 |
| Tekken 3 | Due end March | £39.99 |
| Tobal No.1 | 94% PY, 91% PP | £26.99 |
| Toshinden | 76% PY | £18.99 |
| **Toshinden 2** | 74% PY | £19.99 |
| **Toshinden 3** | 78% PY, 76% PP | **£29.99** |
| X Men Children of the Atom | N/A | £33.99 |
| War Gods | 59% PP | £31.99 |

## DRIVING / RACING



**GRAN TURISMO & TOP DRIVE WHEEL**
**RRP £109.98**
**£84.99**




FELONY 11-79


PORSCHE CHALLENGE


MICRO MACHINES 3

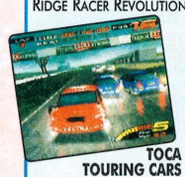
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Auto Destruct | 84% PY, 77% PP | £32.99 |
| Ayrton Senna Kart Duel 2 | Due 27th March | £30.99 |
| Bugriders | N/A | £27.99 |
| Burning Road | 90% PY | £19.99 |
| Destruction Derby | 86% PY, 72% PP | £17.99 |
| Destruction Derby 2 | 82% PY, 89% PP | £18.99 |
| Felony 11-79 | 81% PP | £24.99 |
| **Formula 1 '97** | 90% PY, 93% PP | **£38.99** |
| Formula Karts Special Edition | 75% PY, 81% PP | £22.99 |
| **Gran Turismo** | **Reserve it NOW!!** | **£34.99** |
| **Grand Theft Auto (18+)** | **90% PP** | **£30.99** |
| Hardcore 4X4 | 81% PY, 83% PP | £16.99 |
| Impact Racing | 87% PY, 82% PP | £19.99 |
| Indycar 500 | Due 3rd April | £33.99 |
| Jetrider | 85% PY, 63% PP | £29.99 |

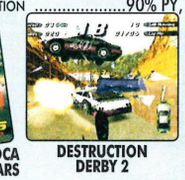

AUTO DESTRUCT


HARD CORE 4x4


FORMULA 1 '97

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Megaman Battle & Chase | Due 27th March | £26.99 |
| **Micro Machines 3** | **92% PY, 95% PP** | **£17.99** |
| Monster Trucks | 74% PY, 82% PP | £36.99 |
| Motorhead | Due 24th April | £33.99 |
| Motor Mash | 68% PP | £33.99 |
| Moto Racer | 86% PY, 85% PP | £24.99 |
| **Motocross International** | 77% PY | **£24.99** |
| NASCAR Racing '98 | 82% PY, 64% PP | £31.99 |
| Need For Speed 2 | 90% PY, 49% PP | £27.99 |
| Need For Speed 3 | Due 3rd April | £31.99 |
| Newman Haas Racing | Due 26th March | £34.99 |
| Porsche Challenge | 82% PY, 80% PP | £18.99 |
| **Rage Racer** | 94% PY, 93% PP | **£26.99** |
| Rally Cross | 89% PY, 88% PP | £29.99 |
| Rapid Racer | 87% PY, 82% PP | £27.99 |
| Ray Tracers | 74% PY, 73% PP | £34.99 |
| Red Asphalt: Rock N Roll Racing 2 | 68% PP | £27.99 |
| Ridge Racer | 93% PY, 76% PP | £18.99 |
| Ridge Racer Revolution | 90% PY, 84% PP | £18.99 |

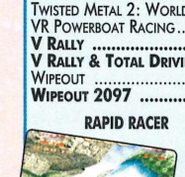

TOCA TOURING CARS


DESTRUCTION DERBY 2

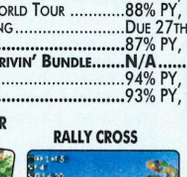

GRAND THEFT AUTO

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Road Rash | 75% PY, 64% PP | £17.99 |
| San Francisco Rush | N/A | £27.99 |
| Street Racer | 84% PY, 79% PP | £19.99 |
| Supersonic Racer | 91% PY, 74% PP | £17.99 |
| Test Drive: Off Road | 35% PY, 48% PP | £18.99 |
| Test Drive 4 | 86% PY, 70% PP | £28.99 |
| **TOCA Touring Cars** | 92% PY, 91% PP | **£32.99** |
| Tokyo Highway Battle | 73% PY, 77% PP | £19.99 |
| **Total Drivin'** | 84% PY, 86% PP | **£22.99** |
| Twisted Metal 2: World Tour | 88% PY, 88% PP | £37.99 |
| VR Powerboat Racing | Due 27th March | £29.99 |
| **V Rally** | 87% PY, 94% PP | **£24.99** |
| **V Rally & Total Drivin' Bundle** | **N/A** | **£42.99** |
| Wipeout | 94% PY, 78% PP | £18.99 |
| **Wipeout 2097** | 93% PY, 94% PP | **£18.99** |

RAPID RACER



RALLY CROSS



GRAN TURISMO



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**TOMB RAIDER 2**
*The fastest selling PSX Game ever in the UK. Bigger levels, harder enemies and a curvier Lara Croft make this a 'must have'.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Clock Tower | 43% PP | £29.99 |
| Deathtrap Dungeon | Due 20th March | £34.99 |
| *FREE TOMB RAIDER 2 T-SHIRT WITH FIRST 500 ORDERS FOR DEATHTRAP DUNGEON.* | | |
| Epidemic | 71% PY, 64% PP | £34.99 |
| Fade To Black | 90% PY, 87% PP | £17.99 |
| MDK | 90% PY, 80% PP | £27.99 |
| Men In Black | Due 24th April | £33.99 |
| Nightmare Creatures | 90% PY, 86% PP | £29.99 |
| Overblood | 86% PY, 76% PP | £20.99 |
| **Perfect Assassin** | **Due April** | **£33.99** |
| **Resident Evil - the Director's Cut** | 83% PY, 91% PP | **£26.99** |
| **Tomb Raider** | 94% PY, 92% PP | **£17.99** |
| **Tomb Raider 2** | 95% PY, 95% PP | **£33.99** |
| Metal Gear Solid | Due May | £35.99 |
| **Rosco McQueen** | 88% PY, 78% PP | **£29.99** |
| Time Commando | 78% PY, 81% PP | £27.99 |


DEATHTRAP DUNGEON


NIGHTMARE CREATURES

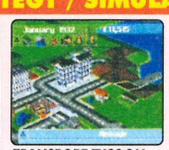

RESIDENT EVIL

## ARCADE SHOOTERS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Blast Chamber | 82% PY, 54% PP | £24.99 |
| Crusader No Remorse | 80% PY, 85% PP | £22.99 |
| Grid Run | 53% PY, 64% PP | £19.99 |
| Loaded | 85% PY, 75% PP | £18.99 |
| Ray Storm | 75% PY, 83% PP | £34.99 |
| Reloaded | 61% PY, 73% PP | £18.99 |
| Hard Boiled | 29% PY, 40% PP | £29.99 |
| Independence Day | 47% PY, 69% PP | £33.99 |
| Mass Destruction | N/A | £29.99 |
| Maximum Force | 50% PP | £27.99 |
| One | 86% PY | £29.99 |
| Overboard | 75% PY | £27.99 |
| PO'ed | 87% PY, 76% PP | £18.99 |
| Riot | 72% PY, 67% PP | £35.99 |
| Robotron X | 85% PY, 66% PP | £24.99 |
| **Syndicate Wars** | 85% PY, 92% PP | **£25.99** |
| Tempest X3 | 86% PY, 80% PP | £18.99 |
| Tiger Shark | 62% PY, 72% PP | £29.99 |
| Viewpoint | 74% PY | £12.99 |
| Xevious 3D | 72% PY, 60% PP | £29.99 |

## STRATEGY / SIMULATION


CONSTRUCTOR


TRANSPORT TYCOON


C&C RED ALERT

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Allied General | 51% PY | £35.99 |
| Carnage Heart | 57% PY, 74% PP | £29.99 |
| Command & Conquer | 79% PY, 91% PP | £18.99 |
| Command & Conquer RED ALERT | 90% PY, 93% PP | £33.99 |
| Constructor | Due April/May | £31.99 |
| Monopoly | 75% PY, 78% PP | £34.99 |
| Return Fire | 84% PY, 91% PP | £17.99 |
| Risk | 81% PP | £32.99 |
| Sim City 2000 | 75% PY, 91% PP | £24.99 |
| Steel Reign | 75% PP | £29.99 |
| **Theme Park** | **86% PY, 85% PP** | **£19.99** |
| **Transport Tycoon** | 78% PY, 86% PP | **£19.99** |
| Transport Tycoon & Sony Mouse | 78% PY, 86%PP | £39.99 |
| **Warcraft 2** | 86% PY, 88% PP | **£30.99** |
| Warhammer: Shadow of Horned Rat | 82% PY, 86% PP) | £34.99 |
| **Warhammer 2: Dark Omen** | **Due 3rd April** | **£32.99** |
| Worms | 92% PY, 82% PP | £17.99 |
| Z | 85% PY, 80% PP | £29.99 |

## PUZZLE

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Bust A Move 2 | 88% PY, 89% PP | £17.99 |
| Bust A Move 3 | 85% PP | £24.99 |
| Caesars World of Gambling | N/A | £29.99 |
| Chessmaster 3D | 68% PY, 87% PP | £19.99 |
| Kurushi | 88% PY, 68% PP | £25.99 |
| Super Pang Collection | Due 27th March | £26.99 |
| Super Puzzle Fighter 2 | 90% PY, 92% PP | £24.99 |
| Tetris Plus | 82% PP | £27.99 |

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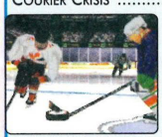
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## SPORT



**ACTUA SOCCER 2**
*The best commentary on any sports game ever, coupled with real player names and likeness. It's got to be the football fan's only choice, Brilliant!*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Xtreme: Extreme Sports 2 | 52% PY 55% PP | £29.99 |
| **Actua Golf** | **88% PY, 88% PP** | **£19.99** |
| **Actua Golf 2** | **80% PY, 83% PP** | **£28.99** |
| Actua Ice Hockey | 91% PY | £30.99 |
| Actua Soccer | 94% PY, 68% PP | £17.99 |
| **Actua Soccer 2** | **92% PY, 93% PP** | **£25.99** |
| Allstar Soccer | 80% PY, 34% PP | £24.99 |
| Breakpoint Tennis | 73% PP | £19.99 |
| Chill | N/A | £23.99 |
| Cool Boarders 2 | 81% PY | £29.99 |
| Courier Crisis | 79% PP | £29.99 |


ACTUA ICE HOCKEY


COOL BOARDERS 2


FIFA '98 TRWC

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Extreme Snowbreak | N/A | £29.99 |
| FIFA Road to the World Cup '98 | 91% PY, 65% PP | £31.99 |
| **Int'l Superstar Soccer Pro** | 84% PY, 92% PP | **£19.99** |
| International Track & Field | 85% PY, 90% PP | £17.99 |
| **Jonah Lomu Rugby** | 86% PY, 84% PP | **£27.99** |
| Nagano Winter Olympics '98 | 35% PP | £33.99 |
| NBA In The Zone 2 | N/A | £27.99 |
| NBA Hangtime | Due March | £29.99 |
| NBA Live '98 | 87% PP | £31.99 |
| NFL Madden '98 | 92% PY, 89% PP | £29.99 |
| NHL Breakaway '98 | 89% PP | £28.99 |
| NHL Hockey '98 | 71% PY, 91% PP | £31.99 |
| NHL Powerplay Hockey | N/A | £22.99 |
| On-Side Soccer | 76% PY, 65% PP | £19.99 |
| PGA Golf '97 | 81% PY | £19.99 |
| PGA Golf '98 | 63% PY, 68% PP | £31.99 |
| Player Manager | 74% PY | £29.99 |
| Powermove Pro Wrestling | 51% PY | £24.99 |
| **Premier Manager '98** | **Reserve it NOW!** | **£32.99** |
| Pro Pinball Timeshock | 89% PP | £28.99 |
| Snow Racer | Due 17th April | £34.99 |
| True Pinball | 85% PY | £17.99 |
| Total NBA '97 | 92% PY, 85% PP | £29.99 |
| Virtual Pool '97 | 68% PY, 85% PP | £24.99 |
| VR Baseball '97 | 80% PY, 72% PP | £24.99 |
| WCW vs The World | 79% PY, 88% PP | £29.99 |
| WWF In Your House | N/A | £22.99 |


PGA GOLF '98


VIRTUAL POOL '97


NAGANO WINTER OLYPICS

## GUN GAMES




**DIE HARD TRILOGY & PREDATOR GUN**
**£27.99**



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|---|---|---|
| Crypt Killer | 38% PY, 27% PP | £35.99 |
| **Die Hard Trilogy** | 92% PY, 92% PP | **£17.99** |
| Die Hard Trilogy & Predator Gun | N/A | £27.99 |
| Judge Dredd & Predator Light Gun | 62% PY, 73% PP | £29.99 |
| Lethal Enforcers 1 & 2 | 30% PP | £27.99 |
| **Time Crisis & Guncon** | 90% PY, 93% PP | **£49.99** |

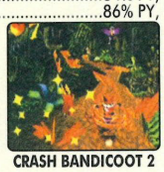
## 3D SHOOTERS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Alien Trilogy** | **91% PY, 85% PP** | **£17.99** |
| Brahma Force | 85% PY | £34.99 |
| Colony Wars | 92% PY, 93% PP | £37.99 |
| Critical Depth | 65% PP | £27.99 |
| **Dark Forces** | 75% PY, 84% PP | **£27.99** |
| Darklight Conflict | 79% PY, 87% PP | £31.99 |
| Descent | 85% PY, 91% PP | £16.99 |
| Descent 2 | 63% PY, 82% PP | £19.99 |
| Doom | 93% PY, 92% PP | £20.99 |
| **Doom & Final Doom Double Pack** | **N/A** | **£25.99** |
| **Duke Nukem 3D** | **90% PY, 91% PP** | **£27.99** |
| Exhumed | 84% PY, 91% PP | £24.99 |
| Final Doom | 82% PY, 89% PP | £19.99 |
| G Police | 84% PY, 93% PP | £33.99 |
| Hexen | 84% PP | £24.99 |
| Life Force Tenka | 86% PY, 82% PP | £35.99 |
| Lone Soldier | 92% PY, 72% PP | £19.99 |
| Mech Warrior 2 | 91% PY, 83% PP | £19.99 |
| Rebel Assault 2 | 60% PY, 46% PP | £33.99 |
| Shadow Master | 79% PY, 88% PP | £34.99 |
| Space Hulk V.O.T.B.A. | 84% PY, 84% PP | £29.99 |

## PLATFORM

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Agent Armstrong | 75% PP | £30.99 |
| Bubsy Bobcat 3D | 82% PY, 30% PP | £24.99 |
| Casper | 65% PY, 62% PP | £25.99 |
| Castlevania Symphony of the Night | 89% PP | £26.99 |
| Crash Bandicoot | 84% PY, 86% PP | £18.99 |
| Crash Bandicoot 2 | 86% PY, 87% PP | £34.99 |

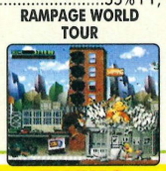

FROGGER


CRASH BANDICOOT 2


HERCULES

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Croc** | 78% PY, 84% PP | **£27.99** |
| Earthworm Jim 2 | 69% PY, 79% PP | £23.99 |
| Firo & Clawd | 64% PY, 82% PP | £21.99 |
| Frogger | 69% PY, 88% PP | £31.99 |
| **Gex 3D** | **OUT NOW!!** | **£33.99** |
| Hercules | 63% PY, 81% PP | £34.99 |
| Iznogoud | N/A | £33.99 |
| Jersey Devil | 90% PP | £34.99 |
| Lost Vikings 2 | 72% PY, 63% PP | £24.99 |
| **Lost World: Jurassic Park 2** | 79% PY, 81% PP | **£25.99** |
| Megaman 8 | Due 27th March | £26.99 |
| Megaman X3 | 82% PY, 81% PP | £24.99 |
| **Oddworld: Abe's Oddysey** | 90% PY, 91% PP | **£29.99** |
| **Pandemonium 2** | 72% PY, 91% PP | **£29.99** |
| Rayman | 87% PY | £17.99 |
| Rampage World Tour | 69% PY, 77% PP | £26.99 |
| Rascal | Due 27th March | £34.99 |
| Skull Monkeys | 83% PY | £32.99 |
| Spider | 75% PY, 70% PP | £19.99 |
| Swagman | 82% PY, 85% PP | £34.99 |
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ODDWORLD


RAMPAGE WORLD TOUR


CROC

## FLYING


ACE COMBAT 2


NUCLEAR STRIKE


TOP GUN

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Ace Combat 2 | 84% PY, 85% PP | £29.99 |
| Air Combat | 81% PY, 65% PP | £17.99 |
| Air Race | 68% PY, 76%PP | £29.99 |
| Apache Longbow | Due April | £35.99 |
| **Nuclear Strike** | 88% PY, 91% PP | **£26.99** |
| **Soviet Strike** | 83% PY, 92% PP | **£18.99** |
| Thunderhawk 2 | 85% PY, 82% PP | £18.99 |
| Top Gun | 76% PY, 66% PP | £19.99 |
| Wing Over | 50% PY, 40% PP | £35.99 |

## HINT BOOKS

| | |
|---|---|
| A-Z of PSX Secrets & Solutions | £10.99 |
| Big Playstation Book | £11.99 |
| Bushido Blade Official Guide | £11.99 |
| Crash Bandicoot 2 Strategy Guide | £11.99 |
| **Final Fantasy 7 Official Guide** | **£14.99** |
| Nuclear Strike Official Guide | £10.99 |
| Oddworld Official Strategy Guide | £10.99 |
| Resident Evil 2 Unauthorised Guide | £11.99 |
| Secrets Strat's & Sol's Vol 2 | £15.99 |
| Tomb Raider Secrets | £9.99 |
| Tomb Raider 2 Official Guide Book | £10.99 |

## RETRO / COMPILATION / MISCELLANEOUS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Atari Greatest Hits | 81% PY, 75% PP | £26.99 |
| Atari Greatest Hits 2 (Midway) | Due mid March | £28.99 |
| Namco Museum Volume 1 -includes Pacman, Pole Position, Galaga, Rally X, New Rally X, Toypop and Bosconian | 70% PY, 84% PP) | £36.99 |
| Namco Museum Volume 2 -includes Super Pacman and Xevious | 70% PY, 63% PP | £34.99 |
| Namco Museum Volume 3 -includes MS Pacman, Galaxian & Pole Position 2 | 73% PY, 71% PP | £29.99 |
| Namco Museum Volume 4 | 79% PY, 67% PP | £29.99 |
| Namco Museum Vol 5 | 75% PP | £29.99 |
| Parappa the Rapper | 82% PY, 89% PP | £24.99 |
| Spice World (Spice Girls) | N/A | £19.99 |

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Gameplay has recently started stocking pre-owned games in addition to our new games and we intend to ensure that these are of the highest quality that you will find anywhere.

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2. You must ring us before sending your game in as prices for 2nd hand games can change quite regularly. You will be given an authorisation number which will be valid for one week.
3. You will receive a credit for the agreed amount which you may use against other games or accessories, either new or used.

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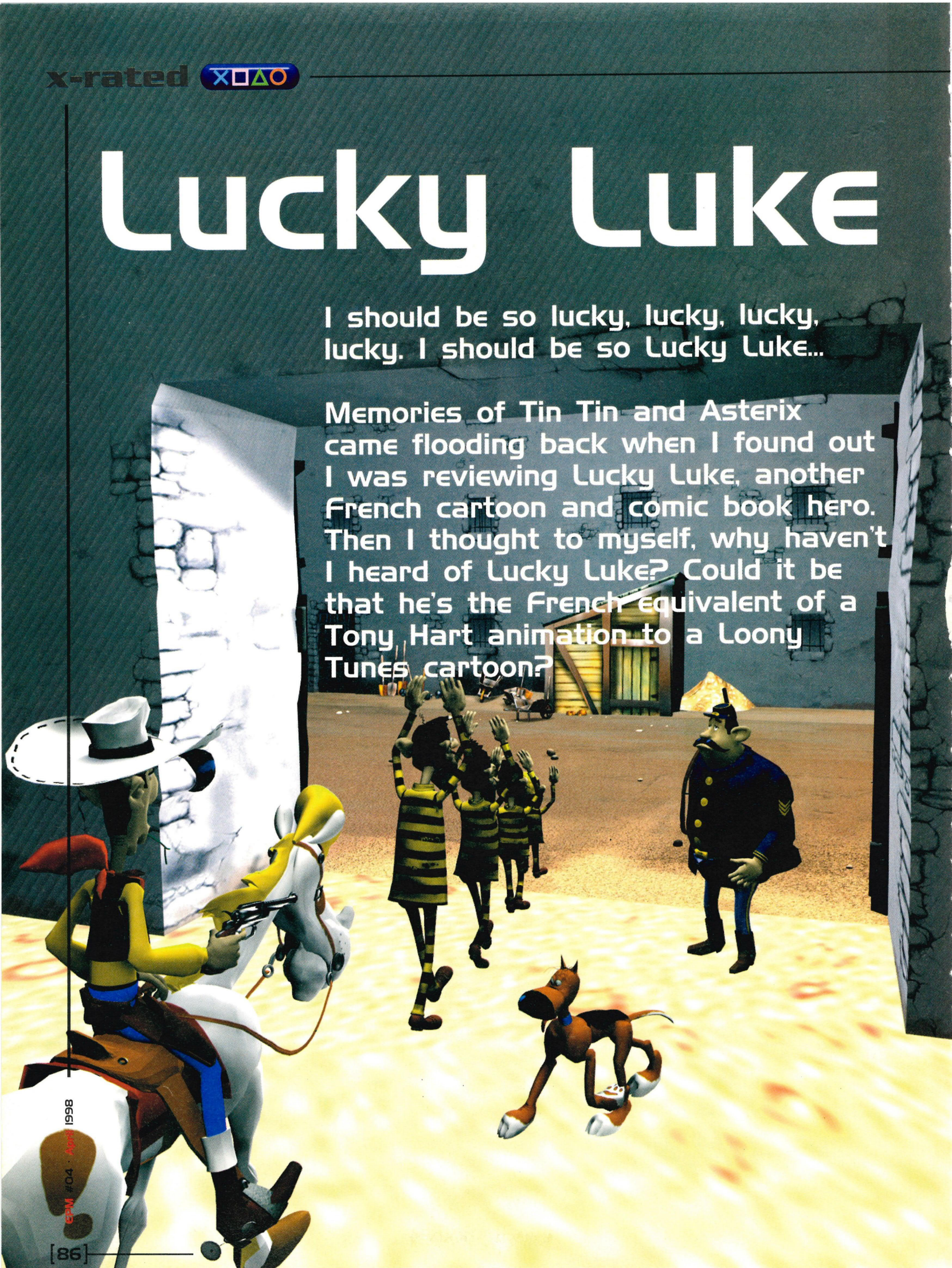
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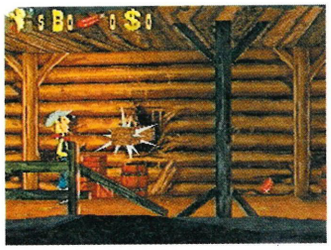
# Lucky Luke

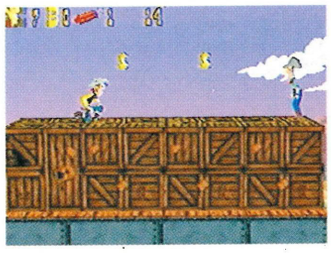
I should be so lucky, lucky, lucky, lucky. I should be so Lucky Luke...

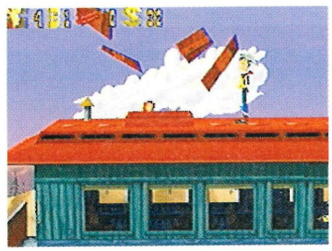
Memories of Tin Tin and Asterix came flooding back when I found out I was reviewing Lucky Luke, another French cartoon and comic book hero. Then I thought to myself, why haven't I heard of Lucky Luke? Could it be that he's the French equivalent of a Tony Hart animation to a Loony Tunes cartoon?

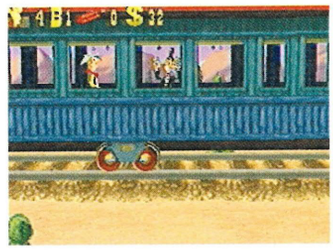


**Right, I thought to myself. This is going to be pants. And at first, that's exactly what it was. Pants. You can't just leave it at that when reviewing a game, though. No, you've got to persevere and to tell the truth I'm pretty chuffed I did. Lucky Luke is basically a kid's game, but there's a hell of a lot in there for adults too.**





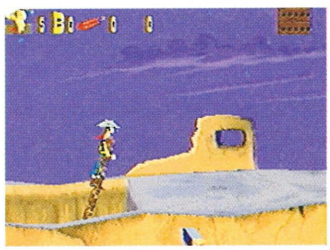


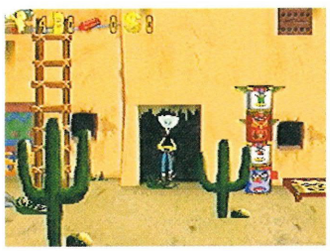


Before you start you're treated to an introduction showing a gang of varmints breaking out of jail. As you can probably guess, it's your job as Lucky Luke to round these law-breakers up and bring them back to justice.

The game is basically a platformer, but developers Infogrames have made an effort to add new ideas to this worn-out genre. This means plenty of sub-levels, bonus games and weird bosses for you to encounter as you play through the basic platform levels, which are actually pretty good in themselves. There are 15 levels altogether which include, among others, a saloon, a waterfall and an old mine. Each level has a totally unique look, although the overall style of the game is cartooney. This is no bad thing, especially when it's been done this well. Although the game is basically 2D (with some exceptions), all of the levels have a real feeling of depth to them. The backgrounds are of a very high standard and the scrolling is nice and smooth, but some of the characters could have been drawn with a bit more attention to detail. The main character, Lucky Luke, is a big, lanky cowboy and a perfect character for a kids game. It's just that he doesn't really match up to the quality of other platform stars such as Crash or Mario. The idea's there, but it hasn't been implemented as well as it could have been.







## CHILD'S PLAY

However, this doesn't effect the gameplay, which is perfectly suited to the younger end of the market but also enjoyable to most others. The basic platform fare involves all the usual stuff; jumping perilous gaps, negotiating moving platforms, shooting bad guys, getting lost and finding springy platforms of one form or another. Although much of it's basic stuff, it's still a bloody hard game and I found myself getting really wound up by some of the levels I came across. The nature of Lucky Luke means it won't take you too long to get past that bit that's holding you back, though. If this wasn't the case it would really nark the kids up, not to mention the rest of us.

It's not the side-on platform fare that makes Lucky Luke so intriguing, though. Some of the extra levels add a certain 'je ne sais quoi' to the proceedings that seems to drive you to complete one level so that you can find out what the next one holds in store. This is obviously the aim of most games, but it really does work with Lucky Luke.

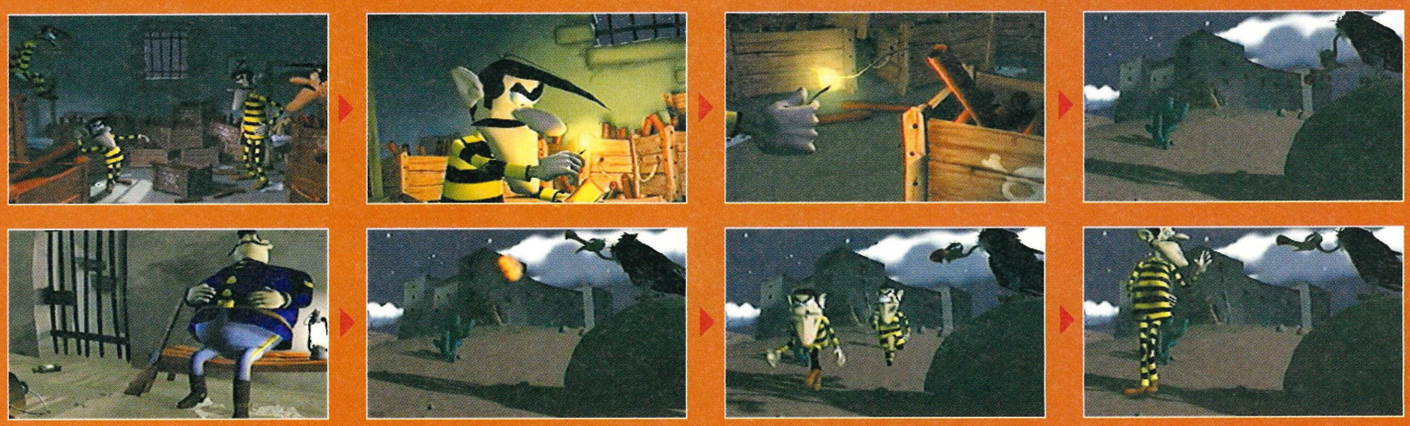
The second level puts you on your trusty steed, Jolly Jumper. Some varmits have hijacked the train and it's up to you to save the passengers and send the hijackers to the gallows. It starts off with an isometric viewpoint where you have to guide your horse around cacti and fences to avoid obtaining any damage. After a while the camera smoothly pans around to a side-on view alongside the train, which is where the real action starts. As well as dodging the obstacles coming onto the screen at a great rate of knots, you also have to take out the villains on the train and avoid their bullets and bombs. Once you reach the end this level, you find yourself on the moving train where you have to rescue the good folk and fill the bad folk full of lead.

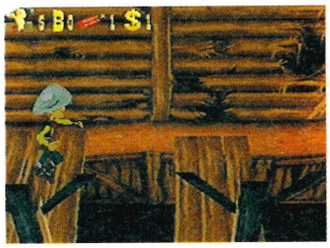
**"...Some of the extra levels add a certain 'je ne sais quoi' to the proceedings..."**

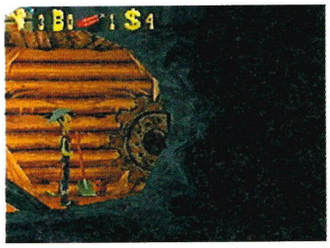
The level that's furthest away from the platform style of gameplay is the Lumbermen's Sport Event, where you have to compete in a

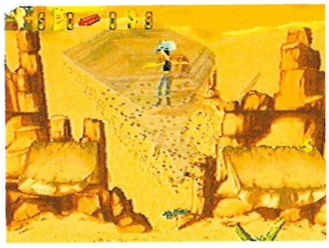
## JAILBREAK

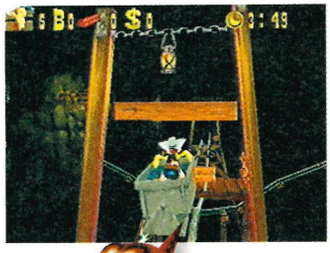
Here's a scene from the intro showing how this gang of varmints break out of jail. Once they're out, the game concentrates on you rounding them up and putting them right back where they belong.











number of different lumberjack challenges such as wood cutting. This part of the game is based on stamina and agility on the pad, as it takes the form of an athletics 'button bashing' session. Other levels include a roller-coaster ride through an old deserted mine in a very fast mine cart and a tennis match involving a frying pan and some logs.

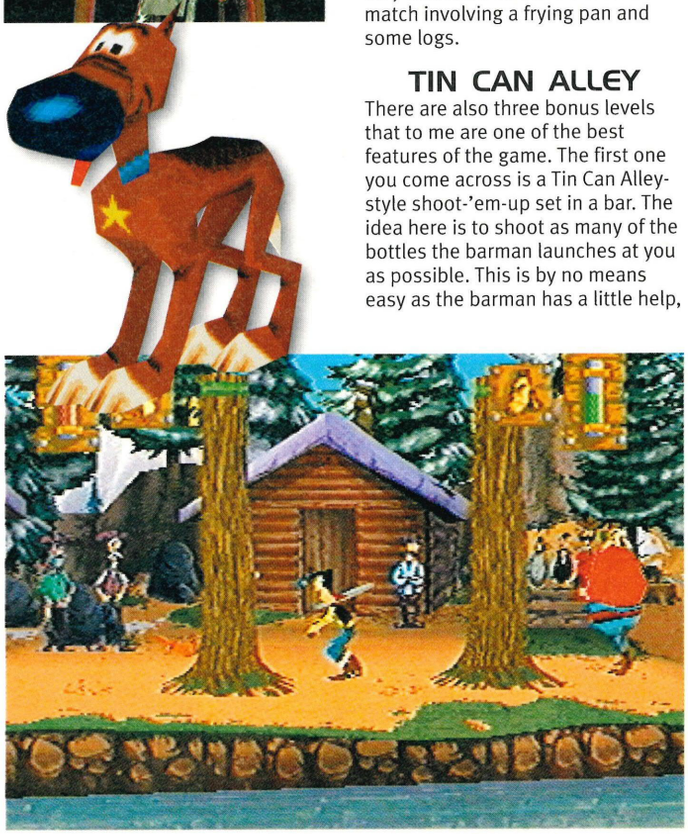
## TIN CAN ALLEY

There are also three bonus levels that to me are one of the best features of the game. The first one you come across is a Tin Can Alley-style shoot-'em-up set in a bar. The idea here is to shoot as many of the bottles the barman launches at you as possible. This is by no means easy as the barman has a little help, meaning there are tons of bottles all winging their way towards you at once. The other bonus levels are a highly amusing, but bloody knackering arm wrestle against your horse and a card game where you have to bet money to win.

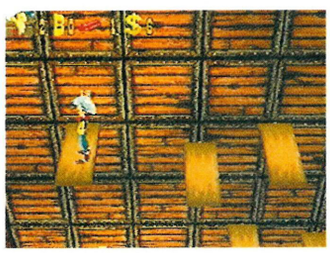
One thing that I would like to have seen in Lucky Luke is some extra weapons. You only ever have your trusty six iron and some dynamite that can be picked up every now and again. The problem is you don't need any more powerful weapons because most of the baddies need only a few shots to take out. There are a few pick-ups for you to collect, though, including health replenish icons and dollars to spend at the end of a level on passwords and extra lives.

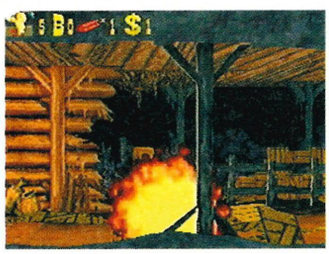
Infogrames could have taken a very easy option with Lucky Luke and made the game as straightforward as they liked - especially as the game is targeted at kids. Thankfully this isn't the case as there are plenty of puzzles for you to work out. Most of the time these puzzles only tax you for a very short while, but they do add to the game. The first level gives you a feel for the way the puzzles work. Right at the start you find your way blocked by some crates. After a couple of minutes of wandering around thinking that there's something wrong with the game, you notice a sign on the barn. Shooting this causes the bullet to ricochet, causing the crates to explode and allowing you to get through. As you continue you find your way blocked again, but after the start you're more clued up. This time you have to shoot a string holding a crate up on a pulley, but you also have to avoid some bombs thrown by a varmint cowboy at the

"...Infogrames could have taken a very easy option with Lucky Luke and made the game as straightforward as they liked... ...Thankfully this isn't the case"



▲ I'm a lumberjack and I'm OK... la de da de day...







## BAR FIGHTER

One of the non-platform-style sections of the game takes place in the saloon. Here you come up against a number of hoodlums in a bare-fist fight. The action isn't up to Tekken, but it's still a great laugh; some of the knockout animations are excellent.

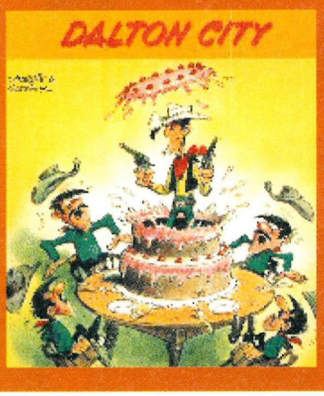






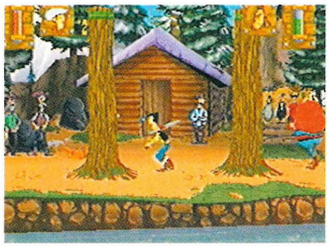
## FRENCH INSTITUTIONS

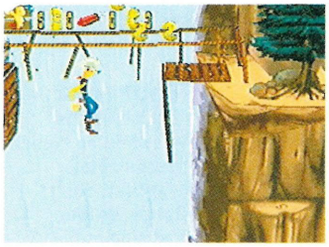
Lucky Luke has been around for over fifty years in France, and it's a bit of an institution now - just like Asterix, Tin Tin, Pacific nuclear testing and sinking Greenpeace boats, hogging World Cup tickets, etc. Anyway, here's some piccies from the comic book...













same time. The game gets progressively tougher (obviously), but once you have a feel for the way it works you find yourself really getting into it.

Lucky Luke is full of little comedy touches that keep you amused throughout the game. These are usually an odd animation, but one of the best bits is the checkpoint. These take the form of a little dog that barks 'checkpoint' every time you pass one - something I'm sure the kids will love.

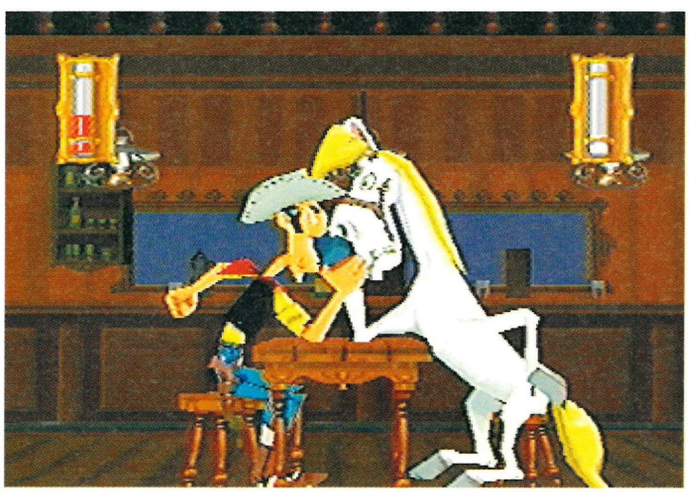
The little cowboy ditties playing in the background are all perfectly suited to the game, and after a while you find yourself whistling along with them. Honest. The rest of the sound effects are all pretty normal, with gunshots, explosions and the odd voice sample making up the aural repertoire.

Lucky Luke is massive in Europe, especially France where the game and the comic book originates. The game has been directly marketed at youngsters, which is exactly where it will be enjoyed the most. I mean, fans of Resident Evil or Tomb Raider aren't going to go out and buy a game based on a kids' comic book. However it's still a good laugh for those of a more mature disposition.

The cartoon graphics and cowboy comedy is very entertaining, but simply not as fulfilling as a lot of other games. If you're still knee-high to a grass hopper, have kids yourself or younger brothers and sisters then Lucky Luke is the game for you. If not, I'd give it a miss, or maybe just hire it for a laugh.

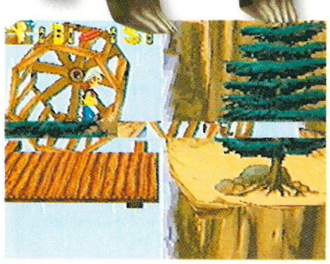
EPM

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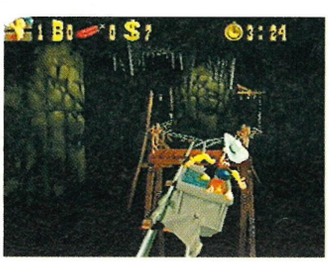


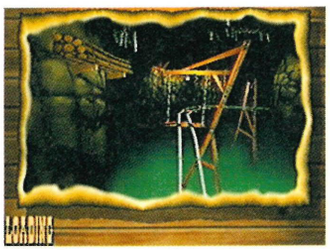
The winner gets a bale of hay.










### Second Opinion

It's been a while since I've seen a game with such a cartoony feel as this. The sub-game seems a near-forgotten element too. The animation and graphics make fair use of the PSX, but I wish he did more than flash when hit.

Ian

### The Score

| | |
|---|---|
| Publisher | OCEAN |
| Developer | INFOGRAMES |
| Released | APRIL |
| Version | UK |
| Price | £39.99 |
| Genre | PLATFORM/ACTION |
| Players | 1 |
| Passwords | ✔ |

GAMEPLAY
8

ORIGINALITY
8

LIFESPAN
7

SOUND
7

GRAPHICS
8

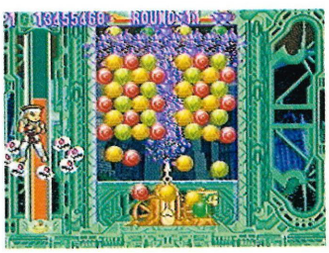
OVERALL
84%

in summary

Buy it for the kids and play it yourself.

# Bust-a-Move 3 DX

## The bubble buster's back!







**There are hardly any puzzle games that utilise the full power of the PlayStation, so to make up for the lack of eye-candy, most puzzle games rely on two things, gameplay and addictiveness, qualities of which Bust-a-Move 3 DX has plenty.**

> "...Bust-A-Move 3 DX really should be played by everyone..."

Comparisons to Tetris are bound to be made, but Bust-a-Move 3 DX works in a totally different way, although it's just as habit-forming and fun to play. Each round starts with a set of bubbles at the top of your screen, your job being to clear them away. To do this you have to link similarly-coloured bubbles together. This is done by firing coloured bubbles from your bubble gun at the bottom of the screen. Once you've joined three bubbles, they disintegrate, taking any stray hangers-on in the process. Of course you can set up more complex sequences where one well-placed bubble causes a chain reaction, causing a mass of bubbles to disintegrate at one time.

There are four modes of play to choose from, with the most fun being the two-player Arcade Mode. Here you take on a friend in a race to clear your set of bubbles and hamper your opponent at the same time. Every time you're successful in taking out some bubbles, more appear on your opponent's side of the screen. Bigger runs send more bubbles and different objects over, so it pays to set yourself up rather than simply go for three bubbles at a time. Playing a friend really gets the spirits going as Bust-a-Move is so competitive. If you haven't got a friend, though, you can play the CPU as if it were a human player which is fun but you can't really gloat when you kick its ass.

The Win Contest is basically the same as the Arcade Mode, although the idea is simply to try and get the longest winning streak which is good for playing a group of mates.

The Challenge Mode is solely a one-player affair where you have to complete a set of challenges the game throws at you. The challenges become increasingly difficult as you progress. It won't take long to complete the challenges in this part of the game, but you find yourself coming back time and time again to try and earn yourself a better grade.

The final mode of play is the Collection Mode. All of the levels here have been designed using the spanky level editor that adorns Bust-A-Move 3 DX (see boxout). Some of them are very basic but you find most of them are extremely devious. Luckily, though, you can choose any level in this section so if you get stumped you can always try the next one.

### Spice Up Your Life...

Taito have tried to spice up the basic puzzle game by adding some flashy graphical touches that, although amusing at first, don't really last the distance. Before each game on the arcade mode you're treated to a little graphical sequence depicting an arcade machine that's linked to the character you're playing. This could be Bubble Bobble, a Street Fighter type of machine or even a mah-jong game. There are ten characters to choose from and play against, and each one has their own animations. For instance, the Street Fighter character performs different fighting moves whenever you score a good run. This does add to the game but to be honest, you don't really notice it because your eyes are glued to what's going on with your bubbles.

The extra touches surrounding the game pale into insignificance after a while because Bust-A-Move 3 is simply a fun and very addictive puzzle game. The gameplay is simple enough for anyone to pick up, but it takes you a long time to master it. The satisfaction of winning a two-player match is second to none but the one player modes still hold their own. Puzzle game fans will lap this up, but Bust-A-Move 3 DX really is a universal game and should be played by everyone.

EPM

*SAUL*

### Second Opinion

Puzzle games are generally great fun, but can lack longevity if the game structure isn't cleverly designed. No such problems here - Bust-a-Move 3 DX is a curiously-named killer.

Ian

### The Score

| | |
|---|---|
| Publisher | ACCLAIM |
| Developer | TAITO |
| Released | OUT NOW |
| Version | UK |
| Price | £39.99 |
| Genre | PUZZLE |
| Players | 1-2 |
| Memory Card | ✓ |

| | |
|---|---|
| GAMEPLAY | 9 |
| ORIGINALITY | 7 |
| LIFESPAN | 9 |
| SOUND | 7 |
| GRAPHICS | 7 |
| OVERALL | 86% |

**in summary**

As addictive as crack, but a damned site easier to get hold of!

### DEVIOUS DESIGNS



A welcome addition to Bust-A-Move 3 DX is the excellent level editor. Here you get to set yourself and your mates the hardest challenges you can think of. The editor is simple enough to use; select a bubble colour and place the bubbles on the screen. Once you've built yourself a devious level you can save it to memory card for later use and annoy the hell out of your mates with it.

# Newman Haas Racing



## Turn left, turn left, turn left...

**Coming from the same team that brought you the ubiquitous F1 '97, Newman Haas Racing is a simulation of F1's transatlantic equivalent, the Indy-CART championship. It formed the training arena for current F1 World Champ Jacques Villeneuve and a veritable stomping ground for hi-speed bore Nigel Mansell a few years back, which does give the impression it's on an inferior footing to its more glamorous cousin, especially as many of the top drivers are failed F1 émigrés.**

Although on the surface the two disciplines look similar, they are, in fact, of a very different flavour of racing. The Yankee cars are heavier, so braking distances are lengthened, but they're unrestricted by the speed-sapping regulations that have reined in Formula 1 recently, so they still have turbo chargers and slick tyres, meaning top and cornering speeds can be as high as 240mph on the enormous banked oval circuits. They are also less technological all round, making competitive racing comparatively cheap, and overtaking more frequent (allegedly). However, do these subtle differences translate to the PlayStation, already bloated with racing games, with enough verve?

The first thing you notice about Newman Haas is that it does look like the original, outdated Formula 1, and this is (surprisingly) because it uses the graphics engine from this older program and not the updated and superior '97 version. However, as far as I can tell it actually runs even more slowly than F1 did, the track and scenery creaking grittily in from the horizon in a few steps, making gauging distances and 'sighting' corners (especially under braking) extremely difficult. Despite some reviews in rival mags to the contrary, the game slows down horribly and in an entirely unpredictable manner independent of the car's speed, opposition on screen, etc.

The car's driving model also leaves a lot to be desired, being snap oversteer-happy at high speeds, the back of the vehicle whipping out without warning into irrecoverable spins. It's virtually impossible to skid and lose control at lower velocities, despite the clouds of tyre smoke you generate. To make matters worse, the analog control won't let you use X to accelerate, only Stick Two, which is a feat of co-ordination too great for me to master.

Unforgivably as well, there's a 'crash view' camera that zooms out to give a wide look at your car when you come together with a competitor. A good idea yes, but it can't be turned off and it activates at the merest brush with another racer, all of which makes it very hard to wrest control of your vehicle back as the camera zooms in and out willy nilly.

### Rancid Racing

To be fair there's quite a lot of variety in the racing available, as the tracks aren't just circular speedways. Instead they include numerous street-type circuits and more conventional Formula 1-style examples, so the challenge to driving technique is quite wide ranging. The artificial intelligence on the other cars is also good, moving away from the train-track single-mindedness of the F1 '97 opposition, but unfortunately they're still not as unpredictable and human-like as TOCA.

Audio is a touch uninspiring though. The in-race commentary is disconcerting to ears weaned on Murray's excitable exclamations, with two uninterested-sounding American blokes making semi-random observations causing me to reach for the CD volume slider sharpish, while the heavy metal music accompaniment is very American, but also very bad.

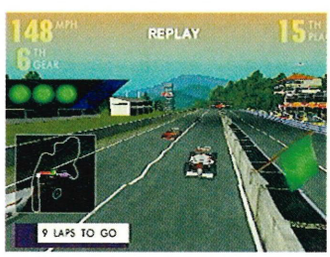
On a positive note, the option menus have been refined from their clunking and slow equivalents in F1 '97, cycling through screens smoothly and easily. However, some things seem to have regressed a touch, in particular on the car set-up page; wing settings only change in increments of 20%, which is just not fine enough, especially on the cripplingly-fast ovals where finesse and careful tuning of the downforce are vital to squeeze the last drops of speed out of a car, but the dodgy handling makes this point moot anyway.

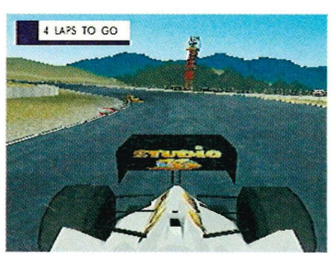
To sum up, Newman Haas Racing has bafflingly gone back to 1995-era programming as its bedrock, a quaint and silly move with the hi-tech quantum leap of Gran Turismo on its way.

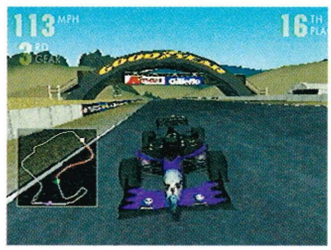
EPM

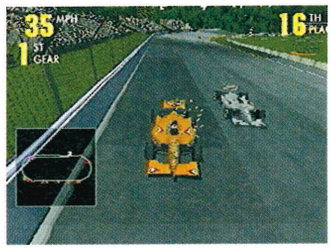
*CHRISTIAN*






### Second Opinion

I looked forward to Newman Haas Racing, but it fails to take the chequered flag by at least half a lap. Steering is awkward and execution is poor.

Ian

### The Score

| | |
|---|---|
| Publisher | PSYGNOSIS |
| Developer | BIZARRE CREATIONS |
| Released | OUT NOW |
| Version | UK |
| Price | £39.99 |
| Genre | RACING |
| Players | 1-2 |
| Memory Card | ✔ |
| Analog | ✔ |

GAMEPLAY
6

ORIGINALITY
5

LIFESPAN
6

SOUND
5

GRAPHICS
4

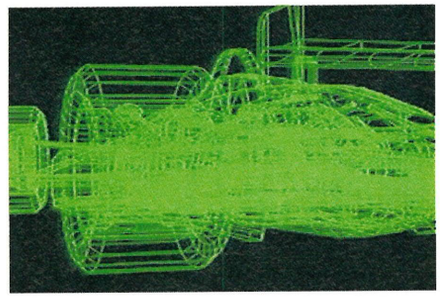
OVERALL
60%

in summary

Too low-tech and lazy to score well.

# Indy 500

## Now the kids don't need joyriding!













**Tomy, mass producers of plastic child-amusers, are the developers of this title, which straight away should give you some idea of their target group for Indy 500. Games aimed squarely at under 16s are definitely at a premium on the PlayStation, as their usually-high price range obviously makes kiddies less likely to have the serious dough demanded for a new game. Nevertheless, someone has decided it's a ripe market to harvest, and the powers-that-be are never misinformed, are they?**

After the 'nice, but no cigar' intro FMV, there's a fairly comprehensive set of vehicle set-up options to wade through, going into a level of detail that's somewhat lacking in a few of the big boys' racers; wing attack, tyre compound, and gearing/acceleration can all be adjusted to a fairly fine degree, although the effect on the car's handling is rudimentary to say the least. Different cars can be selected, but I was disappointed that the only thing which seemed to changed was the car's colour scheme.

Three tracks are available at default, the famous 'Brickyard' Indy circuit, a Ridge Racer-style fantasy track and an actually-quite-good undulating mountainous effort that's extremely well designed and satisfying to race (so much so that I wouldn't mind having a bash at it with a Gran Turismo car!).

### Huge Oval

Unlike Klonoa (previewed this issue), Indy 500 is not obviously a youngster's game at first sight, as visually it's quite refined. The polygons shifting smoothly and quickly, putting a lot of 'proper', more adult-orientated games' graphical engines to shame. The detail on the cars and overall impression of high speed is excellent, especially on the huge oval of the Indianapolis circuit where 240mph is achievable (and actually looks like it, too). However, trying to turn a corner at this speed exposes some of the flaws that ultimately cripple the game: The steering weighting goes from gentle nudging taps to sudden sharp veering without warning, making 'on-the-edge' manoeuvres a hit-and-miss affair. In addition, when a car starts to spin it's virtually irrecoverable, even if you catch it early, while it's quite possible to power down a straight with one wheel on the grass and one on the tarmac without any trouble. Of course, the game has to be balanced away from being sternly accurate to a more arcadey slant (and indeed it's alarmingly similar in feel to Pole Position), but there are too many inconsistencies, making it overall either too generous or overly harsh. Whether kids would have the patience to get to grips with the quirks of the handling is touch and go at best, but then again they won't have really driven a car? (unless, of course, they're budding Junior Ramraiders), so how will they know the difference?

> **"...an actually-quite-good undulating mountainous effort that's extremely well designed and satisfying to race..."**

The sound is another rather schizophrenic aspect of the game, as the engine rev note is one of the meatiest and most satisfying I've heard in a car game, but the in-game speech (which, for some reason, I couldn't turn off) is crushingly annoying, in particular when you brush a wall. Every time this happens a voice sounding strangely like Gandhi implores, "Are you going to break the machine?", and in combination with the nasty LA poodle metal background tunes, the irritation counter hits an all-time high.

Unfortunately, contradictory production values and pricing policies have, in all likelihood, scuppered this game's chances of being successful. This is a real pity as it has plenty of redeeming features, but these are stupidly cancelled out by unnecessary gameplay flaws. A cut-price existence surely beckons... EPM

*CHRISTIAN*






### Second Opinion

**One for the kids, and JVC aren't denying it. If you find the likes of F1 '97 too difficult, and TOCA too fustrating, then this might be what you're looking for.**

**Darren**

### The Score

| | |
|---|---|
| Publisher | JVC |
| Developer | TOMY |
| Released | OUT NOW |
| Version | UK |
| Price | £44.99 |
| Genre | RACER |
| Players | 1-2 |
| Memory Card | ✔ |

GAMEPLAY **4**

ORIGINALITY **4**

LIFESPAN **4**

SOUND **5**

GRAPHICS **8**

OVERALL **53%**

**in summary**

Not bad for a kid's game but a bit pricey nonetheless.

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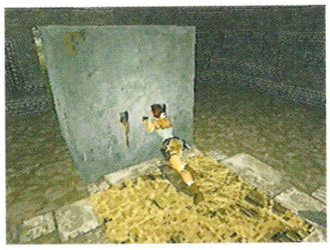
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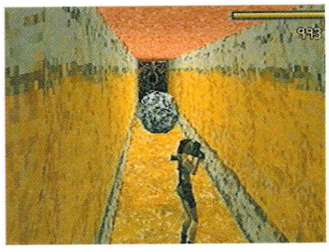
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# Tomb Raider

## Who? Lara Croft? Never heard of her...









**Polygon tits have become just as commonplace as big f**k-off guns on the PlayStation these days, and it's all down to one single game - Tomb Raider, starring Lara Croft. Tomb Raider kicked of a revolution on the PlayStation and in video games in general on its release in 1996. It became the surprise, overwhelming hit of the year, and is still heralded as one of the best games ever. All this praise for a game that stars a bird as the central character; would you Adam and Eve it?**

Of course, it wasn't just the fact that Lara Croft had the body of a super-model and the attitude of Rambo that made Tomb Raider such a success. No, the phenomenally in-depth gameplay also helped a little. It was the mass media that latched onto Lara as an icon, and although this made her and Tomb Raider one of the pivotal icons of the late nineties, the likes of The Sun, Loaded and Window Box Gardeners' Monthly all failed to mention one thing - how bloody good Tomb Raider's gameplay was. Being concerned with bit-mapped mamaries is one thing, but Tomb Raider has much, much more than tits and ass.

For a start, there's the amazingly-solid 3D graphics that, on its release, where the best that anybody had seen on a home console. Each level has been designed with maximum aesthetic value in mind, and it really does show. Most of the game takes place underground in caves and ancient ruins, but each level looks significantly different from the last. Okay, so most of the levels have a certain rocky area or grassy corner, but each level has its own unique features. This could be a complex temple, an underground waterfall complex or even a dinosaur-infested underground jungle. Tomb Raider 2 managed to get Lara Croft outside into the open, but Tomb Raider is played totally inside which gives a unique feeling of claustrophobia, adding incredibly to the atmosphere. Also adding to the atmosphere is the fact that all the environments look very realistic, allowing you to totally immerse yourself into the adventure.

> **"...Being concerned with bit-mapped mamaries is one thing, but Tomb Raider has much, much more than tits and ass..."**

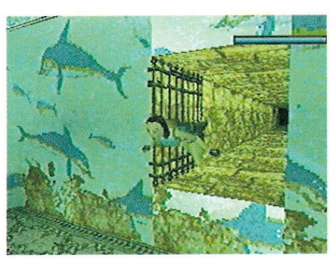
### Fiddling with Lara

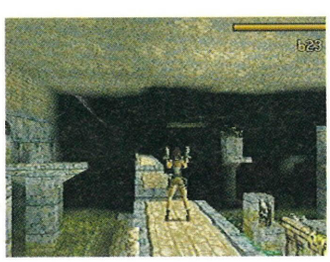
Controlling Lara is a little daunting at first, but after a while you find although fiddly, the control is also very intuitive. By the time you've completed the first level you have full control of Lara's agile body. This won't make the game any easier, though, because Tomb Raider is one of the toughest games I've ever come across. Don't expect to complete it within a few weeks. It takes months to complete; in fact, I know people who've given up on it because it's so damn tough. This is down to the sheer size and complexity of the levels and the ingenuity of some of the puzzles you encounter on the way. Oh, and the fact that you're up against a veritable zoo-full of creatures from rats and bats to crocodiles and lions (and T-Rexes!). Being so challenging doesn't take away from any of the enjoyment to be had while playing Tomb Raider, it just means you have to try harder and concentrate more to get anywhere.

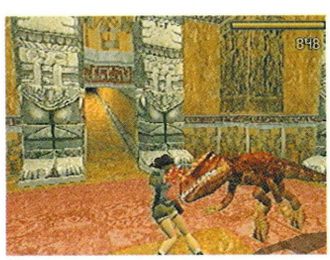
Tomb Raider has since been surpassed by its sequel, the excellent, and imaginatively-titled Tomb Raider 2. By no means does this mean you should miss out on the original game, though. Tomb Raider is an essential purchase for any new PlayStation owner, or anyone who missed it the first time around. Lara Croft is an institution these days, and for twenty quid, anybody can afford to be part of it.

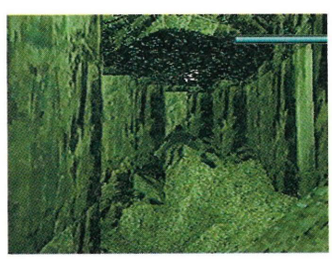
EPM

SAUL









## The Score

| | |
|---|---|
| Publisher | EIDOS |
| Developer | CORE |
| Released | OUT NOW |
| Version | UK |
| Price | £19.99 |
| Genre | 3D ACTION/ ADVENTURE |
| Players | 1 |
| Memory Card | ✔ |

GAMEPLAY
**10**

ORIGINALITY
**10**

LIFESPAN
**9**

SOUND
**9**

GRAPHICS
**9**

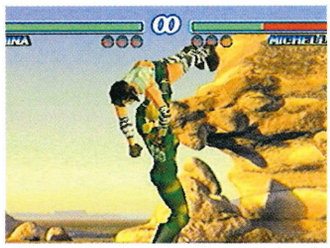
OVERALL
**96%**

in summary

The best just got cheaper!

# Tekken 2

## Fight the good fight...









**For many this game is a seminal PSX benchmark, and arguably the best beat-'em-up EVER, bar none. Its appearance as a Platinum title offers what is definitely one of the best deals in entertainment software.**

Largely responsible for the frantic efforts by seemingly every games publisher under the sun to hack out their own fighting game and grab some of the fisticuffs pie, Tekken 2 took three-dimensional scraps into a new hyper-real realm of bone-crunching intensity. The sheer amount of different and complex moves available was unbelievable at the time of release, requiring a Grasshopper-like devotion to study and memorisation if even a fraction of the attacks could be employed effectively, while the super-smooth polygon driven graphics made the characters' movements almost too realistic; their bodies react with painfully-accurate physics to the blows raining in upon them.

For those unfamiliar with the game, the plot revolves around a tournament for the best fighters around, who accordingly arrive from all corners of the globe to slug it out in a myriad of differing styles. Combatants include the ubiquitous Bruce Lee clone Marshal Law, spray-haired wooden sandal fan Heihachi, camouflage-catsuited chick Nina Williams and jaguar-faced wrestler King. The more exotic characters available include the mechanical ninja Yoshimitsu, robot powerhouse Jack 2, a Devil, an Angel, and ultimately a polar bear and boxing kangaroo!

Moves are split into left/right punches and kicks, with a joypad button assigned to each. The shoulder buttons can be user defined to perform grabs or combinations. Attacks can be strung together to create devastating multi-hit combos of up to ten strikes, but these are notoriously hard to pull off, luckily.

> **"...The sheer amount of different and complex moves available was unbelievable at the time of release..."**

Fighting styles obviously need to be tailored depending on your own preferences, be it a concentration on swift attrition attacks, decisive but risky grapples or all-out power crunches that usually take time to 'wind up', leaving the attacker vulnerable if unsuccessful. Of course, a favourite character usually has to be selected and concentrated on for best results, as confusion between who has what move is all too easy to encounter if you skip about.

To help you learn and remember, though, there's a command list than can be accessed from the pause menu showing each move pictorially, and a practice mode where your button presses are flashed up on screen, letting you see just where you're going right or wrong, plus a passive opponent who can be used as a practice dummy to pummel without retaliation.

### Rabid Aficionados

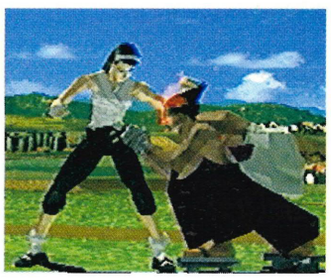
There are some gripes that are often overlooked by rabid aficionados of the game, though. Unlike its stablemate Soul Blade, you can't move in and out of the screen by sidestepping. This means the fighting is still essentially a two-dimensional affair, and the camera angle sometimes jumps position, which can be disconcerting. Also the ability of the fighters to 'juggle' one another by repeatedly hitting them up in the air is unrealistic at best, and horribly cheesy and frustrating at worst, removing the edge of (virtually) real-world believability the game otherwise has (despite the Hong Kong cinema outrageousness of some of the moves). The sound effects are a little stylised as well, being more akin aurally to mines exploding than bone thwacking into flesh, and the music would be more at home on daytime TV.

Perhaps this is picking holes a little too deeply. All in all, Tekken 2 is a superb, landmark game that still shows a clean pair of heels to 97% of current full-price beat-'em-ups, and its new steal price demands to be paid forthwith.

EPM

*CHRISTIAN*







## The Score

| | |
|---|---|
| Publisher | SCEE |
| Developer | NAMCO |
| Released | OUT NOW |
| Version | UK |
| Price | £19.99 |
| Genre | 3D BEAT 'EM UP |
| Players | 1-2 |
| Memory Card | ✓ |

GAMEPLAY
**9**

ORIGINALITY
**7**

LIFESPAN
**8**

SOUND
**6**

GRAPHICS
**9**

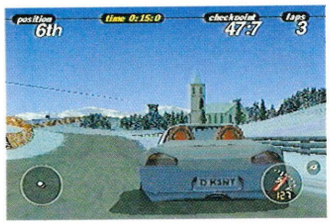
OVERALL
**94%**

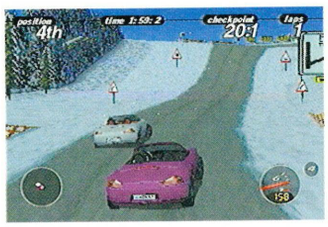
### in summary

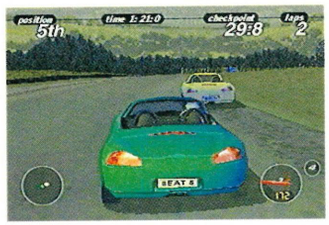
Until Tekken 3 arrives, this is the best fist forward.

# Porsche Challenge

## One car, four tracks; shouldn't this have been budget in the first place?






**I've been thoroughly impressed by the latest string of Platinum releases, with Tomb Raider, Tekken 2, Die Hard Trilogy and Wipeout 2097 all coming out on budget since Christmas. Of course this impressive run had to come to an end some time, and I'm afraid Porsche Challenge has done it.**

It's not that Porsche Challenge is a bad game; in fact, it's far from it. The problem is there just isn't enough of it to keep you interested for long. There are four track scenarios in the game, and they aren't exactly inspiring or original.

> "...Graphically, Porsche Challenge is extremely good looking, but then it should be because there's hardly anything here anyway..."

Stuttgart is simply set in the countryside, with rolling hills and the odd tree and building every now and again. The USA is probably the best track with its basic figure-of-eight pattern taking you through a highway and a city. The Japanese race takes place at night, and is probably the hardest of all four tracks but the scenery is a little scarce. The final track, Alpine, is (as you can probably guess) set in the obligatory snowy mountains that every racing game has.

Each track has a number of different routes which are opened as you progress through the game, but this doesn't really constitute extra tracks; just extensions of the existing ones. On the later part of the competition, the route changes after each lap which makes for some interesting racing as you try to pre-empt which way you have to go next. The problem with this is that at first it's simply a lottery as to which way you go.

As for the cars themselves, there really isn't much to tell. Every car in the game is a Porsche Boxster with the only difference being in the colour. Having just one car to choose from gets very boring after a short while, and the different drivers don't really help the cause. It doesn't matter what driver you choose as your car always handles the same. There are three modes of play to take on; Championship, practice and time trial. No surprises here then.

### Ace Racing

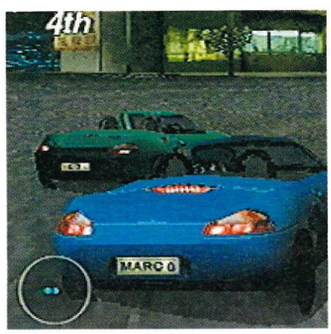
It all sounds pretty dull so far, but Porsche Challenge isn't the redundant lump of turd that it should be. For a start, the racing engine is extremely solid, making the game feel very realistic. It's not overly fast, but the feel of the game is excellent. Once you've learned the tracks you can get down to honing your driving skills, which ultimately makes the game much more fun to play.

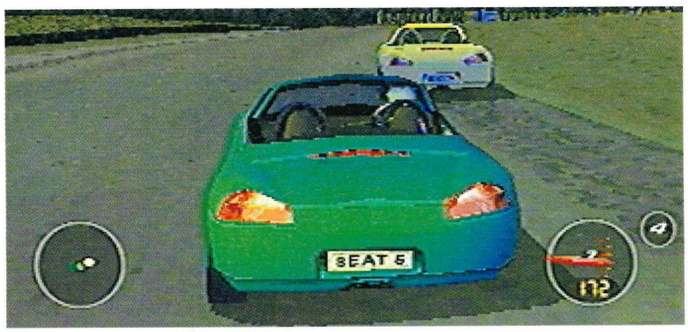
Graphically, Porsche Challenge is extremely good looking, but then it should be because there's hardly anything here anyway. The cars are all very well drawn and there is absolutely no glitching, clipping or slowdown whatsoever.

Although it makes no difference as to what driver you choose to play, the drivers all have different personalities when you're racing against them. There are six drivers in all, which means you face five on the track once you've chosen your character. Each of the drivers has a different driving style and reaction to each other. For instance, Dan, The kick boxer, is a relaxed driver but he has an adverse reaction when he come across Beats, the DJ driver, whereas the journalist Nikita is a wild driver, but she loves Beats the DJ and hates Rachel the model (it's a female thing).

The fact that Porsche Challenge only has one car and four basic tracks is unforgivable, but it's also fair to say that what is here is actually very good and at twenty pounds it's probably worth your money. The problem is that it should never have been a full price game in the first place.

SAUL




## The Score

| | |
|---|---|
| Publisher | SCEE |
| Developer | IN HOUSE |
| Released | OUT NOW |
| Version | UK |
| Price | £19.99 |
| Genre | DRIVING |
| Players | 1-2 |
| Memory Card | ✔ |
| Analog | ✔ |

GAMEPLAY **8**

ORIGINALITY **6**

LIFESPAN **7**

SOUND **7**

GRAPHICS **8**

OVERALL **79%**

**in summary**

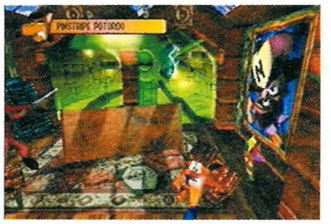
A case of quality over a serious lack of quantity. It's only twenty quid, though!

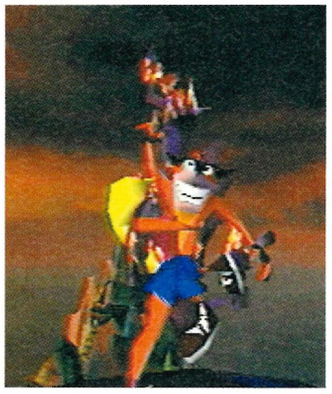
# Crash Bandicoot

## The Crazy Orange Thing makes a Discount Comeback





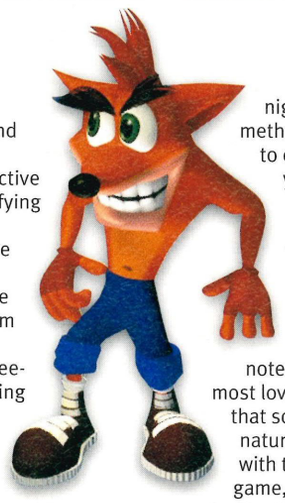




**Nintendo has Mario, Sega has Sonic, Sony has... Well not much, really. That is unless you count Crash Bandicoot, probably the only attempt to create that most beloved tool of marketers and merchandisers, a loveable, recognisable mascot figure for the PSX. Designed to appeal to cartoon-watching youngsters and girls, who like a cute 'n' cuddly character to control more than blokes, the carrot-like Crash is ostensibly a member of the peramelidae species, a vegetarian marsupial from Australasia that loves mangoes and lives in the jungle. His idyllic, fruit-based life is disturbed by the Evil Dr Cortex, who has kidnapped his girlfriend Tawna and whisked her off to his hideaway, meaning Crash must go a-hunting so he can get some.**

Cue frenetic 2.5D running, jumping and platforming action as our furry friend scurries through 26 levels on three sizeable islands in a quest to recover his ho'. Viewed from just behind and just above, our furry friend runs through jungle trails leaping over its predatory denizens or spinning into them in true Tasmanian Devil style. Jumping onto the crates scattered around usually yields a hoard of mangoes to gobble (instead of coins or rings) that accumulate and grant him extra lives.

Each level demands Crash make increasingly risky jumps, solve logic puzzles and occasionally backtrack towards the camera (which was a unique feature at the time of its release), and has an individual boss at its climax that demands different tactics to dispatch from one stage to the next. Controls are nicely reactive, allowing for swift and fluid changes of direction and instinctive timing for death-defying leaps. The camera angle is free to move about at certain points, like the more recent Pandemonium 2, which nicely accentuates the three-dimensional rendering while not actually making much effective difference to play itself.



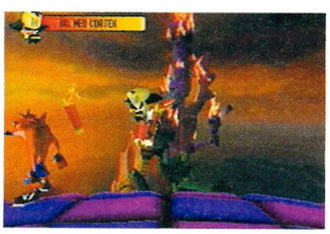
> **"...our furry friend runs through jungle trails leaping over its predatory denizens or spinning into them in true Tasmanian Devil style..."**

The graphics are excellent, the dense jungle around Crash's path light sourced and shaded sweetly, while the main character animation is super-smooth and brimming over with more frames than it probably needs, showing our fuzzy hero's various deaths in humourous detail. A niggle, though, is the method for saving - you have to collect three pictures of your girlfriend to get to a bonus level, which upon completion allows you to save the game, which is a little frustrating at times to say the least. The sound FX are also noteworthy, being in the most loveable, warm samples that sound extremely naturalistic and in keeping with the look and feel of the game, best of which is the protection icon you can run over, that makes a tribal "Ugga-Booga!" cry that always raises a smile. The music is exemplary too, not sounding at all like computer game music (if you see what I mean), being a bip-boppy cute tune with bags of character that fits the mood of the game admirably.

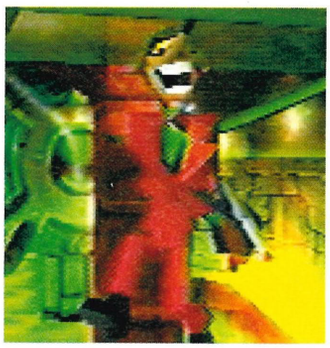
At the time of its original release, Crash Bandicoot was a fairly singular Playstation title; nowadays there's a sequel and it's been copied to an extent (Jersey Devil, Croc), wearing off some of its unique sheen. However, the Platinum price does make it an attractive buy, especially for someone who would fall for his undeniable charm and the pleasant level of gameplay difficulty.

EPM

CHRISTIAN







### The Score

| | |
|---|---|
| Publisher | SCEE |
| Developer | NAUGHTY DOG |
| Released | OUT NOW |
| Version | UK |
| Price | £19.99 |
| Genre | PLATFORMER |
| Players | 1 |
| Memory Card | ✓ |

GAMEPLAY
8

ORIGINALITY
7

LIFESPAN
6

SOUND
9

GRAPHICS
9

OVERALL
82%

**in summary**

Surpassed by now but still fun.

The latest, greatest and love-to-hatest from the brutal world of beat-em-ups

# Battered Around the Ring

## Punches from the Past

Like most game genres, the beat-'em-up has evolved over the years. Let's take a stroll down memory lane, and beat the ball-cocks out of a few ramblers.

The first one-on-one beat-'em-up was Data East's Karate Champ coin-op. Released in 1984, the only difference between the fighters was the colour of their costumes. Moves were executed using two joysticks instead of the usual joystick and buttons. For example, move the joysticks in away from each other and you performed a foot sweep. It was great fun.

Arguably the first one-on-one fighter to grace the home machines was 1985's Way of the Exploding Fist. Featuring four locations and 17 moves common to both fighters (no differing characters in those days), great gameplay made it an all-time classic. After fighting six rounds you had to stop a charging bull with a single strike. Archer Maclean's 1988 hit International Karate+ allowed three people to fight. It also included some neat gimmicks, eg. pressing 'T' caused the fighters' trousers to fall down.

After this, the beat-'em-up went through some lean years until, in 1991, the Capcom classic Street Fighter II exploded onto the scene. This is the first modern beat-'em-up, with combos, special moves and a strong storyline which introduced individual characters, each with their own set of moves. Similarly strong characters were offered by Midway's 1993 coin-op Mortal Kombat. Its motion-captured graphics wowed, but what really sold the game was its gore. Every hit produced sprays of blood, and you could attempt to kill a defeated character by pulling his head off, ripping out his heart or other similarly-gruesome moves. Underneath the gloss, though, its gameplay was less than wonderful - the combo system was almost non-existent.

The Killer Instinct coin-op offered wildly different combos. Instead of merely linking moves, you start with an 'opener', continue with a 'linker', leading up to a 'finisher' - as long as your foe didn't put a stop to it with his 'combo breaker'. It was complicated, but worked very well. A great game, but for expert beat-'em-uppers only.

The first game which featured 3D graphics was Sega's Virtua Fighter, 1995. Each character had a plethora of strikes, but they were all based on genuine martial arts and pro-wrestling moves - there were no 'magic' attacks such as fireballs or lightning. Although offered in 3D, the actual action was two dimensional - you couldn't side-step to avoid your opponent's attacks.

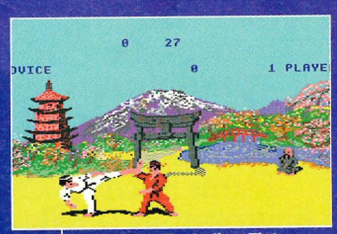
So much for the past - what about the present? The PlayStation features some ace beat-'em-ups, which take the genre a stage further with elements such as true 3D (War Gods) and weapons (Battle Arena Toshinden). And guess what? We've got a great round-up right here...



Killer Instinct



Virtua Fighter



Way of The Exploding Fist



Mortal Kombat

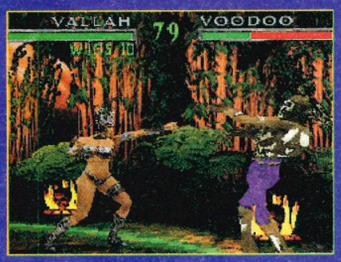
## Better Battering

What makes a good beat-'em-up? What separates the brill bashers from the putrid punchers? We know...

- A good fighter includes a variety of characters which are noticeably different from each other, demanding different tactics from the player.
- Avoid the 'one move kills all' syndrome, where the player can complete the game by finding a single strike which the CPU pugilists can't handle. Repeat to complete.
- Reward the player for completing the game. Give him a secret character, not another costume. This makes the player come back to the game after finishing it.
- The game should offer lots of combos, ie. series' of moves which can't be blocked if the first one hits home. These should be achieved by chaining regular and special moves, not pre-set button presses. If huge combos are offered, the victim should get the chance to break them with a specific move or combo breaker.
- Special moves should require effort, but not be so difficult the player won't risk using them. They shouldn't make it obvious what's coming next either.
- The computer characters shouldn't execute moves and combos that are impossible when you're actually pressing the buttons.
- Animation should be smooth and fast. Jerky movement makes it impossible to time your attacks.
- Finally, give the game an atmosphere. Don't just throw together a plethora of pointless personalities and cover the cracks with a daft plot. Give the characters a life and bring them together with an intelligent and interesting storyline.

## WAR GODS

**MIDWAY**




The 3D perspective here is more than just a gimmick - you can make your character side-step, offering full freedom of movement. Pity the game fails to build on this, though. The storyline's embarrassing, the characters clichéd and boring and the fight system's limited to say the least. Including combos that can take over half your strength without adding a combo breaker is inexcusable.

55%

## PRIMAL RAGE

**MIDWAY**




Cool - the monsters feel just right as they tear each other to shreds, the action is fast and furious and there are some great fatalities, including one mucky scat fetishist who pisses on a fallen foe. There aren't many characters on offer, but it's gameplay that counts, and Primal Rage has it to spare.

85%

## BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN 1, 2&3

**TAKARA**








The first Battle Arena Toshinden game was one of the first ever PlayStation games. Unsurprisingly, it's well below par by today's standards, with sluggish, awkward graphics and very poor combo facilities. The sequel, Battle Arena Toshinden 2, is better in all departments. The characters' differing weapons make for some interesting tactical battles, but it's still too shallow for anyone but beginners. Battle Arena Toshinden 3 offered the same and more, but by then it was overshadowed by other, far-superior fighters. All three games are weapons-based, and feature the ability to roll out of trouble, offering 3D gameplay as well as a shifting camera perspective.

B.A.T 1 30% B.A.T 2 58% B.A.T 3 70%

## SOUL BLADE

**NAMCO**

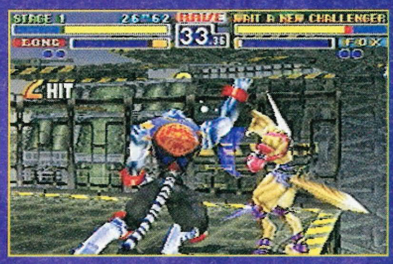



From the same stable as Tekken, but a very different, weapons-based game. Soul Blade emphasises speed and demands tactical fighting, not just knowledge of its (many) special moves. The characters are huge, and animate brilliantly when pulling off spectacular attacks. You can't help wincing when a foe gets in a good cut. Great stuff!

93%

## BLOODY ROAR

**VIRGIN**

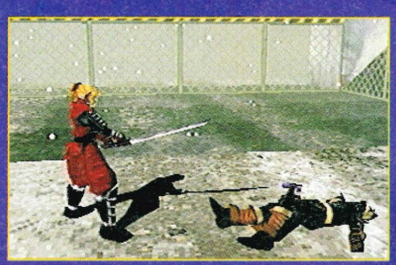



This one contains a neat gimmick - you can change from human to beast form at the touch of a button. The graphics are large and fun, but the gameplay is remarkably unsophisticated. Bloody Roar is recommended for beginners or people who spend little time on beat-'em-ups, but the real fight fans will find it too shallow.

72%

## BUSHIDO BLADE

**SQUARESOFT**



A third person or own-eye perspective (link-up) beat-'em-up. No energy bars, just realistic injuries (if your leg's cut, you limp), and single-strike kills. This is the thinking man's beat-'em-up which emphasises defensive play, tactical fights and honour - break the code of bushido and you're thrown out in disgrace. A brilliantly original game.

90%



## DARKSTALKERS: THE NIGHT WARRIORS

**VIRGIN/CAPCOM**




Another great cartoony 2D beat-'em-up from Capcom. It's fearsomely unoriginal (to say 'Street Fighter fans will find it familiar' is an understatement), but all the expected gameplay is there. The characters, taken from an obscure Japanese cartoon, aren't as exciting as the SF crew, though.

**80%**

## STREET FIGHTER EX+ALPHA

**CAPCOM**




Street Fighter EX+ ALPHA, Capcom's long-awaited 3D version of Street Fighter, features some great polygon interpretations of our SF faves, but the action is largely 2D with a 3D camera. Its smooth action (though not without an occasional glitch) and top combo system win through.

**89%**

## STREET FIGHTER: THE MOVIE

**ACCLAIM**




Featuring graphics digitised from the film, jerky animation and virtually no gameplay, this pathetic pile of pustulating pungent puss would disgrace a 16-bit machine. The visuals are so bad it's almost impossible to time your attacks. About as welcome as a randy dog in a Miss Lovely Legs competition.

**21%**

## STAR GLADIATOR

**CAPCOM**

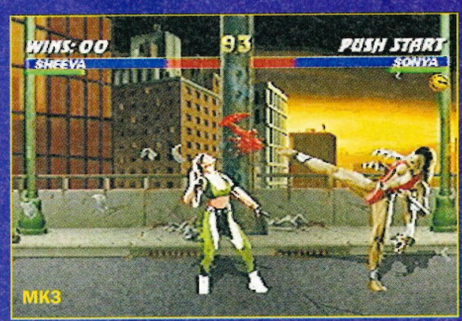



Is this meant to be a joke? We completed it on Level Eight (the hardest) using only one move. It's easier to get control of the bosses by beating the game than by using the ridiculously-difficult cheats. Let's be polite and assume Capcom's first 3D effort was merely a tester for their then-forthcoming 3D Street Fighter game.

**23%**

## MORTAL KOMBAT 3 / TRILOGY

**MIDWAY**







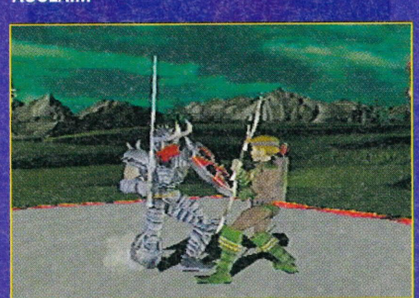
Mortal Kombat 3 expanded the list of finishing moves, which now include Fatalities (kill your foe), Animalities (turn into an animal before killing him), Babalities (turn him into a baby), Friendships (kiss and make up) and Mercies (give him back a little energy). Alas, there's a ridiculous pause while these animations load. Gameplay remains unsophisticated, though the gimmicks were always the most important element in a Mortal Kombat game.

Mortal Kombat Trilogy is more of the same, featuring all the characters from the first three games and equally flat, gimmick-riddled gameplay. For extreme MK afficionados only.

M.K.3 **60%** M.K. TRILOGY **62%**

## IRON AND BLOOD: WARRIORS OF RAVENSLOFT

**ACCLAIM**

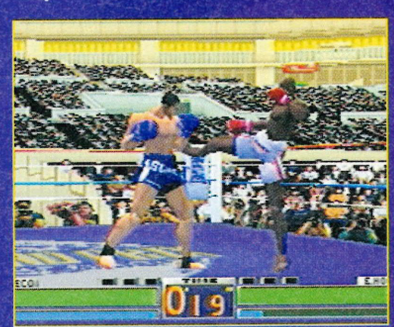


The graphics are nothing special in this medieval monster-masher, but the action's nice and fast. It's got bugger all to do with Advanced Dungeons and Dragons, despite the official licence. Winning abilities by defeating opponents is a neat touch, though.

**69%**

## K1 ARENA FIGHTERS

**THQ**




Neat idea (a kickboxing sim), but let down by shallowness of moves and unintelligent opponents who often punch and kick thin air while you're the other side of the ring. It falls short of the technique-based sim it aims to be. Great FMV intro, though.

**44%**

## RESURRECTION: RISE OF THE ROBOTS 2

**ACCLAIM**



It's better than the disastrous Rise of the Robots, but that's all this (ahem) risible effort has going for it. It loads so slowly you'd be forgiven for thinking your PSX has crashed, and your robot moves unbelievably sluggishly. Executing the simplest of punches takes ages, making it impossible to chain your attacks. Terrible.

20%

## TOBAL NO.1

**SQUARESOFT**




This is a game of two halves. The tournament, ie. one-on-one mode is pretty awful, despite offering full 3D action - how can you get excited about a game with graphics this bad? The quest mode, though, is a great idea. Explore the dungeons finding objects, solving puzzles and punching heads. This is MK Mythologies implemented as it should be, but with weaker graphics.

TOURNAMENT MODE 40% QUEST MODE 85%

## MARVEL SUPER HEROES

**CAPCOM**



A distinct 'could do better' in the graphics department, but the brainly battering, cool combos and sizzling specials that made the Street Fighter series so good are here. Only by developing intelligent fighting strategies can you win. Marvel Super Heroes wins no awards for originality, though - it's Street Fighter all over again.

81%

## ZERO DIVIDE

**OCEAN**



Robots, special moves, combos... Zero Divide makes all the right noises, but without any flare, sparkle or panache. There's nothing disastrous about it, but it completely fails to excite. The characters are too similar, and who can get enthusiastic about weird-looking robots? It's a game with no heroes or villains. ZZZzzzz...

59%

## TEKKEN 1&2

**NAMCO**







Woooo! Tekken is everything a fighter should be, with crisp animation, interesting characters and exciting specials. Each character faces a different sub-boss, who becomes playable when you beat the game. This gives tremendous incentive to master all the fighters. There's even a bonus retro game (Galaga) to play while it's loading.

Tekken 2 takes the game a stage further, with crisper, cleaner graphics and fluid, realistic animation. Each character has his or her own reasons for entering the King of the Iron Fist tournament. They all have their own animated end sequence too, so you've every reason to master all the fighters and to keep coming back to the game.

The Tekken games are truly the kings of the ring, and Tekken 3 looks set to continue the trend when it hits the PSX. For the low-down on this forthcoming fighter, check out our Gamespotting section.

TEKKEN 90% TEKKEN 2 94%

## DYNASTY WARRIORS

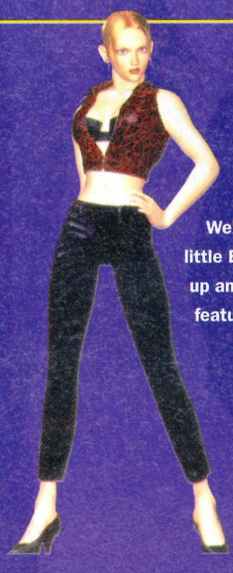
**KOEI**



Hmmm... there's nothing much wrong with Dynasty Warriors, but nothing to set the world alight either. It's a reasonable but unremarkable weapons-based fighter, though many beat-'em-up fans will curse its lack of kick moves.

Worth a look, but don't climb over Soul Blade to get to it.

75%



Well, that's all for now. If you're now feeling a little Battered Around the Ring, pull your trousers up and get set for next month's rave round-up feature; on shoot'em-ups!

# STUFF

## IT'S A BLOODY JUNGLE OUT THERE!

**WHAT DO YOU STICK IN THOSE SLOTS, EH? WHICH GIZMO DO YOU SPLASH YOUR CASH ON TO IMPRESS YOUR MATES AND CUT REACTION TIME? WHICH BIT OF KIT CUTS THE MUSTARD LIKE A HOT KNIFE THROUGH BUTTER? WELL NOW YOU CAN RELAX AS OUR BOFFINS BASH THE BUTTONS ON YOUR BEHALF. BONZER!**

### SONY ANALOG PAD

**RRP** - £24.99

Despite some recent pretenders to the throne, this is still the one and only twin stick analog to arrive and deftly change the way we all play games.

**VERDICT** - Feel the pleasure of incremental inputs under your thumbs.

**9.5/10**



### SONY JOYPAD

**RRP** - £17.99

Now available in dirt-attracting white and sexy fetish black!

**VERDICT** - The hardest-wearing, nicest-feeling pad around. More expensive than the competition, and does need wearing in, but top of the pile nonetheless.

**10/10**



### SONY MULTI TAP

**RRP** - £32.99

Extremely solidly-built key to multi-player tomfoolery, can lead to incredible eight-way playing.

**VERDICT** - The only Multi tap available, and costly, but a joyous toy with the right games.

**8/10**



### SONY MOUSE

**RRP** - £24.99

Ideal for point-and-click strategy games like Command & Conquer, but not so hot for beat-'em-ups.

**VERDICT** - Again, only comes into its own on specialised games, but highly useful on the right titles. Comes with free mat too!

**8/10**



### NEGCON

**RRP** - £34.99

Unusual lateral approach to analog control, this twisty-middle baby is ideal for driving games.

**VERDICT** - Pricey, and has some compatibility grumbles. A dedicated gamers bit of kit for sure.

**8/10**



### NAMCO GUNCOM

**RRP** - £59.99 (with Time Crisis)

The light gun Arnold would choose as his own, this baby's hi-tech aiming system puts it a cut above the rest.

**VERDICT** - The Heckler and Koch MP5 of the silicon shooting gallery.

**10/10**



### NAMCO ARCADE STICK

**RRP** - £49.99

Huge reproduction of a stand-up cabinet's controls, minus the fag burns and spilled puddles of Coke.

**VERDICT** - Good if you just don't like joypads, easy on the thumbs, hard to find a spot for.

**7/10**



### SONY TWIN ANALOG JOYSTICK

**RRP** - £29.99

Become Douglas Bader with this enormous representation of a fighter's controls. Roger Wilco!

**VERDICT** - Only useful for a few games really, but highly impressive and serious looking.

**7/10**



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# Ex-Communication

## SORT IT OUT!

Dear EPM,
Can you believe the audacity of some PlayStation game outlets (yes: EPM). For instance, after reading Issue Three (which, by my accounts, was executed perfectly), I decide to go and buy Micro Machines V3 because I had noticed it went into the Platinum range not too long ago. However, as I went to pay for MMV3 the sales assistant (dozy, stupid buttwipe) tried to charge me £35.99. I, being a very forward bloke, said (bellowed) "excuse me (oi dipshit), MMV3 has shot into the Platinum range therefore it's only £19.99. At this point the dumbstruck erm, er, 'person' called the manageress down from her plump x-large chair in the offices upstairs. She wished to see proof of MMV3 in the Platinum range, so out comes Issue Three on Page 82 and viola, one game, and a further 10% discount.
On my last last note, please, if there are any manager/manageresses reading, sort it out!
Chris Blackmore, Somerset

EPM says...
This just goes to prove the authority EPM has. As for the games shop management, don't worry - we've had our fair share of trouble with them too. Congratulations, here's a selection of Blaze goodies

## A LADY WRITES

Dear EPM,
First of all congratulations on a great mag. From now on it always sits on top of my stack of girlie titles (she means the likes of Mizz et al, not Razzle or Fiesta... EPM) and other PSX mags. I'm proud to say I'm now a proud owner of a PlayStation console and I love it to bits. The game Final Fantasy VII is beyond spectacular, and thanks to your great mag, I'm more than looking forward to Final Fantasy VIII and probably IX. Your mag also tells us little people (we're all equals Anna: EPM) information about other things apart from games that do relate to PlayStation titles, such as the FF movie Anime. Now what I can't believe is that you guys are also completely obsessed with Lara Croft from Tomb Raider. You, of all PSX magazines!
I can't believe FFVII got rated 93% (96% actually: EPM) when Tomb Raider 2 got 94% (98%, in fact: EPM). I bet you guys (and every other male in the entire world) rated TR2 higher than FFVII because it stars a fit-looking girl and you love her up. If you put FFVII and TR2 together, then I bet you find more good points about FFVII than you ever do on TR2.
I'm a girl, but I'm not jealous because I have more sense than to compete with a games character. I think TR2 is crap and bollox to Lara!
Anna Vuone, London

EPM says...
You may not like Tomb Raider 2, Anna, but there are hundreds of thousands of people out there who love it. Most of them probably do think Lara's cute because most of them are young blokes. It may look pretty sad to you, but behind Lara there's also an excellent game. And as for FFVII scoring below TR2, it's hardly worth worrying about two percent is it? I mean, 96% isn't exactly a bad score. Anyway, we're glad you like the mag.

## WHERE'S YER DREADLOCKS GONE

Dear EPM,
I am only 11 years old, so you may think my opinions are inferior, but I'm not just another prat sending in a stupid later for the sake of it.
Anyway my letter is about FIFA Road to the World Cup '98. While borrowing this fine game from my mate Scott, I slipped the shiny silver disc into my grey box o' tricks and waited for the so-called brilliant intro.
After that piece of mouth-watering entertainment I looked at the main menu. Friendly, Road To World Cup, League, etc. On seeing the Customise Squad option, I went straight onto that. I see another menu. 'Oh no', I thought. 'It's not another game with masses of options'. Anyway, after deciding which one looked best I went on to Team Edit. After having the pleasure of turning the Germany squad into a complete bunch of donkeys (we like this boy: EPM), I got bored as any self respecting gamesplayer would.
Next I went onto the surprising but brilliant physical changes to the player. Wow, this is brill, I thought, you can make a player look like yourself. I went on to the hairstyle change, to, in total disbelief, find that YOU CAN'T HAVE BLOODY DREADLOCKS! Come on, they must be the grooviest haircut in the biz, loads of players have them, Gullit, Valderamma, Cadermateri, THEY ARE SMART! I know in EA's minds it's only a minor flaw, but in mine, and probably lots of other people's, IT IS A BIG ONE!
Joe Cunningham, Cheshire

EPM says...
If you're looking for dreadlocks you came to the right place seeing as Darren is the proud owner of two bloody feet of them!

## YOU ARE WRONG!

Dear EPM,
First, I'm going to congratulate you on a very, very, very good mag which has already taken Number One in my magazine league. But, I am going to complain about the review of Formula Karts which you published in your first issue. You made it sound worthwhile to buy. Well, after reading this report I saved up a bit and went into my nearest game shop and purchased the game. After the 'ON YOUR MARKS... GO', I undertook my first race. All I can say is how S**T a racer could be. I thought I would give it a try, but three races later I had made up my mind; Formula Karts is, and will be forever, the biggest piece of s**t I have ever played, and will probably ever play...
Sam Hill, Chesterfield

EPM says...
We think you're absolutely wrong, mate. You yourself said you gave it three races and thought it was s**t. Try sticking it on a 40-lap race and going for a full-on kart duel. The game does take some getting into, so give it a bit of time before you write it off. Either that or get a steering wheel, which really brings the game into its own.

## SOCCER SHENANIGANS

Dear EPM,
Thank you very much for your brilliant mag and keep up the good work. Anyway, let's get straight to the point. For Christmas I got Actua Soccer, and then decided to buy Actua Soccer 2. In Issue Two I read the review on FIFA: Road to the World Cup '98 and thought it sounded pretty good - brill review by the way (thanks: EPM). My friend has got FIFA '97 (poor chap: EPM), and it wasn't really that good but as you said yourself in the review, "In fact, if you didn't already know, you'd never guess it was a FIFA game because it plays so damn well". I also heard Blur's Song 2 is the tune on the game, and I really like it - WOO HOO! (yeah: EPM).
But Actua Soccer 2 has it's good points also. I have not actually read a review on Actua 2, but I've played the demo and I have got Actua 1. One point about it is the graphics and another is the speed. Well, I can't decide, so I hope you can help me to choose.
Stephen Clifford, Chester

EPM says...
We reviewed Actua Soccer 2 in Issue One of EPM, and gave it a respectable 88%. It's an excellent soccer game, but we're basically agreed that FIFA: RTWC'98 is ever-so-slightly better, hence the 91% score it got in Issue Two.

## STEERING PROBLEMS

Dear EPM,
I have had a PlayStation for, well, virtually since it came out in the UK. I'm a huge fanatic of car simulation games, but I'm seriously starting to get pissed off by the way nobody has made one good steering wheel. The ones I've tried include Mad Catz Wheel and pedals, Performer wheel, Gamester wheel, V3 wheel, Top Gear wheel, Top Gear Pro wheel and one cheap-and-nasty wheel I got cheap, and was such a pile of shite I can't even remember its name. Why do they make them so crap? They're just so unresponsive.
You may think I just don't have any decent games to use them on, but I have 23 games and 11 of them are car games, including TOCA, F1 '97,

# BLAZE

Wanna win a selection of brill Blaze International goodies? Every month the sender of the best letter picks up a surprise bag of accessories. It's a real 'trick or treat' offer - you could win anything from a top joypad to a steering wheel. Unless you write in and win, though, you won't find out which it is...

Need For Speed 2, Porsche Challenge, Test Drive 4 and Gran Turismo (import). Please could you offer some reason why nobody makes decent, strong and responsive steering wheels. Also, if you want, say I don't have a clue what I'm talking about. I have already lost over 200 big ones on wheels and my bank account is refusing to pay any money to computer stores again. Please help and tell me the name of a decent wheel...
Neil Prasar, Bury

**EPM says...**
**Try the Gamester Mark II wheel. It's the best wheel we've tried, especially on Formula Karts Special Edition and Test Drive 4. The problem with PSX steering wheels is that you never get that lifelike feeling because none of them have the resistance or weight a real car offers. Also, when it comes down to it, even the best racing games simply aren't very good with a steering wheel. I mean, have you played TOCA with a wheel? It's nigh-on impossible. F1 '97 isn't that bad with a wheel, but you get just as much control out of an analog pad. You're not going to find one wheel which suits all of your driving games and you're never going to get the realism you're looking for from a wheel. Basically, Neil, stick with the wheels you've got and get yourself an Analog Pad and a NegCon Controller. Both are cheaper and give as much, if not more control than a wheel.**

## DATES AND THE BBFC

Dear EPM,
Congratulations on your mag, I think it's great. Anyway, I've a few questions to ask you.

1. When is Resident Evil 2 Coming out? Every mag I've looked at offers different dates.
**EPM: Virgin tell us it hits the shelves at the end of April. Check out the review this issue for more details on this excellent game.**

2. When is the first Tomb Raider coming out on Platinum?
**EPM: It should be out by the time you're reading this.**

3. I hate the BBFC! Why did they put Grand Theft Auto on an '18' certificate? It's not exactly violent, is it? (Being serious) I mean, what's more violent, a couple of guns and car stealing or going round a mansion blowing zombies heads off and watching their brains go everywhere?
**EPM: GTA got an '18' because the powers-that-be thought that the game sent out a bad message to the nations' game players. They reckon a few hours of GTA will turn us all into Umbro/Kickers-wearing, poxy little car thieves, whereas we think this sort of behaviour is in-bred and not a result of playing bloody video games! Innnitt!**

Anyway, got to go.
Andy Brown, Liverpool.

## DATES AND THE BBFC

Dear EPM,
Firstly, well done on producing such an excellent magazine. I'm not one to lick butt usually, but EPM really does have the most in-depth reviews and previews I've seen in a PlayStation magazine.
Anyway enough of that; the reason I'm writing is to ask your advice. I have Command & Conquer: Red Alert, which I think is a fantastic game. I think it's great that there are two separate discs that can be played independently, and so does my mate because he can borrow one while I'm playing the other. Do you think it's worth buying a link-up cable and getting my friend to lug a TV and his PlayStation round to my house so we can play a two-player game? I know a link-up cable isn't exactly expensive, but I only get a measly allowance so I need your advice to tell me if it's worthwhile.
Andrew Kilbourne, Kent

**EPM says...**
**Without a doubt, buying a link-up cable will be the best move you'll have made in a long time. What's ten quid to hours and hours of superb strategy gaming against a human opponent? We've wasted countless hours playing C&C: Red Alert on link-up at EPM, and we're still at it now. Don't hesitate, Andrew, get yourself that link cable as soon as you and your buddy can afford it.**

## TOP MARKS

Dear EPM,
I love your pristine publication, but why are all the marks so high? What's the point of giving games percentage marks if you only mark the games from 55-60% upwards? Surely the very poorest games should get single figures, average games around 50% and the best games in the nineties? There should be as many games scoring below 50% as above it.
Jake Andrews, Grimsby.

**EPM says...**
**Imagine a review of a sandwich, marked as a percentage. If you saw a sarnie had scored 10%, what would you think? You'd expect it to be rancid, wouldn't you? Mouldy cheese, stale bread, foul filling - you just wouldn't want to take a second bite. A 50% score would suggest an average feed; the bread might be a little dry, the filling a little sparse, but basically the sandwich is edible if not particularly outstanding. Of course, a 90%+ sandwich would be delicious.**
**It's the same with games. Our 53% score for Indy 500 suggests what it is - a reasonably playable but ultimately unsatisfying offering. To give it a sub-20% score just because it's the weakest game this issue would imply it's almost unplayable, which it isn't. We've seen games which deserve single-figure scores, mostly on other systems. These pathetic, putrid piles of pixelated puss are so bad you wouldn't want to play them twice. Rest assured we do use the full range of marks, and will give very low scores to games that deserve them, but we won't use 50% as an average simply because there are more games which deserve higher marks. The PlayStation has more triumphs than disasters, and we can all be thankful for that.**

Got a whine? Drop us a line! Send your merry missives on all things PlayStation to:

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# SWINDLERS INC.

MORE HANDY HINTS, CHEEKY CHEATS AND TOP TIPS SO THE FRAUDULENT CAN FIDDLE THEIR FAVE GAMES.

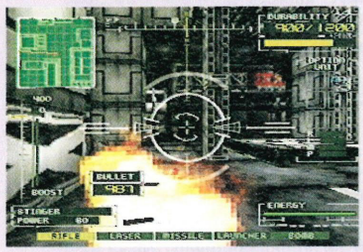
## BRAHMA FORCE

**EASY MODE**
Hold ↗ + ✕ + ■, then press Start at the 'Press Start Button' screen. Enemy attack and defence power is reduced by half, and more time is available to complete each level.

**HARD MODE**
Press L1, R1, L2, R2, ■ ✕ ▲ ● at the title screen.

**FLIGHT MODE**
Complete the game in less than 1:30:00. Hold L2+R2 and press ✕ on Controller Two. During play, press R2 on Controller One to climb and L2 to dive.

**FREE MAP MOVEMENT**
Press Start during play to display the options menu. Enter the Map option. Press Select to stop the map movement. Press L1, L2, R1, R2, and the D-Pad to move around the map.




**IN-GAME RESET**
Press L1+L2+R1+R2+Select during gameplay.

**BONUS OPTIONS**
Use a memory card and complete the game in less than 1:30:00. Press Start after the title screen appears again. Choose the Special selection on the screen to access Level Selection, View FMV Sequences, Enter Sound Test Mode and other options.

**END GAME BONUS**
After completing the game, regardless of time required, hidden areas are displayed on the map. Additionally, you retain weapons and ammunitions. Although, SAPUs are reduced by half.

## G POLICE

**INVINCIBILITY**
Hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 + ● + ▲ + ■ and press ← during the mission briefing. A sound confirms correct code entry. Note, the game will not progress past the current mission when this code is enabled. However, it may be used to try various strategies and options prior to playing in normal mode.

**SECRET MISSIONS**
Enter PANTALON as a password. The word 'Cheat' appears in the lower right corner to confirm correct code entry. Enter the training menu to access six secret missions, including driving a car and controlling a combat droid.

**FAST CIVILIAN TRAFFIC**
Enter BENIHILL as a password.

**ENABLE SIRENS**
Enter WOOWOO as a password.

**BONUS CAMERA ANGLE**
Enter SUPACAM as a password. The camera angle switches to a close-up of an enemy vehicle when it's destroyed.




## ODDWORLD: ABE'S ODDYSEE

**GREEN AIR MINES**
Hold R1 and press ↑, ←, →, ■ ● ✕ during gameplay. Abe produces a green air mine every time he farts.

**INSTANT VOICE PUZZLE SOLUTION**
Hold R1 and press ▲, ↑, ●, ←, ✕, ↓, ■, → during play. Select any sound to solve the game's voice puzzles.

## BLOODY ROAR

**BIG HEAD MODE**
Select Normal mode. Highlight a fighter on the character selection screen, then hold L2 and press ●.

**SMALL FIGHTERS**
Highlight a fighter on the character selection screen, then hold R2 and press ●.

**LARGER RING**
Select Survival mode and defeat ten consecutive opponents.

**SMALLER RING**
Complete the game on Level Four or higher using Greg.

**NO WALLS IN RING**
Complete the game on Level Four or higher using Mitsuko.

**INVISIBLE WALLS**
Complete the game on Level Four or higher using Fox.

**REGENERATING ENERGY**
Select Bakuryu as a fighter and complete the game on Level Four or higher.

**NO ENERGY BARS**
Complete the game on Level Four or higher using Yugo.

**CONTROL CAMERA**
Complete the game on Level Four or higher using Alice.

**PSYCHEDELIC MODE**
Complete the game on Level Four or higher using all the characters.

**DISABLE LIGHTNING**
Complete the game on Level Four or higher using Long.

**NO GUARD MODE**
Complete the game on Level Four or higher using Gado.

**LARGE ARMS**
Complete the game on Level Four or higher without using any continues.

**ALTERNATIVE ALICE COSTUME**
Select time attack mode. Defeat all opponents in under ten minutes. Alice appears in a schoolgirl's uniform.

**ADDITIONAL REPLAY VIEWS**
Hold Select during the winning hit to your opponent for additional replay views.

**BONUS GRAPHICS**
Complete the game in arcade mode to view the corresponding character's ending. Press ← or → to view different scenes.

# Resident Evil 2: The Director's Cut

### Double Items
Highlight the 'Advanced' option on the game mode screen and hold → until the pointer turns green. Begin the game and double the normal amount of items, including ink ribbons and ammunition, are available.

### Change Clothes
Rescue the other two players and finish the game. The phrase 'You've got the special key' appears after the credits. Save the game. Start the game that was just saved. Enter the room with the large mirror on the second floor of the mansion. Unlock the door in the back. Enter the closet and move all the way to the end of the rack of clothes. A message asking, 'There is an outfit that fits you perfectly, do you want to put it on?' appears. Select 'Yes' to change your character's clothes.

### Reset Game
Pause the game during play and press Start + Select. The game resets and returns to the main menu.

### Unlimited Rocket Launcher
Finish the game within three hours without rescuing anyone. A rocket appears after the credits. Choose to continue playing after the game restarts. The rocket launcher is available when the new game begins. Note the rocket launcher does not shoot well upwards or downwards.

### Unlimited Magnum
Select advanced mode and complete the game as either character in any amount of time. The unlimited magnum is available when the game is replayed. This weapon makes it easier to complete the game in under three hours for the unlimited rocket launcher, at which point both weapons are available for another game.



# Ace Combat 2

### Music Test
Complete the game with a rank higher than First Lieutenant. A selection for music player mode appears in the options menu. Any of the 28 music tracks on the game disc may be played. Press L1 or L2 to jump to the next track, R1 or R2 to jump to the previous track, ● to select a track, Select to toggle the screen, and ■, ▲, or ✖ to quit.

### Free Mission Mode
Complete the Kingpin mission. A 'Free Mission' option that allows any mission to be played appears at the opening menu.

### View All Aircraft
Complete the game with a rank of General. A new option allows all aircraft to be viewed.

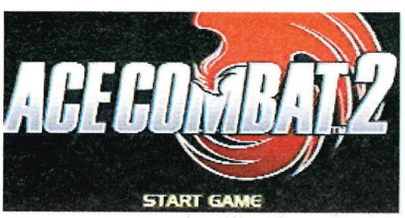
### Lock Replay View
Hold ■ during a replay to lock the camera.

### Alternate Mission Map View
Highlight the 'Mission' option on the mission selection screen, and press Select. Three new viewing angles may be selected.

### Display Rear View of Sony Analog Controller
Press Select at the control configuration screen.

### XFA-27 Fighter
Complete the game under normal difficulty. Play the game again under hard difficulty and reach the low altitude surprise attack mission (Dead End). Locate and destroy the four YF-23As in the special Fox Force Four squadron south of the target. A medal and the XFA-27 is awarded on the debriefing screen.




# Courier Crisis

### Flip Off Other Traffic
Press L1 + L2 or R1 + R2 during gameplay to flip the finger at other traffic.

### Free Movement
Enter HANOILBKJO as a password.

### Zaskar
Enter FDFKFKHCJK as a password.

### Ride The Pantera
Enter KFKFKFOEKJ as a password.

### Level Passwords:
Level 2: EFLCIFCGKJ
Level 3: IFLCIFCCKI
Level 4: MFLCIFCOKJ
Level 5: AFLCIFCKKJ
Level 6: FHCLFIGCJL
Level 7: FLCLFICCIL
Level 8: FPCLFIOCJL
Level 9: FDCLFIKCJL
Level 10: KFLCIFCGII
Level 11: OFLCIFCCII
Level 12: CFLCIFCOIJ
Level 13: GFLCIFCKIJ
Level 14: FFCLFIGCJJ
Level 15: FJCLFICCIJ




# Overboard

### Level Passwords:
Level 1-2: Ship, Skull, Fish, Anchor, Ship, Anchor
Level 1-3: Ship, Anchor, Skull, Ship, Anchor, Fish
Level 1-4: Skull, Ship, Fish, Anchor, Anchor, Ship
Level 2-1: Fish, Fish, Anchor, Ship, Skull, Anchor
Level 2-2: Skull, Anchor, Anchor, Fish, Anchor, Ship
Level 2-3: Fish, Anchor, Ship, Ship, Ship, Skull
Level 2-4: Anchor, Fish, Ship, Skull, Skull, Fish
Level 3-1: Ship, Skull, Skull, Fish, Anchor, Skull
Level 3-2: Fish, Skull, Anchor, Fish, Skull, Fish
Level 3-3: Fish, Fish, Ship, Skull, Fish, Ship
Level 3-4: Ship, Anchor, Ship, Fish, Anchor, Fish
Level 4-1: Skull, Skull, Anchor, Ship, Fish, Fish
Level 4-2: Ship, Anchor, Skull, Fish, Fish, Anchor
Level 4-3: Skull, Ship, Skull, Skull, Fish, Ship
Level 4-4: Ship, Fish, Ship, Fish, Ship, Anchor
Level 5-1: Anchor, Ship, Fish, Skull, Fish, Ship
Level 5-2: Fish, Ship, Anchor, Skull, Ship, Fish
Level 5-3: Ship, Fish, Skull, Anchor, Anchor, Skull
Level 5-4: Skull, Ship, Anchor, Fish, Ship, Skull

# Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain

### Restore Kain's Blood
Press ↑, →, ■, ●, ↑, ↓, →, ← during the game.

### Restore Kain's Magic
Press →, →, ■, ●, ↑, ↓, →, ← during the game.

### View FMV Sequences
Press ←, →, ■, ●, ↑, ↓, →, ← during the game. Press Select to view the Dark Diary sequences.

Player's Guide

# skuLLmonkeys

## science center

### Level One

**Secret Area 1**

After reaching the first Ma Bird, continue on to the second platform, kill the Loud Mouth stood on it then stand in the middle of the platform. A jet of air blows Klaymen up to the ledge above where there are two Green Bullets waiting to be collected.



**Secret Area 2**

Between the second and third Ma Bird, located along the upper platforms of the level, you come across this ledge. Instead of jumping onto the ledge, walk into and under it to discover the second secret area which contains another Green Bullet.

**Secret Area 3**

After passing the third Ma Bird along the upper platforms, drop down to the platform below and you find yourself directly in front of the third secret area. Once again, walk under and into the ledge instead of on top of it to discover another Green Bullet and a Halo hidden inside.

### Level Two

**Secret Area 4**

After jumping into the Red Teleport Ball and emerging at your new destination, climb up the level until you reach the second Clay Keeper. Destroy him then jump from the platform across to the wall on the right. As you fall, keep pushing to the right to enter the hidden hole which takes you to the secret area below where there are three sets of Clay Balls to collect and a Tan Teleport Ball which warps you to the next level.



### Level Three

**Secret Area 5**

After reaching the second Ma Bird along the lower part of this next level, you come to a wall with a Swirly Q in front of it. Jump up and into the wall to reach the secret area beyond; there's a Halo for the taking.

## monkey shrines

### Level One

**Secret Area 1**

When you reach the first Ma Bird, turn around and jump into the block you have just come across. There's a Glidey Bird hidden inside.

**Secret Area 2**

From the first secret area, continue along the level and into the next block to uncover the second secret area; it contains a Phart Head. Now continue to the end of the level and jump into the Red Teleport Ball.

### Level Two

**Secret Area 3**

When you reach the first block that you can walk under, jump up into it to collect the Clay Balls and Phart Head hidden inside.

**Secret Area 4**

When you reach the block that has the Swirly Q directly behind it, use the small blocks in front of it to climb up and jump in. Once you've collected the Clay Balls from inside, collect the Swirly Q then proceed to the end of the level and jump into the Swirly Q Teleport Ball to reach the bonus room.

### Bonus Room

**Secret Area 5**

After collecting all the power-ups in the bonus room, walk right past the Tan Teleport Ball then jump up past the pillar to reach the fifth secret area.

**Secret Area 6**

Once inside the fifth secret area, continue past the Tan Teleport Ball and jump up into the block. Once inside the block, jump around to reveal some extra lives then return to the Teleport Ball and jump in.



### Boss- Shriney Guard

As soon as you begin this boss level, jump onto his head then jump back onto the centre stone and wait for him to roll across to the other side of the screen. As soon as he stops, quickly jump onto his head again then jump back onto the centre stone. Repeat this attack once more and the Shriney Guard is defeated.

## hard boiler

### Level One

**Secret Area 1**

After jumping across the platforms to collect the first Swirly Q, jump up and into the round container to reach the secret area inside. Collect the two Phoenix Hands and the Phart Head before making your exit.



**Secret Area 2**

Once you've activated the second Ma Bird along the lower part of the level, continue across the next few platforms and past the two burners until you reach the small platform up high. Wait for the Loud Mouth to walk under it then while his arms are raised, jump on him and then onto the platform above. Now make your way across the set of burners and up to the small platforms above. Once you've collected all the power-ups, continue across the long set of burners then jump down to the right to reach the two extra lives and the Red Teleport Ball below.

### Level Two

**Secret Area 3**

As soon as you begin the second level, walk behind the second pipe to your left and use the hidden platforms to climb up into the secret area.

## SNO

### Level One

**Secret Area 1**

When you reach the small platform with the Silver Balls below it, jump onto the next ledge then drop down to the left to reach the secret area below. There are three Green Bullets and some Clay Balls to collect. Now use the Silver Balls to return to the platforms above then continue to the end of the level and jump into the Red Teleport Ball.



### Level Two
**Secret Area 2**
When you reach the clock platforms between the first and second Ma Bird, use them to jump up and collect the power-ups from the secret area above.

## skullmonkeys brand hotdogs

### Level One
**Secret Area 1**
From the start of this first level, head left and use the Silver Ball to jump across to the opposite pipe. Collect the Phoenix Hand from the Treasure Ball then wait for the Silver Ball to reappear before jumping back.



**Secret Area 2**
After stepping onto the second platform to float across the sludge, jump up into the container you pass under to collect the power-ups from inside.
**Secret Area 3**
When you reach the first Ma Bird, drop down onto the next pipe then walk to the far left of it and wait for a tree stump to appear. Quickly drop onto the tree stump to float past the upright pipe and collect the Phart Head that's hidden behind it.
**Secret Area 4**
After finding the third secret area, jump back onto the pipe then stand behind the upright pipe and jump up to uncover the fourth secret area.
**Secret Area 5**
When you reach the third Ma Bird, drop down onto the pipe below then stand behind the upright pipe and jump up to uncover the fifth secret area.
**Secret Area 6**
When you reach the Tan Teleport Ball, continue past it and collect the extra life from the Treasure Ball then return to the Teleport Ball and jump in.

### Level Two
**Secret Area 7**
Once you've activated the second Ma Bird on the lower section of the level, walk to the far left of the pipe then jump across and behind the upright pipe; there are hidden platforms there that allow you to reach the secret area above. Now continue to the Tan Teleport Ball and jump in.

### Boss- Joe-Head-Joe
To defeat Joe Head Joe, you must dodge his attacks while waiting for him to burp out a Silver Ball you can use to jump up and bounce on the top of his head. You need to land on Joe Head Joe's head five times before he topples over and dies.

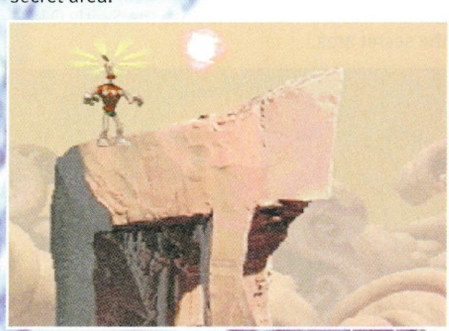
## elevated structure of terror

### Level Two
**Secret Area 1**
After activating the second Yellow Chevron on the second level, return to the previous platform and jump up onto the top of the stone pillar; there's a Universe Enema waiting to be collected. Once you have it, continue across the next few platforms and into the Teleport Ball.

### Level Three
**Secret Area 2**
From the start of the third level, turn around and jump across to the platform on the left to collect Slappy the Hamster from the secret area.

## ynt death garden

### Level Three
**Secret Area 1**
When you reach the Tan Teleport Ball at the end of the third level, use Glidey Bird to float across to the right and collect the Swirly Q from the secret area.



### Level Four
**Secret Area 2**
Once you've past the third Ma Bird on the fourth level, continue across the next few platforms then drop down and collect the Green Bullets from the secret area hidden behind the large round plant.

## ynt mines

### Level One
**Secret Area 1**
From the start, head right and kill the two Worker Ynts then jump past the rock pillar and collect the three Phoenix Hands.



**Secret Area 2**
Return to the start area and jump up onto the first small platform to collect the Swirly Q above then jump across and onto the hidden platform behind the stalactite to the left. Continue jumping up the platforms to reach the Phoenix Hand and the first Ma Bird on the ledge above.
**Secret Area 3**
When you reach the top set of rotating platforms, jump across onto the ledge on the left then walk to the middle of the ledge to reach the secret area and the jet of air that blows Klaymen up to the next air jet. Continue to the end of the level and jump into the Red Teleport Ball.

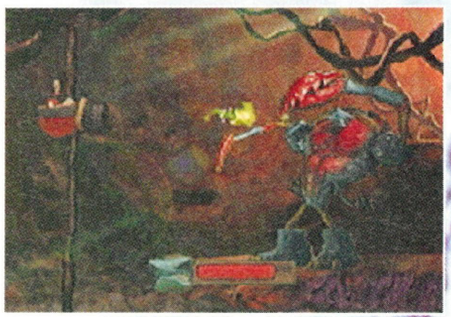
### Level Two
**Secret Area 4**
At the beginning of this new level, jump onto the moving platform then quickly jump across to the rocks on the left. There's a ledge there that allows you to jump up and collect the extra life from above.
**Secret Area 5**
When you come to the first rock pillar of this level, jump up onto the hidden platform behind it then jump up again to reach Slappy the Hamster.

## ynt weeds

No secret areas for this World.

## ynt eggs

### Level Two
**Secret Area 1**
After starting the second level, enter the large root to be blow up to the platform above then walk to the left and collect the extra life from the secret area.



### Boss- Glenn Yntis
Shoot Glenn's feet to make him open his arms exposing his face and chest then quickly move into position and shoot his chest as many times as possible. He now uses his right claw to point either upwards, in the middle or downwards, wherever he points is where he attacks with his left claw. Make sure you get out of the way wherever he points, so that he doesn't hit you when he swipes. Repeat this attack until all of his strength has gone.

## monk rushmore

### Level One
**Secret Area 1**
From the start, jump across the first few clouds then jump up and back across to the cloud on the left to collect Green Bullets and Phoenix Hand. Now continue to the end of the level and jump into the Red Teleport Ball.



### Level Two
**Secret Area 2**
When you reach the second Ma Bird on the second level, follow the line of clouds down to the left to reach the Universe Enema.

### Level Three
**Secret Area 3**
After activating the first Ma Bird on the third level, continue along the lower section of clouds

to reach the secret area containing the Super Willie.

**Secret Area 4**

After the second secret area, jump up the next few clouds then jump across to the left and collect the Universe Enema; it's concealed in the Treasure Ball.

### Level Four



**Secret Area 5**

Once on the fourth level, collect the 1970s pick-up from the cloud on the left then continue across the next section of clouds until you reach the two Phoenix Hands. Now drop down onto the smaller clouds below to reach the Green Bullet and extra life in the secret area below.

**Secret Area 6**

From the fourth secret area, continue to the next Ma Bird then follow the small clouds down to the Green Bullet in the secret area below.

## Soar Head

No secret areas for this World.

## Shards

### Level Two

**Secret Area 1**

At the end of the first level, jump into the Red Teleport Ball to reach the next level. Once you've activated the first Ma Bird on the second level, continually jump up behind the nearby rock to enter the secret area and collect all the Green Bullets.



### Level Three

**Secret Area 2**

Once you've activated the first Ma Bird on the third level, jump onto the floating platform to the right and use it to collect the Green Bullet from the secret area above.

## Castle De Los Muertos

### Level One

**Secret Area 1**

When you reach the line of Silver Balls, follow them across the gap then jump into the castle wall on the other side to enter the first secret area. Once you've collected all the power-ups from inside, use the Silver Balls to return to the platform above.

**Secret Area 2**

Once you've activated the first Ma Bird, continue past the next two towers and walk into the third tower to uncover the power-ups hidden inside.

**Secret Area 3**

From the second secret area, continue past the next tower then jump across the gap. Once on the other side, drop down the gap in the wall and collect the Clay Balls, Halo and Phoenix Hand.

**Secret Area 4**

After emerging from the third secret area, destroy the next spear stabbing guard then enter the hole in the wall to collect the Clay Balls, Phart Head and extra life from the secret area in the shadows.

### Level Two

**Secret Area 5**

After emerging on the second level, walk to the left and into the tower to expose the Swirly Q in the secret area.



**Secret Area 6**

After riding along the rails, continue into the second tower along then jump onto the top of it and collect the Clay Balls and Universe Enema from the Treasure Balls.

### Level Four

**Secret Area 7**

Once on the fourth level, continue to the clock platforms and use them to drop down and collect the Swirly Q from the secret area.

**Secret Area 8**

Continue past the Ma Bird and the long line of spear stabbing guards then jump across the two gaps. When you reach the next set of spear stabbing guards, use a Universe Enema to destroy them, then enter the hole where the second guard was positioned and walk to the right to enter the secret area.

**Secret Area 9**

After emerging from the seventh secret area, use the slanted roof to jump back and onto the previous roof where there are three Treasure Balls to collect.

### Boss- Monkey Mage

As soon as you start this level and land on the platform, wait for it reach its highest point then jump across and onto Monkey Mage's head. By this time his red forcefield has lowered. Now jump back onto one of the platforms and wait for his forcefield to lower again before jumping across onto his head. Repeat this attack until he's destroyed.

## The Incredible Drivy Runn

No secret areas for this World.

## Worm Graveyard

### Level One

**Secret Area 1**

From the start of this level, jump onto the first floating stump then carefully jump onto the stump floating up and down to reach the platform above where there's two Green Bullets and a Phoenix Hand for the taking.

**Secret Area 2**

When you reach the first Ma Bird, drop down the previous hole and jump on the Test Pilots to make it safely down to the secret area below. Collect the power-ups then use the Silver Balls to return to the upper platform. Continue to the end of the level and jump into the Red Teleport Ball.

### Level Two

**Secret Area 3**

After activating the first Ma Bird on the second level, use the stumps to reach the secret area above, it contains a Phoenix Hand, a Universe Enema and an extra life for the taking.

### Boss- Klogg

Simply catch the Clay Balls that Klogg drops while avoiding the spiked balls. Every time you catch a Clay Ball, fire it back at Klogg to reduce his energy bar. Repeat this attack until he has been defeated.

## Evil Engine #9

### Level One

**Secret Area 1**

After activating the first Ma Bird, continue across the platforms to the platform projector and use it to get across the gap. When you reach the next platform projector, use it to reach the opposite platform then drop down to the projector below in the secret area.

### Level Two

**Secret Area 2**

After activating the first Ma Bird on the second level, continue across the next gap by using the two platform projectors then drop down to the platforms to the platform projector below. Use the projected platforms to collect the Clay Balls and the extra life then continue to the end of the level and jump into the Teleport Ball.

### Level Three

**Secret Area 3**

After emerging on the third level, use the projected platforms to get across the first gap then continue across the next five platforms and jump onto the next platform projector. Once activated, drop down onto the lowest platform to reach the secret area below.

**Secret Area 4**

From the third secret area, jump across to the projector on the left and use it to create the platforms up to the Grenn Bullets and the extra life on the platform above.

### Level Four

**Secret Area 5**

On starting the fourth level, use the first platform projector to jump across the gap and reach the second platform projector. Activate the second projector then quickly make your way across to the next projector. Now make your way back towards the previous projector and up to the secret area.



# the triumphant ones

Last issue saw a massive seven competitions. Thanks for all your entries. Remember, pictures of naked women will always sway our decisions.



▸ G-POLICE/DIESEL COMPO
Answer: C
Winner: Hazeldene Threshers, Devon.

▸ TAKE A RUNNING JUMP COMPO
Answer: A
Winner: Viv Slade, Fordingbridge.
Runners-up: Robert Stevens, Kent; Grant Horsfeild, Sheffield; Brian Nissim, Hendon; M J Gamble, Cambs.

▸ COOLBOARDERS 2 COMPETITION
Answer: C
Winner: Edward Smith, London
Runners-up: Peter Linn, Glasgow; Hayley Jade Derham, Birmingham; Daniel Wickham, Milton Keynes; Adam Kitching, Lincolnshire; Michael Schierup, Denmark.

▸ RODDERS COMPO
Answer: C
Winner: P Howson, N Links
2nd: Christoper Wootton, Staffs
3rd: Mr. M. Frampton, Canvey Island

▸ FIFA ROAD TO WORLD CUP 98 COMPO
Answer: D
Winner: Richard O'Grady, West Dunbartonshire
Runners-up: Scott Archer, West Yorkshire; J. Morris, Chippenham; Marc Seaton, Rugby; Mr. R Smith, Shropshire; Ronan Scullion, Co. Antrim.

▸ SYMBOLS CLOTHING COMPO
Winner: John Powers, London

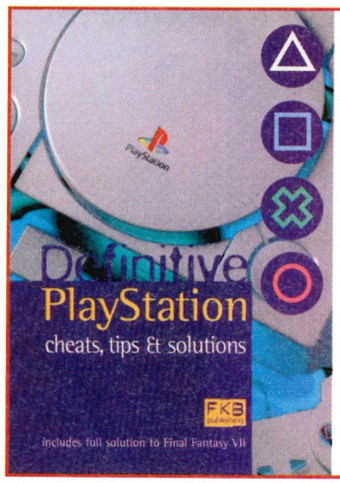
▸ BBE COMPO
Winners: Any Wycombe, Milton Keynes; Peter Robertson, Glasgow; Richard Cooke, Sheffield; John McKenna, Merseyside; D. Hadfield, Barnsley.


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## GAME.COM




**Hmm... interesting. Game.com is more than just a hand-held games console; it's also a personal organiser and internet access terminal to boot.**
On the games front, there's an ever-expanding library of carts for around £20-£25 each, including Sonic Jam, Fighters Megamix, Mortal Kombat, Wheel of Fortune, Batman & Robin, Duke Nukem and more. Resident Evil 2, Turok: Dinosaur Hunter and Castlevania are planned. The screen is monochrome, so its four AA batteries won't run dry within seconds, and there are four comfortably-positioned action buttons to use as well as a solid, responsive D-Pad. Best of all, the machine uses touch-screen technology, enabling you to select an on-screen icon by touching it with the tool provided, instead of having to drag a pointer across the screen with the D-Pad. This is phenomenally useful for some games and utilities.
The Game.com isn't limited to games, though. The console has five built-in functions, namely a user-defined phone book to store those useful numbers, a calendar with every month this century and the next stored, an on-screen calculator and a high scores table which automatically stores your last ten high scores from any cartridge game. There's also a cool game of solitaire - don't laugh, you can play it for hours. The touch-screen input is a real boon here - it would be incredibly fiddly with a D-Pad-driven pointer. No doubt there'll be more utilities available as carts in the near-future.
Amazingly, the Game.com also allows you to use text-based internet functions such as e-mail. With an external modem (not supplied) and an internet cartridge you can, by subscribing to a text-based service provider (around £6 a month) use both e-mail and text-based sites on the World Wide Web. This is arguably the cheapest way of accessing e-mail available.
The Game.com was originally launched at a £79.99 price point, but this has now been slashed to a far more affordable £34.99. We feel the machine is better suited to cerebral, puzzle-type games than arcade extravaganzas, so if you're into this sort of title, give it a go. The Wheel of Fortune and Lights Out carts are, quite simply, superb.

TIGER®

## MUSIC

Slam dunkin' in at number one this month mate is a rocket fuelled nu-school breakbeat compilation on DCI Records. **HI OCTANE - SLABS OF JUNKED UP FUNK** brings together some of the best tunes from the new breakbeat scene. Hi Octane is mixed by Dave Tipper and offers tunes from **Hybrid, Freestylers, Tsunami One** and **Tipper** himself amongst others. This techno and drum 'n' bass-influenced breakbeat sound is gonna be massive in '98, so get in on it now with this excellent compilation... **FSUK 2** is on the way, and it's to be mixed by the Freestylers so expect much big beat and breakbeat action. It's out in February... The mighty **JOHN DIGWEED** has just released a new mix CD on the highly-respected **GLOBAL UNDERGROUND** series. If you've heard him play live, then you've an idea of what to expect - trancey house of the highest order. The smooth mix contains tracks by **Danny Tenaglia** (Elements), **Crystal Method** (Keep Hope Alive) and **Paul Van Dyk** (Words). Anyone into the **Sasha/Digweed** sound will lap this up... Coming from a slightly different angle is **THE SOUND OF THE UNDERGROUND - IBIZA**, mixed by the famous Balearic man himself, **DJ ALFREDO**. Tunes by **Boris Dlugosh** and **Sex-O-Sonique** sit nicely alongside more underground cuts from the likes of **DJ Q** and **DJ SNEAK** to make a great party compilation... It's vocal garage time with a new **BOOKER T** album - **THE PRIZE COLLECTION**, available on Azuli Records. It features the likes of **Juliet Roberts, Soul II Soul and Robin S**... Platipus records are set to release a new album by trance act **QUIETMAN**. **SHHH!** is the title and it includes the classic tracks, **Plastic Gourd** and **Now And Zen** amongst a selection of top quality dance floor and home listening trance. It comes on two CDs, with the first being dedicated to the more dance floor friendly cuts and the second on the more ambient tip. Both CDs are superb and are highly recommended for anyone with a slight penchant for this sound... Have you heard **AIR'S** superb **SEXY BOY** on the radio? Well, they've got an album out and it's called **MOON SAFARI**; check it out for more laid-back, kitsch and most definitely French easy listening.

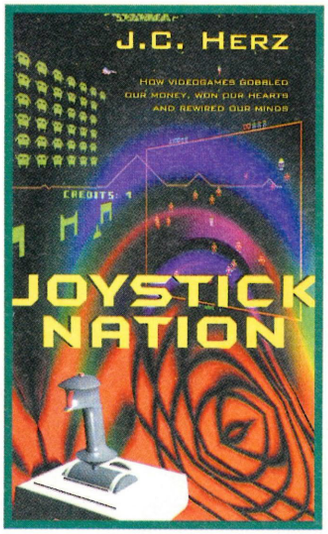



## HI OCTANE COMPETITION

**If you fancy getting into the breakbeat action on the superb Hi Octane compilation, you're in the right place because we've got five copies to give away. To stand a chance of winning, simply send in a postcard with your name and address. The first five pulled out of the bass-bin each get a copy.**
**Send entries to Rocket Fuel Compo, at the competition address. If we happen to get any entries after the 24th April '98, we'll burn them.**

# BOOKS

**All new forms of media go through an inevitable period of rejection or vilification at the hands of the established mass culture, stretching back to the origins of the bound book, phonograph, television, and video recorder. Each has been dismissed as anti-social and/or dangerous, and worthy only of stamping out rather than study. Computer games have been through this negative honeymoon period (as the condemnations in the national press that still pop up now and again show), but the appearance of this book could signal the start of a new mature mode of existence for our favourite pastime, with intelligent analysis and thought replacing hysterical and ill-informed reactionism.**



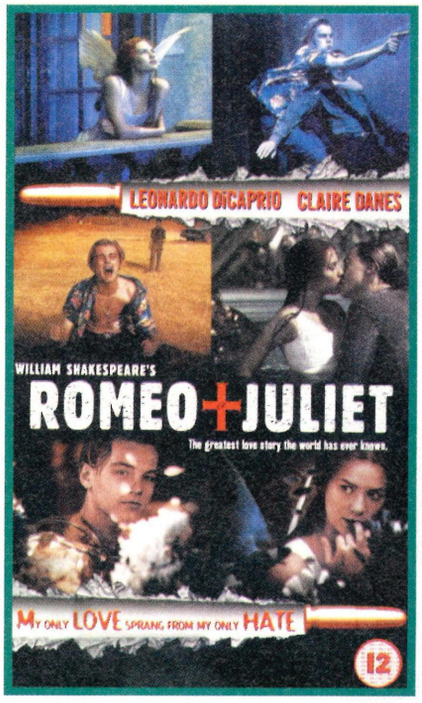

The cryptically-female author JC Herz offers both a history of games from their most primitive mainframe boffin origins, and a cross-cultural overview of their current state. Fond of using anthropological evolutionary terms to describe the growth of arcade and home systems her clever-clogs but lyrical style makes for entertaining reading, and the balance between factual chronicling and sharp insights is nicely struck. The culture of the video arcade, the Disney/Orwellian workings of the Nintendo corporation, why Doom was such a phenomena and the differing gender demands on games all come in for scrutiny. Her sometimes-cutting wit balances the not-at-all dumbed-down thrust of her observations. Being an American, though, means the Spectrum/C64 golden era of the 80s is not really covered at all, as the yanks more or less skipped this generation, so it's down to one of you out there to tell this untold history and fill the gap.

Perhaps this is best read by the mildly-obsessive gamer who's seen the past and thinks about the future. Joystick Nation is well worth putting down the control pad for, and might even change the way you look at what we're really doing when we plug in and play.

# FLIX

**If you thought Shakespeare was for boring old farts in chunky sweaters and sandals, watch this film and think again. Baz Luhrman's 1997 version of Romeo and Juliet, now available to own on video, breathes new life into the bard's classic tragedy by taking it out of Renaissance Italy and setting it in modern-day Mexico.**

Everyone knows the story; Romeo (Leonardo DiCaprio), a member of the powerful and influential Montague family, falls for Juliet (Claire Danes), from the equally-powerful Capulets. Already sworn enemies (as shown by the opening scene when the Montague boyz get into a gunfight with the Capulets at a petrol station), their dispute grows into a full-blown blood feud as Romeo avenges the murder of his friend Mercutio by gunning down his killer, Juliet's cousin Tybalt. Unlike most versions of the play, here the violence is offered in graphic detail. Perhaps this is how it should be - Romeo and Juliet was never a Barbara Cartland-style romance and the blood feud (common in Renaissance Italy) wasn't about settling differences over a game of tiddlywinks and a cucumber sandwich. Perhaps Luhrman's interpretation is closer to what the bard intended than we realise.




Despite the level of violence and Romeo taking an 'E' at a party (naughty boy), Romeo and Juliet is certificate 12. It costs £12.99, and is available just about everywhere.

# BOARD WITH FOOTBALL

Football fans will be delighted at this, Waddingtons' latest addition to the Monopoly series. Monopoly, World Cup '98 Edition replaces the street names on the board for the World Cup '98 teams, so instead of Old Kent Road you get Scotland, and instead of Mayfair there's Brazil. We reckon there's some discrepancy on the placing of teams - I mean, how can they put England next to Argentina and Italy?

The train stations are replaced by the French stadiums where the World Cup matches are set to take place, and Community Chest and Chance have become Home and Away cards. The aim of the game is still the same, but instead of building up a property empire, you have to become a budding Alan Sugar-style football entrepreneur.

World Cup '98 is an excellent variant on the classic boardgame, and you don't have to be a football fan to enjoy it; it's a great laugh for anyone. Fun for all the family. It's £24.99 and it's limited edition, so you'd better be quick if you want a copy.




## WORLD CUP MONOPOLY COMPO

**We've a copy of Monopoly World Cup '98 to give away. To be in with a chance, answer this simple question and send it to the address below:**

WHO ARE THE CURRENT WORLD CUP HOLDERS?
A. ENGLAND
B. CAMEROON
C. SCOTLAND
D. BRAZIL

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# Issue 5

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**Rascal**
**Alundra**
**Powerboat Racing**
**Crime Killer**
**Circuit Breakers**
**Ghost in the Shell**
**Spawn**
**Xenocracy**
**Point Blank**
**Bug Riders**
**Breath of Fire III**

**plus many, many more (we just don't know what they are yet)**



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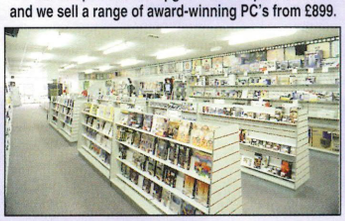
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