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extreme

PlayStation MAGAZINE

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ISSUE 10 October '98

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UK EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

DUKE NUKEM TIME TO KILL

DUKE'S LATEST GAME REVIEWED

MedEvil
Tales of swords and sorcery

Baby Universe
Sony's latest software toy

Moto Racer 2
Get on yer bike...

TOMB RAIDER III ADVENTURES OF LARA CROFT

EXCLUSIVE NEW SCREENSHOTS OF LARA'S LATEST EPIC

EXCLUSIVE PICTURES

TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION

METAL GEAR SOLID

EXCLUSIVE IMPORT REVIEW



VICTORY BOXING 2

Can JVC's interpretation of the Noble Art go the distance?

ALSO REVIEWED
X-Men Vs Street Fighter
Red Alert: Retaliation
Madden NFL '99
Assault
G•Darius
Ninja
Future Cop: LAPD 2100
Tekken 3 (PAL)
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Editorial

What a great month for games. We don't give good marks easily - a game has to be really cool to get over 90%, but this month's releases are of such an incredible quality that almost everything is in the 80s and 90s. PlayStation games seem to be getting better and better.

This month we've another excellent free gift; a complete guide to Mortal Kombat 4, no less. While other mags are falling over themselves to offer yet another guide to Tekken 3 (we covered it in last issue's free solutions book - with ten other games!), we give you something you actually need, not tired guides to a game that's been covered to death.

See you next month...

Ian

REGULARS

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Hot news from around the globe.

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We give you the low-down on forthcoming games...

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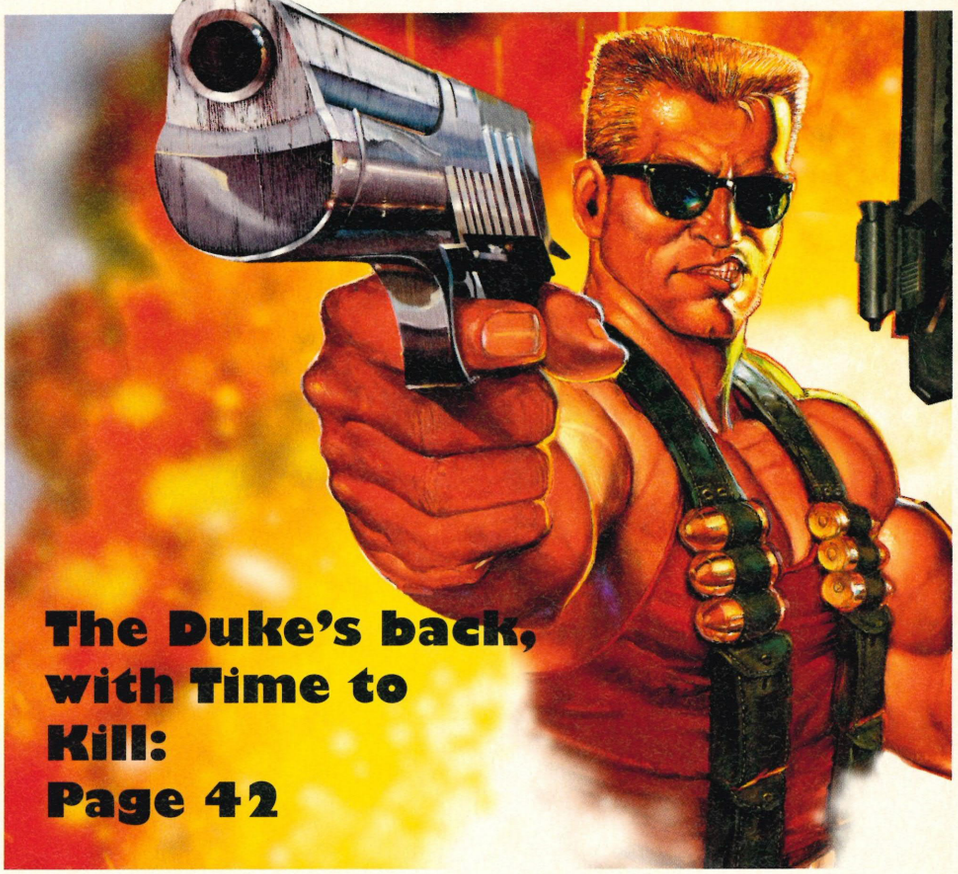
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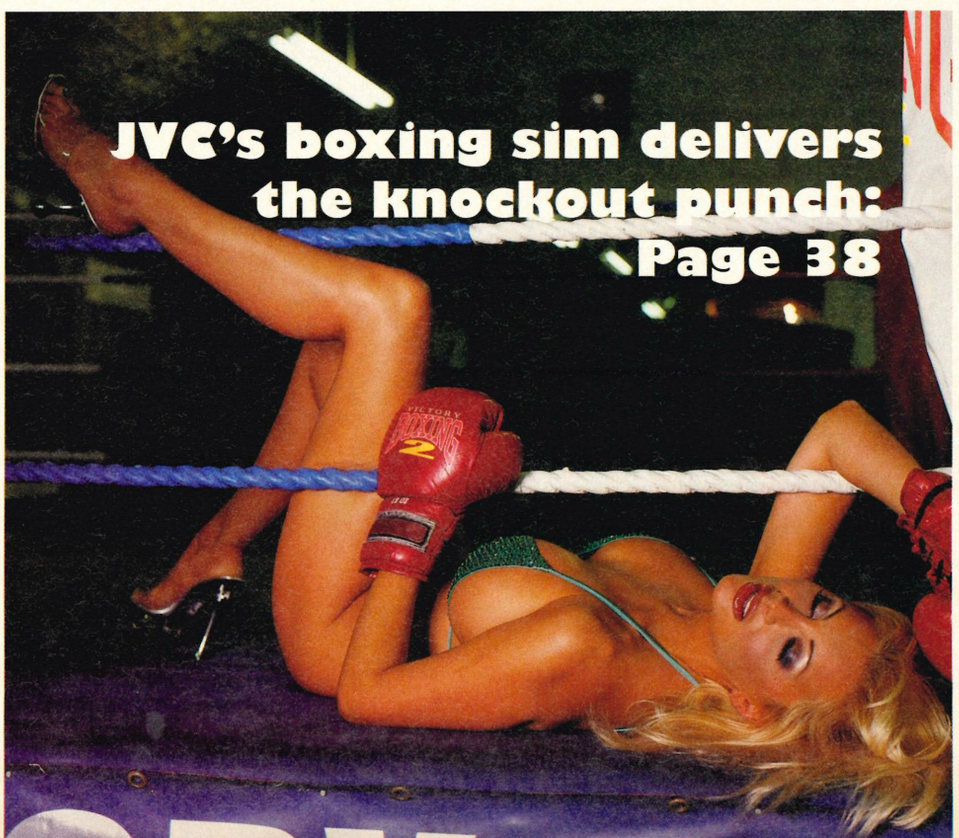
Next Issue 98
But read this one first...

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VICTORY BOXING 2



JVC's boxing sim delivers the knockout punch: Page 38

ents

MediEvil - swords and sorcery silliness from Sony: Page 60



TENCHU
STEALTH ASSASSINS

Activision's strategic slice-'em-up proves a real winner: Page 34



How we rate the games...

90-100%
A near-perfect classic; outstanding example of its genre.

80-89%
Not quite top-of-the-league, but great fun nonetheless.

70-79%
Still not a bad game, but considerable room for improvement.

60-69%
Significant flaws creeping in - think carefully before buying.

50-59%
Decidedly average - nothing to write home about.

30-49%
Hardly any fun to be had here. Definitely not worth buying.

0-29%
Disastrous - you won't want to play it twice.

GAME GUIDE

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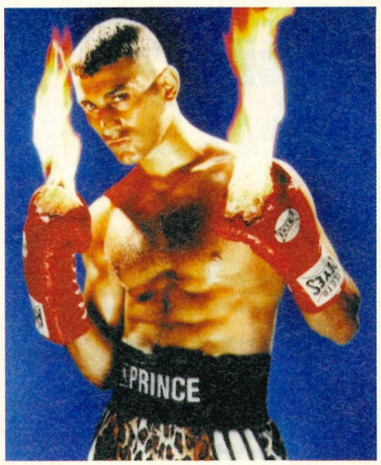

Metal Gear Solid

signals

All the news and more...

CODEMASTERS BOX CLEVER

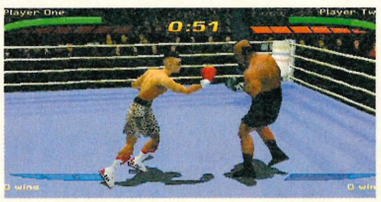
Prince Naseem Boxing announced



Codemasters have secured the rights to produce a boxing game based on the most exciting British boxer since Kirkland Lang. The flamboyant Prince Naseem Hamed will appear in Prince Naseem Boxing some time in 1999.

The game, which Codies claim will 'recreate both the skill and the high-adrenaline excitement of the sport', is set to feature over 100 individual boxers in Exhibition and Career game modes. They intend to capture the style and attitude of the dynamic 23-year-old fighter as well as his explosive boxing style, which has left him undefeated in 30 professional fights.

The Prince himself said, "I wanted to have my own game and there has been no shortage of offers. But I wanted to do more than just give my name, and Codemasters have really involved me in the whole project. It will reflect everything I stand for; the power, the energy and, of course, the showmanship. I'm very excited to be on board".





PLAYSTATION PRICE PLUNGE

Sony repackage the PSX at a new lower price

Sony have repackaged PlayStation once more, offering their Dual Shock Pack for a mere £99.99. The new pack includes a PlayStation, RF lead and a single Sony Analogue Controller, though no memory card.

Although more of a repackaging than a reduction (the £129.99 Value Pack offered two digital controllers and a memory card), at a sub-£100 price point it's sure to sell well at Christmas, expanding the PlayStation market still further.



The PlayStation has already sold over 40 million consoles worldwide, 2.5 million in the UK alone, and with these figures look set to rise still further, software companies are sure to increase their games output. With over 500 games to choose from already, the future's looking very rosy indeed.

PIRATE'S PARROT UNCOVERS HORDE

Pet does more than sing...



When Trading Standards officers raided the home of a suspected computer games pirate in Mountain Ash, South Wales, they searched without success for some time. He might well have got away with it if his parrot hadn't chirped up with, "under the mattress, under the mattress". The grateful Trading Standards officers then searched the bed and found 200 illegally-duplicated games. It's thought the parrot picked up the phrase by hearing his pirate owner offering his hiding place to contacts. Believe it or not, this story is true.

CLASSIC MOMENTS IN VIDEOGAME VIOLENCE

They don't come much more classic than this - the Fatalities in the Mortal Kombat game opened a whole new world for videogame violence, as explained in the History of Mortal Kombat secion of this month's free book. Shown here is Sub-Zero's spine rip, where he grabs an opponent by the head and literally pulls it off, leaving his hapless victim's spine and cerebral cortex dangling like a blood-soaked string. Nice!



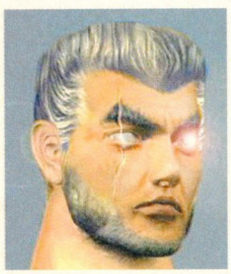
TEKKEN THE RIP?

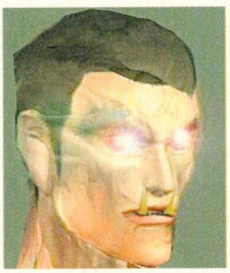
Tekken 4 news a hoax, say Sony

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The game, which Codies claim will 'recreate both the skill and the high-adrenaline excitement of the sport', is set to feature over 100 individual boxers in Exhibition and Career game modes. They intend to capture the style and attitude of the dynamic 23-year-old fighter as well as his explosive boxing style, which has left him undefeated in 30 professional fights.

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THE FORCE IS WITH THEM

Activision wins LucasArts License

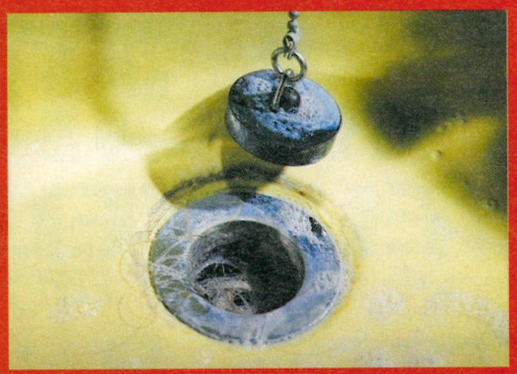


Activision, Europe's fastest-growing games publisher, have secured the rights to distribute LucasArts game titles in Europe and other territories. LucasArts, a division of Star Wars creators Lucasfilm, produce games licensed from their sister company's movies as well as non-licensed titles.

PlayStation releases to date include Star Wars titles Rebel assault, Masters of the Tëras Käsi and Dark Forces, and also non-film titles such as Herc's Adventures and Ballblazer Champions. The new licensing agreement is sure to cover games based on the forthcoming three new Star Wars films.

"LucasArts chose Activision due to its solid presence in the United Kingdom and distribution expertise in related export territories," says Jack Sorensen, president of LucasArts. "With the two companies sharing compatible goals, we look forward to a strong and successful partnership in the months ahead."

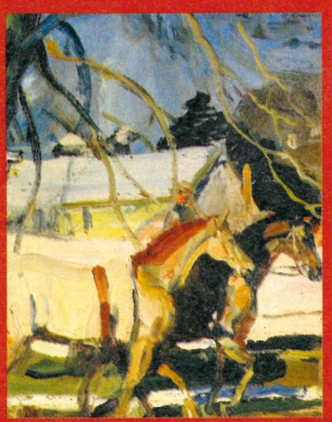
POST TASTE



The best and worst of our compo postcards

Hmmm... Not a great month for interesting and original postcard competition entries, despite our giving away a surprise gift to the sender of the best and worst offerings each month. Or perhaps that should read 'shock' - the prizes are invariably the wrong side of average, and often a lot worse.

This month Mark Parsons of Rushden, Northants gets the prize for the best postcard for this horsey painting, but only 'cos no one sent anything better. The worst postcard award goes to the far more worthy George Reeves of Sutton in Ash, Nottinghamshire for this dreadful picture of a bath plug. They don't make 'em like that any more (thank God). Mark wins a couple of game badges and a Wild 9 postcard, with George getting a toy racing car used to advertise the forthcoming Per4mer Racing Wheel.



VIRGIN TAKE THE FIELD

Viva Football show at V98





Troubled software giant Virgin put on an two-day exhibition celebrity football tournament at the recent V98 festival. A team from Loaded magazine, a female side made of actresses from Brookside and Hollyoaks and music stars squad were among the competitors, but the eventual winners were the Arsenal Celebrities.

The star of the event (apart from the over-enthusiastic supporter pictured here and a male streaker you really don't want to see) was a young striker called Owen - ex-Take That star Mark Owen.

EARTHWORM JIM 3D DELAYED

More time needed for EWJ 3D





The hotly-expected Earthworm Jim 3D has been delayed, and now seems unlikely to be released in time for Christmas. Interplay refuse to rush the game to meet the Christmas market, preferring to take their time and release a quality product.

"If a product isn't ready, we won't release it - it's as simple as that", said Interplay's Peter Bilotta. "If Earthworm Jim isn't ready for Christmas, it will be a huge hit in 1999, and titles like Wild 9 and R/C Stunt Copter will do well for us this year".

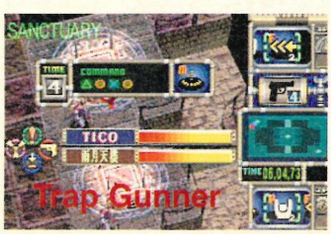
The Earthworm Jim code we've seen so far already shows great attention to detail, especially in the clear and unintrusive camera. Although the additional wait is annoying, if it makes for a better product, it's ultimately good news for the PlayStation gamer.

KONAMI MAP NEXT YEAR WITH ATLUS

Japanese titles coming to UK

Konami have secured the rights to publish three games by Japanese developers Atlus Software. The games are Trap Gunner, which is released later this year, with an RPG called Rebus and an action/adventure hybrid called Dark Messiah to follow in early 1999.





Konami are actively seeking out Japanese titles to dust down and release officially in the UK, so there's sure to be more to follow. Perhaps Kartia and the Ogre Battle saga, reviewed in earlier issues, are just around the corner.

TRIUMPH AND AGONY

Abe's Oddysee / Iznogoud (2D Platformers)





In these 3D-obsessed days, Abe's Oddysee proved you can still make a 2D platformer that's fun to play. Its rendered graphics, wonderful animation and intelligent level design made it a true classic. Here was a main character you could really feel for, solving puzzles which fitted seemlessly into his game world and facing baddies that made your heart stop if you made a wrong move, especially while tip-toeing past a sleeping guard. Here's a game which showed you can dust down an old concept and fill it with fresh ideas.

Not so Iznogoud. Featuring flat 2D characters, ropey animation and some of the worst game design ever seen on a PlayStation, this is one of the console's all-time lows. The graphics would shame a SNES, and just about every platforming cliché is offered and every classic mistake made. For example, you often have to make leaps in the dark, jumping off the screen and hoping you land safely on something you couldn't see from where you started. They couldn't even get Iznogoud's catchphrase right. The French cartoon character wanted to be the Caliph, not the Sultan. Oh well. At least the game lives up to its name - IZ-NO-GOUD.

D.I.R.T COMES CLEAN

Funcom's racer signed to Activision

Activision have acquired the rights to publish the forthcoming Funcom motorcycle scrambler D.I.R.T, now pencilled in for a Winter release. The deal covers all territories world-wide except Asia, and also includes sequel and conversion rights.

D.I.R.T, previewed last issue, is now almost complete. It's a tricky racer, but thankfully Funcom have made it less easy to fall off your bike than in the version we previewed. Realistic bike physics are used throughout - at last, a two-wheeled racer that doesn't feel like you're driving a car.



The deal represents a second coup for the Norway-based software developers, following their game Mario Kart-like SDR being picked up by Sony. Expect full reviews of both games soon.

JOYTYECH BITE BACK IN PERIPHERAL PRICE WAR

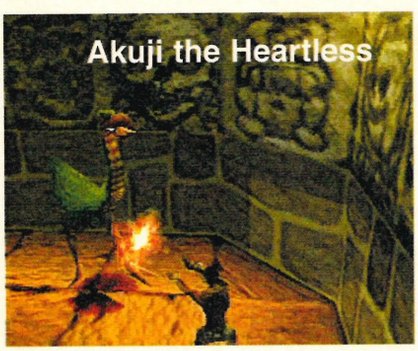
Even more PSX accessories come down in price

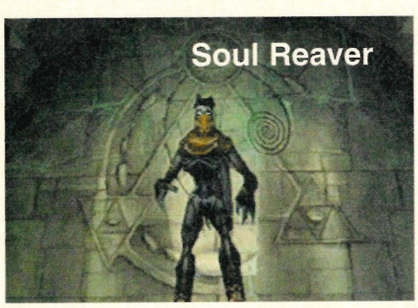




Following Sony's peripheral price slash, Joytech have reduced the price of their own peripherals. Their Analogue Controller Plus falls from £24.99 to £19.99, and the digital PlayStation Controller Plus reduced to a mere £5.99. Joytech memory cards will now cost £6.99, a saving of £3.

Joytech marketing director Matthew Lamprell describes the reductions as offering a 'win/win' situation for PlayStation gamers, describing the lower-priced peripherals as 'an excellent product range at great prices'.

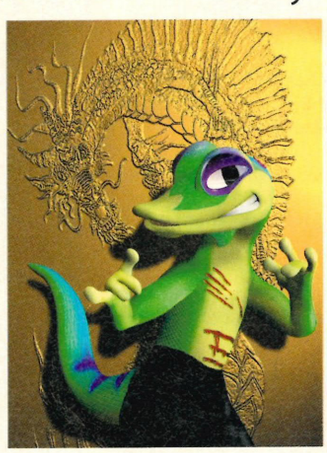




EIDOS ACQUIRE CRYSTAL DYNAMICS

...and new games on the way

Eidos, ever keen to expand their already-huge roster of talent, have acquired California-based software company Crystal Dynamics. Now Eidos will publish on-going Crystal Dynamics games Unholy War (reviewed this issue), Akuji the Heartless, Gex 3 and, of course, Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver. The London-based company have also bought the rights to publish Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain and Pandemonium 2 as budget games, though no firm release dates have been set.



GADGETS



After a hard day's gaming on your PlayStation, with your thumbs as sore as a lifer's ringpiece and a thousand explosion effects still going off in your head, what could be better than a device which calms the senses and relaxes the mind? LifeTools' MindLab Orion could be just what you're looking for.

While wearing the special glasses and earphones and activating the machine, stunning psychedelic patterns swirl before your eyes as soothing sounds drift over the headphones. Within minutes, claim the manufacturers, you should be in a deeply relaxed state, so much so that you might feel as if you're drifting through space or floating in the sea. Benefits claimed for the MindLab Orion include accelerated learning, improved confidence and heightened senses. But does it work?

We found the MindLab very easy to use, with detailed, clear instructions. Although the idea of flashing lights being relaxing is a curious concept, it does work. The pre-set sensations and trainers vary from relaxation and mental pick-me-ups to learning and well-being. The brain takes a while to adjust to the rhythmic sounds and pulsating lights, but after a while you do feel calmer and more relaxed. The mental pick-me-ups are very stimulating, but probably no more than some upbeat music or a strong coffee.

As well as the in-built sessions, the MindLab is accompanied by a series of CDs. These range from deeper relaxation to helping you learn a foreign language. As you listen to the CDs the flashing lights heighten your perception and help focus the mind. You can also listen to your favourite CDs while wearing the Lab, the beat of the music being translated into pulses of light.

You need to experiment to get the most from the MindLab Orion, and at £249 (!), it's hardly cheap.

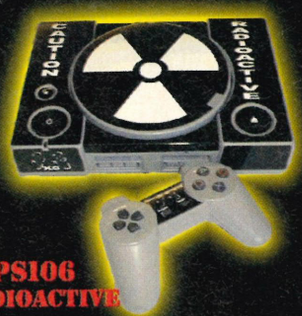
For more information or a free brochure on the MindLab Orion, call 01260 282000. The phone lines are staffed 24 hours a day. Alternatively, write to LifeTools, Freepost NWW17019, Congleton CW12 1YR.

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TRADE ENQUIRIES WELCOME !

expected

Insider info on future games...







Can Eutechnyx' latest ace racer out-perform their own Total Drivin?

C3 Racing

Car Constructors' Championship

PUBLISHER
Infogrames

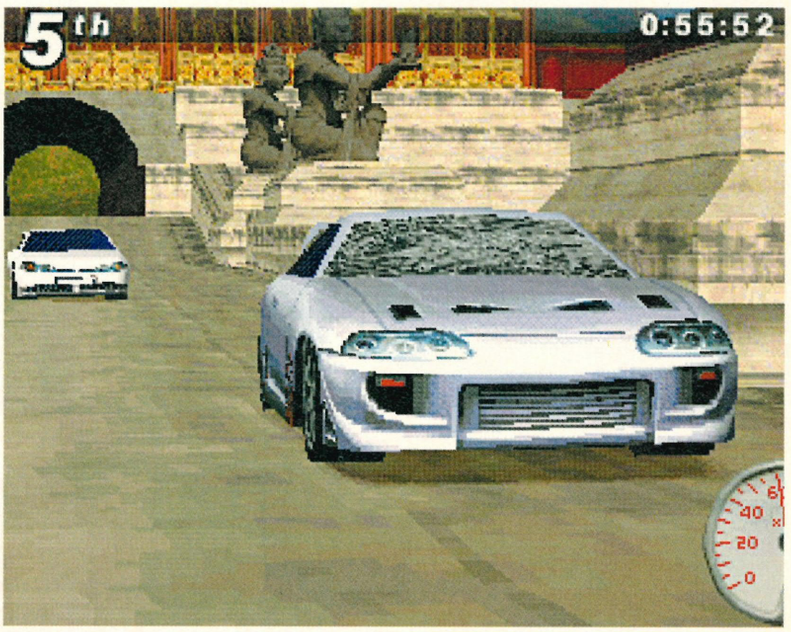
DEVELOPER
Eutechnyx

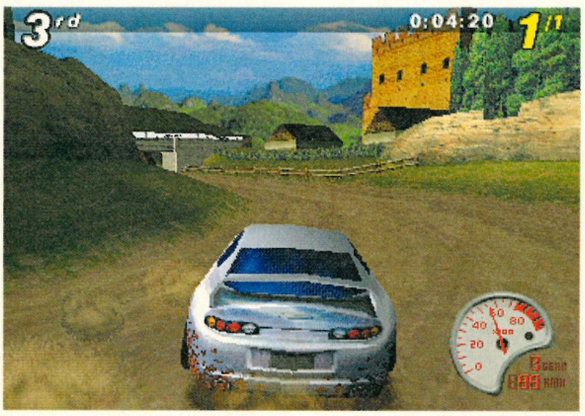
RELEASED
TBA

Another racer - don't dismiss it out of hand, though, 'cos it's by the people that brought you Total Drivin', and if anyone can find a gap in this haplessly overcrowded genre, Eutechnyx can.

C3 Racing - Car Constructors Championship (what a mouthful) features over 20 genuine cars from the likes of Mitsubishi, Ford, Marcos and Nissan. There are 30 tracks set over 10 countries, and weather effects including fog, mist, rain, snow and lightning.

As you progress, your car becomes increasingly muddy. Drive through a river or puddle and it's washed off. Ten out of ten for attention to detail, then...









Pro Pinball - Big Race USA

PUBLISHER
Empire

DEVELOPER
Empire

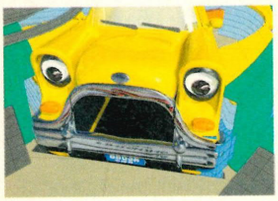
RELEASED
Winter '98

Insert your own Tommy gag...

The first Pro Pinball game was ace, and Empire promise the newie will be 'the fastest, most intricate pinball sim ever created'. Brave words, but with 16 American cities for playing areas, up to six balls in play simultaneously and a head-to-head mode played over a link-up cable, who can doubt them?

Opponents faced include a Monster Truck, Hot Rod, Sports Car, Mini-Beetle and a Police Car. Neat.

All we've seen of Pro Pinball - Big Race USA is the screenshots on this page, but look forward to more information soon.





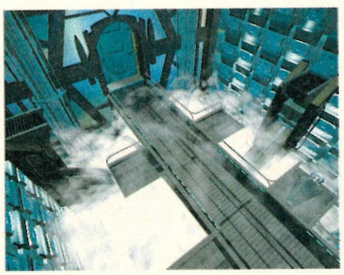


Ubik

PUBLISHER
Cryo Interactive Entertainment

DEVELOPER
Cryo Interactive Entertainment

RELEASED
TBA

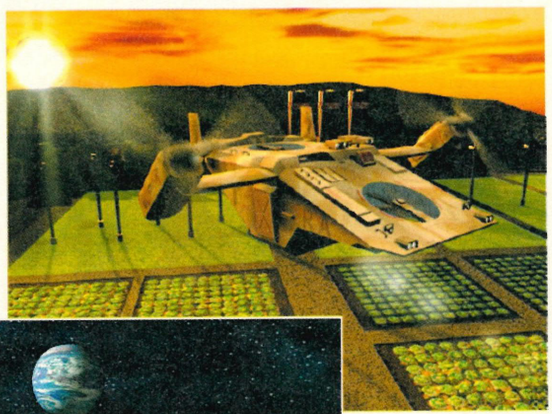


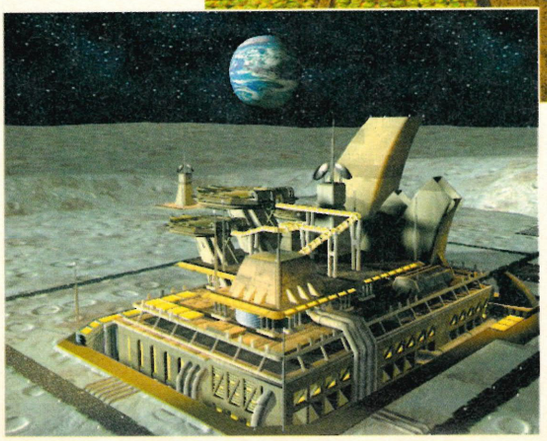
Ubik has been given a few more months' development time, allowing Cryo to make it leaner and better looking than its PC counterpart. Based on the work of sci-fi author Philip K Dick, the game is set in New York, 2019, when mega-corporations fight it out for mastery.

Ubik features two game universes with 15 levels for each, 60 characters, 30 types of weapons, 110 types of psychic powers and cinematic transition sequences. The PC game fared very well, and if the PlayStation version proves better (as we're promised) it should be a real winner.

Dick's Ubik in quick trick schtick...











PUBLISHER
Cryo Interactive Entertainment

DEVELOPER
Cryo Interactive Entertainment

RELEASED
Early '99

Easy to catch, hard to cure?

Virus

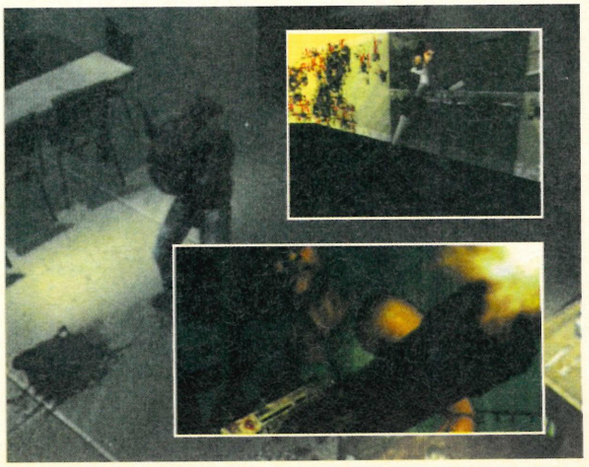
Based on the film starring Jamie Lee Curtis, which is in turn based on a Dark Horse Comic, Virus is a Resident Evil/Tomb Raider-style game with 11 levels, over 40 creatures, nine types of weapons and five boss monsters.

While getting used to her new role as Assistant District Attorney, Joan Averil gets to work on a homicide case. There's a serial killer on the loose, and he leaves his dismembered victims with limbs replaced by metal art. Naturally, this is where you come in...

Virus is progressing well. Although originally pencilled in for an October release, it's been put back to coincide with the film's release.









And not a teabag in sight...

Monkey Hero

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive

DEVELOPER Blam!

RELEASED Christmas '98

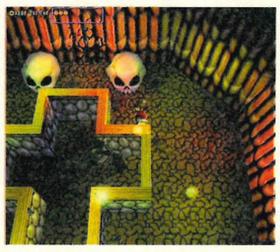
For the first time ever, Anime and Disney styles of animation have been mixed together to make create Monkey Hero's unique graphical look. As Monkey, you are challenged to venture through in excess of 16 action-rich 3D landscapes and defeat 14 unique and taxing bosses.

The game is said to have a well balanced use of both tough arcade-style enemies and logical puzzle-solving across 2,500 different screens. The game is expected to be rich in secret areas and have many different endings to give it the replayability factor that we have grown accustomed to.

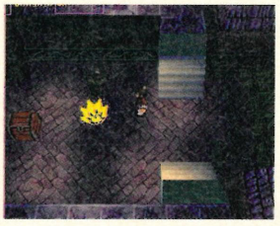
Stay tuned for more on this as it happens, but expect to see a late Christmas release for this baby.

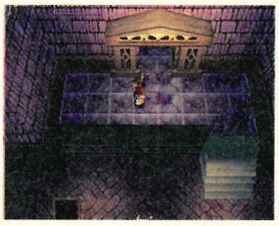












Golf Pro

Fore!

PUBLISHER Empire

DEVELOPER Empire

RELEASED November '98

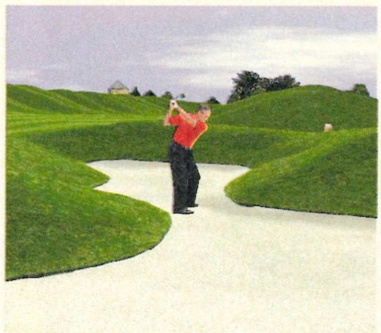
Empire claim Golf Pro is 'the most realistic golf simulation ever' on the PlayStation. Judging by the early version we've seen, they could be right.

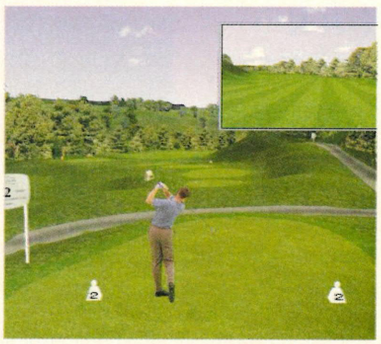
Eschewing the usual advancing bar, click to strike approach where a power meter rises until the player presses a button, then falls again, with the player's second press aiming to halt it on a line to determine accuracy. Instead, Golf Pro uses a system they call Realswing, where the joypad apes the movement of the real club and therefore offers direct control over the golfers.

While only two courses are on offer, St Mellion, Cornwall, and Hilton Head in North Carolina, each of the 36 holes has been recreated with tremendous attention to detail. A three-man team carried out an inch-perfect survey on the actual real-world courses, resulting in the most accurate depiction of a genuine course yet - you can almost hear the leaves rustle.

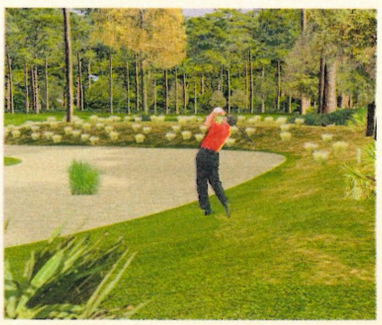
An intuitive handicapping system, instinctive learning curve and tips from Gary Player mean the game works for experts and novices alike. You can even enable an in-game commentary feature, where the top pros offer helpful hints on how you're doing. Over 90 different players are featured, with their swings involving over 20,000 frames of animation.











The shoot-'em-up renaissance continues...

Expendable

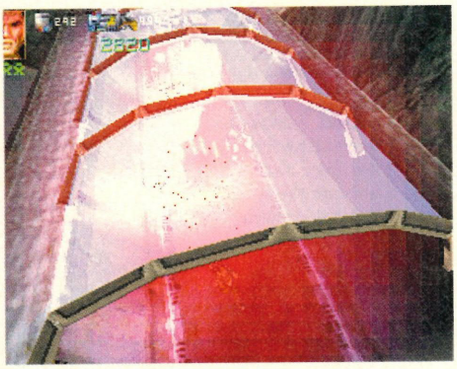
PUBLISHER Rage Software

DEVELOPER Rage Software

RELEASED Early '99

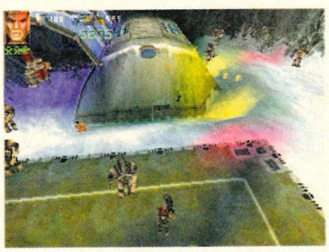
We haven't been able to get our hands on a playable demo of Expendable as yet, but we've got a few interesting pointers at hand and some pretty funky shots to keep you going until next time.

There are some interesting features used in Expendable. Rage's own dynamic lighting effects engine is featured throughout the game. The player must carry out missions that include objectives like protection, reconnaissance, destruction and even environmental modification! There are 20 missions in all, with a total of 55 hours of gameplay. If that wasn't enough, there are 12 different vehicles to assist you over land, air and through the water all having their own individual strategic attributes.



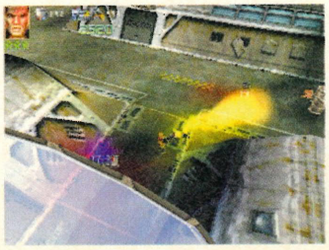
Expendable is rumoured to have a famous graphic novel author on the team who is taking care of the story, script and cut scenes included in the game for added depth and interest. Could arcade-style shoot-'em-ups be moving away from the plotless drivel that's become commonplace? You'll have to wait and see...

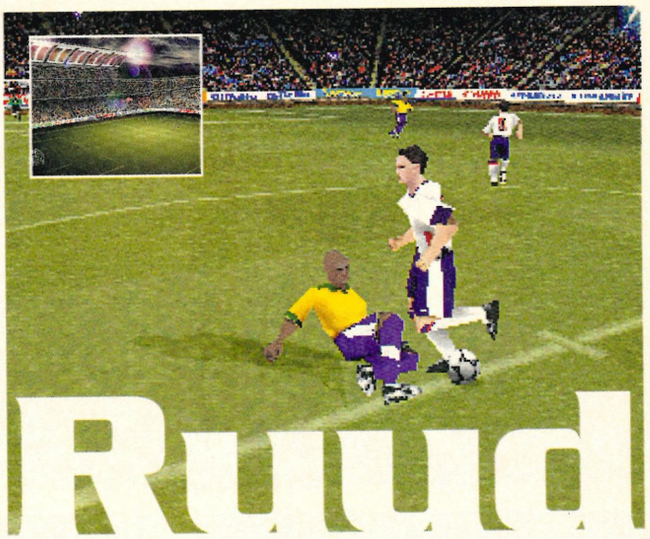












Ruud Gullit Striker

Could it give ISS Pro 98 a Ruud awakening?

PUBLISHER Rage Software

DEVELOPER Rage Software

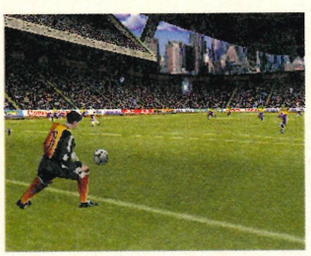
RELEASED Early '99

Striker returns once more, this time under the guise of Ruud 'hair-cut' Gullit. The Striker series has sold in excess of 1,500,000 copies in all four corners of the world to date, and Rage Software hope to add to that figure tremendously with their latest footy extravaganza.

Rage's very own 'first touch' control system has been used as a benchmark in Ruud Gullit Striker to produce consistent and fast-paced action. The artificial intelligence used in the game has been designed with the help of a top England team coach, and the tactics advised by the Football Association itself to produce one of the most realistic-looking football simulations ever created.



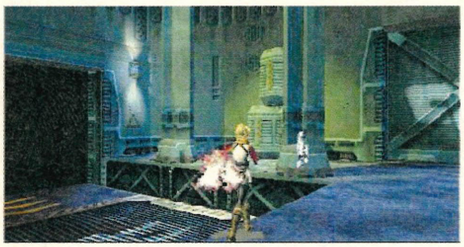
Johnathon Pearce is your commentator, while footy experts Ron Atkinson and Trevor 'lets take another look at that' Brooking are on hand to advise players on how to improve their game while you're playing! Ruud Gullit Striker also gives you the chance to play a Full Season Mode that gives you the chance to take a Division Two team right into Europe. Expect to see a lot more of this in the near future, as it's definitely shaping up to be something pretty exciting.

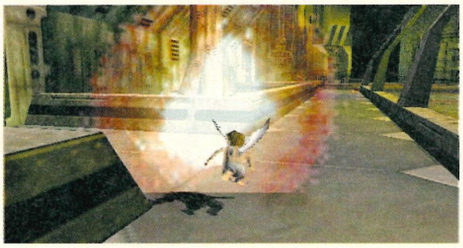












Messiah

'The Devil hath power to assume a pleasing shape' (Hamlet)

PUBLISHER Interplay

DEVELOPER Shiny Entertainment

RELEASED Early '99



This third-person shoot-'em-up is a spectacular technical achievement. Says Shiny managing director Dave Perry, "Messiah will be a revelation, extending the life of Sony's console and providing true arcade-quality graphics on the system for the first time". Brave words, but for once the game might live up to the hype.

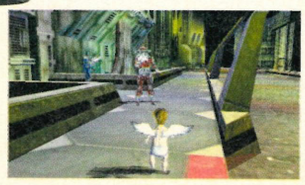
Shiny have developed a system which creates characters with all the attributes of a real human being. This RT-DAT technology (Real Time Deformation and Tessellation) was previously believed impossible on home machines, but Shiny have done it. Each figure has a realistic bone structure with virtual muscles under a textured skin. Their clothes crease and fold realistically as they move. Far-away characters use less polygons than those nearby, saving on processing power and retaining speed with no visible loss of detail.

Practical possession

Nor is the game's technology its only innovative feature. You play Bob, the cute little angel seen in the screenshots, but (thankfully) you have the power to possess your enemies and control their actions, giving you a potential roster of over 20 playable characters, human and non-human. Each has his own unique weapons and abilities. Using this unique ability, the seemingly harmless Bob can crawl, blast, climb, battle and (as himself) fly through the game's six huge levels. Expect an enthusiastic reception from gamers and the inevitable complaints from God-botherers.











PUBLISHER Activision

DEVELOPER DreamWorks Interactive

T'ai Fu

RELEASED 4th December

Is it grrrrrrrreat?

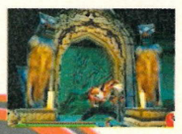












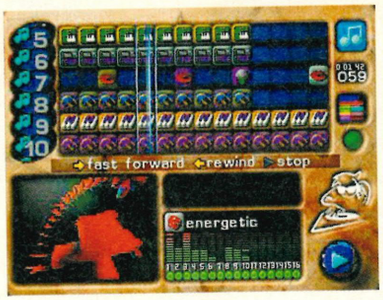
What a daft name. T'ai Fu has nothing to do with teabags, and despite the Tony-like main character, isn't a Frosties licence either. Instead it's a 3D beat-'em-up based on Double Dragon-style exploration rather than individual fights. Thus you, as the eponymous kung fu tiger, wander through Ancient China taking on various animal clans, culminating in the inevitable boss fight. You start the game with a very limited arsenal, but by bettering the bosses you learn their moves and add them to your own - neat idea or what?

The code we saw is far from finished, but the overall game concept looks sound. The moves you pick up from the various animal tribes are tailored to the creatures in question, for example the crane clan teach you moves like the crane hover, which allows you to get extra mileage from your leaps. Thus subsequent levels demand longer jumps, your new abilities opening the door for new hazards. Fighting methods are, to some extent, based on genuine kung fu styles and the main character is anthropomorphic enough to make this visually realistic. The gameplay needs a little tightening up at present, but we've no reason to believe this won't happen. If the enemies are tough and challenging, demanding every move in your ever-increasing arsenal to beat, it could prove a fantastic feline fighter. If all you do is walk up to baddies and press an attack button until he falls, then move on to the next Golden Axe-style, it won't. Only time, and the EPM review, will tell.

PUBLISHER
Codemasters

DEVELOPER
Jester Interactive

RELEASED
November '98

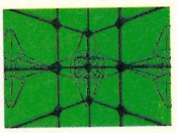


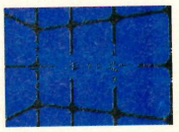












Music

Budding techno dance freaks take note...

The PlayStation's 'enjoying' (a term we use loosely) a series of entertainment applications which aren't really games. First there was Sony's Fluid, a brave but pointless sequencer/explore-'em-up hybrid, then video light show Baby Universe, also from Sony and reviewed this issue. Neither were particularly good, so the way is clear for Codemasters' Music to take the dubiously-prized PSX non-game crown.

Music allows dance muzo wannabes to create their own throbbin' rhythms using over 3000 individual instrument, percussion and vocal sounds and over 750 pre-set riffs. The tracks are created using a simple-but-powerful icon-based system which the Codies claim is powerful enough for skilled musicians to create their own hits. The pre-recorded samples can be edited, offering a potentially infinite bank of sounds, and (of course) you can save your work onto a memory card.

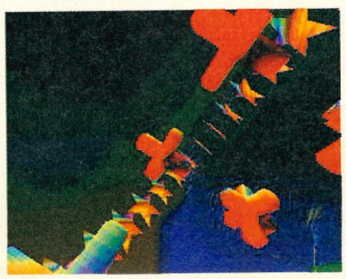
Large it up!

Music is powered by a 16-track music composition, editing and mixing suite, using the PlayStation's impressive 24-channel audio capabilities. The CD comes with ten pre-recorded demo tracks, which the player can edit at whim - a great way to learn how to use the software. Top game musician Tim Wright leads the Jester Interactive team, Music's developers. He penned the background sounds in the WipEout games, so he certainly knows his onions.

As well as the happening sounds, Music also offers video editing capabilities, so you can direct your own animated club-style movies and light shows to augment your aural experience. Despite a Music track being up to 45 minutes long, you can store a combined sound and light display in a single block; you can get an entire album on one memory card.

Mot everyone will warm to a concept such as Music, but if it achieves what the developers hope for it, it could well be worth buying. Keep your ear to the ground until we review it...





Swing

Have a ball with Swing...

PUBLISHER
Software 2000

DEVELOPER
Software 2000

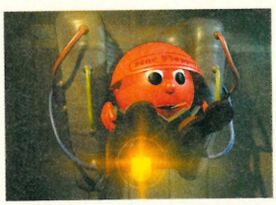
RELEASED
TBA

The PlayStation could do with more unapologetic puzzlers. Swing offers nothing that couldn't be done on a SNES, but so what? It's the gameplay that counts...

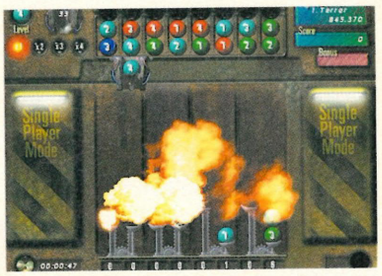
Offering more than a passing nod to Klax, you place coloured balls onto a row of balances at the foot of the screen. The number on the spheres represents its weight - by arranging the numbers on either side of a seesaw, you can move the columns up and down in a limited fashion. Match three similarly-coloured balls horizontally and they disappear. Needless to say, you've additional features such as exploding bombs, near-immovable stones and other such power-ups (or 'downs') to contend with.

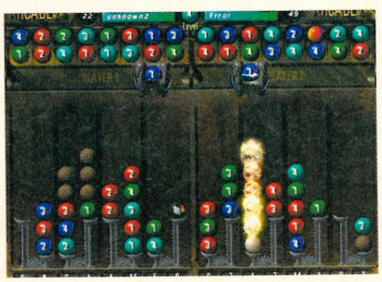
Puzzle games have the power to enthral and frustrate in equal measures, a fact not lost on Software 2000. Check out their list of 'Murphy's laws of Swing':

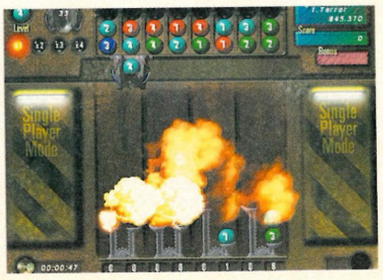
- Don't listen to people giving good advice behind your back. It's guaranteed not to work.
- The ball you need is always where you can't get at it.
- The seesaw always tips when it shouldn't.
- The special ball that appears is always the one you can't use.
- To get the third ball of a given colour, you always block the space you were reserving for it with another ball.
- You never have the right weights to balance the seesaw.
- Special balls always appear on full stacks, where you can't get at them, unless the game screen is almost empty and you don't need them.
- If you're in a hurry to finish a game, you won't be able to.











PUBLISHER Hasbro Interactive
DEVELOPER Hasbro Interactive
RELEASED Early '99

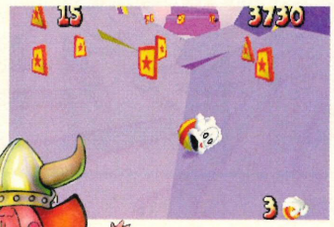
A tale of glove and evil...

Glover















Weird plot, or what? The (unnamed, but who cares?) wizard has had an accident while mixing his potions. By combining two ingredients (unnamed, but perhaps that's just as well), he caused an explosion that turned him into a statue.

If this wasn't enough, his magical gloves have flown off, one landing safely outside the castle (why do all wizards live in a castle?), the other being less fortunate. It's also dislodged the seven crystals that gave the castle and surrounding world the energy needed to survive - so much for bricks and mortar. Needless to say, it's up to you to put things right...

Glover is a 3D fantasy platform adventure with a difference. You play the luckier of the wizard's gloves and take control of the first of the seven crystals, mysteriously transformed into a magic ball. By guiding it with your palm, you must lead it back to safety. You can push it, throw it, bounce it or simply leave it behind while you seal with other matters. Don't expect your task to be easy - there are all sorts of hazards and pitfalls standing in your way.

Not the least of these hazards is the second glove, which fell into a vat of pure evil (where do they get their ideas?), and plans to hinder you along every step (or should that be 'push'?) of the way. You must avoid his minions, keeping the ball safe and restoring peace and harmony, etc. etc.

The Glover game engine is already looking slick and polished, facilitating some exciting puzzles as well as platform action. For example, you often have to activate switches by throwing the ball onto them - take care, or you'll lose it. You can change the ball into a steel baring (heavy, but tough), but watch out for the monsters that mutate it into an uneven mess that doesn't roll properly. The game's obviously been designed by people who care about their games, and this really shows in the puzzles and level design. Our letters page is full of people screaming for some PlayStation originality; Glover should be just their cup of witches' brew.

PiG

PUBLISHER Microprose
DEVELOPER Team 17
RELEASED TBA

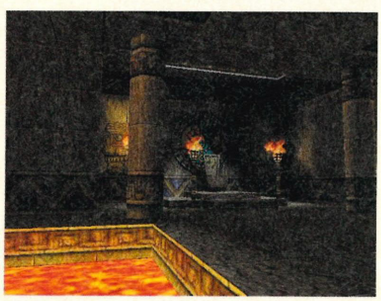
Who ate all the pies?

What a strange choice for a console hero. Private Investigator George (just call him PiG) is a fat, ugly, greedy, Twenties throwback oaf. A bucket of blubber who's so fat he causes an eclipse just by bending over. According to MicroProse, "Duke Nukem would eat him for breakfast and as for Lara Croft, I doubt she'd look twice". He certainly doesn't lack enthusiasm, though, and he'll certainly keep you laughing.

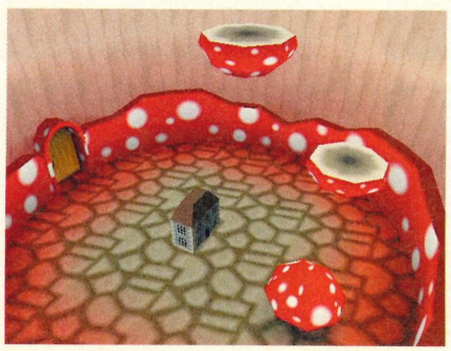
The aim of the game is to help our hapless hero unveil the mysteries of Fun Dazzle Magic Land and rescue the captured piglets from the evil Dr Gotem. The game's packed with features, such as:

- Custom-written high-spec true 3D render engine. Frame rate runs at 25 frames per second.
- Full Gouraud Shading.
- Mip Mapping and lighting effects.
- Fast loading, complex compression techniques enabling storage of huge game areas.
- Non-linear gameplay.
- Totally free roaming 3D worlds - go where you want, do what you want.
- Over 40 graphically different environments to be discovered.
- Over 50 critters to both help and hinder you on your travels.
- Interactive non-linear music and SFX.
- Fiendish puzzles and platform fun at every turn.
- Full use of Sony analogue pad.











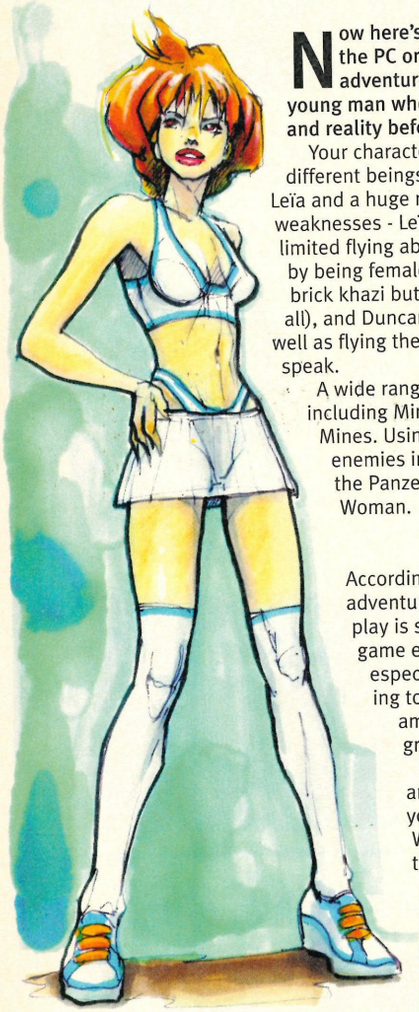
PUBLISHER
Cryo Interactive Entertainment

DEVELOPER
Cryo Interactive Entertainment

RELEASED
October '98

Real-time 3D gameplay meets the subconscious mind...

Dreams



Now here's a weird one. Greatly changed from the PC original, Dreams is an action and adventure game where you play a sleeping young man who must save both the dream world and reality before he wakes.

Your character can morph at will between three different beings; a guy called Duncan, the gorgeous Leïa and a huge monster. All have their strengths and weaknesses - Leïa flies well (yes, the characters have limited flying abilities) and gets Cryo magazine covers by being female and horny, the monster is built like a brick khazi but flies like Dennis Bergkamp (ie not at all), and Duncan is somewhere between the two. As well as flying they can jump, walk, run, fight and speak.

A wide range of magic bonuses are on offer, including Mind Control, Invisibility and Anti-Gravity Mines. Using your magic powers you can destroy enemies in a blinding flash of 3D - watch out for the Panzer Laser spell, Ice Cube and Bomber Woman.

I have a dream...

According to Cryo, the game is 'full of action, adventure, mystery and magic'. 3D real-time play is set with realistic lighting effects. The game engine has been developed by Cryo especially for the PlayStation, and, according to the developers, 'creates remarkable ambiances with varied and spectacular graphics'.

With over 100 places to explore and an equal number of monsters to fight, you won't complete it in a hurry. Whether it's worth completing remains to be seen - stay tuned for the review.



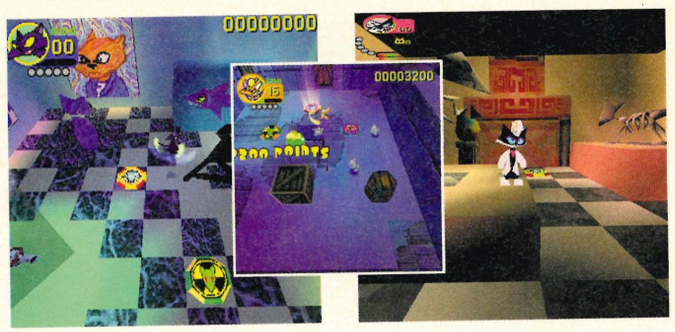












PUBLISHER
Mindscape

DEVELOPER
Mindscape

RELEASED
TBA

You get feline frolics and rodent rascals in this action-packed arcade extravaganza...

Rat Attack

Way back in 1957, American scientists send two rats into space, intending them to orbit the moon and then return to Earth. The rats, Washington and Jefferson, would be the first living creatures in space. Alas, things don't work out as planned. Washington knaws through a communications cable and the rocket is lost.

The craft is intercepted by alien beings turn the rats into super beings, but they're not grateful - they grab as many alien gadgets as they can carry, steal a saucer and fly back to Earth with revenge on their minds. Alas, no one connects the increase in rat population with the metallic object heading towards the planet...

The Scratch Cats, feline fighters dedicated to the protection of planet Earth, battle the evil space-rats and their rodent army who have started banding together, destroying all in their wake. Washington and Jefferson's deadly mutators have been installed everywhere, creating bizarre and ever-more deadly mutated rats. Likewise, their 'duplicators' are rapidly increasing the rat population.

Meeeowww!

Only the Scratch Cats can save the day. Using the Eradicator invented by their leader, Professor Julius, they trap the rodents and dispose of them before they destroy every nearby object.

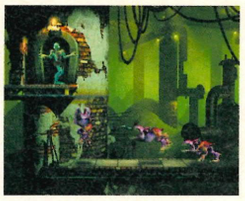
Rat Attack is a hi-res 3D action game where you save the world from the rats by trapping them in a rectangular energy trap trailed behind you as you hold the action button. Walk over the destructor while you're holding captured rats and they're destroyed. The more rats you hold the more points you get (each successive rat is worth double its predecessor), but run into a rouge rat while carrying captured critters and they're freed. Dare you take the risk? The game's full of great little devices, exciting worlds and polished presentation, and we'll tell you all about it when it's finished. For now, check out the cartoony screens and colourful characters - they move as good as they look.









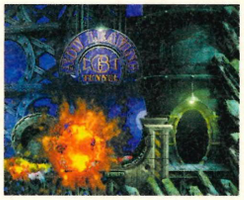












PUBLISHER
GT Interactive

DEVELOPER
Oddworld

RELEASED
20th November

Abe's Exoddus

More platform mayhem and weird spelling...

Here's some more screenshots from GT's forthcoming Abe game, the follow-up to the equally badly-spelt Abe's Oddysee. Back in Issue 8 we gave you the plot and listed a few improvements, and we've very little else to say here, but we couldn't resist snazzy artwork like this.

Abe's Exoddus is the second in a series of Oddworld games. Originally they were each to offer radically different game styles, but the phenomenal success of the first offering (Abe's Oddysee, scoring 94% last issue as a Platinum release) inspired a similar sequel. That's not to say there are no changes, though. More emphasis has been placed on controlling large numbers of Mudokons, offering all manner of new hazards as you lead them to safety. Not easy when fights break out among these supposedly-friendly creatures. The farts have been simplified to a single button press, and you can slap your fellow Mudokons when they hit each other or giggle uncontrollably due to the affects of laughing gas.

Abe's Exoddus is almost finished now - hopefully we'll be able to review it next issue. In the meantime, drool over these new screens as a taster...











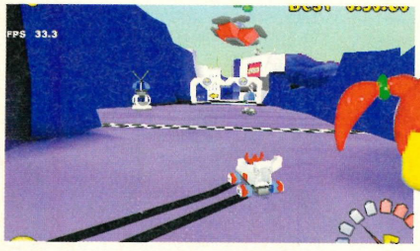
PUBLISHER
Lego Media

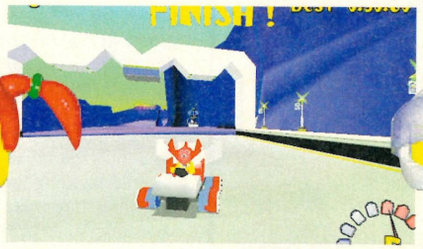
DEVELOPER
Lego Media

RELEASED
Summer '99

Build, customise, drive, win...

Lego Racers







Lego - don't you just love it? Didn't we all grow up with it, breaking apart a castle and building a space ship, demolishing our space ship and building a monster, trashing the monster and getting shouted at by mum for getting the bricks all over the floor? Well now we can play with Lego again, and without a brick in sight.

Lego Racers is a 3D driving game with both the cars and the tracks based on Lego's famous building system. The cars are indeed made from Lego - you can customise them in the Lego garage by winning races, for which you're awarded fresh cars which you can then customise with pieces you already have. The 12 courses are themed around the four most popular Lego sets, Pirates, Castles, Space and the new Adventurers. Although the scenery isn't built from Lego (that would be a pain in the eyes), its angular design and primary colours give the impression that it might have been. Thus the theme is maintained without being garish. The drivers are also Lego characters such as Rob 'n' Hood, Captain Redbeard and Sam Grant. You compete against up to five other racers.

Each Lego world offers its own unique hazards. For example, one of the Castle tracks features an active drawbridge and the Space world's Magma Moon Marathon has lava geysers to negotiate.

If all this seems familiar, you probably own an N64 as well as your trusty PSX. It's early days yet, but Lego Racers is shaping up to be the PlayStation's Mario Kart, but with the added thrills of designing and modifying your vehicles as you go. As Mario Kart is one of the few N64 titles that's actually worth the asking price, this is no bad thing...

PUBLISHER
Psygnosis

DEVELOPER
Psygnosis

RELEASED
Christmas '98

War is dangerous when it gets personal...

Colony Wars: Vengeance

Sit tight pilot, because Colony Wars (#09 Feature, 89%) has a hot sequel on the way. Psygnosis promise that Colony Wars: Vengeance is going to be the epic space adventure to end them all, and we're not about to argue with the big boys.

Vengeance picks up 100 years after Colony Wars, and continues the same incredibly deep storyline from the perspective of a young rookie pilot called Mertens. You are fighting to reopen the very same warp hole players of the original game worked so hard to seal in the original game. That's right - the tables have turned and now you're fighting for the other side, the new Navy.

The game is going to feature new planet-based environments as well as the original deep space battles where you need to undertake multiple task missions and dog fight your way to victory. As Vengeance is a non-linear game, losing a single mission won't lose you the entire game; in fact, the game changes as you progress depending on how you perform, as does the story which unfolds in certain directions depending on you.

Building on Basics

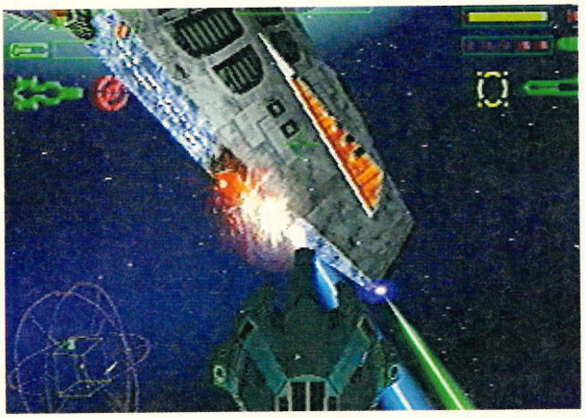
As in the original game there are 19 acts in all that are specifically designed so that the game can be ended in a total of six different ways using a total of 26 epic cut scenes throughout the game. When you first start a new game you have only a basic standard craft, which can be customised to your personal preferences balancing your weapons, defence and engines to best effect. As you progress and complete missions, you're given the choice of up to four fighter crafts which can carry five deadly primary weapons and five secondary weapons from a possible 22 in all.

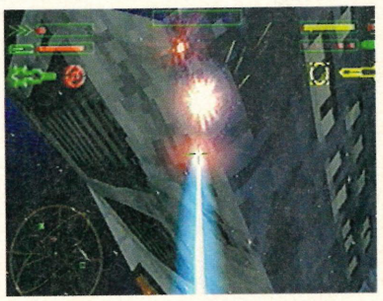
As Mertens, you must ultimately succeed in as many increasingly challenging missions for the new Navy to move up through the pilot ranks to ultimately become an elite pilot. Psygnosis say as the game changes and progresses through the conflict, his personality and emotional state changes to match the feeling of the game. It all sounds rather deep to us, but we can imagine it all works really well to produce a really exciting adventure that you can get really involved in and live for as long as the game takes, and that's brilliant.

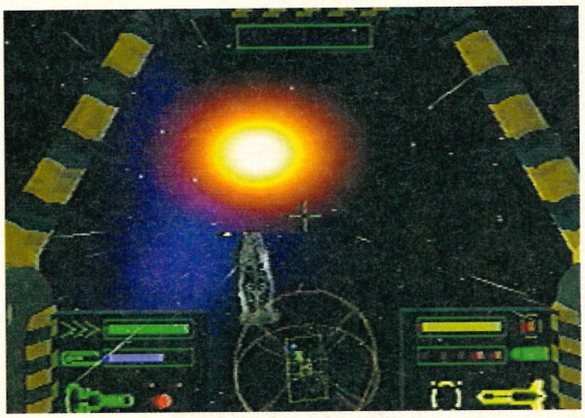
Stand by for more news and a future review of Colony Wars: Vengeance as soon as we can - we think you'll agree that this is going to be something really special.

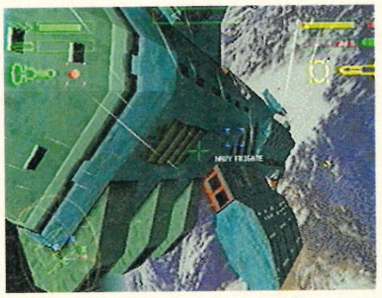


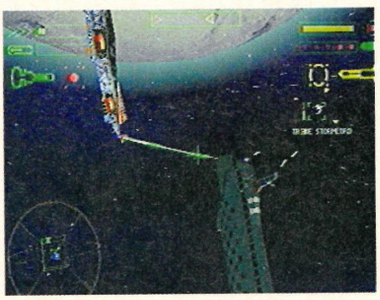


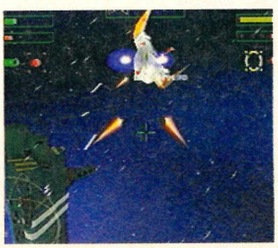


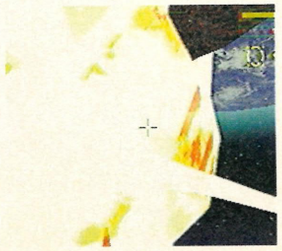


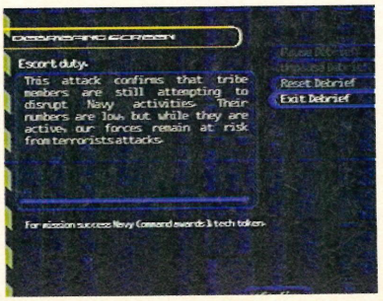












Tomb

PUBLISHER
Eidos

DEVELOPER
Core Design

RELEASED
Winter '98

The babe is back with more Tomb-Raiding action...

Lara Croft, the industry's biggest and most recognisable icon, returns with... Oh hang it. What you're really interested in is how Tomb Raider III differs from the superlative TRII, so let's get straight down to business.

As would be expected, Tomb Raider III boasts new outfits, more vehicles and fresh moves. However, it doesn't end there. Multi-coloured lighting has made a vast difference to the overall atmosphere of the game. Lara and her enemies all benefit from more realistic use of shading and wider colour palettes, as do the game environments. New water reflection effects are offered, as well as weather conditions such as wind, snow (where walkers leave footprints), mist and rain.

The landscaping system on which the environments are built has also undergone a radical overhaul, allowing more 'organic' maps and complex structures such as domes and arches. Look out for St Paul's Cathedral. The artificial intelligence has also been revised. Enemies now behave realistically instead of just running at Lara and attacking at the first possible opportunity. Some even run away when first approached, and you can duck past or avoid them at times. Watch out though - they often hide behind objects, making them harder to hit.

Inevitably, Lara has some new moves at her disposal. She can crawl, dash and swing like a monkey, allowing a whole new series of action-based puzzles. Dashing allows her to speed up for a few seconds, allowing her to avoid time-based puzzles. She can even add a dive at the end of it. She can duck to avoid missiles, move backwards and forwards

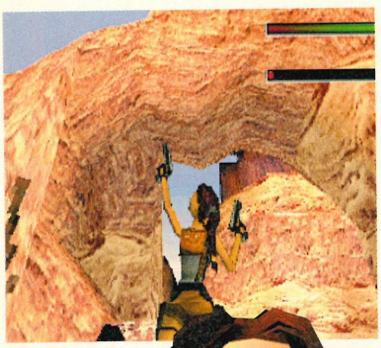
LET THERE BE LIGHT...

Here we see the new lighting effects in action. As Lara fires her pistols, the muzzle flashes light up the wall next to her but not the snowbank, which is too far away.





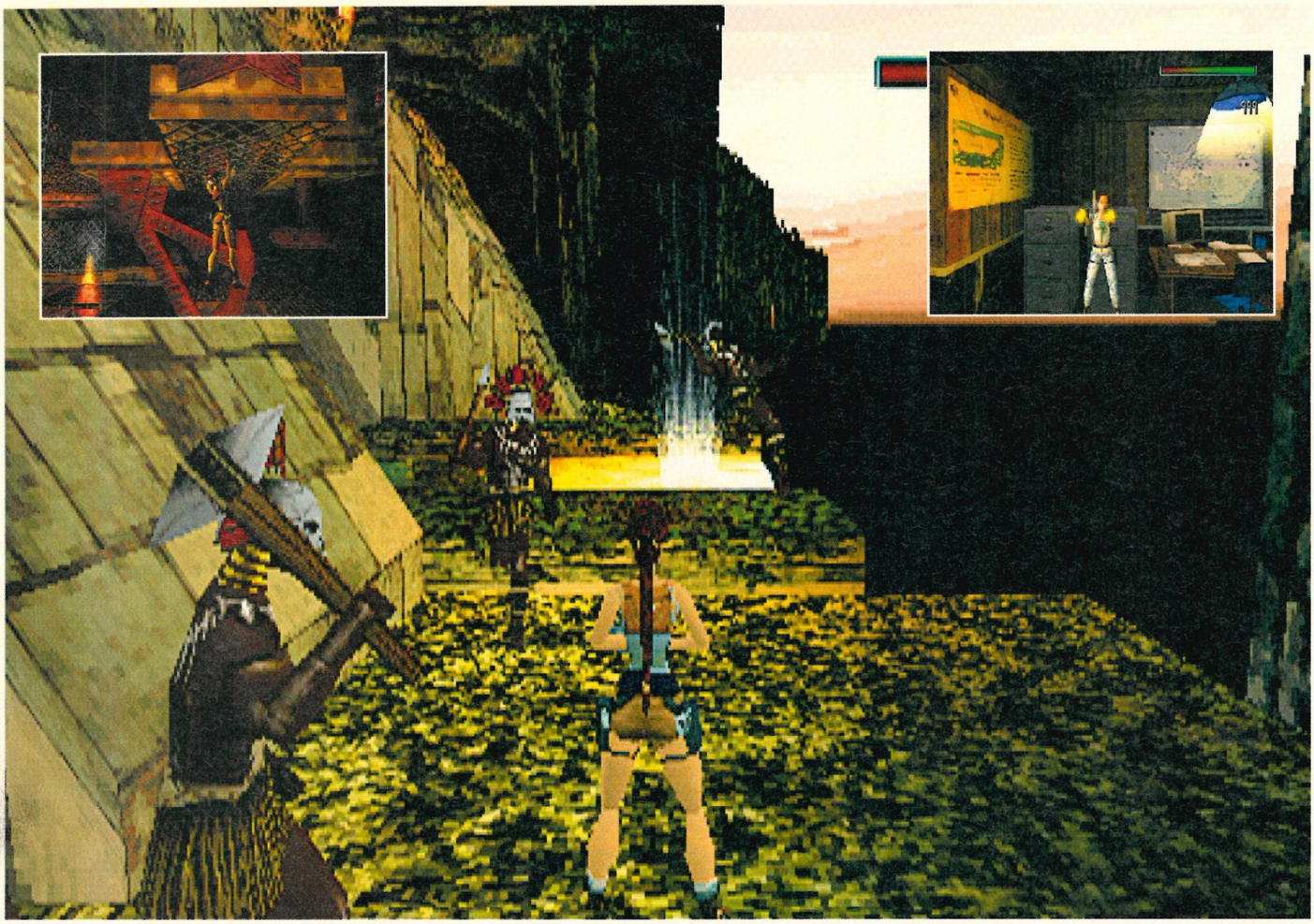
Raider III













New game, new features, same old pony tail...



in the crawling position and swing across ropes Tarzan-style. New vehicles include a canoe, quad bike, mine cart underwater propulsion unit and snow vehicle. Although running in hi-res mode, the game is faster than before due to a complete engine overhaul. Analogue and Dual Shock are supported.

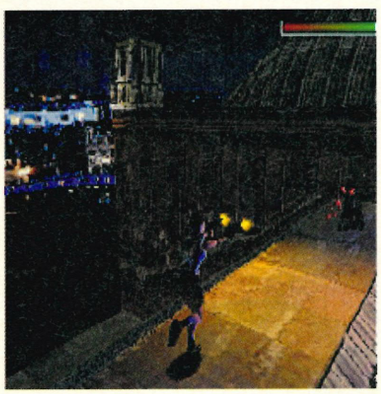
A Piece Of The Action...

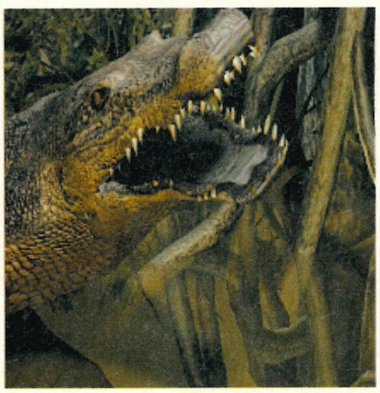
Core Design have listened to criticisms of the second Tomb Raider game and taken them to heart, improving TR3 accordingly. Many thought the second game too action orientated, at the expense of exploration. Tomb Raider III will combine the best elements of its predecessors, with the vast locations and intriguing puzzles from the first game and the vehicles and combat from the second. For example, in Area 51 you have to escape from prison. You've no guns (they've been confiscated) and the jail is guarded by laser defences. Your only chance is to find a prisoner who can lead you through it. The save-game system, which allowed you to save wherever you liked, was criticised for taking away some of the suspense in the game. You can save the game anywhere when playing in Easy mode, but using the Hard option you must store Save Crystals to use at will.

The levels are now non-linear too, allowing you to complete a level without











exploring the entire map. The structure of the game as a whole is also different, consisting of five independent adventures. Completing the first one (India) opens the next three, which can be played in any order, finally leading to the last which concludes the game. The London level is, according to the programmers, the most impressive, with the hardest being the final stage, Antarctica.

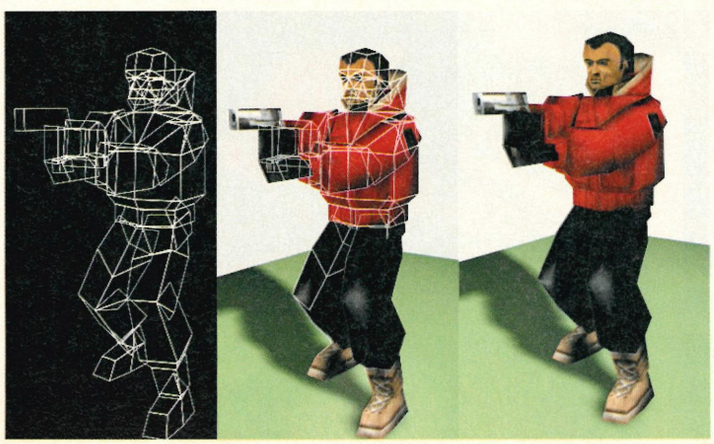
Making a welcome return is the Tyrannosaurus Rex, who's still rock-hard to kill but behaves more realistically. Like his extinct inspiration, his eyesight is based on movement - stay still and he can't see you. You can confuse him with a flare, but he's extremely difficult to kill, even with Lara's new weapons. She now has a rocket launcher and a grenade launcher. Her Bowie knife was originally intended to be been used for cutting ropes and prising gratings as well as a weapon, but this idea was dropped due to memory and time considerations.

Quality Control

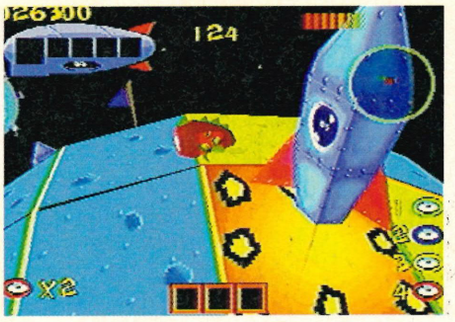
So much for the theory - but is it any good in practice? We've yet to see any playable code, so we can't comment on how successful the developers' spit and polish is in improving basic gameplay, but let's face it - this is a Tomb Raider game. We know what to expect here. Anything with Lara on the box will sell, but if Tomb Raider III comes up to expectations, it may yet live up to the incredible hype surrounding the game.

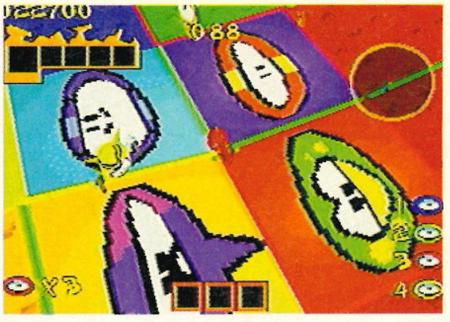
SLIP ME SOME SKIN...

Here's how the characters' skins are added to the wireframe polygons...









Live Wire!

Get wired!

PUBLISHER
SCI

DEVELOPER
Code Monkeys

RELEASED
October '98

Simple, original, fun and furious. All the makings of a top rate Playstation title if you ask me, and that's what SCI hope it's going to be when it gets a UK release some time in October '98.

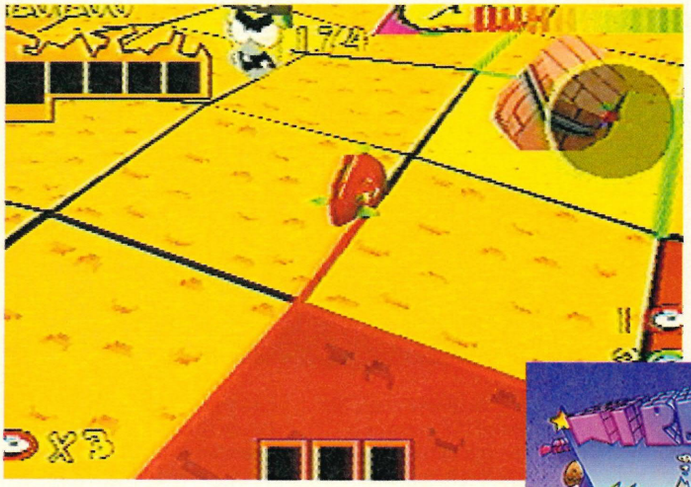
The game takes place on grid lines of a 3D wire frame object in vast landscape. Players (up to four on one PlayStation) must navigate their way around the grid lines changing it's colour as they go. When they have completely surrounded an object within the landscape with their particular colour, the object (be it a square, triangle or whatever) flips over to match the player's particular colour. The idea of the game is to cover as much of the landscape in their colour as possible against other players in the allotted time. Watch out for unusual characters that populate the many different landscapes causing havoc and problems for you to over come.

Some of the objects in the levels have different power-ups on them so when you have surrounded it that particular power up becomes yours and you can use it to aid your progress through the level as and when you want.

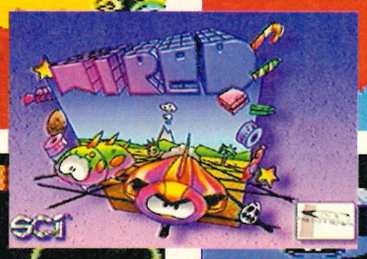
It sounds very retro and in a way it is, but thanks to what looks like really stunning 3D graphics and a funky soundtrack SCI are confident that it won't be overlooked. Take a look at the following and make your own mind up:

- There are over fifty levels to compete in.
- Ten different worlds to explore, each with its own individual characters and themes.
- Multiple camera angles completely under the player's control.
- Lots of different enemies to hinder and even help you in different situations.
- Different game modes to give the game more longevity: Multi-player, Competition Play and Team Play.

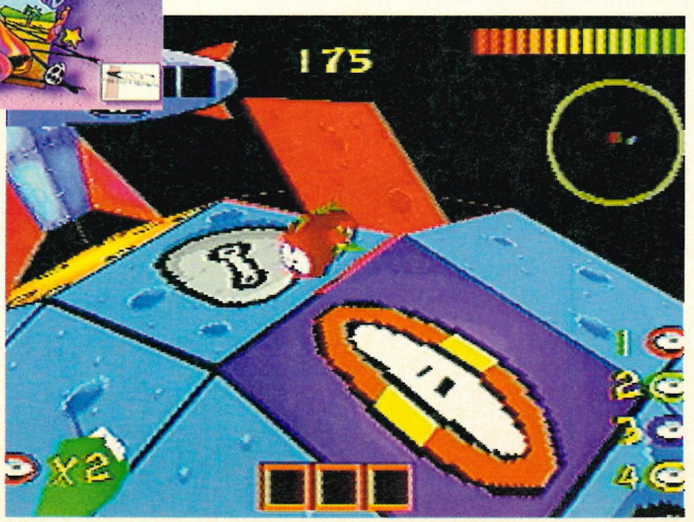
Things are looking good at the moment, but the proof is in the pudding so watch out for a full review in the coming months.

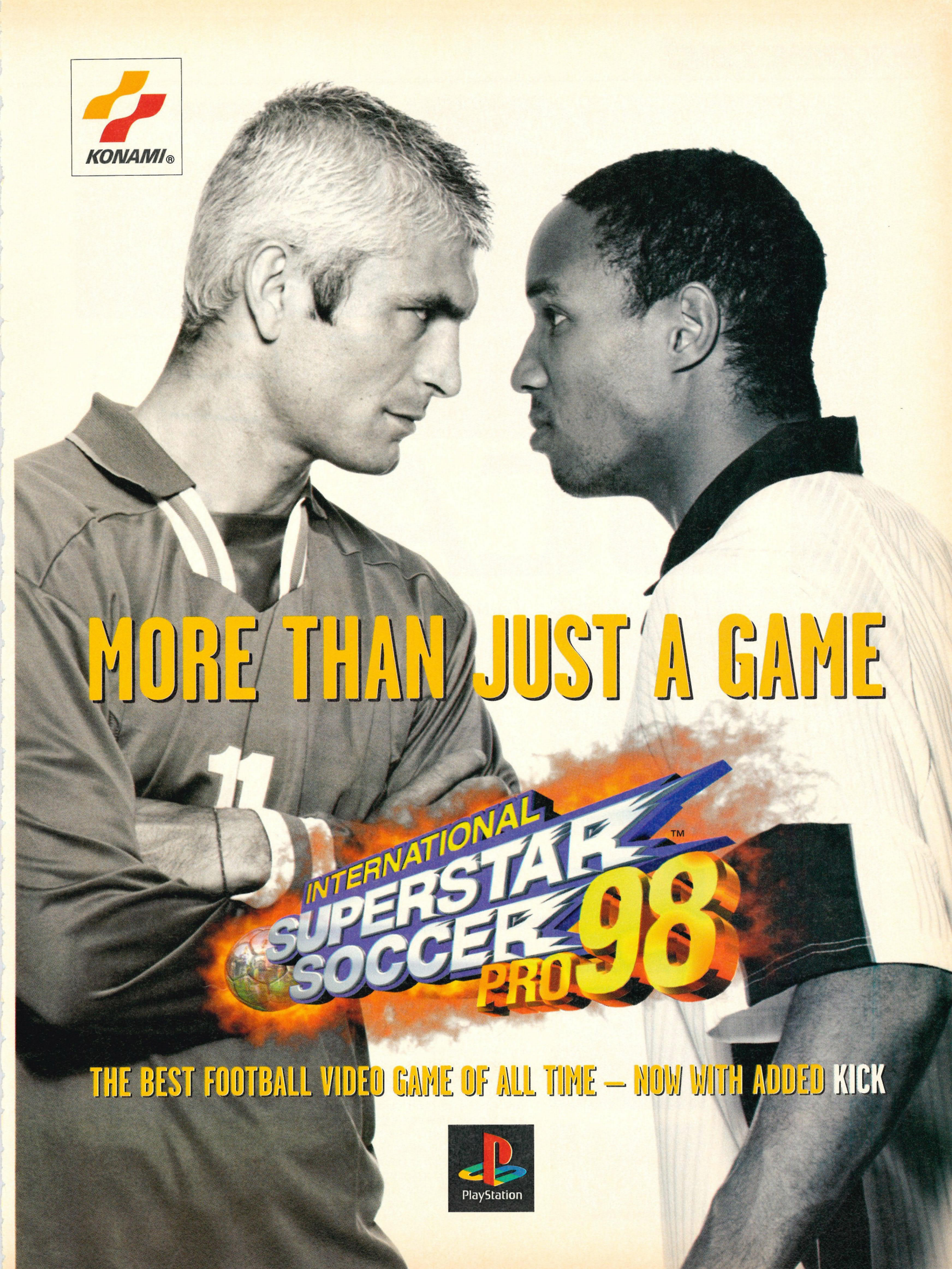











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SOCCER
PRO 98
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PlayStation



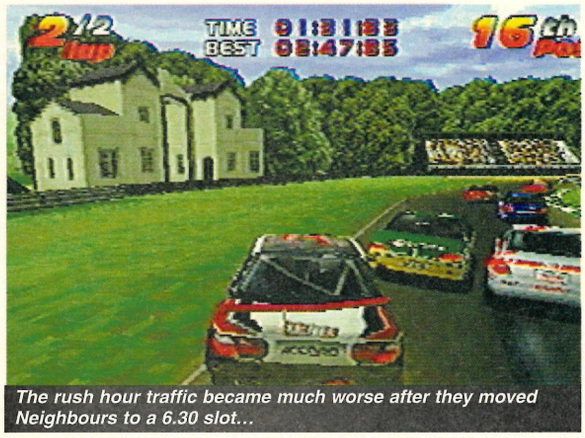


PUBLISHER
Codemasters

DEVELOPER
Codemasters

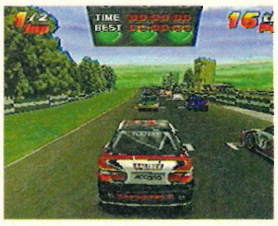
RELEASED
November '98

TOCA 2



The rush hour traffic became much worse after they moved Neighbours to a 6.30 slot...













Things are hotting up...



This is the moment everyone in the office has been waiting for; we've finally got our hands on a demo of TOCA 2, and I'm pleased to report it goes like a dog on heat and then some!

I know what you non-believers might be thinking, but no, this is not just a '98 version of exactly the same game, this is going to be the business!

Let's take a quick rundown at what TOCA 2 will have to offer.

International race tracks are now included alongside the up-to-date 1998 season. New 1998 season rules including the addition of strategic pit stops and tyre changes, and advanced car physics, collision physics and damage graphics the likes of which have never before been seen.

Detailed Drivin'

New race modes including Link Up and Battle Race. The game's now in the Playstation's impressive Hi-Res mode featured in Gran Turismo, and the development team's now assisted by the people that brought you Colin McRae.

The list could go on and on, but TOCA 2 deserves a lot more of a detailed look simply because attention to detail is what the game is all about. Along with the totally remodelled cars that utilise the hi-res graphics, you can see right through their windows and see the drivers bumping around in their car while cornering and breaking hard. Crashing has never felt as good as it does now in TOCA 2 either; you can rip the wings clean off of your car and crumple the bonnet until it's practically unrecognisable. This is done while trying to see through the bugs that have splattered across your windscreen (if it hasn't been smashed in).

An excellent drum and base sound track has been added, as well as all-new engine sounds. The noise rumbles out of the speakers like you're sat right there in the car. The sound detail is so great that each individual tyre on the car produces it's own sound, depending what surface it's on. Now that's what I call realism!

Mentioned last month was the addition of the new Support Car Championship, featuring all sorts of specialist cars. Alongside the type of cars you would expect to see like the Jaguar XJ220 and the TVR you also have motors like the Formula Ford, Lister Storm and the AC Superbower Grinnall Scorpion and the Ford Fiesta. These races take place on the same day as the touring car races to bring more variety to the day's event.

Codemasters has also promised a lot more action on the track by tweaking different elements of the game. Vastly improved AI for the 15 computer-controlled cars you'll be up against is one of the first tweaks - they've each been given multiple racing lines, which means they duck and weave around the track looking for openings and gaps in the traffic.

Another of Codemasters' decisions to keep the action going was to bring the racing boundaries in quite a bit to tighten up the playing area, so you don't spend so much time doing 360s on the grass and sinking really deep in sand traps.

All in all, a rather mouth-watering look at what's going to be something of a large game when it is finally released in November. Stay tuned for any updates on the game as and when it happens.

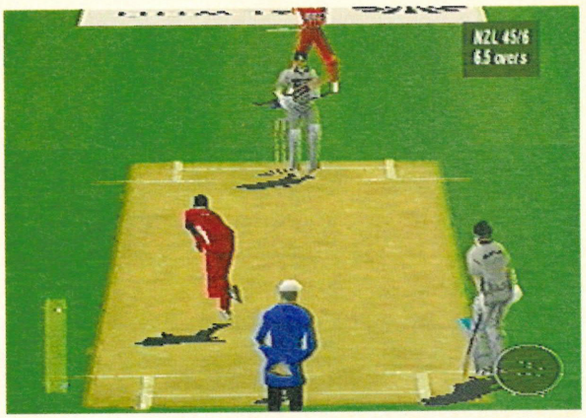
PUBLISHER
Codemasters

DEVELOPER
Codemasters

RELEASED
Autumn '98

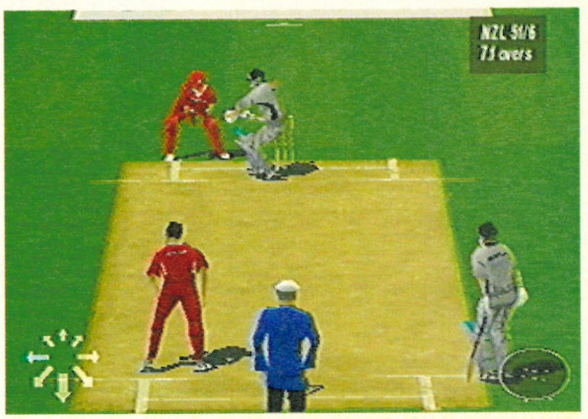
Ahh, the sound of leather on willow...

Brian Lara Cricket





Honest, it was this big - and you should've seen the one that got away...



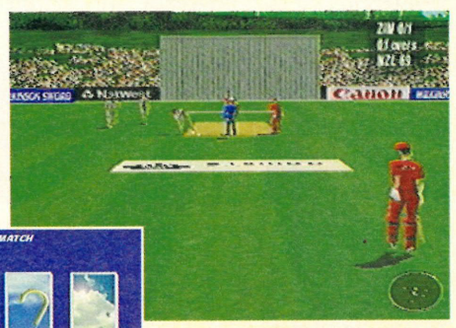
Following the success of the original Brian Lara on the Mega Drive, which achieved amazing record sales of over 100,000 copies in England alone and became the best-selling game on any format from July to September of 1995, which is an incredible feat when you think about it, Codemasters have given Brian the prestigious PlayStation treatment. Though the game mechanics are still the same, the graphics and presentation are right up to date. You'll be playing in fantastically realistic panoramic environments, with the latest in motion capture technology producing realistic and fluid player animation throughout.

IF you're into cricket you'll be pleased to hear it has in access of 240 real cricketers, who will be able to take part in individual matches, complete World Cup Competition, a Test series, season, knockouts and World Series Tournaments. You can even play a Classic Match mode, which allows you to enter a famous match from history at different points and you're challenged to beat the real match results! If this wasn't enough, batters can take the plunge and use a first person perspective, allowing you to see the action through the player's eyes. As I'm sure you can imagine, being on the receiving end of the world's best fast bowlers is a harrowing experience!

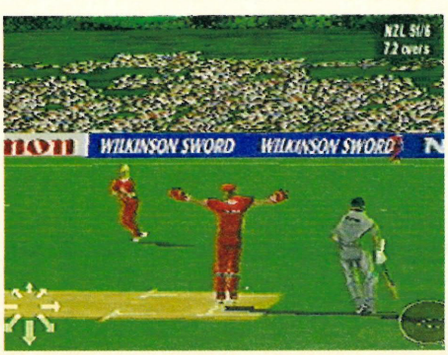
Codemasters plan to have day and night matches included in the final version, within 40 true international stadiums with differences in pitch, weather and climate conditions particular to the country you're playing in. The four-player option should be something to behold for sports fans everywhere - hold on tight until Autumn, but of course we'll have a review before then.















Anne McCaffrey's best-selling novels come to the PlayStation...

Dragonflight: Chronicles of Pern

PUBLISHER Grolier Interactive

DEVELOPER Grolier Interactive

RELEASED Early '99



If Vandal Hearts, Suikoden and (of course) Final Fantasy VII proved PlayStation RPGs do sell in Britain, Dragonflight will prove they don't have to be Japanese to be successful. Based on Anne McCaffrey's best-selling Chronicles of Pern novels, which have sold over 30 million copies, Dragonflight is a 3D-perspective role-player with an intuitive interface and a wealth of exciting characters. The game world offers a history and a future and (claim Grolier) 'a wealth of locations, people and dragons to give an ideal mix of intriguing storyline, action and adventure'.

McCaffrey's novels certainly offer a rich source of material for the fantasy-style RPG. McCaffrey has won some of the world's most prestigious science fiction prizes, including the much-valued Hugo and Nebula awards. Like Tolkien and Asimov, her novels are set in an entire world of her own making, offering the reader a whole new reality to explore. Born and raised in the USA but now living in Ireland, she says of herself, "My eyes are green, my hair is silver and I freckle; the rest is still subject to change without notice".

Dragonflight: Chronicles of Pern is due for release in the first quarter of 1999. Grolier have a dedicated in-house development studio working on it full time, and expect great things from this, their first venture into the RPG genre.

PUBLISHER Grolier Interactive

DEVELOPER Glass Ghost

RELEASED Early '99

Tank Racer



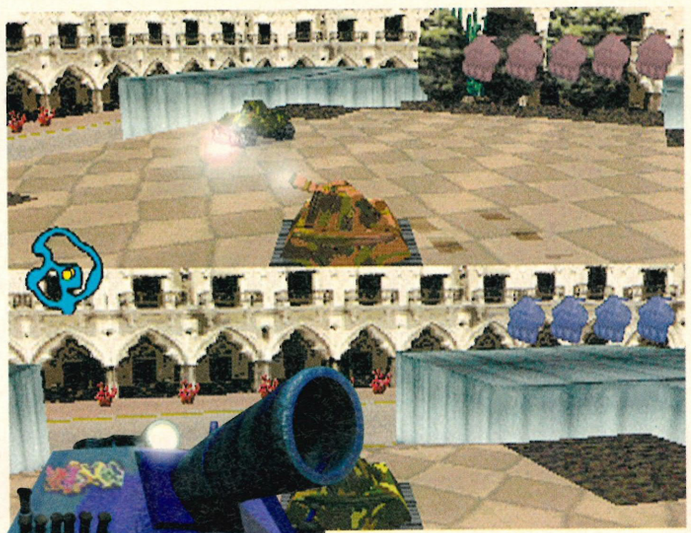
Rommel takes pole position, but Montgomery's on his tail...

It's becoming harder and harder to put a new slant on the racing game, but Grolier seem to have cracked it with their forthcoming Tank Racer. Developed by the Glass Ghost team at Simis, Tank Racer is a 3D behind-the-vehicle or first-person driving game with a difference - you drive tanks (as if you hadn't guessed).

You can customise your own tank and use it top blast the other racers off the face of the Earth as well as beating them in a fair race. The courses are as original as the concept. The tracks take you on- and off-road, through some of the roughest terrain yet seen in a racer. The courses are filled with obstacles for you to blow out of the way or simply run over, crushing them beneath



The EPM crew were all tanked up and ready for a night on the town...



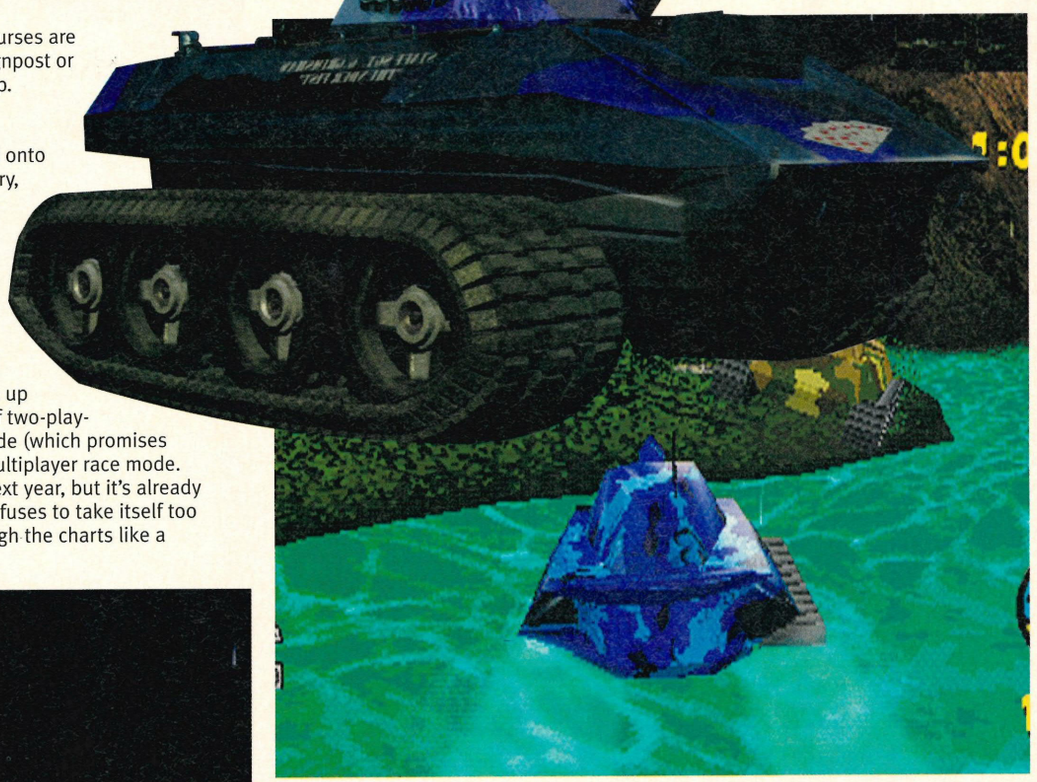
your tracks. Take care, though - the 15 courses are clearly markered, but if you run over a signpost or chevron you might get lost on the next lap.

Big Bang Theory

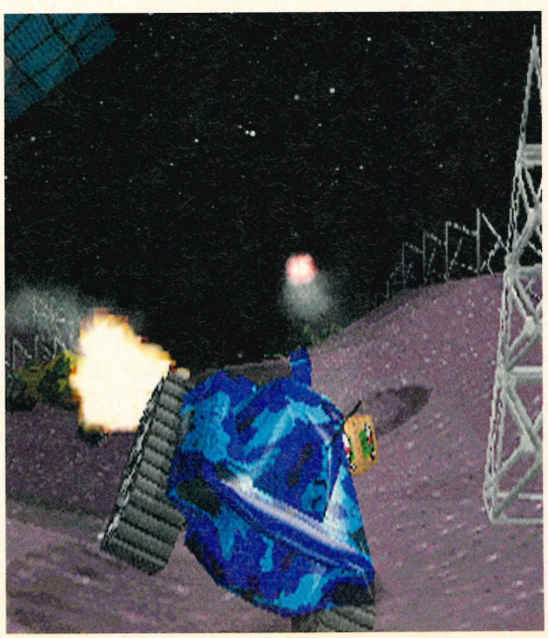
Numerous power-ups are sky-dropped onto the racing arenas, offering heavier artillery, speed-ups and all manner of vicious weapons to topple the other tanks. You've 12 tanks to choose from, ranging from fast-but-weak speedsters to lumbering powerhouses.

Tank Racer offers four distinct modes of play. In one-player mode, you must complete three championship levels, totalling 15 tracks. In a single race you're up against the clock, and there's a couple of two-player split-screen modes, namely battle mode (which promises to be a deathmatch-type event) and a multiplayer race mode.

The game isn't due for release until next year, but it's already shaping up as a cool action game that refuses to take itself too seriously. It could yet blast its way through the charts like a Panzer advance.







California's finest show their wares...

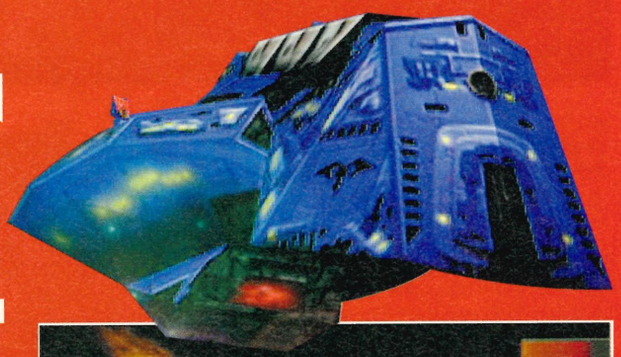
ACCOLADE Action

Accolade have been around for some time. The Star Control saga first hit the PC in 1990, and their highly-acclaimed Test Drive series was launched in 1987 on the Amiga and Commodore 64.

Since their founding 14 years ago, the company have released over 150 titles, with four more to come by the New Year. With games like Test Drive 5 and Star Control 4 in the pipeline, they couldn't resist teaming up with their publishers, Electronic Arts, to show them off, so we went to EA's Langley offices to take a look...

Star Control 4

DEVELOPER Accolade





STAR CONTROL 4 IS...

...a space combat game with a difference. Taking the Star Control series back to its roots, SC4 emphasises shoot-'em-up action rather than strategy and adventure, though it takes more than brawn to beat a mission.



In America this one's called StarCon, though the name's been changed in Europe as 'StarCon' is a French vulgarism far too obscene to repeat here.

Star Control 4, set a few hundred years after the third Star Control game, takes the series back to its roots. Gone are the overt adventure and strategy elements, making room for some mega space combat action. It's not for the mindless, though. Like a highly-trained boxer, brawn and aggression are needed if you're to win through, but you can fall to a foe with half your strength if you fail to fight wisely. There's no point having a killer punch if you can't land it - likewise, you need to understand your enemy and adapt your tactics accordingly to win here.

The game sees two alien alliances fighting for supremacy; the Hyperium are warlike and organised, and based on the Roman Empire, but the Crux are anarchistic, believing that bringing order to the universe is against nature. Later on you also meet the Zealots, desperate to convert every intelligent being to the true religion (ie. theirs). You can play through the 24 missions using either race, your actions having an outcome on the storyline. For example, the first mission sees the Crux about to drop a bomb on a Hyperium colony. Play as the former and you must ensure it gets through; pick the latter and success depends on stopping it. Later missions have multiple objectives too. You can return to already-completed missions to look for bonus items and generally cause havoc with your over-powerful plundered-from-later-in-the-game weapons.

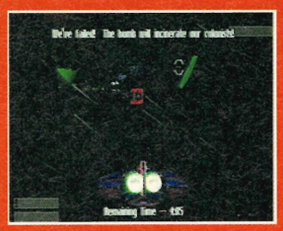
Whichever race you choose, you control a huge carrier ship which can launch small, mobile fighters. While controlling the carrier you can switch to side and rear cameras, allowing you to aim broadsides at enemies on the starboard bow or see off that casing enemy fighter. Take care, though - lose your carrier and it's 'game over'. Fighters are more expendable, and far faster, though they pack a smaller punch. In the final game, you'll have up to six different fighters to choose from. In any craft, the head-up displays are minimalistic and unintrusive and flight controls instinctive and straightforward.

The two-player modes are shaping up nicely too. There's no link-up mode, but you can choose between horizontal and vertical modes. Two players can join forces and take on the enemy in co-operative play, a second player joining in at any time - just plug in a joypad and go. There's also a one-on-one deathmatch mode in the pipeline too.

Considering how far away the release of this game is (it's pencilled in for a February 1999 release), it's surprising how polished and complete it looks. Sure, a lot of work has to be done on the missions, and with the speech samples yet to be recorded, the in-game messages appear in ugly white text (rest assured this will be gone in the final version), but the game's running at a cool speed (despite not yet being optimised) and the gameplay's definitely there. If the missions prove sufficiently varied and balanced, and the learning curve paced correctly, it could well be one to watch.













Big Air

DEVELOPER
Pitbull Syndicate



















BIG AIR IS...

...yet another snowboarding game. For a minority sport, this one gets a great deal of support on the PlayStation.

Big Air, to be released in the Autumn, aims for realism and simulation rather than instant-fix arcade thrills. To this end, Accolade have licensed nine snowboard manufacturers, seven clothing companies and five professional snowboarders for use in the game. There are over 80 genuine snowboards from manufacturers like Palmer, Joyride, Morrow, Maui and K2. Enthusiasts of the sport will thus be well catered for, but the game is still accessible for non-snowboarders. More than 11 hard-core industrial-style bands provide over 30 songs for the background music.

Using a modified version of the Test Drive 5 engine, The game offers six types of snowboarding event, including half-pipe, big air, boardercross, slalom and freeride. These are set across 30 courses in six different countries. Travel is earned by winning competitions. Using soft skin technology, the characters are built not from polygons, but instead all vertices are animated separately to give that realistic look. The characters aren't motion-captured, but built from live keyframes.

"We are really trying to capture the authentic look and feel of snowboarding", said Monte Singman, senior producer of Big Air. "Big Air's exciting gameplay and the inclusion of licensed music, pro snowboarders, official snowboards and sports gear lets gamers participate in a true snowboarding experience". Heavy claims, but developers Pitbull Syndicate are certainly taking the job seriously. Ten pro-snowboarders have been consulted during the development of the game, again boosting its realism. For example, the key to pulling off the incredible stunts on offer is to buy yourself enough air time to achieve them. In other words, the higher you fly, the more impressive the twists and turns you can pull off - just like the real thing.

With its intense two-player mode, available through vertical or horizontal split-screen and analogue/Dual Shock compatibility, Big Air will keep even the most hardened gamer busy, but will also appeal to the genuine snowboarding fan, who will appreciate the level of authenticity offered. The only aspects of the sport not reproduced here are trashing hotel rooms and getting disqualified from the Olympics for testing positive for cannabis.

It should be ready for review soon, probably next issue, so stay tuned to see how the finished offering compares to Chill and Coolboarders 2.

Test Drive: 4x4

DEVELOPER
Accolade





TEST DRIVE: 4X4 IS...

...an off-road Test Drive game. Instead of the usual Test Drive road racing, you can now race over hills, through streams and across mud-sodden fields.



The first off-road Test Drive outing wasn't well received. Test Drive: Off Road featured some terrible pop-up and a slow frame rate. The new offering, Test Drive 4x4 (Test Drive: Off Road 2 in the States) corrects these faults, offering a much faster speed and no long-distance draw-in, but you can no longer drive anywhere like you could in the original - the tracks are walled. Let's face it, though - who wants to go on joyrides when you're supposed to be racing? The newer game offers much wiser use of processing power.

The game features around a dozen licensed vehicles, including exclusive use of the AM General's US Army jeep-replacement the Hummer. Users can modify their chosen cars as they go. The cars use independent suspension and realistic physics models, the program being based on four-wheel physics as opposed to Test Drive 4's two, the additional refinement proving necessary due to the rough terrain. If, for example, you hit a ditch and your front wheels weren't touching the ground, the computer would still recognise the fact that the rear wheels offered power. With a front-wheel only game engine (or real-world car), you'd be stuck. Thus Test Drive 4x4 needs that degree of sophistication unused in a road racer.







The tracks cover six territories all over the world, including Santa Cruz during the mud slides of a few years ago and a stylised Wales, full of castles and valleys but with cows in the fields rather than sheep. Watch out too for a volcano track in Hawaii and snow-covered Mount Blanc, Switzerland. There's only one track in each territory but they're fairly long which, in the version we played, caused the racers to be a little too spread out but there's still time to address this before the game comes out. You can race them backwards as well as forwards, which effectively doubles the number of courses.







As usual, you're offered multiple racing modes such as Time Trial, Single Race, League and, of course, Multi-Player. The game is analogue and Dual Shock compatible, and the force feedback is governed by impact, not engine noise. Unlike some race games, the Dual Shock doesn't constantly rumble like a flatulent's stomach.

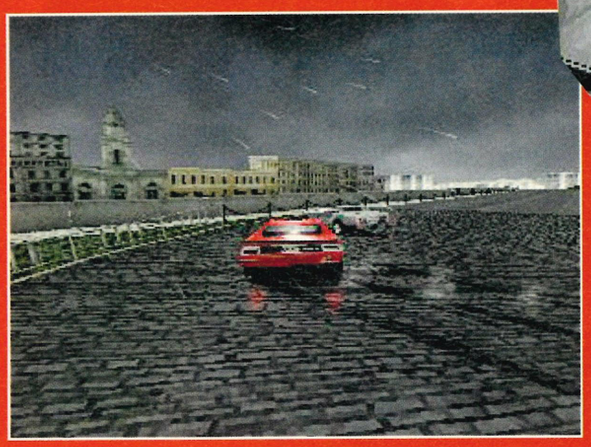




Test Drive 4x4 comes out in the Autumn of this year. It might not prove as popular as its big brother Test Drive 5, but will prove a welcome diversion for those who are sick of road racers.

Test Drive: 5

DEVELOPER
Pitbull Syndicate

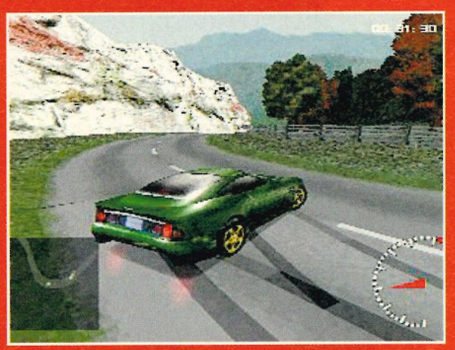




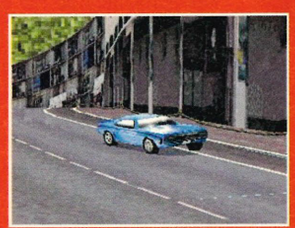
TEST DRIVE 5 IS...

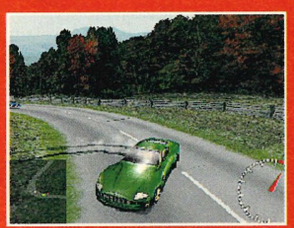
...The latest in the highly-acclaimed Test Drive series. Featuring twice the number of cars and three times as many tracks, Test Drive 5 is a major step up from its predecessor.

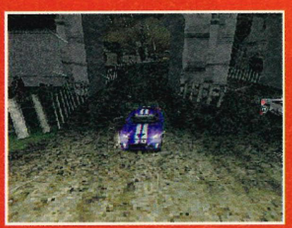


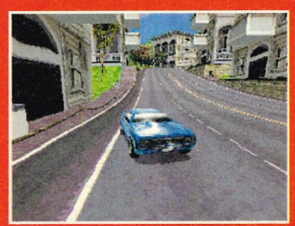


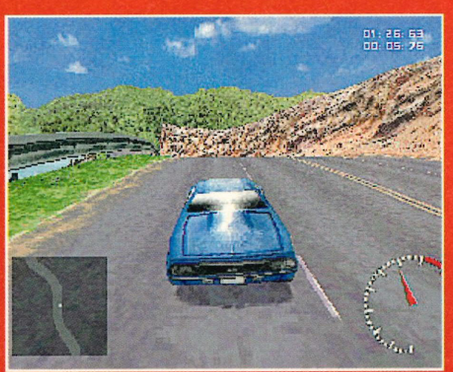












Everyone knows about the Test Drive games, but what has Test Drive 5 got to offer over its predecessors? Is it a racer to take the series a stage further, or a lightly-tweaked version of Test Drive 4 with little to offer anyone with the earlier game other than an opportunity to spend money?

Well for starters, there are three difficulty levels, something not enjoyed by the original. You can choose between arcade and simulation physics, affecting the way the car handles, and there are far more tracks, 17 in all. You can race the tracks backwards and some of them are available in Night Mode too, offering a huge variety of courses. There are now 28 licensed cars, based on today's supercars and muscle cars from the past. Needless to say, the music is licensed too, from bands such as industrial rock group KMFDM, Pitchifter and metalheads Fear Factory.

The graphics are much-improved, and the courses now branch into two in certain places. Tracks are set in exotic locations such as Moscow, Honolulu, Tokyo, Edinburgh and San Francisco. Licensed cars include the Dodge Viper, Chevrolet Corvette, Aston Martin Vantage, TVR Cerbera, Jaguar XKR and the Nissan Skyline. Among the older muscle cars are the 1966 Shelby Cobra, the 1967 Pontiac GTO, the Dodge (1969 and 1968's Ford Mustang 428CJ.

Test Drive 5 boasts several technical advancements over both its predecessors and its competitors. Using a system called MultiDynamic Environment Mapping, travelling under trees and bridges throws multiple reflections onto the cars. Its high resolution graphics run at 30 frames a second, and realistic weather conditions and breakable roadside objects are offered too.

Perhaps the biggest leap forward from the fourth game in the series is the incredible Cop Chase Mode. You take control of a high-speed police car and pursue various law-breaking bad guys Chase HQ-style. This is especially good fun in two-player mode, where you chase a friend (or he chases you!).

The game should be ready for review next issue - we're certainly looking forward to it here at EPM.

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Activision	Aquire / Activision	Action / Adventure	October '98	UK	£39.99	1	Memory Card	Dual Shock

INTRO SEQUENCE...

The intro sequence is atmospheric rather than spectacular. A walk through a misty woodland offers shadows of Japanese warriors. Are they friends or foes? Our two main characters aren't taking any chances - they appear only fleetingly, hiding in the fog and generally keeping a low profile. This is the true ninja spirit.

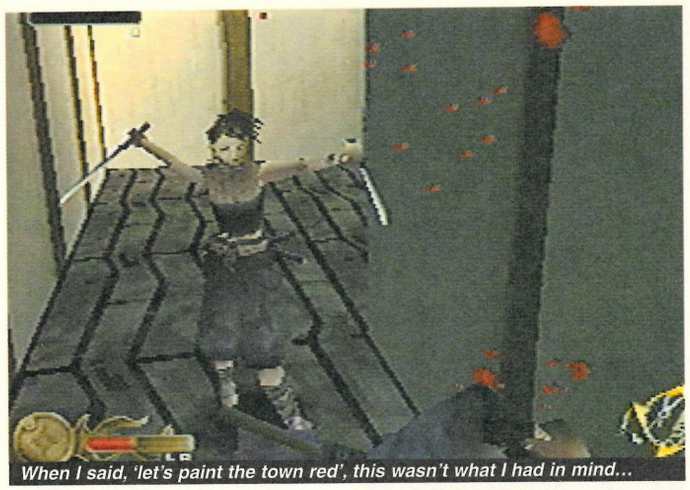


Tenchu: Stealth Assassins

Live by honour - kill by stealth

This is no ordinary hack-'em-up. In fact, it's not a hack-'em-up at all. Instead, it's a beat-'em-up/adventure hybrid where the player must tackle a series of missions, all with set objectives. Success demands more than a fast sword arm; you need brains, cunning, and above all, stealth to beat Tenchu.

To get some idea of what the game's like, imagine Tomb Raider crossed with Soul Blade. Like Tomb Raider, you must explore your surroundings rather than face a series of single enemies. Using Right and Left on the D-Pad rotates your character, Up and Down moving him (or her - you get to choose) forwards or backwards. The more advanced controls are incredibly subtle. By pressing one of the Stealth buttons you creep around, hiding from your enemies. In open spaces you now crouch, inching your way along. When near a wall, you flatten yourself against it, gaining as much cover as possible. Sure it's slow, but this game's about stealth, not speed, and you can perform a low roll by double-tapping the D-Pad to speed movement or dodge an enemy attack. By holding the Look Around button, you can change the viewpoint to an own-eye perspective, looking around and taking in your surroundings without moving. Release the button to revert to the usual behind-the-character view. With the Special Items button, you can use objects such as throwing knives or calthrops. When using a missile or the grappling hook, holding it offers an aiming cursor



When I said, 'let's paint the town red', this wasn't what I had in mind...



Inspired level design is evident throughout.

which you move using the D-Pad, releasing the button to fire. You can also jump and side-step.

In battle, the game's more like Soul Blade, with straightforward special attacks using medieval weaponry, here inspired by feudal Japan.

Unseen Assassin

Despite its similarities in execution with Tomb Raider and Soul Blade, if you're looking for the heart of Tenchu, you won't find it in either. This is no brains-off, weapons-out slaughterfest, despite the severed limbs and buckets of blood. Run around like one of Arnie's unfeasibly indestructible movie characters and you won't last long. The key to survival here is to creep up on your enemies unseen, killing from the shadows, striking without being spotted. Do this by keeping your eye on your Ki meter in the bottom-left corner, offering a sixth sense whereby you can detect the emotions of nearby people. A '?' indicates the character (foe or innocent) is unaware of your presence. A '!' tells you you've been spotted but not identified as an intruder, '!?' that the enemy is actively looking for an intruder, having been alerted by a suspicious sound or a nearby corpse, and '!!' means war - your foe has recognised you as a threat and will attack.

Armed with your sixth sense, you can make sure you do your killing unseen. For example, if you hear a guard pacing up and down around







COLOURFUL CHARACTERS

Tenchu offers you the choice of two main characters. Here's a guide to them and a few other important people you meet along the way.



RIKIMARU
This 25-year-old was rigorously trained from birth in Azuma Shinobi-ryu techniques. Having served Lord Gohda since he was 16, he's earned the admiration and respect of his clan for his thoroughness, patience and bravery. Granted the legendary Izayoi sword by the sect's master Shiunsai, Rikimaru is stronger than Ayame, but not as fast.



AYAME
An orphan trained as a ninja from early childhood, 21-year-old Ayame has served Lord Gohda for seven years. Renowned for her boldness, spontaneity and swiftness, Ayame's two-sword attacks are faster than Rikimaru's strikes, but not as powerful. She adores Gohda's daughter Kiku as if she were her own sister.



MATSUNOSHIN GOHDA
Gohda, a benevolent dictator, is head of the Gohda clan despite being only 30. A wise ruler, he has no ambition to widen his territory or increase his power. Instead he dedicates himself to ensuring peace and stability and improving his people's standard of living. A caring father, he has raised Princess Kiku alone since the death of his wife.



NAOTADA SEKIYA
Naotada, the 57-year-old patriarch of the Sekiya family, served Matsunoshin's father and later Matsunoshin himself as a teacher. His family have been advisers to the Gohda clan for generations, and provide their lord with lieutenants.

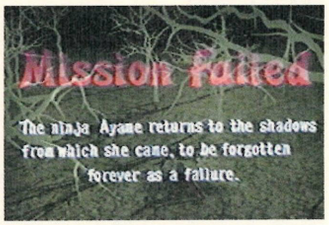


PRINCESS KIKU
Because her mother died when she was young, 12-year-old Kiku tends to be childish and dependant on others. She's Lord Gohda's only child, and looks up to Ayame as an older sister-type figure.







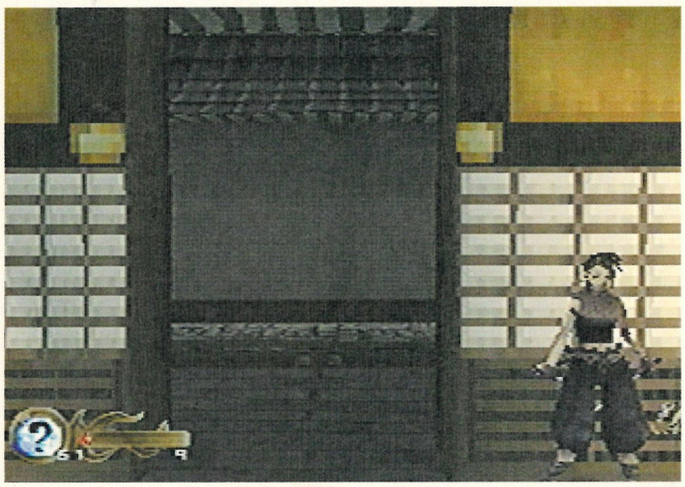








If anyone from the BBFC asks, she tripped while carrying a tin of red paint...



sised. It really is the key to victory, as thuggish tactics are penalised, not only on the score chart but also by making life impossible for the player, especially as the game advances. A foe that's spotted you might run away. Don't think he's scared - he's gone for reinforcements. Indeed, the game's attitude (as opposed to execution) is more akin to the hotly-awaited Metal Gear Solid than to Tomb Raider or Soul Blade.

Menacing Missions

As stated earlier, the game is played over a series of objective-based missions. Each is introduced by a short cut scene during which a voice-over outlines your task. For example, the first mission sees you hunting a corrupt merchant who murders his rivals and bribes his way out of trouble. Feudal Japanese culture is alluded to throughout the game - here we discover merchants, although wealthy, can never climb the largely-immobile Japanese class structure and become Samurai, and this leads to resentment. Small touches like this really add to the game's atmosphere and offer a real sense of being there.

You select your special items from a store room which expands as you go, stock including healing potions, caltrops (dropped to impede pursuers), grenades, coloured rice to mark trails, poisoned rice for use on guards and smoke bombs. Then it's off to the merchant's stronghold - press Select for an on-screen map. A few snippets of advice are offered while the level loads, another nice touch which preserves atmosphere by minimising the distraction caused by the inevitable wait. points are gained by stealthy kills and lost through being spotted or killing the innocent.

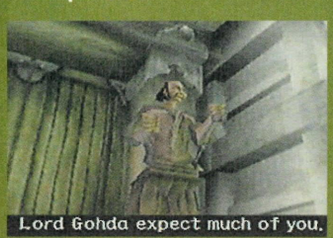
During the missions, you face not only humans but dogs, wolves and even demons, each presenting their

the next corner, don't run around it at full pelt and take him on toe to toe. Instead, hug the wall, creeping around until you can watch him unobserved. Wait until he turns his back on you, then use your Stealth Roll to close the distance without being heard. Do this right and you can slit his throat, killing him instantly before he even knew you were there. Approach in just the right manner and you can perform one of your character's one-strike fatalities; for example, Rikimaru skewers his foe with a clean strike, Ayame performs a wrestling-style frankensteiner and snaps his neck.

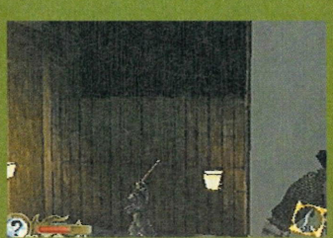
The importance of taking things slowly and using stealth rather than brute force cannot be over-empha-

HONING YOUR SKILLS...

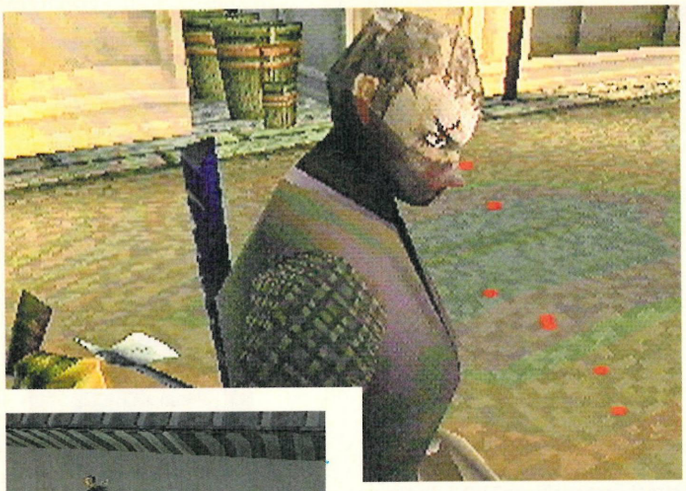
Tenchu offers a comprehensive training mode where you can practice essential skills such as swordplay, stealth and the use of special items such as the throwing daggers and the grappling hook. You soon learn how to take out a foe before they even see you. Scoring points for undetected kills, detected kills and passing unseen, your performance is analysed after the session. Rikimaru obviously needs more practice...





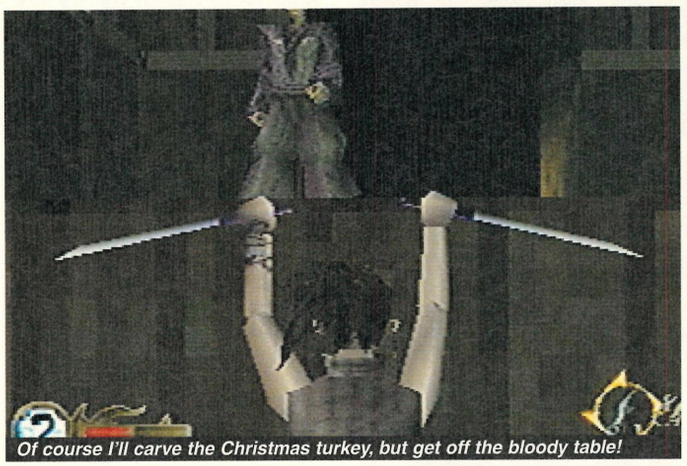


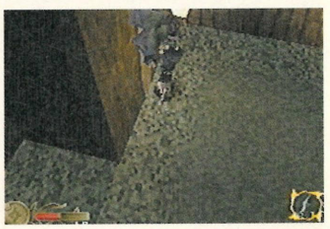


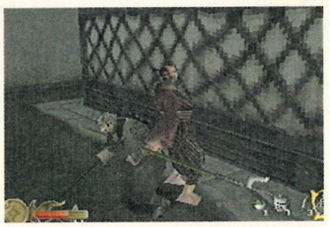






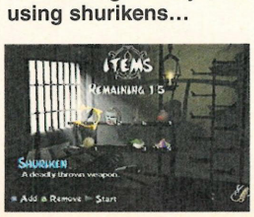

Of course I'll carve the Christmas turkey, but get off the bloody table!





JAP HAPPENINGS...

Activision, along with original developers Aquire, have made substantial improvements over the Japanese version of Tenchu. The game now boasts two extra levels, making ten in all. The artificial intelligence of the guards is improved, making them more aggressive and aware. In the Japanese version of the game, they could only spot you if you were standing on the same level as them - if they were on the ground and you'd climbed onto a roof, they missed you, however visible you were.
Presentation-wise, the Key Meter has been improved and the end sequence replaced with a far better one, a rendered movie in the style of the opening scenes. There are more secret items to discover in the UK game, but surprisingly, the shurikens (ninja throwing stars) have been replaced by equally-effective throwing knives due to 'legal reasons'. Strange - Mortal Kombat 4 got away with using shurikens...



own unique problems for the unwary ninja. As the game advances you can pick up spells to be used in the same way as magical items. These range from simple aggressive spells to a great disguise mode which causes guards to see you as an innocent citizen, unless you attack, in which case the spell is broken. Guard dogs can still identify you anyway.

Clever Design

Inspired level design is evident throughout. For example, there are very few open courtyards, and where they do occur it's best to creep around their edges rather than crossing them. There are always places you can hide and take stock of your surroundings, using your ninja techniques to the full. If you're spotted, the best course of action is to head for one of these, hoping your pursuer loses sight of you, enabling you to revert to stealth once more. The worst thing you can do is treat the game as a beat-'em-up and plough into them, however tempting it is to do so.

Tenchu offers another incentive to score highly. After every mission you're given a rating from Thug to Grand Master. Earning higher grades offers more special items, and even enhances your own abilities as a ninja. Exceptionally high scores can win items not normally available. Thus you've an incentive to replay missions you've already completed, earning higher ratings to enable you to get further into the game. This enhances lastability - run out of steam and it's back to a previously saved game to try for a more profitable score. There are even three different map layouts, with enemies and power-ups in different places, so you can't easily learn a mission off by heart then claim a cheesy high score.

Aesthetically, Tenchu also scores very highly. The motion-captured graphics are smooth and fluid, the characters actually looking like they're fighting realistically for once rather than just lashing out with the same animation over and again. The hi-res backdrops add atmosphere, the very-Japanese buildings and objects creating a believable game world, and the soundtrack's Oriental pop/folk providing the perfect backdrop to the action without swamping the game's often slow-paced cerebral exploration. The cut sequences are exciting and unintrusive, though it would be good if you could skip the in-mission scenes should you choose to do so.

Even the most cynical gamer will have trouble finding fault with this one. Perhaps the control method should switch from rotate-and-move to a directional input when standing toe to toe with a foe, as it's often tricky to keep your enemy in front of you, but what the hell - you're not supposed to fight in this way anyway. The camera's sometimes a little slow to move to where you want it too.

Don't expect Tenchu: Stealth Assassins to be easy. By turning video games' accepted concepts on their heads and demanding discretion rather than aggression, the game effectively undermines the player's confidence and forces him to play in ways he's just not used to. If you like your games challenging, atmospheric and (above all) fun, though, this one's for you. It's no pushover, but games of this depth and subtlety rarely are.

Ian

SECOND OPINION

What a spectacular month for good games. Because of the violence, Tenchu's bound to get an '18' rating, which is a pity (a videogames shop's been prosecuted for selling Duke Nukem to a 13-year-old). If you're old enough, though (or can get away with it), buy it.

Russell

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	9
LIFESPAN	9

93%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
JVC	JVC	Sports Sim	September '98	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card	Dual Shock

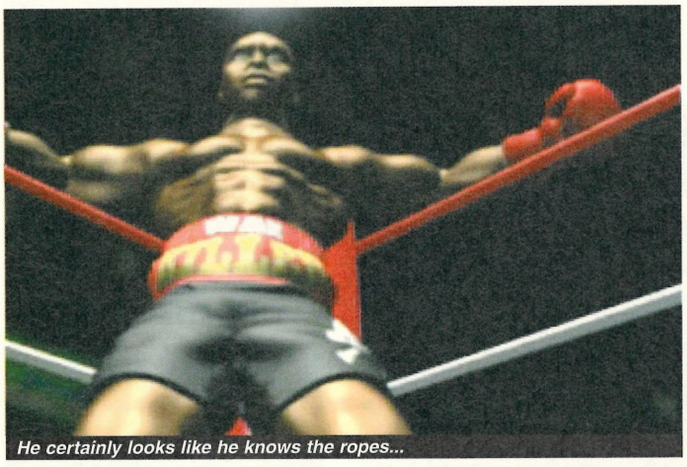
Victory

Is this a game that wins belts, or just hedges its bets?









He certainly looks like he knows the ropes...





Have you got what it takes to become a real-life Rocky Marciano, or are you just a street corner chump? Well it's time to find out with the latest offering from JVC - Victory Boxing 2.

Victory Boxing 2 has been in development at JVC for over two years, and finally looks set to bring the big money, showbiz, all-action world of professional boxing crashing onto your PlayStation. It has to be said that to this point, boxing hasn't exactly proven itself to be the perfect video game material. In the past we've had a couple of attempts, but they've always ended up being far to shallow to hold the player's interest beyond opening the box and putting the CD into the machine. The action is nothing more than that of a simplified beat-'em-up, with too few moves and not enough variation in attacks. This means boredom, or just plain frustration, soon sets in. Well Victory Boxing looks is set to change all that; it takes the action and excitement of the sport, while managing to add enough strategy and tactics to give the proceedings real depth. Let's take a closer look.



Your first task in Victory Boxing 2 is to select yourself a would-be champion. You're given a decent selection to choose from, ranging from a Lennox Lewis lookalike to a couple of

THE FIGHTERS

Choosing yourself a fighter is the first thing you're asked to do in Victory Boxing 2, and it's an important decision, so choose wisely.



Lennox Hedges
Height: 6' 1"
Weight: 121 lbs
Handed: Lefty
This left-hander has great speed, which makes him deadly when it comes to combo attacks; plus he learns really fast.



Henry "Slate" Dyson
Height: 5' 7"
Weight: 143 lbs
Handed: Righty
Henry is slightly slower than Lennox, but this mean-looking fighter soon becomes one of the power-houses of the boxing game.



Dave "The Animal" Perry
Height: 5' 11"
Weight: 154 lbs
Handed: Righty
Dave gets his name from being an absolute animal in the ring; in fact, when this guy gets going he's unstoppable - almost.



Meldrick Manson
Height: 5' 11"
Weight: 165 lbs
Handed: Righty
This guy is nearly six foot and weighs in at a hefty 165 lbs; this gives him a deadly punch and lots of power. Watch out if you come up against him.



Easily the best attempt so far at videogame boxing

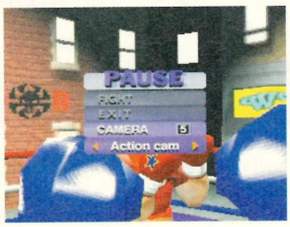
female characters - no room of sexism here, mate. However, at this stage it's really a case of getting a character who you like the look of, as all the fighters have pretty much the same (rather poor) statistics and skill ratings. In fact, statistically the only difference between all of them is in the speed department. However, it pays to think ahead; even though a character has more speed now, you've gotta think how this'll effect his or her development as you progress through the game.

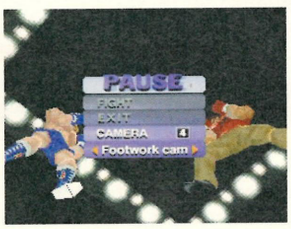
With your fighter selected, its off to see your trainer, the strangely-named 'Jackal', and what this guys doesn't know about boxing isn't worth knowing, although this does beg the question, if he's so good, why the hell is coaching a chump like you and not winning the world title himself? Anyway, the Jackal teaches you all manner of new skills as you progress through the game. For example, in his first lesson he teaches you how to perform the step-in uppercut, which is a powerful yet easy to pull off punch that stands you in good stead for the first few fights.

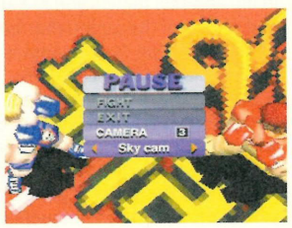
At this point it's time to step into the ring and stop talking; you must choose an opponent from the vast list of possible adversaries. You must start by working your way

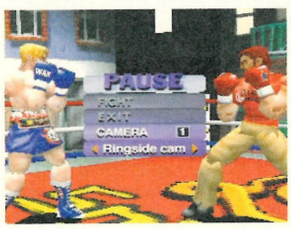
CAMERA ANGLES...

Choosing a camera angle you feel comfortable with is essential when playing, as you need a good view of the ring and both boxers at all times. However, in Victory Boxing 2 the camera angles have an even greater use than this. For example, there's a 'footwork cam' that lets you view the action from underneath the ring. This means you can focus on your fighter's footwork in the ring and use this to improve how you move when fighting. This, used in conjunction with action replay option, proves a great training technique. Check out all of the camera angles in the pictures here.

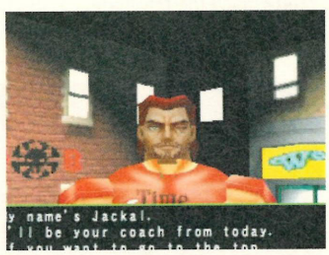












Boxing 2

Below you'll find an outline of each boxer, with a few stats and a brief description of what he can do.



Marvin Woods
Height: 5' 11"
Weight: 216 lbs
Handed: Lefty
Marvin is the true heavyweight of Victory Boxing 2. He weighs in at 216 lbs, and at nearly six foot he's a commanding presence in the ring. However, he's let down by extremely poor speed.



Don Brown
Height: 5' 9"
Weight: 137 lbs
Handed: Righty
Don's pee-ka-boo boxing style makes full use of his speed, while his height gives him an excellent reach on his punches, making him tough to stop.



Juliana Van Horne
Height: 5' 6"
Weight: 99 lbs
Handed: Righty
Juliana is the fastest character you have to choose from, and her small 5' 6", 99 lbs frame mean she can move around the ring like a rabbit. However, her power and strength is somewhat suspect.



Alexa Arguello
Height: 5' 11"
Weight: 121 lbs
Handed: Lefty
Alexa is much bigger than her fellow female boxer, so as you'd expect the potential for more power and strength is certainly there to be exploited. However, because of her increased weight and height, Alexa's speed does suffer.



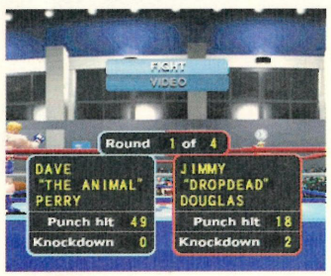
If you hit me again I'll run you over in my invisible car...



through the local fighters before taking on the best in the country, and finally working your way to very top and becoming World Champion.

Graphically Victory Boxing 2 is pretty good. The characters are made up of large polygons that move around the screen quite nicely, although I can't help thinking it would have been better if some kind of motion capture had been used. In addition to this, most of the fighters look like they share the same body, as all seem to have pretty much the physique. However, it must be said that on the whole the graphics are good, without being amazing. One of my favourite graphical features are the multiple camera angles - there are 7 in all, and this means you're sure to find a view of the action that best suits you. These camera angles include Classic, Sky, Footwork, Action and even a Reverse cam view which is lets you look at yourself while fighting - weird or what?

On the whole, the presentation throughout the game is good. After each fight you get an immediate newspaper report of how things went and what you fighter's current winning (or losing, as the case may be) streak is. In addition to this, you get some nice little touches like lots boxing facts and statistics from a Boxing News-style paper while you're waiting for the game to load. Yeah, okay, it may not be riveting stuff, but it sure helps to bridge the gap that loading creates, and this helps to hold the interest.







Power Punching

In terms of playability, Victory Boxing 2 is a tricky game to figure out,. It sets out to be a very much simulation-driven game, and what this means is that you cannot simply stand in the ring and tap the Punch button all day; well, not if you want to win at any rate. You must use the high and low blocking stances to stop your opponent's attacks whenever you're not attacking yourself. If you don't 'guard-up', you're soon sitting on the canvas - in fact, it only takes a mere four well-aimed punches to knock you to the floor, and this is only on the earlier levels. As you begin to gain a better ranking position, the difficulty steadily increases.

However, despite this initial feeling, I found that most of the bouts simply degenerate into a case of standing there with your guard up, waiting for you opponent to stop attacking, then launching a counter combo. It may sound as if I'm over simplifying things, but these tactics were good enough to see me through to the National Championship which is over half way through the game, and these tactics even served me well in a two-player match.

I think this problem basically comes back to the fact that boxing simply isn't a sport that translates to a console very well. It's almost impossible to recreate the strategic element that the sport involves, and this means that the videogame version is never going to be much more than a simple fighting game. However, this isn't to say that Victory Boxing 2 is a bad game; far from it. It features an excellent challenge, a great two-player mode, excellent presentation and some really nice little touches. I just think that in choosing the sport of boxing to convert to the PlayStation, JVC have set themselves too big a task. In fact, I'm not sure it can be done. For this reason alone I just don't think Victory Boxing 2 will appeal to every PlayStation owner out there; it's just a bit too liner to have mass market appeal. However, if you're a fight fan, or just want a change from the endless Tekken clones or racing games around on the PlayStation at the moment, then Victory Boxing 2 is certainly well worth a look - it's easily the best attempt we've so far seen at videogame boxing.

Alan

SECOND OPINION

Despite some liberties with the boxers' names (Lennox Hedges indeed), Victory Boxing 2's a fine game, and much better than its Japanese parent, which was just a shallow beat-'em-up. Being forced to fight with brains as well as brawn makes this one a winner.

Ian

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	6
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	8

85%

PULLING OFF PUNCHES...

One of the major things that sets Victory Boxing apart from pretty-much every other boxing game is the fact that stringing a combination of punches together is much more than simply tapping the Attack button like a man possessed. You must come up with high and low combinations that force your opponent to change his blocking position quickly. You can alternate between jabs and uppercuts to form an all-round style, while keeping you boxer's strength levels nice and high. You can come up with some great combos with a little practice, and the training mode is the prefect place to develop these tactics. Check out the pics for a few ideas.





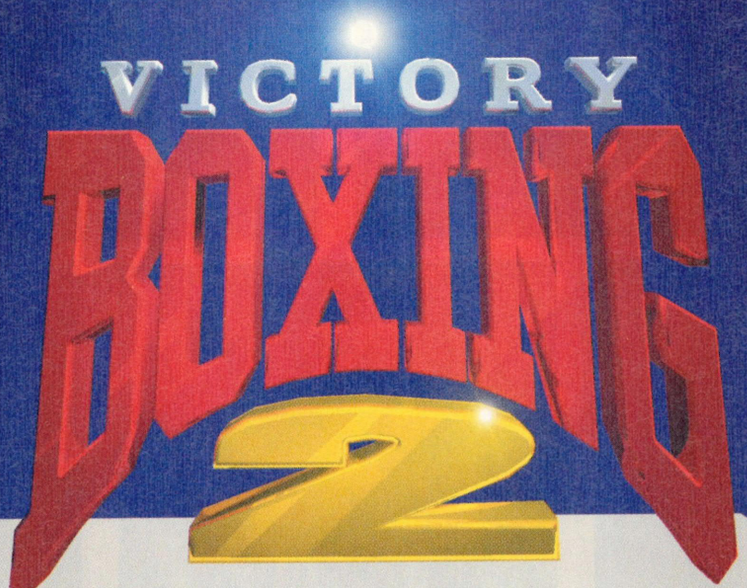


IT'S NOT THE WINNING THAT COUNTS IT'S THE TAKING APART!

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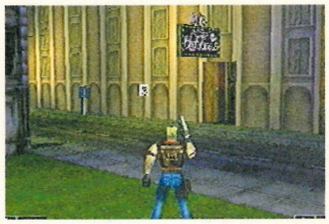


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PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
GT Interactive Entertainment	3D Realms	Adventure	25th September	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card	Analogue

Duke

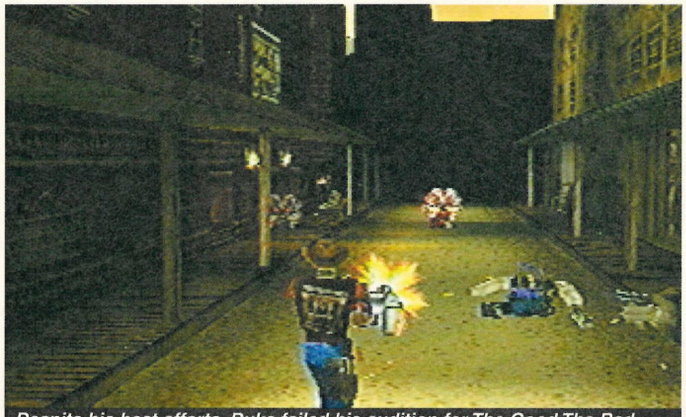
Right, someone think of a bad-ass one-liner...





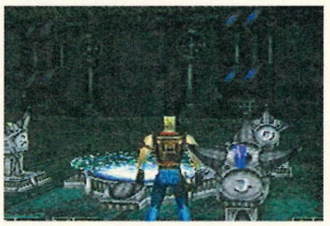


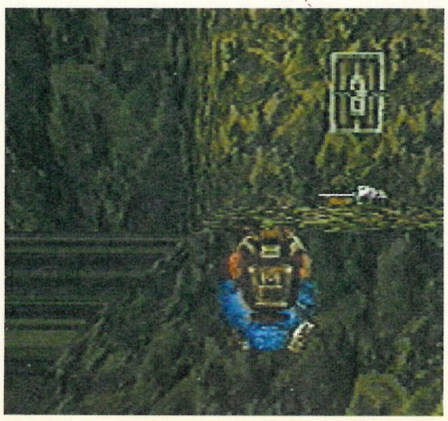




Despite his best efforts, Duke failed his audition for The Good The Bad And The Ugly...







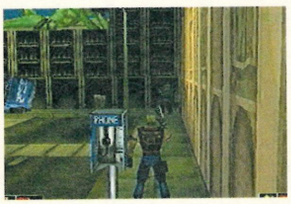


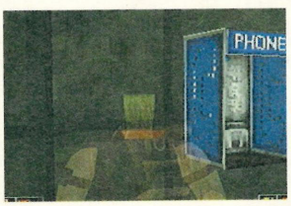


Nukem: Time To Kill

DARK HUMOUR...

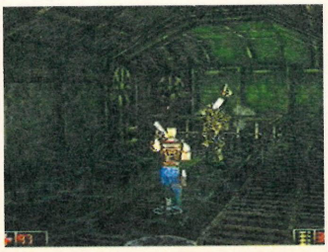
Okay, so we know that many elements of Duke Nukem: TTK's gameplay lean generously towards that of a certain large-breasted bird we all know, but it's duly noted and cunningly made into jokes within the game. In one occasion you can get Duke to pick up a phone. At the other end of the line there's a sexy-sounding girl breathing very heavily and moaning in a rather suggestive fashion. When she's done her bit Duke utters, 'Lara, is that you?' and then hangs up.
Elsewhere you're in a building and Duke opens a wardrobe. Inside, on a hanger, there is a tight green Lycra top and a pair of brown shorts. Duke takes one look and says 'Ohh, skanky clothes!'. This blatant acknowledgement of Tomb Raider is very clever, and only the big guy himself has the big brass balls to get away with it; excellent!



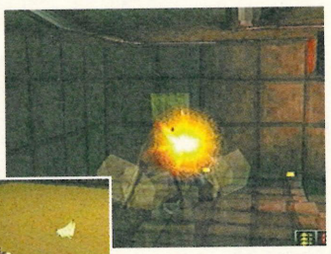




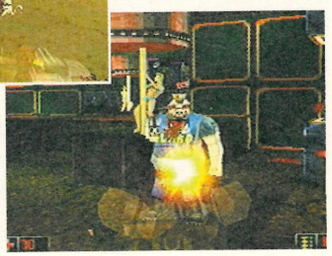


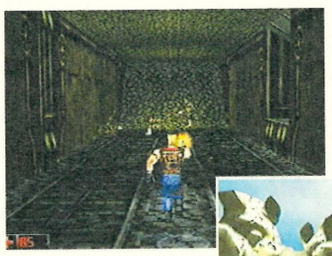




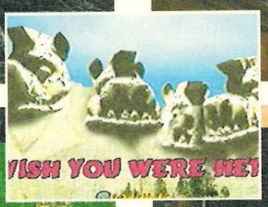




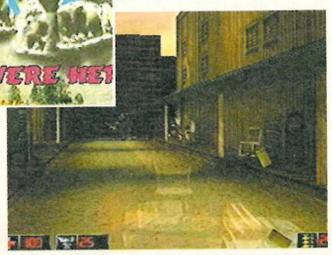












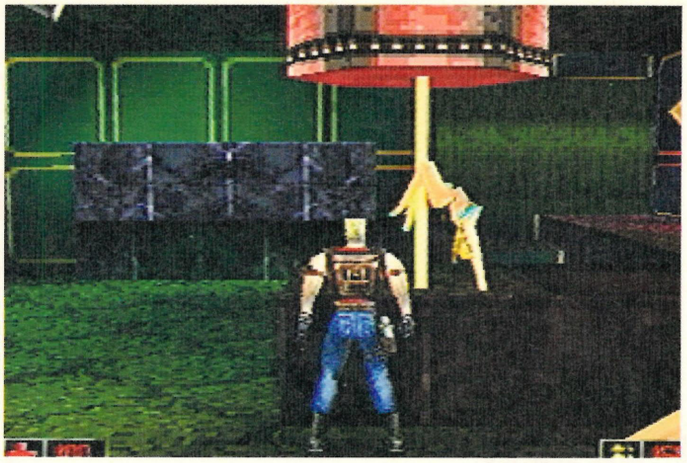
Here it is, the latest generation in the prestigious Duke Nukem family tree. Duke Nukem: Time to Kill is packing more attitude, more weapons and more enemies than ever before, and it's all in glorious third-person perspective 3D. Oh, and it's full of naked totty - what more do you want?

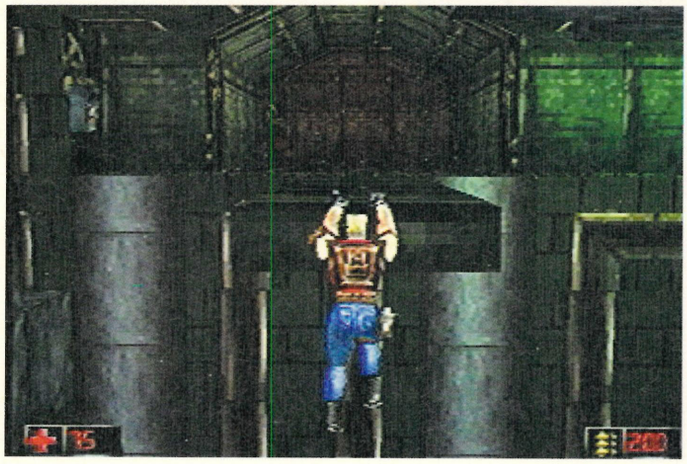
Though the introduction sequence doesn't give away too much of the story behind the game, it does set the mood in a breathtaking, almost music video style while showing you Duke, a bunch of ugly Pig Cops and table dancers really going for it all in a fast paced, action packed rendered sequence.

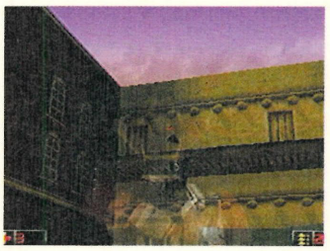
Fans of Duke's 3D shooting fests on both the PlayStation and PC will be instantly familiar with the first level of TTK, showing the downtown streets and the entrance to his favourite bar, Bootylicious - 'Shake it baby!' To complement Duke's new appearance, he has also has a plethora of moves added to his repertoire to bring him bang up to date. Without a weapon in hand he has a selection of karate kicks that are quite impressive and hard-hitting when they connect with an enemy. He can side-step, jump both forward and back as well as jump to the side in a similar way to Lara Croft.

Along with this, Duke can also duck down onto his knees and roll around the screen commando-style,

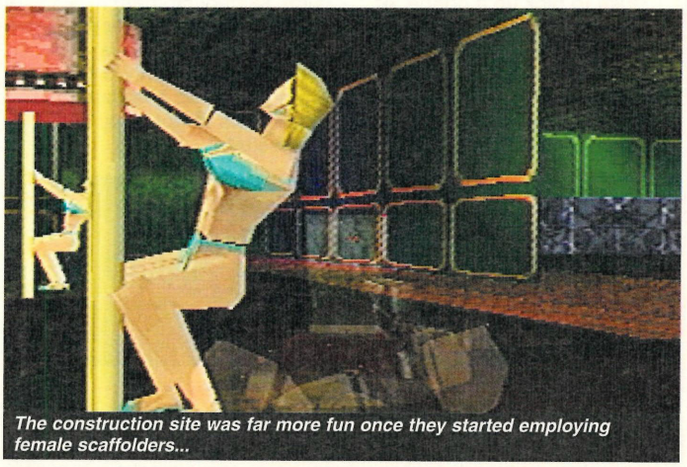












The construction site was far more fun once they started employing female scaffolders...

which can help you to escape enemy fire by hiding behind boxes and the like. To be honest, controlling Duke is rather similar to playing the large-breasted one, bar a couple of important factors. Duke moves around the playing area an awful lot faster and more efficiently that Lara, with much quicker gunfights giving you faster-paced action as a result. By pressing and holding the right shoulder button, the camera zooms in to the back of Duke and he turns transparent so you can see right through him. A red laser dot appears in the centre of the screen and you can use the directional pad to move the dot around the entire playing area and target whatever you want to shoot with a pixel-perfect aim. This function also lets you look anywhere you wish, and nine times out of ten it's the key to finding secret areas above and around your head.

All Hail to the King, Baby...

The levels in TTK are much bigger than before, with an excellent structure that makes you explore the huge cityscapes, massive caves and the like that make up the game. It definitely points you away from the path you're almost lead along in Tomb Raider and other such games, and really puts the 'adventure' in adventure game. In the Wild West level you can walk along the dusty high street and go into a building and take a look around. Instead of having to exit the building from your entrance point, you find another door on the other side of the building that leads you onto another street with yet more buildings on the other side. Duke also has a habit of talking to himself giving you clues about some items you've picked up or places that you come across. For example, in the first level you must find three crystals to make the time machine work and take you to the next area. When you

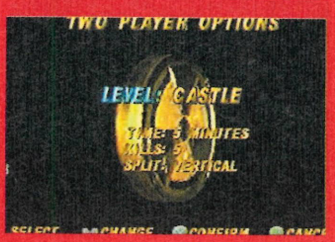
SEEING DOUBLE...

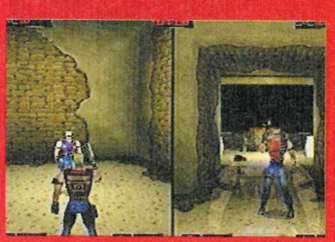
No you're not seeing double; Duke Nukem: TTK has rather a nifty two-player option that allows you to slog it out deathmatch-style with a friend. You can split the screen both vertically and horizontally, and choose form six of the game's levels as your backdrop to the action. As in all good deathmatch games, you have all of the game's most damaging weapons within easy reach to make the action as hot as you like. You can change the parameters of the game so you can have as many kills as you please and play for as long as you can.

The graphics do suffer as well as the speed that TTK plays at, but it's not too bad at all when you get into it. This added function works really well to prolong the game's shelf life, and gives you the opportunity to double the action for the first time in a game of this type. In a way, it's really reassuring to see that 3D Realms haven't just banged out a game which could so easily have been accused of being on the Tomb Raider band-wagon. They've really gone to town here, and that's great to see. Maybe Eidos should take note of the innovation in this game and perhaps try a little harder to produce something new for Lara's immanent third outing. Still, Duke's given them something to worry about now and that should be taken as a shot across their bow, because if they're not careful, Lara might just run out of steam and where would they be then?

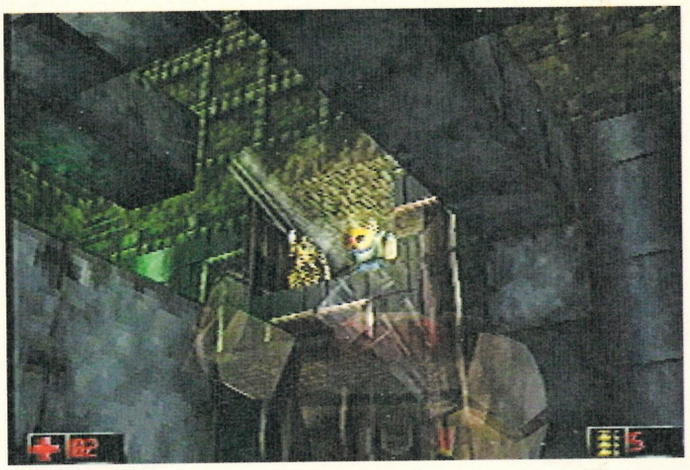


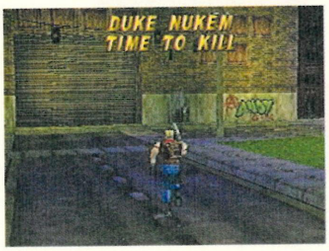


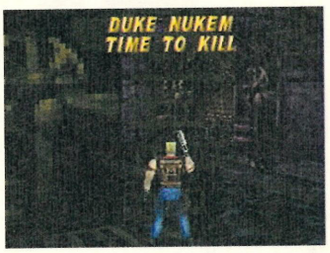


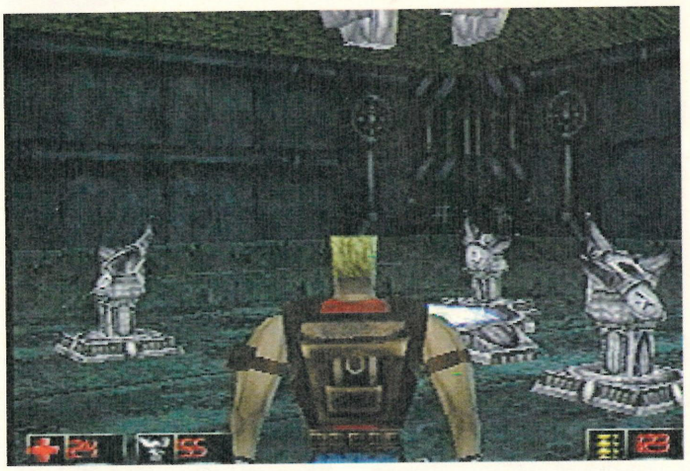














The shame of it, felled by a giant tomato...

DUKE NUKEM TIME TO KILL

find them, he says something like, 'Hmm, wonder what this is for' or 'two down, one to go'.

Though the levels are huge and it's remarkably easy to get lost in, you never get board due to the immense interaction between you and your surroundings. There is nothing in TTK that you can't shoot, comment on or interact with in one way or another. Every glass in the numerous bars you enter can be shot, every phone you come across can be used and every toilet can, well; be used. When you pass a mirror, Duke does his hair and comments on his fabulous looks in a number of different ways, and when he's near one of the dancing girls, strippers or bathing beauties he's always got a corny comment up his sleeve to get them hot. Although most of this is just for a laugh and serves little purpose in the game, it shows the huge amount of time spent making your adventure as full and brimming with things to do all the way through.

On the weapons front TTK has plenty to offer. An interesting touch that adds to the game's quality is the balance between weapons and the time period Duke is currently in. When he travels back in time to Ancient Rome, for example, you discover axes and throwing knives to add to your arsenal. The Wild West, on the other hand, delivers you Gattling Guns and buffalo rifles, but being in present times offers you energy weapons and the fantastic RPG, a shoulder mounted projectile weapon that has two launchers for each shoulder. The damage this baby does quite phenomenal; just try it in a room full of Pig Cops and see the wall turn red with blood. Kosher baby, it's great!

Duke Nukem: Time to Kill is a wonder to behold...

The graphics in TTK could possibly have been a little better, but I'd much rather see good contents in a game rather than just flash graphics. I get a strong feeling that perhaps the graphics had to be slightly compromised due to the sheer depth and size of the game, and that's fine by me because TTK has it by the truckload. Though I would say Tomb Raider looks slightly better than Duke in some ways, the levels you see in TTK are a lot busier. You get a real buzz from exploring and you get a feeling of 'where shall I go now?'. This is what keeps the player coming back time after time, and that's very important in a video game and something I think 3D Realms worked very hard to achieve.

Nuking Croft?

All in all, Duke Nukem: Time to Kill is a wonder to behold and is a must for fans of the genre and newcomers alike. I dare not say whether Duke is better than Tomb Raider as it really is a terribly sore subject. If I was feeling particularly brave, I'd say that Duke has much more to offer than Lara as far as enjoyment and gameplay goes, but Tomb Raider is less looked at as a game now but more of a phenomenon due to her almost cult status, so regardless of Duke's quality Lara will still be closer to our hearts. Shame really, but if Duke continues on the same road and delivers more of the same in the future, there could be an interesting conflict afoot. We've all heard of Alien Vs Predator, but what about Duke Vs Lara, anyone?

Russell

SECOND OPINION

What a cool game. It's great to see a sequel tht takes the series a stage further instead of offering a better-polished replica of the first game. Duke acknowledges its debt to Tomb Raider with some great wisecracks. Perhaps TR4 will learn from Duke.

Ian

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	9
GAMEPLAY	9
LIFESPAN	9

93%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Virgin Interactive Entertainment	Capcom	Beat-'em-up	September '98	UK	£44.99	1-2	Memory Card

You've gotta Marvel at Capcom's new beat-'em-up...

X-Men Vs Street Fighter











APOCALYPSE...

The big boss in X-Men Vs Street Fighter is the huge, powerful and insane Apocalypse. In order to stop his plan of world domination, you must first fight your way through all the other contenders in the game, which is no easy task in itself. Then with this done, it's time to take on the big guy himself. Before the fight begins, Apocalypse gives you one last chance to back out, which of course you cannot do. Enraged, he then transforms himself into a huge, and we are talking h-u-g-e version of his usual self in order to crush you. His favourite attacks include the Fist Smash, the Sliding Drill Attack and the Laser Ball Blast. Check out the screenshots to see what you're up against.









The big warriors' of the Street Fighter series and uncanny X-Men collide in this latest offering from Capcom, the masters of the 2D beat-'em-up.

The Street Fighter series has been one of, if not the most popular 2D fighting game of all time. With its amazing yet simple gameplay, it's easy to play but impossible to put down. Well, Capcom have taken the basic Street Fighter game engine and its most popular characters, then thrown them into the mix with the uncanny X-Men. Is this a match made in heaven, or a marriage of convenience? Read on and find out.

Unless you've had you head in the sand for the last few years, you're sure to know all about Capcom's Street Fighter II series of games. They are the pinnacle of the 2D fighting game, and possibly the greatest games of all time. Now in more recent times, Capcom have released a number of fighting games based on the X-Men characters (X-Men: Children of the Atom and Marvel Super Heroes), with some success. These games took the basic gameplay of the Street fighter series but added faster, more hectic gameplay plus a whole host of new features that speed up the action and created huge combo attacks - and this formula proved to be very popular indeed. Well, now the guys at Capcom have combined the two, and in doing so bring us a completely new experience; and its gotta be said, on the whole X-Men Vs Street Fighter lives up to the high standard set by its illustrious predecessors.

Meet the Cast...

The first thing to look at is the cast characters you can chose from. The world warriors include Ryu, Ken (surprise, surprise), Charlie, Cammy, Chun-Li, Dhalsim, M. Bison, Zangief and the mysterious Akuma. While some of the more popular SF characters have been left out (Sagat, Blanka, etc.) Capcom have got a good balance and Street Fighter fans are sure to find a character that suits their fighting style. The list of X-Men only amounts to eight, in contrast to the nine world warriors, and these are Cyclops, Gambit, Juggernaut, Magneto, Rouge, Sabertooth, Storm and the speedy Wolverine. Most of these character have been seen in the two previous X-Men games from Capcom, and play in very much the same way, which means those of you that have played these earlier X-Men games will have a head start over newcomers as the same tricks and tactics can be used here. Overall, the balance of characters is quite good and offers the player a decent choice in terms of fighting style, combo ability and difficulty. However, a good deal of the characters included are very similar in terms of gameplay. For example, Ryu, Ken, Akuma and Cyclops might as well be the same character as they all rely on the Fireball/Dragon Punch strategy which every single Street Fighter fan knows off by heart. You've got Zangief, Sabertooth and Juggernaut, who are all slow, powerful character that rely of heavy attacks and little else too. This theory can be applied to almost every character in the game. Now the problem is that when you consider factors like this, the number of 'truly' different character you have to choose from is far smaller than the total cast of 17 fighters. However, a skilful player will be able to make use of the subtle differences between the characters far better than a novice who simply relies on button bashing, and this is the real skill of the game.

The most exciting new feature in X-Men Vs Street Fighter is the fact that now, instead of choosing a single character to fight with, you can pick two. First off, you choose your 'main' character; this is the guy (or



There is almost no mid-move animation...

gal) you'll control for the fight, so obviously this should be the character you feel most comfortable with. However, you now choose a second warrior who stands at the side of the battle area but can leap into the action to help you out with either a Variable Counter Attack or, better still, the deadly Variable Combination Attack. For more information on how your 'tag-team partner' can help you out, check out the boxout.

This addition really is more than just a gimmick and changes the way you think when fighting and, basically, how the game is played. The Variable Combination attack in particular can change the course of the match in a matter of seconds.

The X-Factor...

Other new features that help to change the gameplay and add to the speed and excitement include the four turbo speed settings, which allow you to test your skills to the maximum. You also have the ability to choose how your character blocks during the fight; this option is basically a choice between manual and automatic, the latter being perfect for novice players. The Hyper Combo Gauge, which features in the SF Alpha and earlier X-Men games, is also included. This opens the door to some of the most amazing moves in the game. For example, each character has two Hyper Special Moves which can be performed when enough hyper energy has been amassed (this is achieved by attacking an opponent), and these moves can score anything up to a staggering 25 hits. In addition to this, X-Men Vs Street Fighter also features counter attacks and aerial attacks and even mid-air blocking. What all these features mean is that the gameplay has a lot more depth than previous games, and it forces the player to adopt more advanced fight strategies to win. No longer can Ryu players just sit back and fireball an opponent into submission, for example. This makes the matches much more even and fun - the perfect example of this is Dhalsim. In the earlier Street Fighter games he was always considered to be a weak character, but in X-Men Vs Street Fighter the new features and special moves actually make him one of the best.

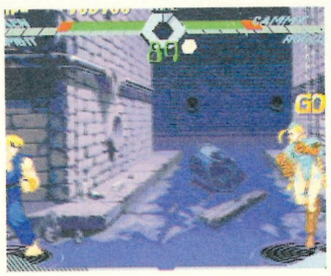
However it's not all good news. X-Men Vs Street Fighter does have a few niggling problems that stop it from being an arcade-perfect translation and therefore scoring a higher mark. Looking at the screenshots, the game may appear to be arcade perfect; the colours, the background; everything is there. However, when you actually see the game running, and more importantly the animation, you realise that a number of corners have been well and truly cut to get X-Men Vs Street Fighter from arcade to PlayStation. The characters have a limited amount of animation frames and some moves seem to have hardly any at all. Tap the kick button and the first thing you see is your character's foot connect with the opponent; there is almost no mid-move animation and even the more complex special attacks seem to have had a good deal of the animation frames cut away in order to save memory.

In addition to this, the arcade version of the game allowed the player to tag in his second character at any time, thus giving him two energy bars and two individual characters to work with. This feature had to be limited on the PlayStation as the machine didn't have the memory to cope with four sets of attacking moves. Both of these problem are simply a case of the PlayStation not having the bus fare, which is not really the fault of the programmers, but is nonetheless a real shame.

All in all, X-Men Vs Street Fighter is a game worthy of the Street Fighter name as it holds true to the strong gameplay base that made the earlier games in the series so good, while introducing enough new features to make it a game in its own right. The only problem I can see with the game is the poor loading times, and the fact that the animation is extremely ropy in places, and this is simply due to the lack of RAM the PlayStation has to work with. If you're a fan of the 2D beat-'em-up or just fancy a change from the never-ending stream of 3D fighters that swamp the PlayStation, you can do a lot worse than in X-Men Vs Street Fighter.

Alan







SECOND OPINION

Is anyone else getting bored with these endless Street Fighter games? It's not a bad game in its own right, but we've seen so much of it before...
Come on Capcom, the cash cow's been milked dry. Let's see something original.

Mike

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	7

83%

THE VARIABLE COMBINATION ATTACK...

As we've mentioned in the main review, one of the best new features included in X-Men Vs Street Fighter is the fact that you actually choose yourself a 'tag-team partner' before the match starts, giving you the ability to perform the Variable Combination Attack. This deadly move sees both characters unleash their Hyper combo on the opponent at the same time. This means you can pull off combos of anything up to 60 hits and cause around 35% damage in a single attack. Check out the screenshots for a demonstration of this move's power.



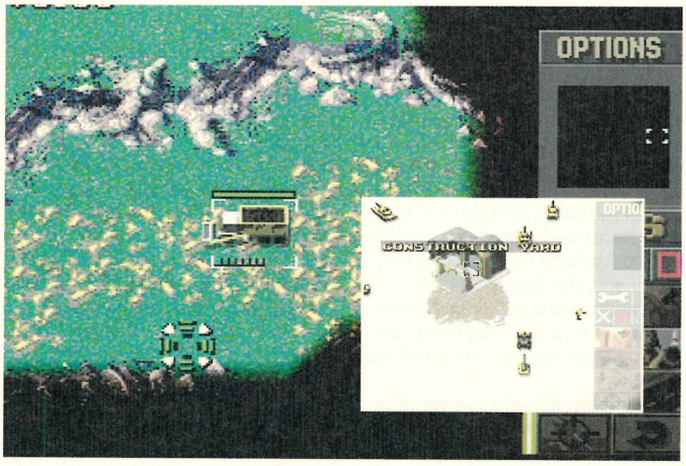
PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Virgin Interactive Entertainment	Westwood Studios	Strategy	18th September	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card	PlayStation Mouse

More of the same, or as they say, if it ain't broke, don't fix it...

Command & Conquer Red Alert:



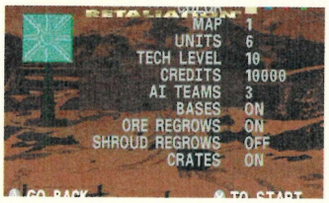




Fancy taking charge of the massive Soviet army, or maybe you'd be happier being the leader of the Alliance trying to stop them? C&C Red Alert: Retaliation gives you the chance, so let's see if you've got what it takes...

When the original Command & Conquer was released on the PC it caused a storm, and with its amazing strategic elements, all-action gameplay and excellent graphics, it really wasn't hard to see why. Many tried to emulate the success of C&C as countless clones flooding the market, but Westwood's original is still by far the pick of the bunch.

We've seen a number of sequels released on the PC that upgraded the original while adding a number of new features, better graphics and the like. Then finally us PlayStation owners got a taste of the Command & Conquer phenomenon, with the release of the original title and then C&C: Red Alert. Now Westwood have updated the game, and through Virgin released the latest PlayStation incarnation - Command & Conquer Red Alert: Retaliation. So lets take a closer look at promises to be the best PlayStation version of this award-winning series.





Movin' out...

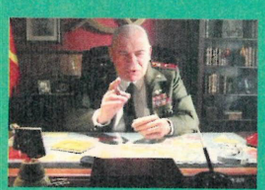
Okay, for those of you who are new to the PlayStation, don't usually go for strategy games or have had your head down a toilet for the past three years, here is a brief explanation of what Command & Conquer is all about. The basic idea of the game is a simple, yet amazingly addictive one. First off choose the 'side' you want to fight for, basically goodies or baddies. In Retaliation, these sides are the Soviet army and the Allied forces. Once you've chosen your colours, it's up to you to take charge of the entire campaign through a series of missions, the overall goal being to wipe out the opposition. Each mission in the



CUT SEQUENCES...

Atmosphere is one of the key elements to a game like Command & Conquer, taking the game from simply being something you play to something you really believe. C&C: Red Alert Retaliation accomplishes this feat with a combined use of Full Motion Video cut scenes and fully-rendered animated action. Everything from your missions briefing, you successes and your failures are all reported to you by a team of characters. For example, when playing as the Soviets you take orders form Stalin himself. Just check out a few of the following sequences...















Retaliation

game offers you a different type of challenge, these range from a covert night-time mission that requires stealth and planning through to all-out war where you take control of tank platoons, laser cannons and all manner of hardware. This diversity and variation is what makes the series so good; you just don't know what is around the next corner.

The PlayStation version of C&C Retaliation comes on two disks (just like the PC ones). The first holds all the Allied missions, the second the Soviet campaigns - this means in effect you've got two different games to play through.

The first thing that strikes you about C&C is the presentation. It's incredibly polished right the way through, from the excellent Full Motion Video introduction that sets the scene to the slick menu options and animated cut sequences that precede most missions. This faultless presentation has always been the hallmark of the C&C games on the PC, and it's great to see no corners have been cut in its conversion to the PlayStation. Another pleasing aspect of Red Alert: Retaliation is the loading times involved. So many PlayStation games suffer from horrendous gaps between the action that breaks up the atmosphere, but not so here. Despite the fact that each mission is introduced by an animation of FMV, you don't have to wait much more than 15 seconds until you're thrown into the action. This may only be a small aspect, but it's one that really shows good planning from the programmers and it just helps to keep the whole atmosphere of the game going.

You can't help but recommend Red Alert: Retaliation...

Unit lost...

Graphically the game is pretty-much identical to the PC versions, which means you get all the FMV and fully-rendered animation scenes you could wish for. However, it has to be said the graphics in the game itself are not exactly what you'd call mind-blowing. After all, they haven't really changed since the original, and that was released around three years ago. Although having said this the visuals do their job perfectly well as they are easy to follow and are well animated.

In terms of control, C&C represents the best reason you could ever have for buying a PlayStation mouse. Yeah, it's possible to play with a joypad, but anyone who has tried will tell ya' that the only way to go is to get yourself a mouse. However, other than this minor problem, which isn't really a problem at all to be honest, controlling your vast army couldn't be easier. You can build, attack, retreat and form a huge army with relative ease; a simple click of the mouse button is all you need do.

My only problem with Command & Conquer: Red Alert Retaliation is that I can't help thinking that maybe, just maybe, we've seen it all before. Yeah, there are new missions and a few new bits of hardware for you to tinker with, but essentially you're playing a game that has pretty much remained unchanged for a good few years now. As I played C&C for this review, I just could shake the feeling that I'd seen and done it all before; it felt as though I was simply playing another data disk of different missions.

Don't get me wrong - you can't take away the fact that this is one of the most addictive games around; this will never change. I just think now it's time to update the series big time, keeping the gameplay but changing the way the game looks. Maybe this will be the case when Command & Conquer 2: Tiberian Sun finds its way onto the PlayStation.

The simple fact is you can't help but recommend Command & Conquer: Red Alert Retaliation to everyone, as it's soooo good. If your a fan, you'll love it. If don't own the previous PlayStation version (and why the hell not?), then you love it, but find its difficulty curve a little steep. If strategy games aren't usually your bag, you'll still love it. I just hope that now Westwood take the series somewhere different and once again give us a new benchmark for games of this genre. However, while we're waiting, I can't think of anything better to play then C&C: Red Alert Retaliation.

Alan

SECOND OPINION

This one was originally two data disks for the PC game, and it shows in the lack of a suitable learning curve and limited originality. It's a great title, but if you haven't played C&C or the original Red Alert, get them first - you won't regret it.

Ian

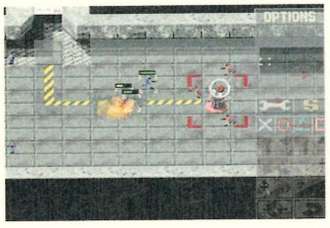
THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	6
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	8

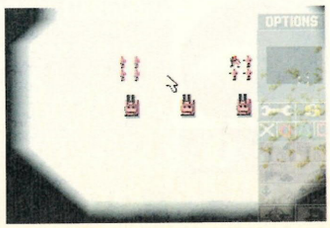
91%













PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Electronic Arts	Electronic Arts	Sports Sim	October '98	UK	£39.99	1-4	Memory Card, Multi-Tap, Analogue Pad

Another Madden American football game. Is it worth buying, or the same old thing in a new suit?

Madden

The Madden Series of games has got to be one of the longest running in console history. It seems like a lifetime since the original was released of the Sega Mega Drive (remember those?), and every year since then EA have given it a face lift, a few new features and some technical updates. So is the series really worth yet another sequel, or is it time 'dear old' John Madden hung up his boots and called it a day? Let's find out.

Before we get down to the real business of what Madden '99 is all about, let's get the basics out of the way first. Graphically, there have been a number of improvements since last years instalment. The player animation has been updated and now looks better than ever; in fact, a motion-capture technique has been used to give them an incredibly lifelike look. The graphics as a whole have been vastly improved, and are by far the best you're likely to see in any PlayStation Sports game. In addition to this, the new game perspective (which can, incidentally, be toggled through a selection of eight different views) also works very well and makes the action easy to follow, even when things get hectic.

The sound and spot effects are basically the standard fare we've come to expect from the Madden series of games, and in fact sports games as a whole, with the usual grunts and groans of the players mixed with the some excellent speech from the John Madden and his commentating partner Pat Summral. The overall atmosphere created by the game is a good one, and it really does help to give you the feel of a real NFL stadium, minus the other 150,000 people, of course.

Presentation is quite simply excellent. The front end of the game is full of FMV action, and with John Madden himself introducing the game you just can't help but be drawn into the world of sports EA have so finely created. In addition to this, Madden '99 features just about every option you could ever think of. Everything from skill level and quarter length, to trade deadlines and salary caps are included. In fact, to be honest there is little else for the guys at EA to tinker with these days, as cosmetically the game has evolved to a point of saturation now. Unless they start to change things for the sake of it I really can't see what else can be improved in these departments.

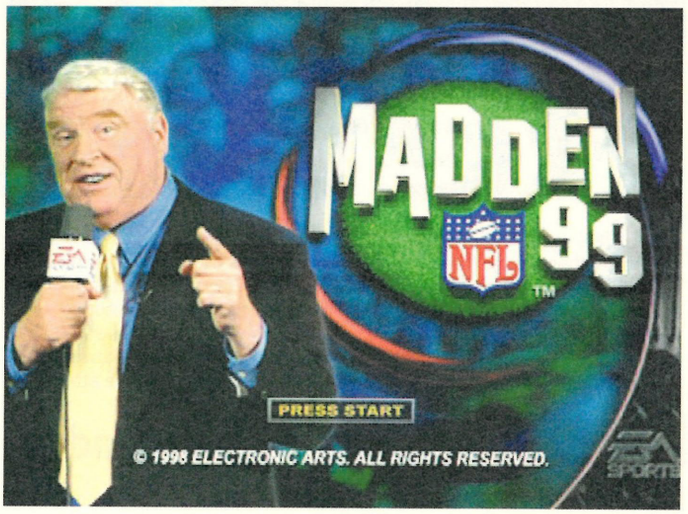
Sacked in the Endzone

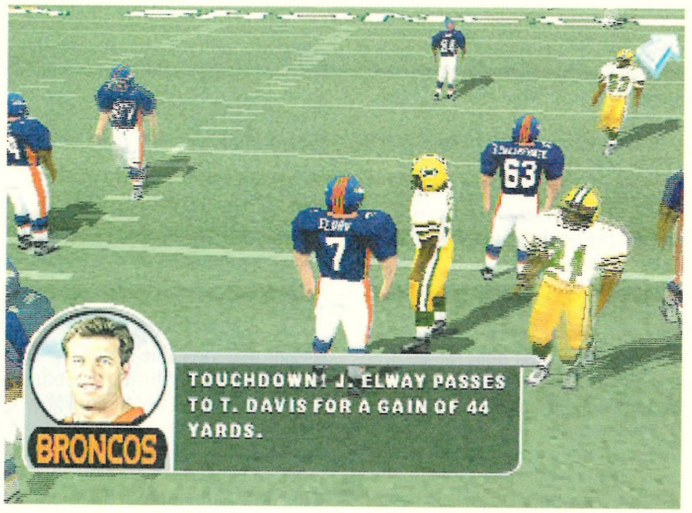
On the 'down' side, the loading times in Madden '99 are simply crippling. You have to wait for around 20 seconds to simply load up the front end, then once you've selected your game style, another wait of around 35 seconds ensues before you can get started. I guess this is the price for all the graphical and statistic enhancements, but it's nonetheless extremely annoying.

However, with the cosmetic features out of the way, we come to the real core of the 'oh my God it's another Madden game' argument - let's see why the sequels just keep on coming.

It doesn't take a genius to figure out that the yearly Madden update is primarily for the American market, with the European release being something of an afterthought. Now I don't mean this to be a criticism; it's simply a fact, and

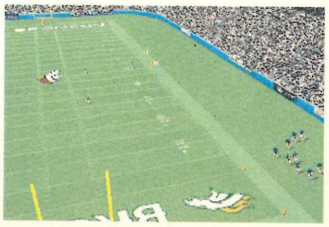
The graphics as a whole have been vastly improved...



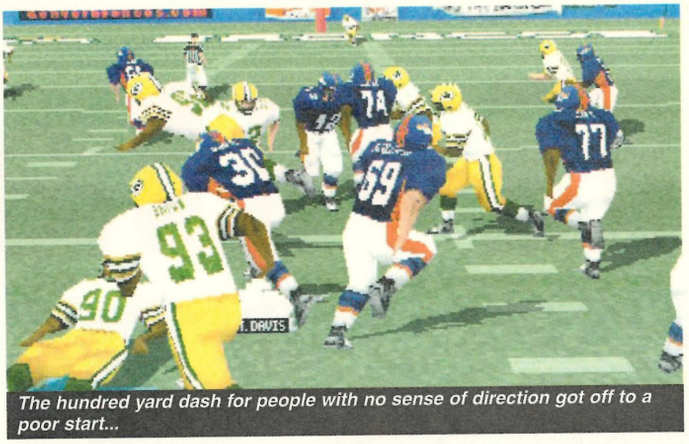










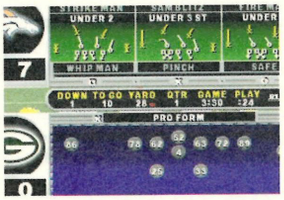


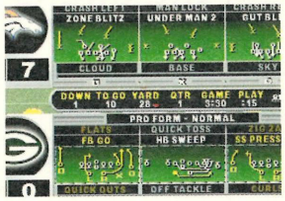
The hundred yard dash for people with no sense of direction got off to a poor start...

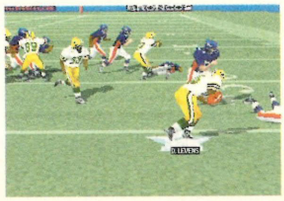
NFL '99

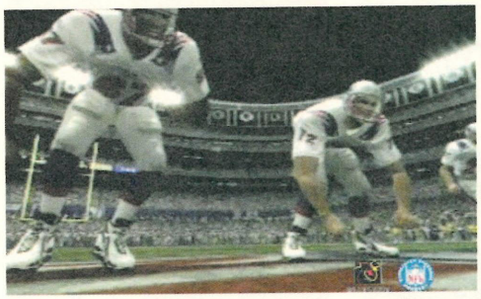
RUNNING A PLAY...

Choosing your team's play in Madden NFL '99 is more than simply hitting and hoping. You must select a play that suits the situation your team is in. First, you must select the 'formation' you want to give your team. The next job is to chose the 'set'; these two factors then dictate the list of actual 'plays' you can choose from. For example, if you go for a Goal Line set, you're not going to have many throwing plays to choose from as this set gives you more line men than wide receivers. Check out the screenshots below as they take you through the play selection process.









What us Brits, and pretty much everyone else outside of America to be honest, fail to realise is that you buy the next game in the series so you are playing with the same statistics as the real guys in the NFL.

In addition to the statistics, each year the play book is also updated, which means as real-life football strategies move on, so can you in your virtual NFL world. However, the problem is that when the game comes around for European release, all these changes are wasted as most people in the UK can hardly name ten American football teams, let alone ten individual players and how their stats effect the game. How many of you can actually name a new player who joined the league from this year's draft, or which players have moved to which team, or even who are the reigning super bowl champions?

The bottom line is this - Madden NFL '99 is the best slice of videogame American football you'll find on the PlayStation. It's that simple. However, in terms of raw gameplay, this could have been said about the previous the games in the series. If you own one of the earlier games and simply want the best American football game to play with your mates, then in truth you already own it, and unless you really must have the latest graphics I really can't see the point in shelling out another £40. However, if you're a real NFL fan and want all the updated stats, players, rosters, new graphics and the like, Madden '99 is a worthwhile purchase it's easily the benchmark American football game on any home console.

Alan

one that must be acknowledged in order to understand why the sequels keep on coming. You see, the Madden series has always been about creating an accurate, strategic and playable game of American football on a console, and to do this the American gameplaying public demand that each year the statistics, player rosters, player attributes, draft picks, player retirements, etc. are updated and revised. It they weren't the game would fail to be realistic, which is, after all, what its ultimate aim is. This is why each year EA appear (to the untrained eye at least) to release a slightly tweaked version of the same game at full price.



SECOND OPINION

It's the best gridiron game there is, but hardly radically changed from the last one. If you've already got a PSX Madden game, there's no point buying this unless you're a complete American football nut who must have the latest stats and rosters.

Ian

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	8

81%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
THQ	Taito Corp.	Shoot-'em-up	25th September	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card	Dual Shock

G•Darius

Put another ten pence in the slot...





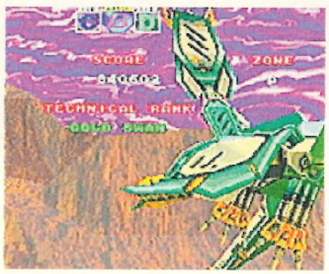








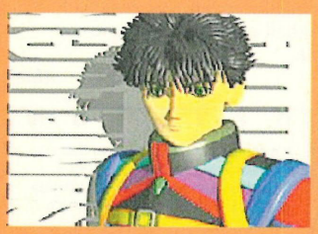


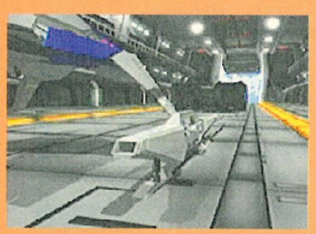




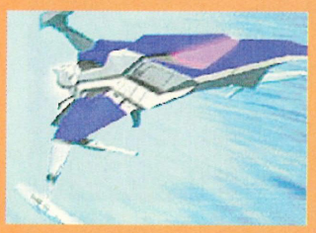
A JOURNEY INTO THE UNKNOWN...

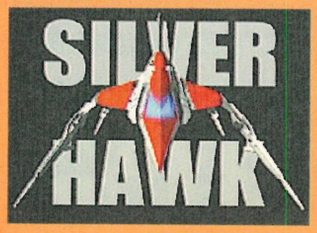
One thing you wouldn't have found in the arcades of the Eighties is a rendered intro sequence, but it seems like no PlayStation game is complete without one these days.













This game takes you back to the arcades of your youth - that's if you're old and crumbly enough to have been a teenager in the early Eighties! If you're not, you'll still get a kick out of the fast and frantic action THQ have got in store with their update of the Japanese classic, G•Darius.

The Darius series has been doing the rounds for decades now, with a huge following among die-hard game fans in the US and Japan. The formula has never strayed too far from the simplistic space ship/shoot-'em-up mould that has been so popular with gameplayers all around the world, and this new PlayStation version doesn't make the mistake of doing something new and innovative - it sticks to what it knows best!

The basic G•Darius ship is a hawk-shaped affair with nothing particularly out of the ordinary to boast about, except its simple single laser shot at the front and the ability to drop bombs. It's up to the player to use their skill and cunning to expand the ship as quickly and effectively as possible to survive through attack wave after attack wave of alien ships.

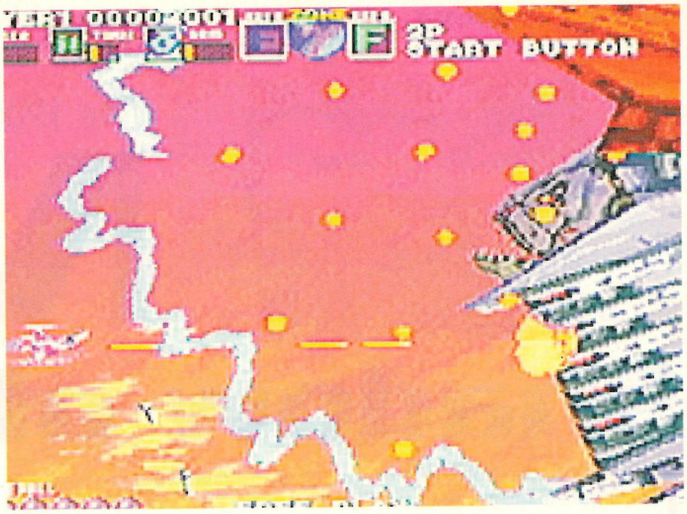
Enemy Action

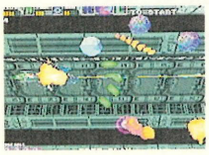
There's a constant stream of enemies that pile onto the screen, and shooting them adds points to the score. It's the final enemy in many of the sequences you've got to look out for - it's a different colour to the rest, which indicates that it's holding a power-up! Blast this enemy to oblivion and a coloured ball appears on the screen. Collecting these adds a new weapon to the ship, gives a temporary shield or increases its speed. The one unique feature of G•Darius in the power-up department is the ability to capture enemy ships in a forcefield, then use their weaponry against their comrades - cool. Once you've been playing for a while, you learn that capturing a particularly nimble and well-equipped enemy is your best bet - turning the tables on the aliens is very satisfying.

Turning the tables on the aliens is very satisfying

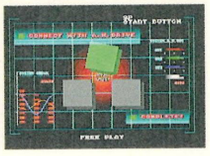


The fish on this planet are so strange they crap cocktail umbrellas...



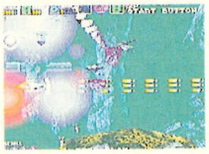












As the background of each level scrolls along, the majority of the enemies appear on the screen from the right, but just to put you off, you occasionally get encampments of enemies sitting on rocky outcrops on the scenery. Then there are those you missed on the first pass to contend with - they double back, following their set attack pattern, and can catch you by surprise. For variety, later levels change the scrolling direction of the level too, moving at a diagonal and tilting the ship accordingly.

Layers of Levels

There are 15 levels of G•Darius to battle through, with 30 bosses to encounter on your mission. These levels take you through many diverse locations, from thick jungles to deep blue oceans, barren deserts to the vast open wastes of space. You won't get to visit them all in one sitting, though, and playing the same level twice can be a very different experience. There are locations in each level where you can split off into a new direction. You're given a few seconds to make the choice or the computer chooses for you. Then on completing each level you get a choice of route to take through a triangular-shaped map, so you can play the game differently each time.

There are also three game modes to suit players of all abilities - the Beginner mode makes things a little easier for shoot-'em-up novices, Arcade mode gives a typically arcade experience but without having to insert coins and Boss mode gives you the option of taking on bosses individually and fine tuning your skills against them, but somehow isn't as fulfilling as battling through to them in the Arcade mode.

Obviously, being an arcade game, there's a good two-player option to G•Darius. Both players battle against the onslaught of enemies simultaneously; there's no split-screen, just two mates fighting for survival and helping each other out. With both of you playing with Dual Shock controllers you're in for a real laugh!

It's a Mega-Blast!

Visually the game is pretty snazzy. The special lighting and weapon effects manage to retain a retro feel while being state-of-the-art PlayStation fare at the same time.

Many of the enemies you encounter are on the small side, but this is more than made up for by the gigantic bosses that attack in a multitude of different ways to keep you on your toes.

Not all THQ productions are this good, but G•Darius really is a jewel in an otherwise-filthy crown. You just won't be able to put it down until the game is completed!

The one niggle I did have about the game, and there is only one, is that with your finger held down on the fire button and an unlimited supply of ammunition, the levels can sometimes pass by without hardly batting an eyelid. The bosses are a challenge even for the most experienced shooting gamesplayer, but longer and more stimulating levels building up to the boss battles would have gone down a treat.

If it's pure unadulterated shoot-'em-up pleasure you're after, G•Darius is right up your street!

Doug

HIS OR HERS?

One of the coolest things about THQ's G•Darius is the simultaneous two-player option where two friends can rip and tear around the screen together, joining forces against the ugly alien onslaught. This creates a true team spirit and is fantastic fun with the music ramped up to full volume when you come in from the pub!









SECOND OPINION

G•Darius is a fine retro rave, but falls short of greatness. At times it depends too heavily on throwing umpteen baddies at you and cramming the screen with hazards as opposed to subtle enemy strategies, but this doesn't stop it being fun.

Ian

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	6

74%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Eidos	Core Design	Action Adventure	25th September	UK	£39.99	1	Memory Card



The Water Margin was never like this...

Ninja: Shadow of Darkness

If you take the development house behind the phenomenally-successful Tomb Raider series and give them the atmospheric backdrop and characters of a mysterious ninja clan, you're going to expect something seriously cool to come out of the deal - and Ninja: Shadow of Darkness is the result. Let the PlayStation pleasure begin...

There's nothing special about third-person perspective action adventures these days. They're ten-a-penny on the next-generation console formats, and range in quality from the dire to the delightful. Just thinking off the top of my head, games like Pitfall 3D, Rascal, Batman & Robin and obviously Tomb Raiders I, II and soon to be III spring to mind - and that's without even looking at my extensive PlayStation collection. It's the delightful games that matter, though; the dire ones are destined to live out their lives on the bottom shelf of the rental shop, and Core Design's Ninja: Shadow of Darkness is certainly delightful.

Core have been developing this game up for almost two years now - I first played a preview version way back in 1996. It looked like a game with incredible potential then, but with two years' further development it's become an almost instant classic. The teaser ad campaigns they've been running in the mags recently have surely whetted your appetite too, so without further ado let's explore Ninja.

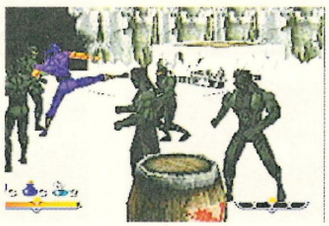
Cinemascope

Viewed from a third person perspective, you get to take control of a ninja warrior equipped with an arsenal of fast and efficient special moves and an unlimited supply of throwing knives. Each of the lush levels is packed with detail and animation, with a countless number of cool finishing touches to make the game stand out from the rest. Birds flutter by in the green fields, bats flap at the cemetery, rabbits hop along. Madmen with axes sit and gaze at the view until you walk by, when they suddenly get quite angry and attack. The game predictably covers all the usual terrains like slippery snow and ice and rough, tough towns, but there are many pleasant surprises to be had too with a level set entirely up in the sky, Catac Clouds, and some cool one-on-one battles with impressive giant bosses including a mean-looking, fire-breathing dragon.

There are 13 levels in all, with the player progressing from one to another in a linear fashion. Obstacles like traps, moving platforms, gates and rolling logs must all be overcome to reach the end of the location. Each level is viewed using a cinematic camera system where the viewpoint can't be controlled by the player, but is instead zoomed in and out and rotated around the action to give the optimum view of what's going on. Each of these locations is packed to bursting with a multitude of enemies in many guises - there are in fact 50 in all. These characters are all really well animated and have their own unique attacks, and obviously they get progressively tougher to fight against as the game goes on.

Innovative ideas combine to create a truly addictive game...

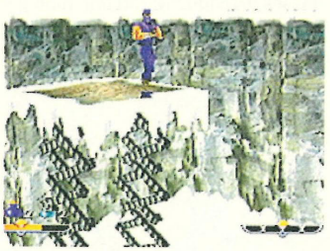














NINJA TECH SPECS

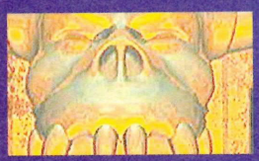
The PlayStation coding wizards at Core Design have really done the business with Ninja: Shadow of Darkness. They have once again pushed back the boundaries of PlayStation quality and set the standards for other software developers to follow. We managed to pin down one of the leading programmers of the game to find out the technical gossip behind this phenomenal title. Some of this jargon may go way over your head, but it sure sounds cool.

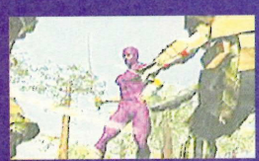
- The game runs at 30 frames per second.
- There are realtime lightning calculations for ultimate realism.
- A unique R3000 optimised rendering engine has been used on visuals with a real-time dynamic camera system.
- The average polygon count is 3000 with a maximum of 7000.
- The game calculates real-time shadows.
- There's a Hierarchy Animation System with up to 128 nodes per object.
- The cut scene animations use up 25,000 frames of action.
- Finally, the game uses relocated code hunks - whatever they may be.

THE NINJA LEGEND

Watch wisely young Ninja, for the ways of the clan are here for all to see. Learn your quest from the cinematic portrayal, then go on to conquer the 13 challenging stages and become victorious over those who conspire against you.

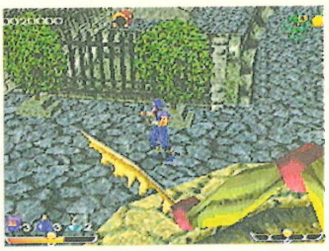


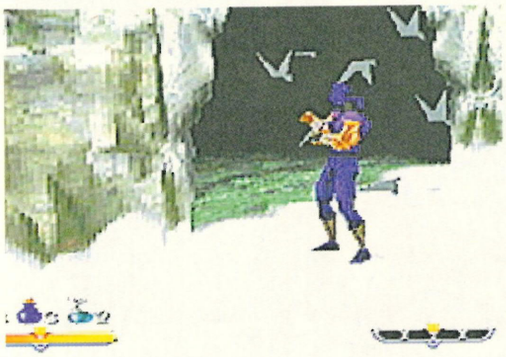



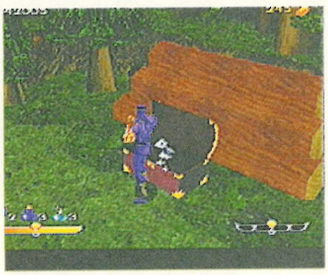
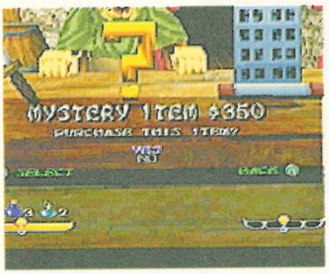


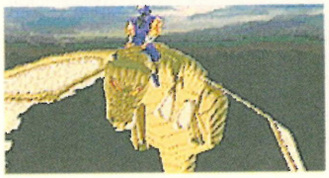








Seek and Search

Placed in the most out-of-reach areas of each level, you find treasure chests that contain all the power-ups and money you could wish for. These are opened with a swift punch revealing extra lives, energy, and cash, and even show the way to hidden rooms. You must watch out, though - the chests sometimes contain a nasty surprise too. You won't know what you get until you go nosing around.

When it comes to fighting, the Ninja is ready for anything. Starting out with punches and kicks that can be combined with jumps and a bunch of throwing knives, weapons like swords, scythes and magic can be obtained from the treasure chests and each of these can be upgraded through four levels, making you next to invincible.

On reaching the end of each location you're automatically transported to a shop where the money gathered from the level can be used to purchase more energy, weapons or lives. This gives you an incentive to search out the chests and hidden locations where bountiful supplies of cash are bound to be hidden.

Enter the Hall of Fame

The one thing that sets Ninja: Shadow of Darkness apart from similar games is the fact that you build a score as you go along. Killing enemies, overcoming obstacles and collecting cash all adds to the score at the top of the screen. Scores like this were commonplace in the old days of home computers, but have become quite rare in the virtual cinema games of today, programmers preferring to concentrate on the realism of the game. Ninja's high scores can be saved to memory card too, so you can show off your prowess to your mates, just in case they don't believe your claims.

Ninja: Shadow of Darkness doesn't take itself as seriously as Core's other success, Tomb Raider. Instead Core have gone all out to create an audio and visual feast that is fun to play, packs a good challenge and retains some of the arcade heritage that many games tend to forget about these days. I found each level a joy to behold with a fizzy mixture of action game clichés and innovative ideas that combine to create a truly fun and addictive game. Top stuff.

Doug

SECOND OPINION

I wish they'd label the treasure chests properly - the ones which are trapped look just like the ones containing goodies, which is hardly fair.
Other than this, Ninja's a great arcade slash-'em-up; Tomb Raider lite.

Mike

THE SCORE

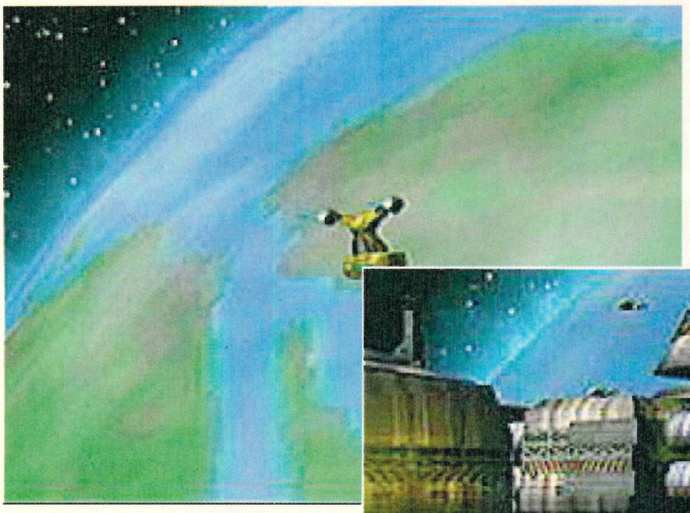
GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	9
LIFESPAN	8

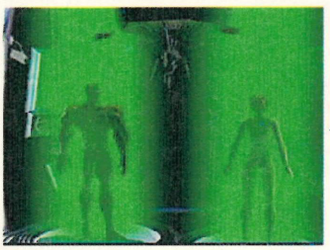
90%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Telstar Electronic Studios	Candlelight Studios	Shoot-'em-up	Autumn '98	UK	£34.99	1-2	Memory Card Analogue	Dual Shock

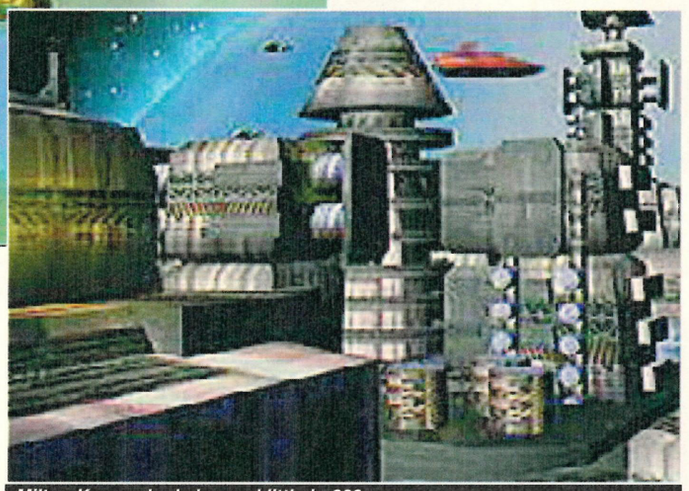
Gryzor for the PlayStation generation...

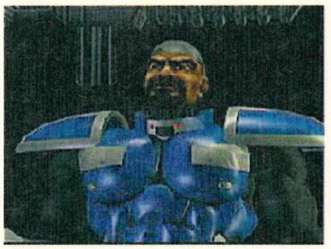
Assault



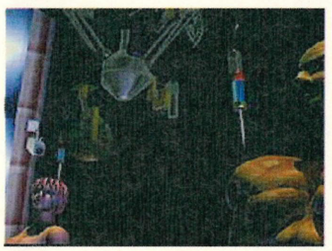






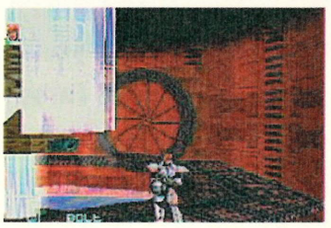


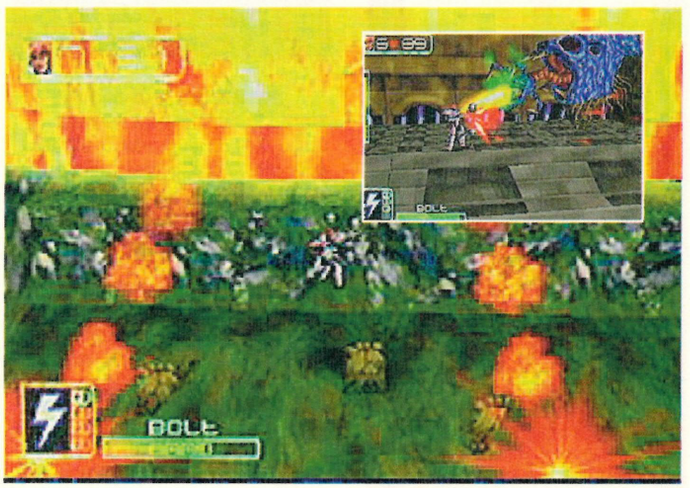




Milton Keynes had changed little in 200 years...







After quite an absence from the videogame market, the shoot-'em-up is now enjoying a revival with software companies clambering to bring the ultimate blaster to your screens. Telstar has one of the most visually impressive up their sleeves - it's a real Assault on the eyes!

One of the most popular videogame genres through the ages has been the shoot-'em-up. This style of game stems from the arcades of the late 70s/early 80s, where a quick fix of blasting action was all that was needed to satisfy gamers. From the phenomenal success of Space Invaders in chip shops around the country to classic arcade games like Gryzor and Probotector, the popularity of the shoot-'em-up was always strong. That was until the last year or so. The growth in the fighting game market all-but pushed shooters to the back seat on the gaming bus.

Ask someone to name a top arcade game these days and they're more likely to come up with Street Fighter or Tekken than anything involving aliens and guns. Fortunately for all blasting fans, the shoot-'em-up is now making a comeback.

The story behind Assault has the usual mixture of alien invasion and human suffering. It's set in the year 2198 AD, and the city of Arcadia has been flattened by a large alien spaceship landing slap, bang on top of it. Those who didn't die on impact are now fleeing the city, and reports of deadly mutant creatures crawling from the debris are coming in. Two heroes have been sent to dispose of this hostile alien threat - one male, one female, and both packing some serious firepower.

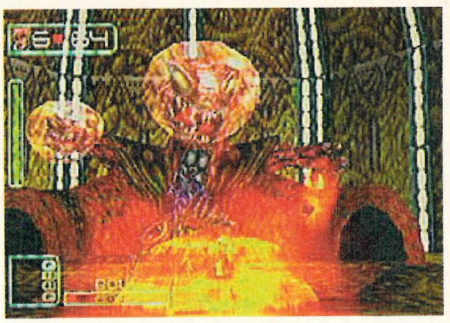
Foot Soldiers

The characters in the game move around on foot, with weapons interchangeable as they go. There's much more to their movement than just up, down, left and right, though. They can jump to clamber over immovable objects, strafe so that they can fire in one direction while walking in another, stand their ground which locks them on the spot while rotating to stream bullets all around and look up and down to take on assaults from the air and ground.

There are six environments to blast your way through, with a cool rendered movie intro sequence and











further movies between sections to continue the story. These environments contain a total of 40 zones and each has secret areas to discover, creating one massive game.

Each character has a standard weapon they start out with, and this can be powered up by collecting pick-ups. There are four additional weapons to find for each character and all require the use of energy cells. The later zones introduce alien artillery too that can be utilised against the green scum, and smart bombs that give some of the coolest effects yet seen in a videogame.

The two-player option works really well too...

A Constant Stream

What really sets this game aside from similar PlayStation outings is the fact that you'll never need to wait for a level to load in Assault. The developers have done a great programming job, streaming data from the CD as you play instead of your playing a level, pausing to load the next, then playing on. This really makes a difference to the tempo of the game. It truly is an assault on the eyes and ears as wave after wave of alien scum bursts on to the screen.

The two-player option in Assault works really well too, with both players fighting simultaneously on screen. It works on the principle that one player can't move on until the other catches up. This gives both players a frenetic time, not only shooting aliens that are attacking their character, but also looking out for their comrade.

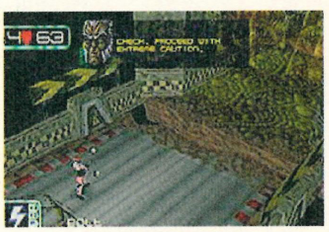
From the moment your character sets foot on Level One, there's a constant bombardment of aliens of all shapes and sizes. The weapons you can pick up are really impressive with cool PlayStation visual effects put to good use, and the search for power-ups and secret areas is a welcome diversion as you progress through the game.

Candlelight Studios, Assault's developers, set out to create a shoot-'em-up experience that captures the excitement and challenge of the top arcade shooting games, and they have certainly succeeded. Forget all the PlayStation shooters that have come before and put Assault straight to the top of the pile. It's a mega-blast!

Doug







SQUAD MEMBERS...

The alien scum are taking over the human race, and all we can come up with to save ourselves are three people, and one of these does nothing but sit in a big chair back at headquarters.

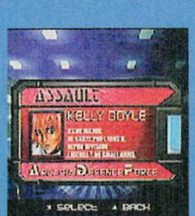
SGT RENO J WASHINGTON

Age: 36
Height: 6' 5"
Weight: 260 pounds
Standard Weapon:
P-420 Multi-phase Pulse Rifle
This guy has one mean expression, probably from fighting alien scum for the last 18 years, with eight years' frontier defence on outer-world colonies. His speciality is in heavy energy weapons, and he's conducted practical research into alien artillery. He's the default choice for Player One.



MAJOR KELLY DOYLE

Age: 28
Height: 5' 10"
Weight: 140 pounds
Standard Weapon:
D-16 Magnetic Bolt Accelerator
Adding a bit of glamour to the proceedings is Kelly Doyle. She lost her parents at the age of 13, so decided to train in fighting techniques to protect herself and her fellow humans. She has spent four years fighting renegade droids in New York and eight years on urban pacification. Her speciality lies in sniper weapons and explosives.



COMMANDER DANKOWSKI

Age: 52
Height: 6' 2"
Weight: 200 pounds
Not human at all, Danowski was one of the first alien-human hybrid soldiers. He has a total of 30 years' experience in battle, and that gives him the right to sit at headquarters barking out orders to Doyle and Washington. He is known for his quick thinking and tends to be tough on troops in combat situations.

SECOND OPINION

The explosions in this game are terrific. Each bomb and blast offers a veritable kalidescope of colour. It's a little difficult to aim your shots at times (you can raise and lower your gun), but apart from that, it's a great shooter, especially with a friend.

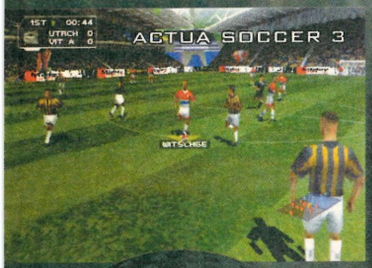
Alan

THE SCORE

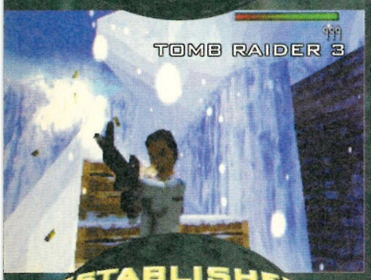
GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	9
GAMEPLAY	9
LIFESPAN	8

90%

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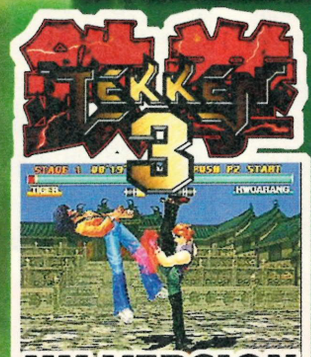

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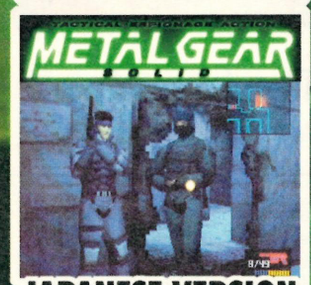
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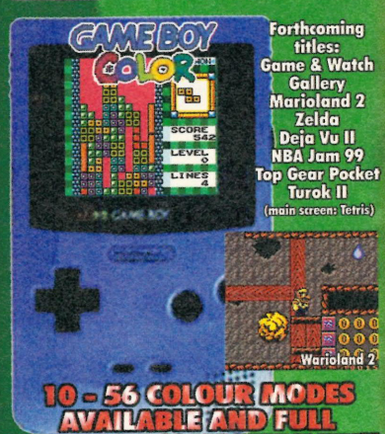
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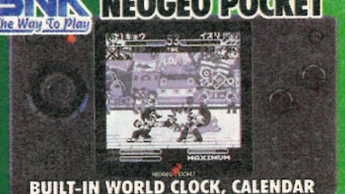


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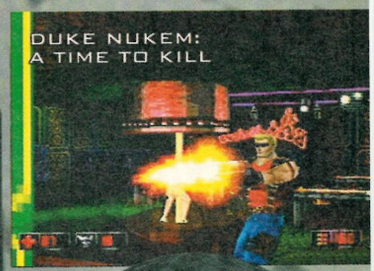
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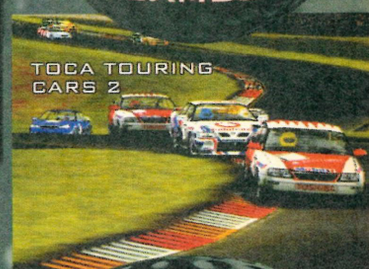
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PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
SCEE	SCEE	3D Action Adventure	TBA	UK	£39.99	1	Memory Card	Dual Shock

A tale of heroes and villains, swords and sorcery, demons and devilry...

MediEvil

Prepare yourself for a tale of heroes and cowards, good and evil, handsome and ugly. MediEvil is the latest 3D action adventure to come from Sony's own development studios, and can certainly stand proud wearing the 'state of the art' badge - this game is the business.

The story starts many years ago in the kingdom of Gallowmere. Here lived a sorcerer by the name of Zarok, who had nothing but evil thoughts. He hated the way the people around him lived simple, peaceful lives, so he thought he'd shake things up a bit. Summoning up an army of the undead, he brought pain and horror to the land.

Fortunately the King of Gallowmere had a hero ready at hand - Sir Daniel Fortesque. Sir Dan led an army against Zarok's demons and they eventually overcame the stinking dead and won, but not before Dan was shot in the eye an killed, supposedly just after killing off Zarok. A hero's statue was erected in Dan's honour, and peace once again settled over Gallowmere; but all was not what it seemed.

Zarok was not dead, and the stories didn't tell the whole truth. Dan was the most unheroic army leader around, and it was the first arrow of the battle that killed him off. Over time, Zarok created a new army of demons, and once again set on Gallowmere. This is Dan's chance to prove himself once and for all, and he can fight on Zarok's level this time, because he's been dead for decades himself.

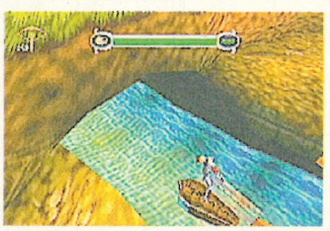
Crypt Killers

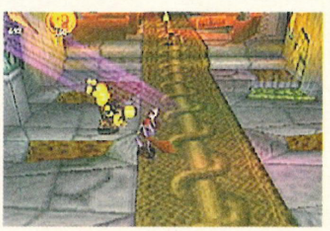
You start out the adventure in Sir Dan's crypt. He's as handsome as ever, only with a little less hair. There are weapons, shields and plenty of advice to be found in the crypt - talking to the gargoyles dotted around the walls gives handy hints on the adventure ahead. The main pick-ups to look out for are the runes. These magical stones have symbols stamped on them, and open up doors allowing access to new levels.

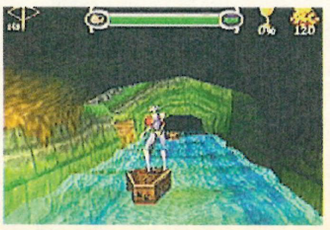
The first level is the cemetery where you get to meet the first enemies of the game - stinking zombies. A swift slash of the sword sees these undead beings collapse into a heap. Their life force is then whisked away into a chalice hidden somewhere in the level. Killing all the enemies you come across is an essential element to the game.



Our hero was glad he put a clean shirt on this morning, but regreted not taking the clothes hanger out first...







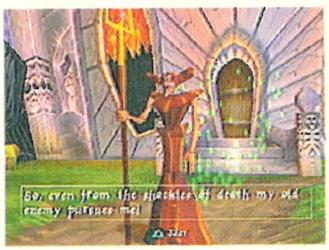


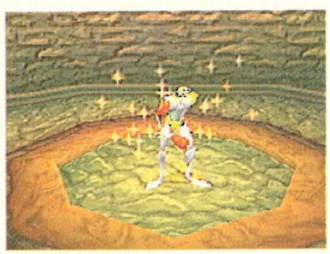
A highly addictive game that's a joy to play...











Once the chalice is full, you can pick it up and it then allows you access to the Hall of Heroes when you complete the level. The hall is where statues of Gallowmere's heroes stand, and each statue gives a new weapon to fight with.

Gothic Goings-On

There are 11 areas to the game, with a grand total of 22 levels in all. These are all linked together with an overview map, and you get to choose which direction to take next by moving a Sir Dan icon around. There are graveyards, towns, castles and fields to battle through, all with a gothic feel and a humorous vein running through them.

Each level of MediEvil gives complete 3D freedom of movement, with only rocks and locked doors stopping Dan progressing further. The viewpoint can also be rotated around to give a better view of the action. Treasure chests are littered around the place and can be opened with a swipe of the sword. These contain all kinds of objects, from new weapons to hard cash. Collecting the coins makes Dan very popular with the merchant gargoyles - he can buy all the supplies he needs from them, but they're quite pricey.

Visually, MediEvil really shows what good PlayStation games are all about. Sir Dan, Zarok, the zombies - they're all really well put together and animated. The action takes place at a distance for the majority of the game, which is a shame because when you use the rotating viewpoint near a wall you get a close-up on Dan and his surroundings, and the level of detail is amazing.

Pixel Perfect

The great thing about MediEvil is that it's not just a mindless zombie-killing game, although it does have that element to it. Each level has a handful of puzzles to work out and tricky manoeuvres to pull off too. There's a statue of an angel that at first seems like scenery, but you soon discover that it can be turned to open gate to new areas. Then there's the constant quest for new stone runes. One level is a maze of corridors and spikes where four runes must be collected to reach the final area. Add to this cool mini-quests like finding sheet music for a mad skeletal organ player and you've got a highly addictive game that's a joy to play.

Doug

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE COWARDLY

A 3D action adventure can be graphically stunning and be packed with special effects, but it's nothing without good solid characters that you can learn to love or hate. MediEvil has some of the coolest seen on the PlayStation for some time...

Sir Daniel Fortesque
Is he a hero or a coward? Brought back from the dead, Sir Dan has another chance to battle with his old enemy, Zarok the sorcerer.

Zarok
With his army of the undead, Zarok just won't let things lie - he's back to claim Gallowmere for himself, and this time he won't be beaten.

The Pumpkin Witch
This sweet tasting vegetable is the stepmother to the pumpkins, bizarrely. She has many rewards to give to a worthy hero.

Jack of the Green
You meet this character in a maze, where he prides himself on his riddles. No one has ever solved a riddle, or left the maze.

The Boatman
A job ferrying zombies and lost souls to the land of the dead can become quite monotonous, so The Boatman is always happy to welcome newcomers.

WICKED WEAPONS

You begin the adventure with the boney arm of Sir Dan. He rips it off and throws it boomerang style. Searching around the crypt, you may find something more useful. There's a trusty old sword and a few throwing daggers to add to the inventory before you start the game proper. Searching the treasure chests and visiting the Hall of Heroes uncovers new weapons.

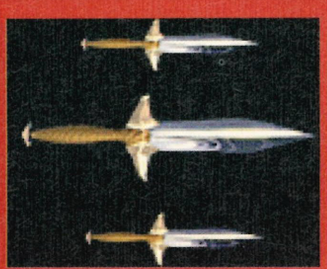
Broadsword
This metallic marvel is much more powerful than the sword you start out with. It's got a much wider arc of attack and if you find the right merchant gargoyle, you can even have it enchanted to double its power.



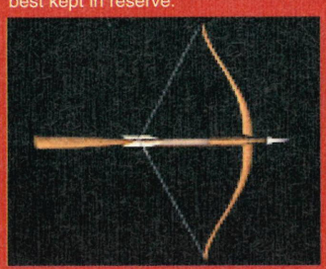
Club
You find many rocks blocking your path as you fight through the game, and the club is the answer. A couple of swift swipes turn the rocks to rubble and open up secret areas to explore. There are also collapsing walls, if you can find them.



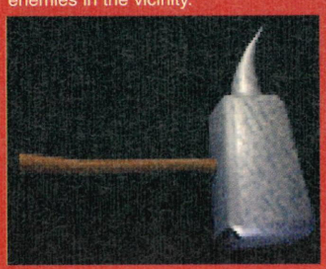
Throwing Daggers
You start out with a few of these, but many more can be picked up as your adventure unfolds. They are useful for attacking enemies from a distance, and getting at those undead creatures high up on balconies.



Crossbow
The crossbow fires out one mean dart at a time, but they are mighty powerful and kill zombies with one shot, instead of the two swipes of the sword needed. You must be very accurate though, so the crossbow is best kept in reserve.



Hammer
The trouble with the club is that it's made of wood, and soon wears down with extensive use. The hammer does everything the club can, but without the wastage problem. Its shockwave of power can also kill all enemies in the vicinity.





SECOND OPINION

The graphics in this game are nothing short of amazing, with beautiful characters and scenery. The gameplay's a treat too, with just the right mix of arcade action and perplexing puzzles. Another winner for Sony; keep 'em coming, guys.

Alan

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	9
LIFESPAN	8

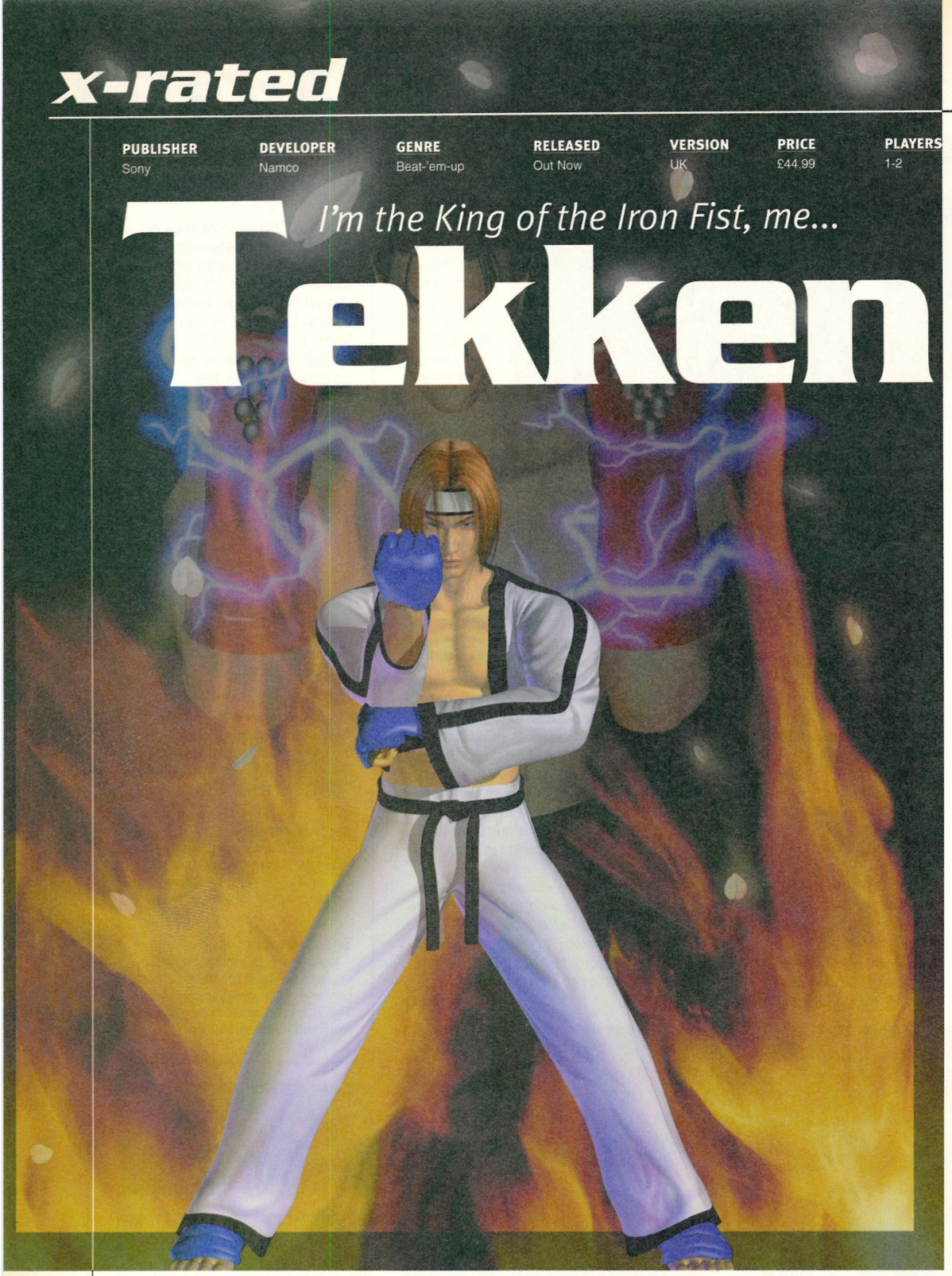
92%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS
Sony	Namco	Beat-'em-up	Out Now	UK	£44.99	1-2

PERIPHERALS
Memory Card Dual Shock

I'm the King of the Iron Fist, me...

Tekken 3

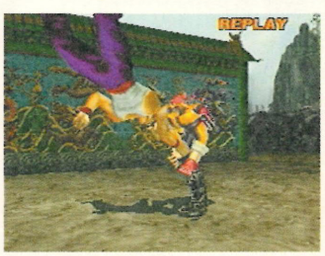


Well it's final made it to our shores, and about time too if you ask me. Tekken 3 is here, and those that didn't give up the long wait for the UK release are in for a treat; and I mean a real treat!

Back in Issue Five, we reviewed the Jap import of Tekken 3 and it scored a smashing 95%, and well deserved it was too. You may well be wondering what's the point of reviewing it again. Simply put, it's a review of the full official UK release as opposed to the Jap version. I'll be looking into the dreaded 17.5% speed loss that all UK games could (but shouldn't have to) suffer during the translation from import to see if it takes the 'kick' out of the game.

Graphically and gameplay-wise, Tekken 3 is by far the best there is and no mistake. It has a higher polygon count than Tekken 2, allowing much more detail and a less 'blocky' look. The player animations are second to none, with some all-new motion capture for the newer characters that have really quite amazing specials and combos. Eddy, for example, is an incredible breakdance fighter with many of his fighting moves being performed at break-neck speeds and angles. It looks so real and fluid that it just makes your jaw drop. You can't see polygons jutting out of limbs or vanishing altogether any more. Each limb is joined to its respective owner as it should be, with no gaps or glitches. A huge improvement over Tekken 2, and I thought that wasn't possible!

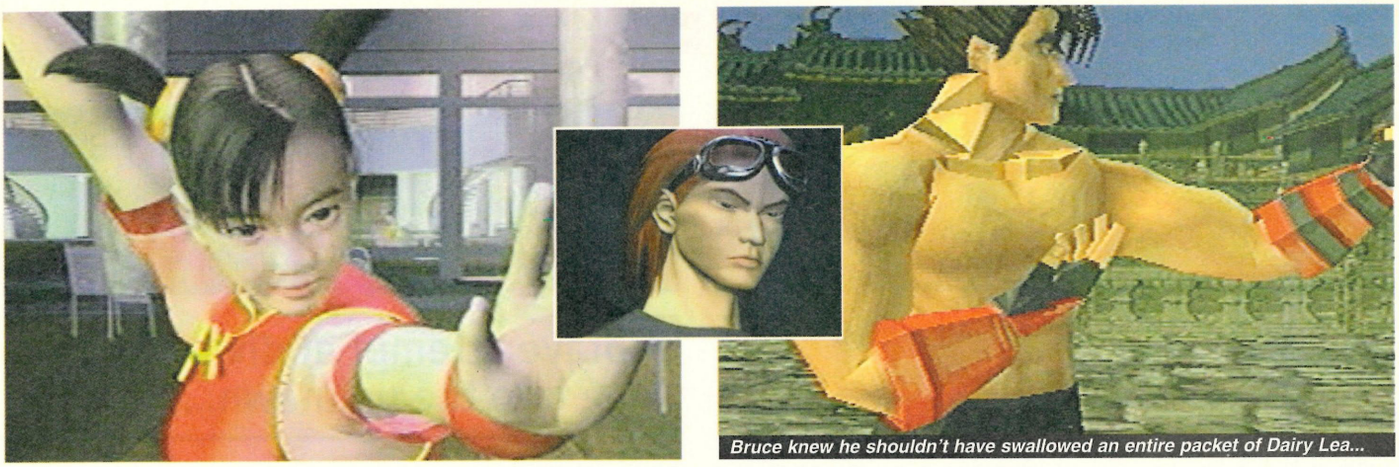








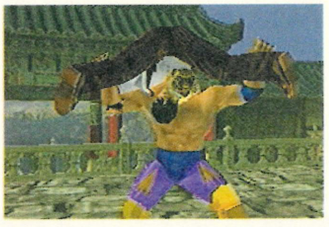




Bruce knew he shouldn't have swallowed an entire packet of Dairy Lea...









Because of the drop in speed the game's been compromised

So are there any differences between the import version of Tekken 3 and the UK release? Yes and no. The game is basically the same. Same amazing graphics, same bone-crunching sound and voice FX and the same incredible moves and game options. The only flaw, as I mentioned earlier, is the fact that the UK version runs 17.5% slower. If you haven't actually played the Jap version at all, you've got little to worry about, but if you're familiar with the import version and then go on to play the UK version, you're going to be a little bit gutted. You'll feel like the fighters are slugging it out under water or on the moon, as they seem to move so slowly and the response seems somewhat dulled. The fact of the matter is that this slow down takes away one of the best elements of Tekken 3; its speed. Okay, so if the Jap one would have been any faster it would have just been another button-bashing Soul Blade, but the balance between speed and skill was perfect and so well manufactured I almost feel that with the UK version they're just Tekken the piss. I mean, why should we be given sub-standard games just because of where we come from?

Right, now I've got that off my chest I can continue to say that regardless of the speed issue, Tekken 3 still rules the world and will no doubt go down in computer game history as a classic of the 90s. This game will still be played well into the millennium. Let's face it, there's nothing out there to match its skilful control system and cunning combination move mechanics, and I doubt there will be for a couple of years to come.

Punching Power

For those of you that don't know, there are many, many different playing modes in Tekken 3. There's Arcade, Time Attack, Team Battle, Tekken Ball mode (a bit like volleyball, but you kick and punch it), Tekken Force mode (Final Fight-style side-scrolling beat-'em-up with Tekken characters, quite good actually) and, of course, where would we be without Versus mode? This vast array of playing modes has become something of a trademark for Tekken, and has played a large part in the series' success over the years.

If, like me, you want the best for your PlayStation, you can do no better that Tekken 3. From the incredible introduction sequence right through to the individual mini-movie end sequences for each character, you can see this game has got pretty much everything a fighting game needs. I tried to think up a few things that could have been included in T3 to make it a little better, but to be honest I couldn't think of a thing. If you've got any ideas to how Tekken 3 could have been improve or if you've got any ideas for Tekken 4, drop us a line at the usual address and we might just print your ideas in the next issue.

Finally, if there is any confusion to why Tekken 3 has earned a lower score than its original review back in Issue Five, I will explain. Basically, because of the drop in speed I feel that the gameplay of the game has been slightly compromised. Players of both the Jap and UK version would agree that it's not on; so who's going to write a letter to Sony, then?

Russell









SECOND OPINION

Hmm... It seems a little sluggish compared to the import versions, but it's still the best one-on-one beat-'em-up ever. There's lads to do and scores of hidden characters to reveal, though like most Japanese games, it's a little easy to complete.

Ian

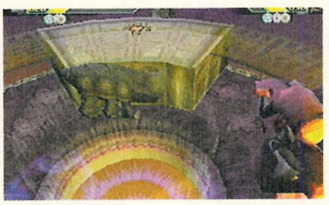
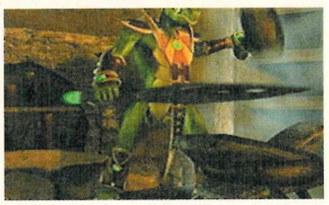
THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	9
LIFESPAN	9

93%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Eidos	Crystal Dynamics	Strategy / Beat-'em-up	Early '99	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card	Analogue



Unholy War

A Strategy game incorporating hack-'em-up fighting? Chalk 'n' cheese, mate...

Unholy war could almost be described as having two games in one. In one hand you have a turn-based strategy game very similar to Kartia (reviewed on import in Issue Nine) which concentrates its energy on methodical movements around a board, considering strategic manoeuvres very much like a game of chess. On the other hand, you have a 3D hack-'em-up-style fighting game that requires you to beat the buttons as hard and as fast as you can. Novel it is, but can you mix oil and water? I don't think so...

You see, Unholy War is destined to fail due to the daring combination of two completely unrelated game genres. Both styles of the game have their individual pros and cons, but those points don't seem to make any difference to the fact that players of hard and fast-style action games are going to hate the turn-based strategy, and of course the anorak party (belt up, Russell - you loved Kartia: Ed) are going to frown at the adrenaline-soaked fighting. This is, in a way, a great shame because both of the elements that make up Unholy War are actually quite reasonable games in their own right, but I feel mixing the two is very much their undoing.

A brave attempt at diving headlong into the unknown...

Strategy games of the turn-based persuasion require chess-like moves around the playing area, with each character or piece having their own set power and range perimeters like a King or a Bishop. Taking away these set perimeters and replacing them with the player's own fighting prowess makes the turn-based strategy practically redundant, because if you're highly skilled in the fighting element of the game your strategy on the field doesn't matter a toss.

Science and Magic

The game starts out innocently enough, with a very impressive introduction sequence depicting the start of a war between a technically advanced race of humans and robots attacking a race of mystical sorcerers and goblins. When the first Options Screen appears, you get the choice of playing a Strategy mode or a Mayhem mode, the first being the full game and the latter being a version of the game with only the fighting elements available. In Mayhem mode, you can choose between a number of 'teams', these consisting of different characters for each of the two races or even teams made up of a mixture. You can play on different difficulty setting against the CPU, or against a friend as in all self-respecting fighting games, but the Strategy Mode is an entirely different shooting match. When you have chosen which side of the war you wish to take part in and the difficul-

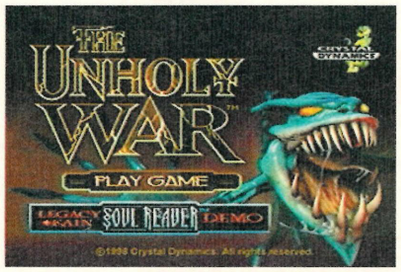




White is definitely in fashion this year but it's so impractical - it shows up every speck of dirt...

ty of your CPU adversary (unless you're playing the two-player mode), you're taken to the first of the turn-based playing arenas with a selection of different team members clearly visible on the hexagon-filled playing area. Across the other side of the area you see your opposition standing in wait for their move. You must use the on-screen cursor to highlight the character you wish to move and then click on them. A selection of hexagons surrounding your character flash to show you where and how far you can move your team member. You have three moves in all that make up your turn, in which time you can start to push forwards towards the enemy or set up a formation.

When the opposing team has done the same and you've repeated the process a few times depending on the size of the playing area, you come into contact with enemy troops and are given the opportunity to attack. Instead of simply lifting a sword and hitting out at your foe, the camera zooms in on both contenders and then zooms back out into a more detailed 3D playing area where the slog-fest takes place. The action immediately begins and it's up to you to use your three different moves to defeat the enemy by knocking his energy bar down to zero.



Generally speaking, you find that within the three moves you see a close-quarters attack like a punch or a swipe move, a long range attack like magic or missiles and one other special attack that can take any form, depending on the team and the character. When the battle is won or lost, the action ends and it's back to the Strategy screen for more and the process repeats. The loser of a battle (meaning full game strategy and fighting) in the early throws of the game is the team with all its characters wiped out. As you progress further into the game, though, you have bases at either side of the playing area. When you get to this stage it's possible to win the battle by storming the base and gaining possession. You can also buy new troops to add to your team by clicking on the base station - each member costs different amounts depending on its skill and power. To earn the Aur (money, effectively) required to buy new team members you must take detours around the playing area for specific hexagons upon which your player can mine the Aur.

All in all, the Strategy section alone without the fighting element would have made a fine game that I for one would love to play, if it wasn't for the unfortunate compromise between the two genres. Reasonable sound and graphics don't make up for this shortfall in any way. It's a brave effort at diving headlong into the unknown, but sadly it just wasn't to be.

Russell











SECOND OPINION

Mixing two radically different game styles was bound to end in compromise, and it's also ended in tears.
It's more mediocre than bad, but in an exceptional month for quality games, it stands out as being well behind the pack.

Ian





THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	6

69%

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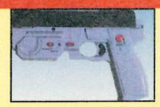


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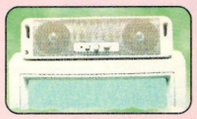
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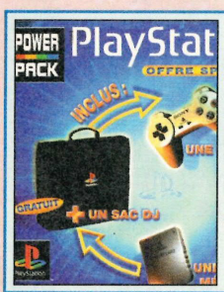
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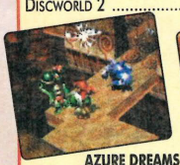


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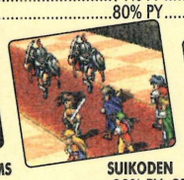


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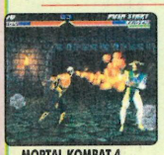
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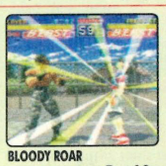


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Star Wars: Masters of Teras Kasi	74% PY	£29.99
Streetfighter Collection	67% PY, 87% PP	£33.99
Streetfighter Ex Plus	91% PY, 93% PP	£29.99
Tekken	95% PY, 90% PP	£18.99
Tekken 2	95% PY, 95% PP	£18.99
Tekken 3	**94% PY, 96% PP**	**£36.99**
Tobal No.1	94% PY, 91% PP	£19.99
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	78% PY	£30.99

DRIVING / RACING

GRAN TURISMO & TOP DRIVE WHEEL

RRP £109.99

£89.99







FELONY 11-79



VIGILANTE 8



MICRO MACHINES 3

Auto Destruct	84% PY, 77% PP	£22.99
Ayrton Senna Kart Duel 2	N/A	£24.99
Buggy	Due 7th October	£32.99
Bugriders	N/A	£19.99
Burning Road	**90% PY**	£14.99
Circuit Breakers	81% PY, 80% PP	£29.99
Colin McRae Rally	**93% PY**	**£33.99**
Destruction Derby	86% PY, 72% PP	£18.99
Destruction Derby 2	82% PY, 89% PP	£18.99
Explosive Racing	82% PP	£17.99
Felony 11-79	81% PP	£19.99
Formula 1	**84% PY, 88% PP**	**£16.99**
Formula 1 '97	90% PY, 93% PP	£38.99
Formula Karts Special Edition	75% PY, 81% PP	£16.99
Gran Turismo	**97% PY!!!**	**£34.99**
Grand Theft Auto (18+)	**88% PY, 90% PP**	**£26.99**



N2O



COLIN McCRAE RALLY



FORMULA 1 '97

Impact Racing	87% PY, 82% PP	£12.99
Jeremy McGrath's Supercross 98	67% PY, 52% PP	£32.99
Jetrider 2	78% PY	£24.99
Micro Machines 3	**92% PY, 95% PP**	£17.99
Motorhead	79% PY, **92% PP**	£17.99
Motor Mash	68% PP	£19.99
Moto Racer	86% PY, 85% PP	£24.99
Moto Racer 2	Due 2nd October	£32.99
Motocross International	77% PY	£24.99
N_2O	70% PY, 89% PP	£32.99
NASCAR Racing '98	82% PY, 64% PP	£32.99
Need For Speed 3	87% PY, 89% PP	£24.99
Newman Haas Racing	74% PY, 75% PP	£27.99
Off Road Challenge	Due 25th September	£33.99
Porsche Challenge	82% PY, 80% PP	£18.99
Rage Racer	94% PY, 93% PP	£19.99
Rally Cross	89% PY	£29.99
Rapid Racer	87% PY, 82% PP	£17.99
Ray Tracers	74% PY, 73% PP	£19.99
Red Asphalt: Rock N Roll Racing 2	55% PY, 68% PP	£19.99



TOCA TOURING CARS

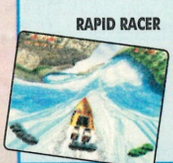


DESTRUCTION DERBY 2



GRAND THEFT AUTO

Ridge Racer	93% PY, 76% PP	£18.99
Ridge Racer Revolution	90% PY, 84% PP	£18.99
Road Rash	75% PY, 64% PP	£18.99
Road Rash 3D	76% PY, 80% PP	£30.99
Street Racer	84% PY, 79% PP	£19.99
Supersonic Racer	91% PY, 74% PP	£17.99
Test Drive 4	86% PY, 70% PP	£17.99
TOCA Touring Cars *Dual Shock*	**92% PY, 91% PP**	**£17.99**
TOCA Touring Cars 2	**Due November**	**£35.99**
Tokyo Highway Battle	73% PY, 77% PP	£18.99
Tommi Makinen Rally	N/A	£19.99
Twisted Metal 2: World Tour	88% PP	£24.99
Vigilante 8	**94% PY, 91% PP**	**£23.99**
VMX Racing	45% PY	£31.99
VR Powerboat Racing	N/A	£14.99
V Rally *Dual Shock*	87% PY, 94% PP	£17.99
Wipeout	94% PY, 78% PP	£18.99
Wipeout 2097	93% PY, 94% PP	**£18.99**



RAPID RACER



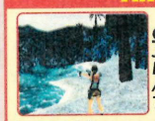
NEED FOR SPEED 3



GRAN TURISMO

ARCADE ADVENTURE

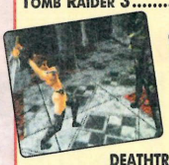
TOMB RAIDER 3



Competition! *We've got a Lara Jacket, Lara Fleece, Lara Watches, Lara T-shirts and more to give away! All you have to do is order a copy of TR3 before November 28th to enter!*



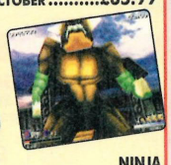
Batman & Robin	Due 20th August	£33.99
Deathtrap Dungeon	86% PY	£29.99
Deathtrap Dungeon includes a free book, T-Shirt & cards!		
Fade To Black	90% PY, 87% PP	£17.99
Fifth Element	Due 25th September	£29.99
Frenzy	73% PY	£29.99
MDK	90% PY, 80% PP	£19.99
Men In Black	N/A	£31.99
Nightmare Creatures	90% PY, 86% PP	£29.99
Ninja	Due 25th September	£34.99
Overblood	86% PY, 76% PP	£12.99
Perfect Assassin	N/A	£24.99
Resident Evil	95% PY	£18.99
Resident Evil 2	**96% PY**	**£37.99**
Rosco McQueen	88% PY, 78% PP	£26.99
Spawn	49% PY	£26.99
Tenchu	Due October	£CALL
Tomb Raider	94% PY, 92% PP	**£17.99**
Tomb Raider 2	95% PY, 95% PP	**£27.99**
Tomb Raider 3	**Due October**	**£35.99**



DEATHTRAP DUNGEON



BATMAN & ROBIN



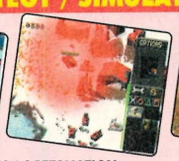
NINJA

ARCADE SHOOTERS

Blast Chamber	82% PY	£24.99
Blast Radius	N/A	£34.99
Crime Killer	81% PP	£29.99
Crusader No Remorse	80% PY, 85% PP	£19.99
Grid Run	53% PY, 64% PP	£16.99
Hard Boiled	29% PY, 40% PP	£19.99
Loaded	85% PY, 75% PP	£18.99
Mass Destruction	80% PY	£22.99
One	**86% PY, 83% PP**	**£28.99**
Overboard	75% PY	£24.99
PO'ed	87% PY, 76% PP	£14.99
Ray Storm	75% PY, 83% PP	£29.99
Reloaded	61% PY, 73% PP	£18.99
Robotron X	85% PY, 66% PP	£16.99
Syndicate Wars	85% PY, 92% PP	**£19.99**
Tempest X3	86% PY, 80% PP	£14.99
Tiger Shark	62% PY, 72% PP	£18.99
Xevious 3D	72% PY, 60% PP	£29.99

STRATEGY / SIMULATION







THEME HOSPITAL

C &C RETALIATION

C&C RED ALERT

Carnage Heart	57% PY, 74% PP	£22.99
Command & Conquer RED ALERT	90% PY, 93% PP	£32.99
Command & Conquer Retaliation	Due 18th September	£33.99
Constructor	Due 24th September	£31.99
Monopoly	75% PY, 78% PP	£33.99
Risk	81% PP	£34.99
Sentinel Returns	62 % PY	£34.99
Theme Hospital	**88% PY**	**£25.99**
Theme Park	**86% PY, 85% PP**	**£18.99**
Transport Tycoon	78% PY, 86% PP	£19.99
Warcraft 2	86% PY, 88% PP	£28.99
War Games	60% PY	£31.99
Warhammer: Shadow of Horned Rat	82% PY, 86% PP)	£34.99
Warhammer 2: Dark Omen	**85% PY**	**£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	88% PY, 85% PP	£23.99
Caesars World of Gambling	N/A	£24.99
Chessmaster 3D	68% PY, 87% PP	£22.99
Kula World	83% PY, 89% PP	£32.99
Kurushi	88% PY, 68% PP	£22.99
Pet in TV	**Out Now**	**£29.99**
Poy Poy	84% PY	£27.99
Super Pang Collection	53% PP	£26.99
Super Puzzle Fighter 2	90% PY, 92% PP	£24.99
Tetris Plus	81% PY, 82% PP	£29.99



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website http://paragon.co.uk/gameplay

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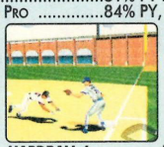
SPORT



ISS '98

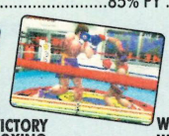
ISS Pro was regarded as the most playable soccer game ever, and now there's a sequel! ISS '98 boasts the smoothest graphics of any football game, enhanced strategy options and (finally!) a player name editor! The most realistic and addictive footy sim ever!

2 Extreme	55% PP	£22.99
Actua Golf 2	**80% PY, 83% PP**	**£17.99**
Actua Golf 3	Due 21st October	£31.99
Actua Ice Hockey	91% PY	£17.99
Actua Soccer 2	**92% PY, 93% PP**	**£17.99**
Actua Soccer 3	Due 28th October	£31.99
Brian Lara Cricket	Due end October	£35.99
Breakpoint Tennis	73% PP	£19.99
Chill	56% PY, 82% PP	£19.99
Cool Boarders	82% PY, 91% PP	£24.99
Cool Boarders 2	81% PY, 92% PP	£29.99
Courier Crisis	79% PP	£19.99
Dead Ball Zone	84% PY, 88% PP	£24.99
Everybody's Golf	85% PY, 85% PP	£29.99
FIFA Soccer '96	81% PY	£14.99
Int'l Superstar Soccer Pro	84% PY, 92% PP	£17.99


Everybody's Golf | Hardball 6 | Premier Manager '98

Int'l Superstar Soccer Pro '98	**92% PY, 94% PP**	**£32.99**
International Track & Field	85% PY, 90% PP	£17.99
Jonah Lomu Rugby	86% PY, 84% PP	£20.99
Nagano Winter Olympics '98	83% PY	£25.99
Namco Smash Court Tennis	86% PY	£29.99
NBA Live '98	87% PP	£32.99
NFL Madden '98	92% PY, 89% PP	£26.99
NHL Breakaway '98	89% PP	£28.99
NHL Face Off '98	80% PY	£29.99
NHL Hockey '98	**71% PY, 91% PP**	**£26.99**
On-Side Soccer	76% PY, 65% PP	£14.99
PGA Golf '98	63% PY, 68% PP	£32.99
Player Manager	74% PY	£24.99
Powermove Pro Wrestling	N/A	£19.99
Premier Manager '98	**Out Now!!**	**£19.99**
Pro Pinball Timeshock	89% PP	£22.99
Snow Racer	85% PP	£24.99
True Pinball	85% PY	£17.99
Total NBA '98	92% PY, 85% PP	£29.99
V Ball	30% PY	£29.99
Victory Boxing	90%	£27.99
Victory Boxing 2	Due end September	£35.99
Virtual Pool '97	68% PY, 85% PP	£24.99
VR Baseball '97	80% PY, 72% PP	£22.99
WCW Nitro	80% PY	£29.99
WCW vs The World	79% PY, 88% PP	£29.99
World Cup '98	**86% PY, 90% PP**	**£26.99**
World League Soccer '98	**90% PY, 93% PP**	**£30.99**
WWF In Your House	N/A	£22.99
WWF Warzone	85% PY	£33.99


Namco Tennis | Victory Boxing | WWF Warzone

GUN GAMES




DIE HARD TRILOGY & PROTECTOR GUN
£26.99

Die Hard Trilogy	92% PY, 92% PP	£18.99
Die Hard Trilogy & Protector Gun	N/A	£26.99
Lethal Enforcers 1 & 2	30% PP	£27.99
Point Blank	**90% PY, 92% PP**	**£29.99**
Point Blank & Guncon	**90% PY, 92% PP**	**£49.99**
Time Crisis	**90% PY, 93% PP**	**£29.99**

3D SHOOTERS

Alien Trilogy	**91% PY, 85% PP**	**£17.99**
Armoured Core	69% PY, 86% PP	£29.99
Colony Wars	92% PY, 93% PP	£19.99
Critical Depth	65% PP	£19.99
Dark Forces	75% PY, 84% PP	£24.99
Darklight Conflict	79% PY, 87% PP	£17.99
Descent	85% PY, 91% PP	£14.99
Descent 2	63% PY, 82% PP	£12.99
Doom	93% PY, 92% PP	£18.99
Duke Nukem 3D	**90% PY, 91% PP**	**£19.99**
Duke Nukem A Time To Kill	**87% PY**	**£33.99**
Exhumed	84% PY, 91% PP	£24.99
Final Doom	82% PY, 89% PP	£19.99
Forsaken	**92% PY**	**£24.99**
Future Cop LAPD 2100	Due 2nd October	£32.99
Ghost in the Shell	73% PY, 90% PP	£29.99
G Police	84% PY, 93% PP	£27.99
Hexen	84% PP	£19.99
Life Force Tenka	86% PY, 82% PP	£24.99
Mech Warrior 2	91% PY, 83% PP	£19.99

PLATFORM

Agent Armstrong	75% PP	£24.99
Bomberman World	85% PY, 83% PP	£29.99
Casper	65% PY, 62% PP	£25.99
Castlevania Symphony of the Night	89% PP	£18.99
Crash Bandicoot	84% PY, 86% PP	£18.99
Crash Bandicoot 2	86% PY, 87% PP	£29.99
Croc	78% PY, 84% PP	**£23.99**





Bomberman | Crash Bandicoot 2 | Hercules

Frogger	69% PY, 88% PP	£24.99
Gex 3D	**92% PY**	**£24.99**
Heart of Darkness	**88% PP**	**£29.99**
Hercules	63% PY, 81% PP	£34.99
Jersey Devil	90% PP	£24.99
Klonoa	83% PY	£29.99
Lost World: Jurassic Park 2	79% PY, 81% PP	**£21.99**
Lucky Luke	79% PP	£29.99
Megaman 8	82% PY	£28.99
Megaman X3	82% PY, 81% PP	£24.99
Nothing Can Stop Mr Domino	Due 18th September	£32.99
Oddworld: Abe's Oddysey	90% PY, 91% PP	**£19.99**
Pandemonium	90%	£18.99
Pandemonium 2	72% PY, 91% PP	**£22.99**
Pitfall 3D	70% PY	£19.99
Rayman	87% PY	£17.99
Rampage World Tour	N/A	£24.99
Rascal	77% PY	£34.99
Skull Monkeys	83% PY	£32.99
Tombi	**79% PP**	**£29.99**
Trash It	55% PY, 57% PP	£29.99
Whizz	N/A	£19.99
Wild 9	Due October	£34.99

FLYING





Ace Combat 2 | Nuclear Strike | Thunderhawk 2

Ace Combat 2	84% PY, 85% PP	£29.99
Air Combat	81% PY, 65% PP	£17.99
Air Race	68% PY, 76%PP	£24.99
Nuclear Strike	88% PY, 91% PP	**£19.99**
Soviet Strike	83% PY, 92% PP	**£18.99**
Thunderhawk 2	85% PY, 82% PP	£18.99
Viper	N/A	£24.99
Wing Over	50% PY, 40% PP	£35.99

RETRO / COMPILATION / MISCELLANEOUS





R-Type | Spice World | Fluid

Atari Greatest Hits	81% PY, 75% PP	
Inc Asteroids, Super Breakout, Tempest, Battlezone, etc		**£19.99**
Atari Greatest Hits 2	**Out now**	**£27.99**
Fluid	78% PY, 84% PP	£26.99
Midway Greatest Hits 2	N/A	
Includes Moon Patrol, Root Beer Tapper, Burgertime, Splat, Spy Hunter, Blaster, and Joust 2		**£27.99**
Namco Museum Volume 2	70% PY, 63% PP	£22.99
Namco Museum Volume 4	79% PY, 67% PP	£24.99
Namco Museum Vol 5	75% PP	£27.99
Parappa the Rapper	82% PY, 89% PP	£21.99
R-Type	Due end September	£29.99
Spice World (Spice Girls)	**N/A**	**£18.99**

HINT BOOKS

A-Z of PSX Secrets & Solutions	£10.99
Alundra Unauthorised Game Secrets	£12.99
Deathtrap Dungeon Official Guide	£10.99
Diablo Official Strategy Guide	£10.99
Final Fantasy 7 Official Guide	**£14.99**
Gran Turismo Strategy Guide	£11.99
Oddworld Official Strategy Guide	£10.99
One Official Strategy Guide	£10.99
Resident Evil 2 Unauthorised Guide	£11.99
Riven Unofficial Game Secrets	£6.99
Suikoden Unofficial Game Secrets	£15.99
Tekken 3 Official Strategy Guide	£10.99
Tomb Raider Secrets	£9.99
Tomb Raider 2 Official Guide Book	**£10.99**
Vandal Hearts Unauthorised Secrets	£12.99
Vigilante 8 Official Strategy Guide	£8.99
Warcraft 2 Console Strategy Guide	£10.99

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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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£90.99!!

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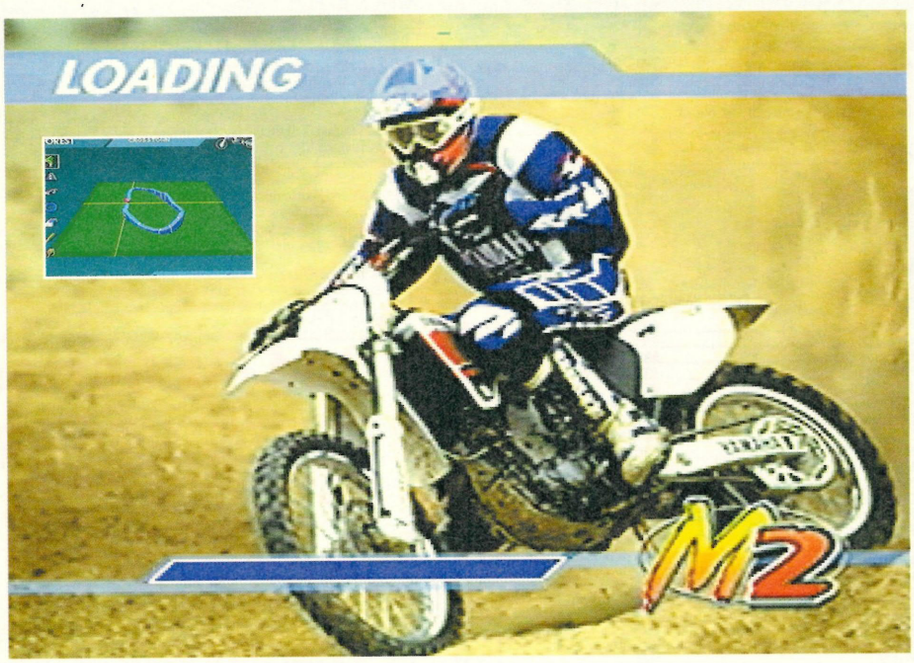
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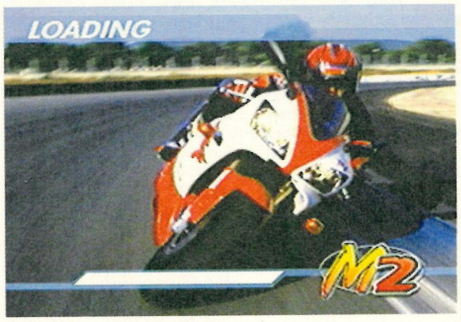
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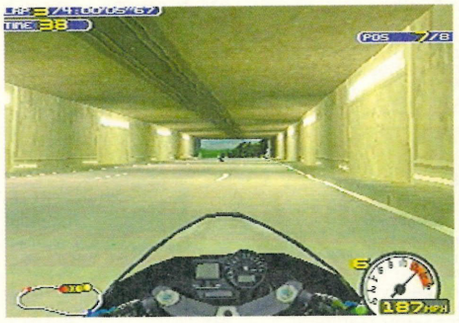
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QUALITY SERVICE

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
EA Sports	Delphine Software	Driving	2nd October	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card	Dual Shock







Moto



'New record'? I hope it's not the All Saints album.



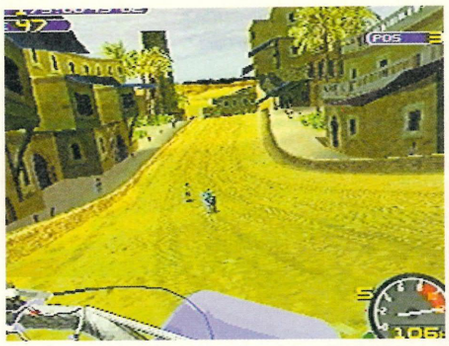


The vomit-a-thon has been replaced by a more subtle sway...

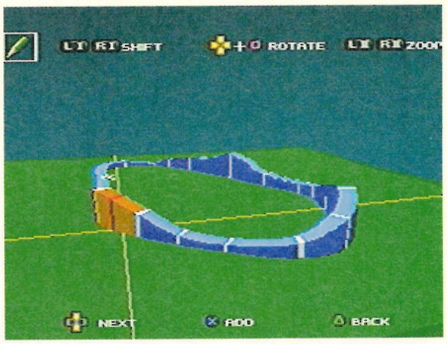
Moto Racer was one of last year's surprise hits, offering high speed, high jumps and of course motorbikes. Delphine Software strikes again with the imaginatively-titled Moto Racer 2, but does it deliver the goods, and more importantly, does it have anything more to offer than it's predecessor? It's not often I trade the luxury of my Mitsubishi GTO for full racing leathers, but duty calls...

I would forgive you for thinking I'm a little sceptical about Moto Racer 2. To be totally honest, I personally didn't think that the first one was all it was cracked up to be. It looked like the tracks and the bikes were from different games and just added together as an afterthought. The bikes were very small and out of proportion to the rest of the on-screen graphics, while the 'helmet cam' view left me feeling seasick from all the too-ing and frowing that was going on. It may have been realistic, but it compromised the gameplay a little too much for my liking.

Delphine Software may well have felt the same way, as the sequel has marked improvements on many of the gripes I've mentioned. Your rival racers are now much more substantial and better animated, while the vomit-a-thon that was the driver's eye view has been replaced by a more subtle sway. Moto Racer 2 is more than a simple upgrade from the original, though; it has 40 twisting and turning tracks that make up both the road-racing and the scrambling playing types. These tracks now take on different themes like the Sahara Desert, Amazon and good, old-fashioned Grand Prix but to name a few. The graphics and sound have also received vast overhauls. There is now an excellent track editing device allowing you to alter courses already in the game and even create new ones of your







Racer 2

Blimey, I wouldn't mind that between my legs!

own using differently-themed race backgrounds. Along with a new Replay Mode that allows you to save your best races with dynamic TV-style camera angles and interchangeable weather conditions, M2 is the definitive motorcycle racing game on the PSX.

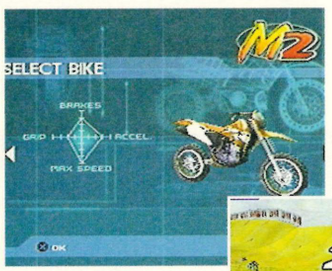
On Yer Bike...

This doesn't mean that it's a 'must buy' by any means, though. If you're into speed-related thrills and have an interest in motorcycling, M2 is obviously for you. It is very, very fast to play, so fast in fact that sometimes the backgrounds almost can't keep up with the action and some clipping occurs. The visual appearance of the game is very much like V-Rally, though possibly of not quite so detailed and the real-time light effects promised for M2 are nowhere near as good as in many other games. When you're racing in the dark, your headlights simply appear as a patch of light grey on the road ahead and don't really contour and change to match the road surfaces all that well. The best of the lighting effects comes from static objects like the occasional lamp post on the night races, and that's just a little lazy, if you ask me.

Engine sounds are pretty funky, with revving sounds when you drop the accelerator and bring it back. The music is okay soft metal, not really my bag to be honest, while the voice FX are embarrassingly duff and of poor quality, though the commentator does say his bit when you do something spectacular like good jumps, corners and crashes. You occasionally get the feeling you're playing the same course over and over again due to the limit number of background themes and designs. This is not to say that all 40 tracks are crap; they're actually really well laid out and are great fun to race, it's just that after a while they all begin to seem very samey and repeated. The split-screen two-player option is fair, keeping the speed and detail to a reasonable standard and the action is guaranteed to be thick and fast. The only real arse in this game is the terrible loading times that take place between every race, every track edit, after the options screens and so on. It keeps you waiting an awfully long time and begs the question, 'is this really worth the wait?'.

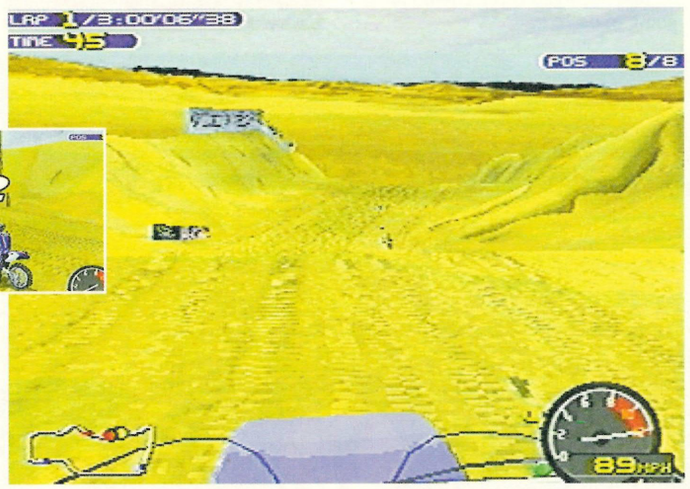
To round off, I'd have to say while M2 is definitely not GT, it is a good, playable game with simple options and tried-and-tested features. The track editor makes it a worthy purchase really, though I did get the feeling the game itself was created with a very similar one! In a nutshell, worth a try even if it is just as a break from playing GT.

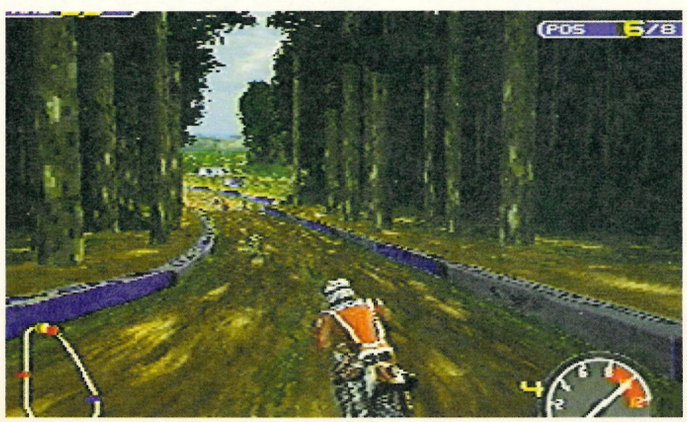
Russell



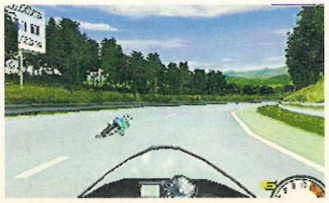












MOTO RACER 2™

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Created and Published by Delphine Software International
Moto Racer is a Trademark of Delphine Software International

SECOND OPINION

It's a happening racer, but how can the same game engine cover scramblers and Grand Prix bikes and still keep the physics accurate for both? Treat it as a game rather than a simulation, though, and it's a rather fine ride.

Ian

THE SCORE

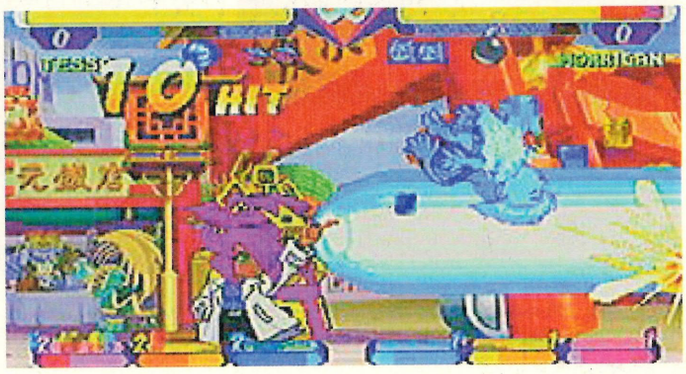
GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	7

86%

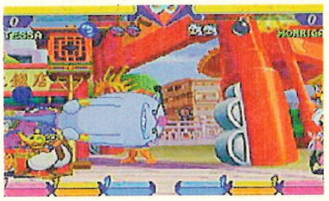
PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Virgin Interactive Entertainment	Capcom	Beat-'em-up	TBA	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card

Is that a fighter in your pocket...

Pocket Fighter















First came Virtua Fighter Kids, then Battle Arena Toshinden Kids, so it was only a matter of time before Capcom got in on the act to create a cutesy version of Street Fighter. At last they've come up with the goods, and out of the three kiddy beat-'em-ups around, it's probably the most fun.

There are 12 characters to fight against in Pocket Fighter, and they've all come from some of Capcom's top games; Street Fighter, Nightwarriors and Red Earth. There is one major difference between the characters in the original games and these, though - they've been shrunk down to kiddy versions of themselves. As each battle takes place, special moves and combos that hit home are rewarded with coloured gems that scatter around the screen. Picking these up before your opponent gets to them powers up your combo meter. The more gems you collect, the more powerful and outrageous the combo is going to be.

This is instant, candy-coloured fighting action...

What makes these kiddy-style beat-'em-ups so much fun is that they don't take themselves seriously like Tekken 3, Virtua Fighter or Toshinden. You don't have to get bogged down by the intricate storylines or learn a thousand special moves before you can start to play the game - this is instant, candy-coloured fighting action.

MEET THE GANG...

Capcom have taken some of the traditional Street Fighter characters and mixed them up with new faces from the Super Puzzle Fighter 2 Turbo game to create the gang for Pocket Fighter. What a strange bunch they are, too!

FELICIA
Dressed like a cat with blue hair, Felicia dreams of becoming a big movie celebrity. She has an optimistic and outgoing personality, and her ultimate goal is to star on Broadway.



CHUN LI
This girl needs no introduction - she has starred in the Street Fighter series from the very beginning. She's an excellent detective with immense strength in her legs.



ZANGEIF
Another Street Fighter star that's been around since the start. Zangeif is the champion of the Russian wrestling circuit, and has decided to compete around the world.



TESSA
With a large purple hat and cape, Tessa could only be a master magician. She's on a search for an extraordinary magical staff, and she is prepared to battle for it.



SAKURA
In true Japanese pervy style, Sakura is a high school student with a short mini-skirt and white panties. She can knockout even the strongest opponent with nothing but her smile.



RYU
Ryu has been wandering through the world searching for stronger fighters to challenge him. He is a young man who has set himself the goal of becoming the 'true warrior'.



MORRIGAN
This demonic girl is a beautiful and selfish succubus with a hankering for expensive clothes and gifts. She hates any trendy girls who think they are better than she is.



KEN
All gamesplayers around the world should recognise Ken - he's another Street Fighter regular. He loves to skive away from his training to flirt with the girls, and is Ryu's arch rival.

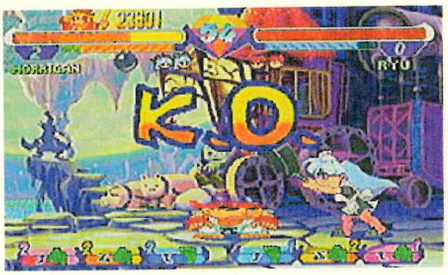


IBUKI
This gorgeous creature is a high school ninja from a modern ninja country. It's amazing what they teach in high school these days. She is on a search for ice cream, believe it or not.



HSIEN KO
This painted-faced girl isn't in fact a girl at all. She's a Chinese ghost who makes a living by hustling fights on the streets with her sister. Magic tricks are her secret weapons.









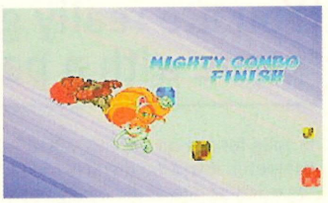






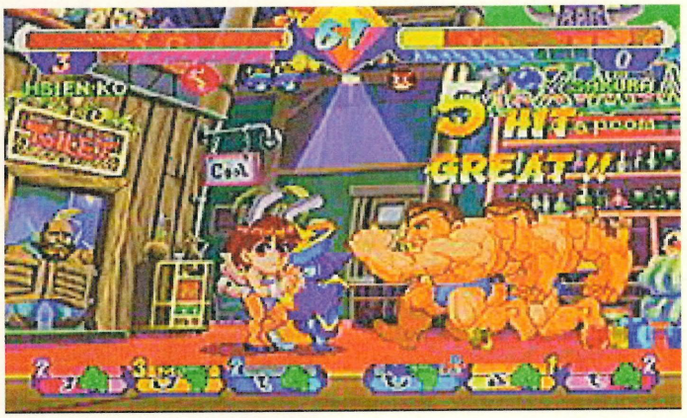












All characters have their own background to fight against, and these are all at least two screens high, so there's plenty of room for aerial attacks.

A Multitude of Modes

True fighting game fans will go wild for the variety of modes of play Capcom have crammed into this cool game. You can choose a normal Arcade Battle, where you take on the other characters one at a time, or a Free Battle where you choose which opponents to fight against. The Running Battle adds a twist to the game - each time you defeat an opponent, your character simply runs on to the next one with the background scrolling along. There's also a Training Mode to brush up on your skills.

The one thing that really sets Pocket Fighter apart from other fighting games though is the Edit Fighter mode. How many players have dreamt of creating their own fighter, then battling it out against the elite? Well now you can! In this mode you must answer a bunch of questions in a quiz to prove that you are worthy, then choose one of the 12 characters as a base for your new improved fighter. By picking and choosing the special moves, skills and abilities this new character possesses, and a new name, you can create an unlimited number of combatants to play with.

Light Relief

I found Pocket Fighter to be welcome light relief after playing Tekken 3 to death over the last couple of months. The characters may be small and 2D, but they're really well animated and have some of the craziest special moves I've ever seen on a console. When a large dinosaur comes stomping onto the screen, or a giant umbrella starts spinning as part of a special combo move, you know this is no run-of-the-mill fighting game.

Being cute and cuddly doesn't mean there isn't a challenge in Pocket Fighter for experienced fighting game fans, though. There are still plenty of moves to learn and master, and incredible combos to pull off. The only difference between this and Tekken 3, for example, is that you'll probably have much more of a laugh playing through this! The inclusion of the Edit Fighter mode means that there's more depth to the game than is first apparent too. Creating your own personal characters then using them to whip the butts of the other fighters is very self-satisfying.

If you want a fighting game that you can pick up instantly for some candy coloured, cutely-animated fun, Pocket Fighter is the perfect game for you - it's a blast!

Doug



SECOND OPINION

I suppose it was inevitable - Virtua Fighter Kids, Battle Arena Toshinden Kids, and now this. I wonder what's next? Tekken Embryos? Mortal Kombat Sperm? The game's a great tounge in cheek fighter, and a worthy addition to anyone's collection.

Russell

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	9
LIFESPAN	9

92%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Psygnosis	No-Name Games	Strategy	Out Now	UK	£39.99	1	Memory Card

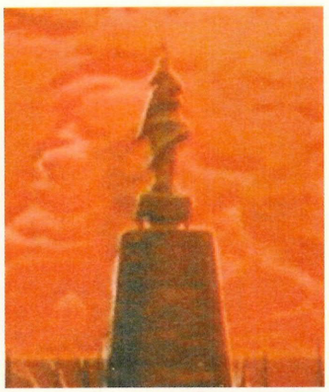
Just let its soul rest in peace...

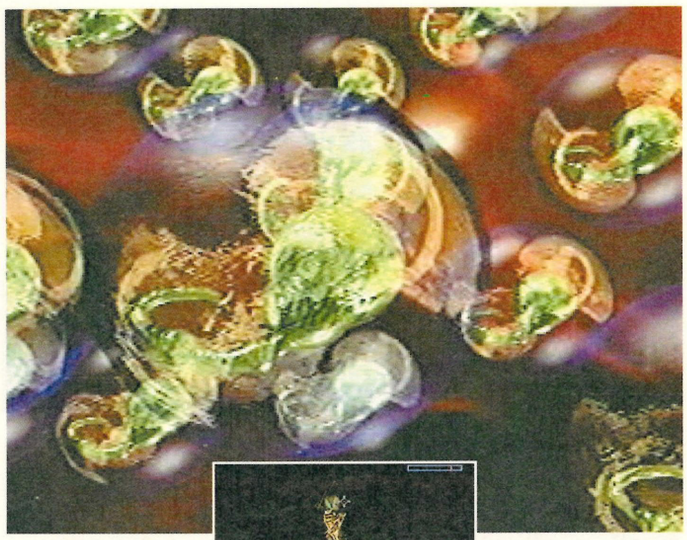
Sentinel Returns

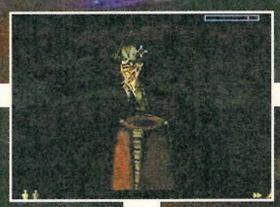
When Sentinel was originally released way back in 1985, it achieved both critical and commercial acclaim for being the worlds first true virtual reality game. The problem is, VR has been and gone, so who want's a VR game now, let alone the first one ever made?

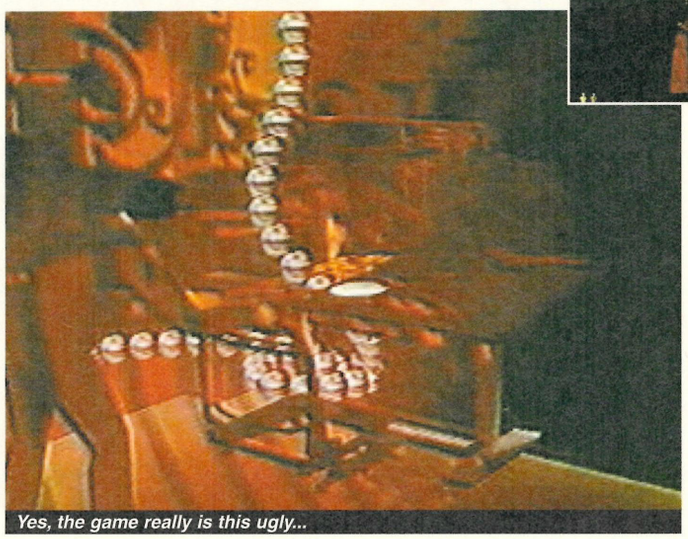
Before I begin my review of Sentinel Returns I will pay my respects to Geoff Crammond, the 'Father of gaming', or I'll feel really guilty for giving the game a slagging.

Geoff Crammond wrote Sentinel in 1985 for use on the BBC Micro computer. It was (and still is today) regarded as one of the best games ever created and became one of the and highest selling too. Through the years it has been released on many different computer formats including CBM 64, Sinclair Spectrum, Amiga, Atari ST and PC.

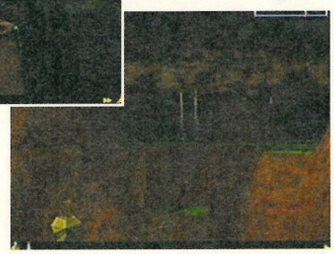








Yes, the game really is this ugly...









You are really going to hate this game with a passion...

The game's 3D landscapes were like nothing ever seen before, and the idea was totally original and still is to this day. Geoff also made loads of other top games past and present, more recently writing Grand Prix 2 on the PC which is the sequel to F1 Grand Prix, pretty much the standard driving simulator for most of my life. Geoff, I salute you for being the forefather of today's video games, BUT unless you're about 40 with a large forehead with a love for Open University and a natural flair for spotting train numbers from 100 yards, you are really going to hate this game with a passion unparalleled in the natural world. Let me explain...

Been and Gone

The objective of the each of the 650 levels that make up Sentinel Returns is to gain control of 3D landscape by absorbing the energy of trees(?) and using the energy to transport your soul into robots that you can place on any visible part of the landscape. As you move, you must try and ascend to the highest point of the landscape so you can then absorb the energy of the ruling Sentinel and taking his place as a sort of 'King of the Hill'. To aid you on your journey, you can use rocks to prop up your robot, thus increasing your view of the landscape.

The graphical representation of the game was meant to be at the cutting edge of 3D technology, bringing Sentinel Returns well into the 90s. Unfortunately, all you have here is the same basic models as in the first game, only covered with dull, empty textures that could at best only use 20% of the PlayStation's potential. The music for the game was, believe it or not, written by the legendary John (horror god) Carpenter in 3D Q-Sound to add more 'atmosphere' to the game. Sure the score is moody and broody, but it's too much to ask to try and make the game into something it's not.

In an ideal world, this game may well have gone down quite well, but it's just not what the average PlayStation owner wants. The game is too freakin' weird for a start, and it has nowhere near enough substance or variation to keep the player glued to the screen for 650 levels of what can only be described as 'drivel'. If you don't remember the game from the first time around, I strongly suggest you give it a miss.

Russell

SECOND OPINION

Some things are best left in the past, like Tiswas, wide ties and the Bay City Rollers. Sentinel is such a game.
Geoff Crammond is, as Russell says, a game god, but this poorly-planned attempt to update his work wins no favours.

Ian

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	3
SOUND	5
GAMEPLAY	4
LIFESPAN	4

33%

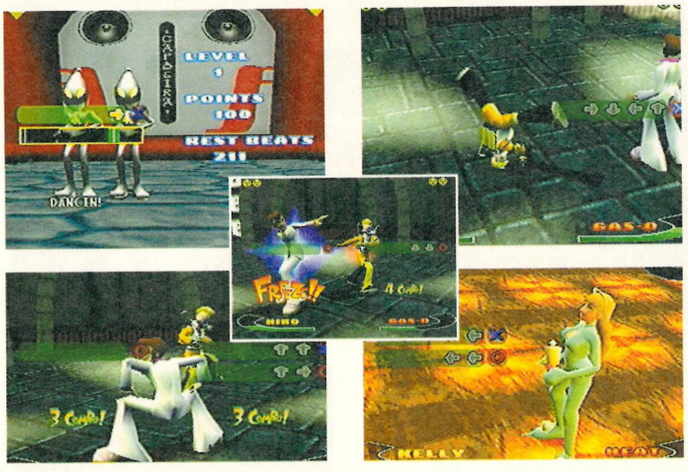


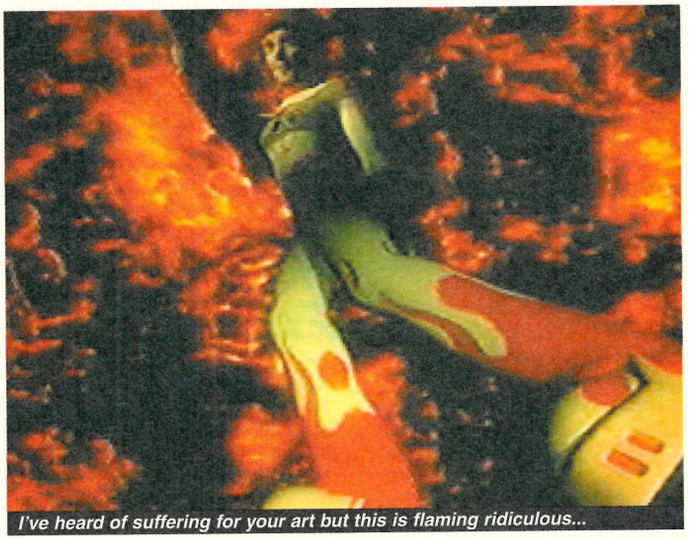




PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Sony	Enix	Dance-'em-up	October '98	UK	£39.99	1-2	None

Bust A Groove





Let the groove-a-tron funk it up!

Welcome to the next generation of music entertainment. Like the legendary PaRappa the Rappa, Bust-A-Groove is a strong music tip, involving the action and sounds to get your toes tapping and your head nodding in an embarrassing fashion. As opposed to your actions having an effect on the music as it does in PaRappa, Bust-A-groove employs an interface that relies on the music for your actions to have an effect on your character. This, in effect, allows Enix to come up with the best in-game music score ever encountered on a home computer or console.

D-I-S-C-O

The idea behind Bust-A-Groove is remarkably simple and ultimately addictive. Choose your dancer from a list of a possible ten and challenge the remaining nine to dance-offs where the victor is the mover that holds the camera's attention for the longest. You're given commands that you must follow so that really freaks you out when you first see them moving, and it bowls you over as you start to string together more and more complex moves until the camera zooms right up close to your groovy mover and the routine ends in a blaze of glory.

> **The best in-game music score ever encountered on a console...**

How they also managed to achieve the best motion capture I've ever seen on the PlayStation as well as quality music is just beyond me. There are no visible polygons jutting out of their limbs and bodies, neither are there any gaps. All you can see is the smoothest, most detailed and realistic moving characters dancing perfectly in time to the music. It's hard to explain, but it your button-bashing is in time with the music, working on a four-beat bar. As the dance progresses, you're given choices as to what command you would like to follow, one being quite easy to pull off and the other reasonably tricky. The harder the move offers the greater the reward, with the camera taking an interest and your Carried Away gauge going through the roof (the more moves you pull off in a row, the higher the gauge goes and the funkier your moves get!). To spice up the action even further, you can also pull off special attacks and counter attacks similar to what you would expect from a fighting game. This allows you to knock your opponents Carried Away gauge down to zero and end their combo of moves so the camera loses interest. If you spot a special move in the offing, though, you can counter their attack so you can continue your routine and hold the camera's gaze a little longer.

The timing between the commands and the music is spot and work together to produce a incredibly atmospheric, addictive and fun game for all the family and all party situations. The two-player option included in Bust-A-Grove keeps the dust well away from the CD for a long, long time, which is good because the one-player option can get slightly repetitive after a particularly long session.

If your interest in music spreads wide through today's spectrum of sounds, you'd be wise to invest in the best. For those of you who feel you just want something a little different, Bust-A-Groove is where it's at, baby. Thank God for Sony!

Russell



SECOND OPINION

This game's fun for a while, but it's really just a complex version of the old 70s sound and light games like Simon.
Slick execution and some of the best aesthetics ever seen make it a great laugh, but its lastability is questionable.

Ian

THE SCORE

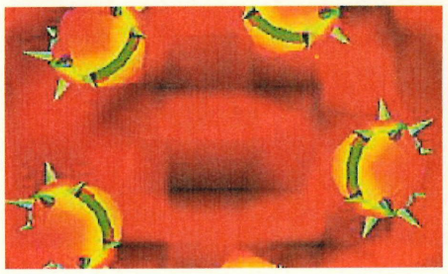
GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	10
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	8

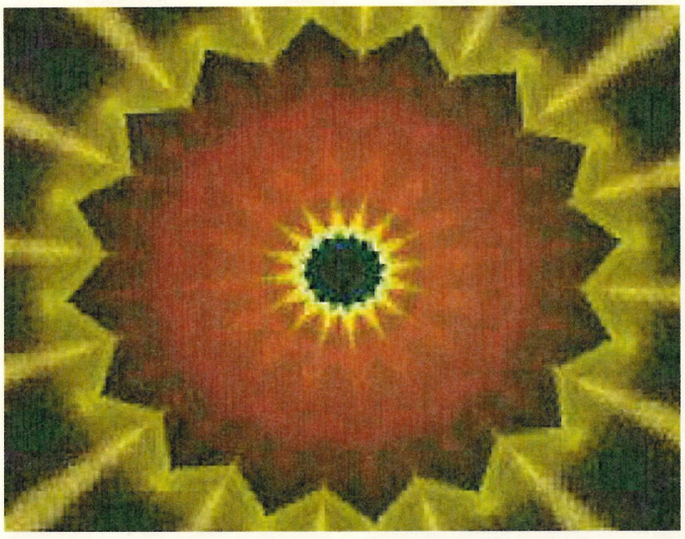
94%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Sony CEE	Sony CEE	Video Light Show	TBA	UK	£29.99	N/A	Memory Card	Analogue

Let there be light...

Baby Universe





The gap between home consoles and PCs gets smaller every day. At one time, consoles were seen as nothing but kids' toys with cartoon characters jumping around on the screen, or non-stop shooting and fighting. But these days you can even watch video CDs or paint pictures using consoles. With the PlayStation, Sony attempted to bring gaming to a whole new demographic, and now they have succeeded, they have opened up a market for new and innovative products that will appeal to the same people - and it's this niche that Baby Universe fits into.



Let's get one thing straight before we start - Baby Universe is not a game. It's as far removed from the stream of shoot-'em-ups, beat-'em-ups and strategy games found on the PlayStation as you can possibly get. Instead it uses the advanced graphic and processing power of the PlayStation to create 'live art'.

Baby Universe uses the power of the PSX to create 'live art'...

On loading up, you're faced with a bizarre floating 'form' in space; this is called the Vortex. After a short time it starts to move and pulsate in time with the techno music that's included on the CD. This is the 3D Kaleidoscope that forms the starting point for the package - shapes spin, twist and zoom in and out with cycling colours.

If you don't like the sound of the techno beat that the programmers have chosen to include, you can skip to other tracks, or insert your own CD to serve as a backing track for your creations.

Getting Creative

You see, Baby Universe is all about making sound visual. There are four main modes to play around with. In 3D Kaleidoscope mode you can change the angle of the shapes on screen, alter the colours around and mess about with the patterns to create your own unique show. These actions can be recorded live, as you press the buttons, and then saved to memory card.

The Psychedelic Scope creates 2D patterns that Sony describe as 'mind-bending images of psychedelia'. Again, these can be altered to allow you to express your inner self. The image can be zoomed in and out, the angles changed again and the whole thing recorded. The Electric Scope is more of a traditional kaleidoscope, the kind that kids have in long metal tubes. The Sound Scope gives various kinds of sound wave pattern that again move and jerk around in time with the music and the Jewel Case mode simply allows you to select different shapes to play around with in the other modes.

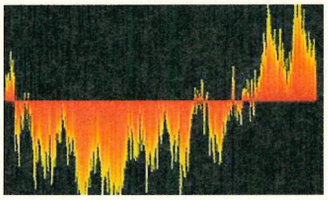
Surely it Should be Free?

So I bet you're wondering what the point of all this is, aren't you? Well... there isn't one, really. If you're interested in psychedelic patterns, you'll get some fun out of messing around with the variables and seeing what appears, but this is really the sort of thing that should have been programmed into the PlayStation from the start. Other systems like the Saturn, 3DO and Jaguar all had this kind of thing to use when playing your own CDs on your console, but Sony didn't bother with the PlayStation - presumably so they could charge you more dosh for it.

I wouldn't recommend anyone actually paid the best part of £30 for Baby Universe, but I can see it will have some appeal in the rental market. If you're having a house party soon, rent a copy and play your CDs on your PlayStation through the TV - you've now got a light show for your mates to groove to.

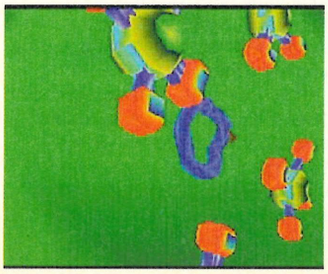
Doug

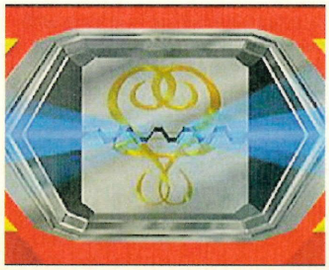












SECOND OPINION

It's not often you see 'Players: N/A' on these hallowed pages. Baby Universe is the sort of thing you could program in Spectrum BASIC in the mid-Eighties, and certainly not a £30 'game', especially since Codemasters' Music looks set to make bot it and Fluid redundant.

Ian

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	6
SOUND	9
GAMEPLAY	1
LIFESPAN	7

40%

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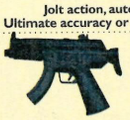


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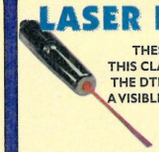
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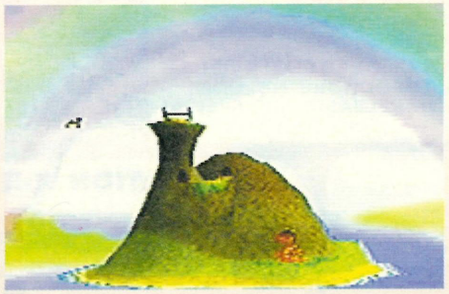
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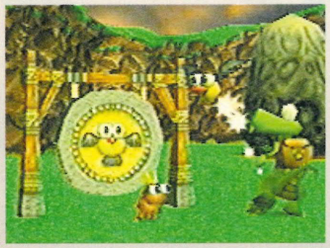
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PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
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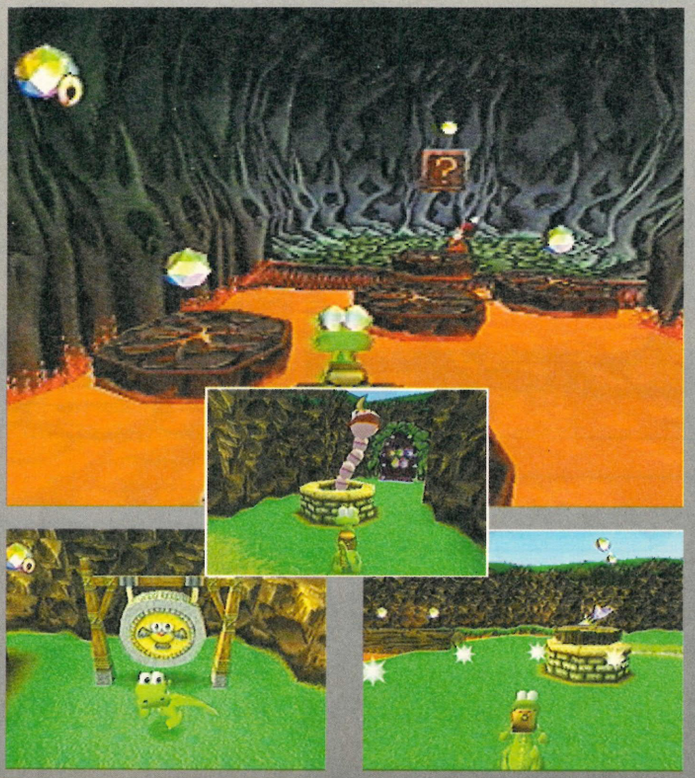


Is this a game with serious bite or would your money be better spent on a handbag?

Croc



Croc gazed in awe as half a dozen giant beefburgers fell out of the sky...



Originally released around about a year ago, Croc was viewed by some as Sony's answer to Mario 64. Being the same 3D platform affair as Mazza, and having a direfully cute character that has suspiciously-similar moves the aforementioned plumber, it's hardly surprising comparisons were made.

Unfortunately for developers Argonaut the eagle-eyed reviewers and critics decided that Croc didn't quite have the big brass balls that are so obviously hidden in Mario's pants. It's not that Croc doesn't have anything to offer; it has around about 50 fairly-sized levels full of reasonably well animated characters and colourful backdrops. It's just that once you get through a substantial portion of the game, you realise the control method is annoying the hell out of you and all the levels are basically the same. They demand the same tasks to be undertaken again and again, with little or no variation and the same reward each time. It seems like Argonaut have simply jumped on the virtual band-wagon and sung the same short and boring song over and over again, all the way to Tipperary, if you get my drift.

Snappy Chappy

I don't want to be too hard on the game, as we are talking about something that's relatively old in computer game terms, and to be fair it was impressive in its day. Compared to today's offerings, though, it's a disabled cod in a sea of easily-offended killer whales.

The control method employed in Croc means that for Croc to move forward in his world, you must push Up on your directional pad. When you press Left or Right, he spins on a vertical axis through 360 degrees, very similarly to Tomb Raider, for instance. This proves very difficult when the camera angle is trying hopelessly to catch up with your actions while you're doing a tricky jump to a distant platform, and soon becomes as irritating as a nasty case of thrush.

It would be easy for me to finish off this review by saying, 'but it's a snip at twenty quid' as I have done many times in the past, but as it's getting late and I want to go home. I'm going to say that you're much better off waiting a little while longer and spending your hard-earned cash on a more polished and expertly-manufactured game like Spyro the Dragon, which we'll taking a damned good look at next issue. If, however, you're hopelessly addicted to 3D platformers and you just can't get enough no matter how hard you try, you may as well give it a go - just don't say I didn't warn you...

Russell



SECOND OPINION

Not the PlayStation's greatest hour. Croc was mildly acceptable in its day, but has been surpassed since.
At £20 it's not a rip-off, but if I were you, I'd save my money for the forthcoming Spyro the Dragon, to be reviewed next issue.

Ian

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	6
LIFESPAN	6

67%

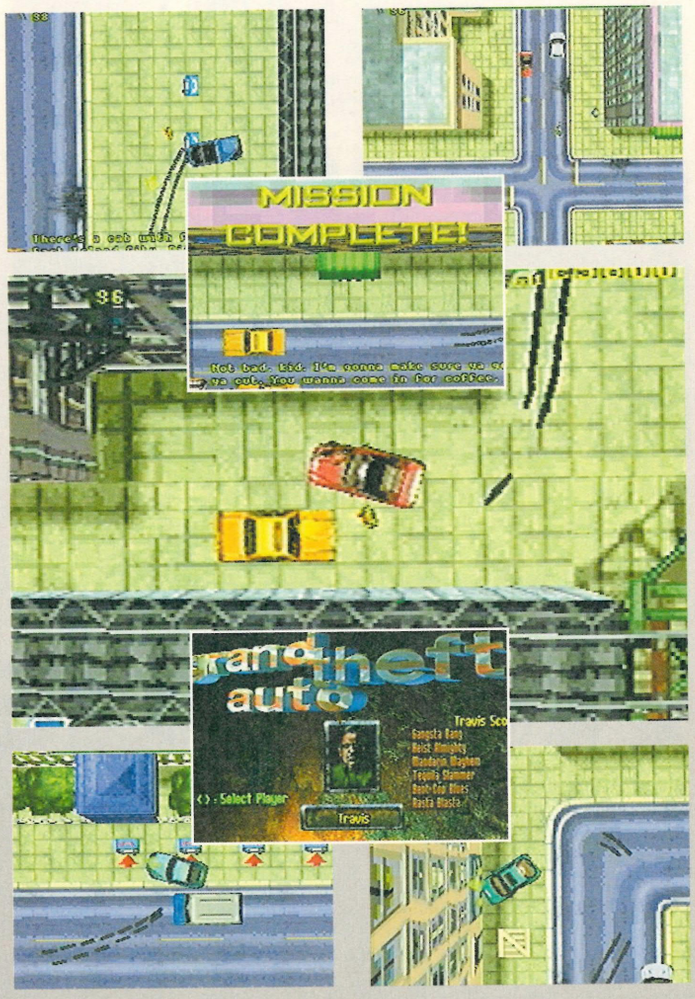
PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Take 2 Interactive	DMA	Driving	Out Now	UK	£19.99	1	Memory Card

Parental advice: explicit contents...

Grand Theft Auto



Despite the uninspiring graphics, Grand Theft Auto plays really well.



It's a top game with loads of playability and a lot of swearing

GTA couldn't have had more attention from the press and media after its original release. This was, to be frank, due to the content of the game being downright immoral. Even looking at it now I'm still amazed it got released in the first place, but now the hype has died away, who cares about GTA? The game has just turned Platinum, so it must be more than the hype. It's obvious, really - it's the fun, addiction and originality that has made this title into what it is. Well, that and the murdering, car theft and bombing.

For those of you who didn't have the pleasure of playing GTA the first time around, the idea behind the game is simple. You start out as a petty thief who is given a wide range of different 'jobs' to complete to work your way through the ranks of the American criminal underworld. Your jobs are directed to you through many of the public phones dotted around the three cities of the game, and entail acts like car theft, driving getaway cars, bombing police stations, drug smuggling, collecting protection money, killing the odd person - the list goes on. Completion of jobs more often than not leads to sub-missions where you get to increase your dirty money income and also increase your underworld status. Once you have made sufficient money and gained enough points in the game, you can move into the next city to make your mark. There are three cities, which have a rough total of 6,000 miles of scaled highways and byways in all, which is remarkable when you think about it.

Take a Joyride...

With all this wrong-doing and evil, you can expect to get quite a lot of interest from the city's law enforcers, and indeed you do. High-speed chases and getaways are great fun, and you get a real buzz from escaping or even getting into a shoot-out in the middle of a busy street surrounded by police and onlookers.

Being caught by the police isn't good for your rep or your bank balance, so escaping really is your goal, either that or to kill the coppers that are after you. If you do kill a copper, you can be sure there are going to be roadblocks set up on all the major routes and every bobby in the city is going to have a bullet with your initials etched into it. The best way out of this is to visit to one of the many paint shops for a quick re-spray and new number plates to get the pigs off your tail.

As you can see, the level of reality in GTA is scary and it's understandable that it should receive so much attention from the press, but original publishers BMG knew any publicity was good publicity when they first released the game, and to be honest it would have sold regardless of its quality. Luckily, though, the game is very good and also very polished. The only thing that really takes this game away from reality is the almost cute graphical appearance. The graphics at best can be described as being functional, but at times it's really hard to see exactly what's going on while you're driving along in the RS Turbo you've just nicked, but hey, no games perfect.

All in all, it's a top game with loads of playability and a lot of swearing and references to drugs. Not really one you'd take home to show your mother, but a great game nevertheless.

Russell

SECOND OPINION

The mobile camera zooming in and out is enough to give you motion sickness and the police must be terribly thick to chase you into a garage and then wait outside while you get a paint job, but brilliant design wins through in the end.

Doug

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	8

90%



If you think this room's a mess, you should see the EPM advertising department's office...



PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Virgin	Capcom	Adventure	Out Now	UK	£19.99	1	Memory Card

The graves shall spew forth their dead...

Resident Evil

I don't know about you, but I can't get enough of those cheesy, almost bile-inducing one-liners supplied by Capcom's masterpiece, Resident Evil. In a slow, low-pitched monotone, one of the male characters says, "Jill, here is a lock pick; it would be wise if you, the master of unlocking, would take it with you". The first time I heard that I fell about laughing at its shameless corn and B-movie style.

If the game wasn't so remarkable, even by today's standards, the terrible vocal acting would be a real sin. But as it is, it works really well to build an atmosphere that B-movies on a horror trip have always achieved in the past.

Unless you were born within the last 24 hours, you're probably very familiar with the legend that it Resident Evil. For those that don't know, it's an action/adventure game in which you control one of two commando-style agents through an old mansion full of flesh-eating zombies and brain-busting puzzles for you to overcome. The choice between one or the other of the two main characters determines the story and route you take through the game; though the playing area stays the same, it still feels like you have two adventure games for the price of one. The subtle differences this entails includes the female Jill starting the game with a gun in her inventory while Chris only starts with a knife, and discovers a gun later on in the game.

Caught On Camera

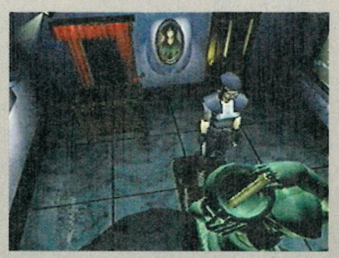
The cunning use of the camera angles in the game work to heighten the cinematic mood that the game tries very hard to achieve, along with the cut sequences used to expand the story. What you end up with is, to all intents and purposes, a real interactive movie. The graphics are sharp and the animation of each character, dead or alive, is pretty much ahead of its time and the beautifully-drawn backgrounds are fantastically realistic and nothing short of awesome.

The controls are responsive and easy to handle, allowing you to get involved in the game to the point where you're living the whole experience. I know it's one big fat cliché, but it really is one of those games you must play late at night, alone, in the dark with the sound turned up to maximum. The hairs on the back of your neck stand out and the shivers down your spine increase the further through the game you progress. For Capcom to achieve this sort of an emotional reaction from a simple game is quite fantastic, and not to be missed by any honest PlayStation owner anywhere.

In a nutshell, if you haven't played this game to death by now, you should be reported to the police for misuse of a home console. If, on the other hand, you have, now is your chance to live it again on Platinum, because for twenty quid you can have a slice of gaming history all for yourself.

Russell

For twenty quid you can have a slice of gaming history...

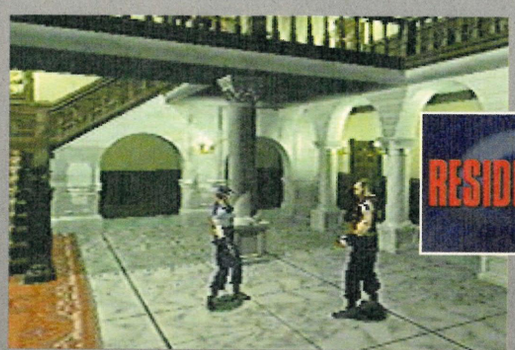


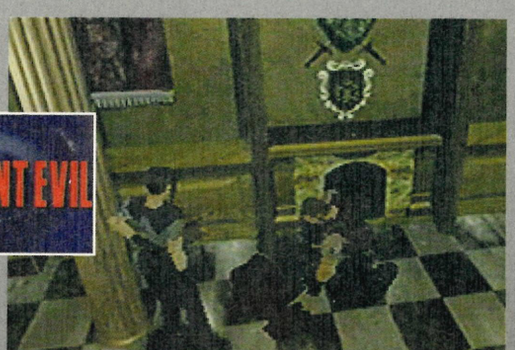


SECOND OPINION

This game boasts unbelievable atmosphere and some of the most sickening violence ever seen. The tension really grows as you find yourself fighting hordes of zombies with only an empty pistol and a rusty key, and every time you die you have to come back for more.

Ian

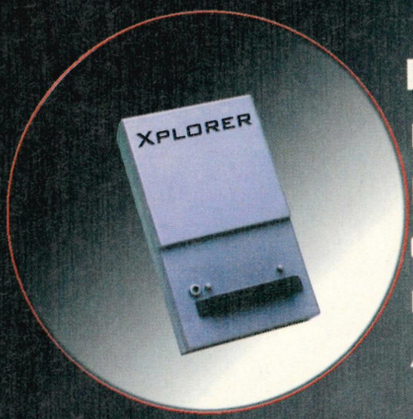




THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	9
LIFESPAN	8

94%



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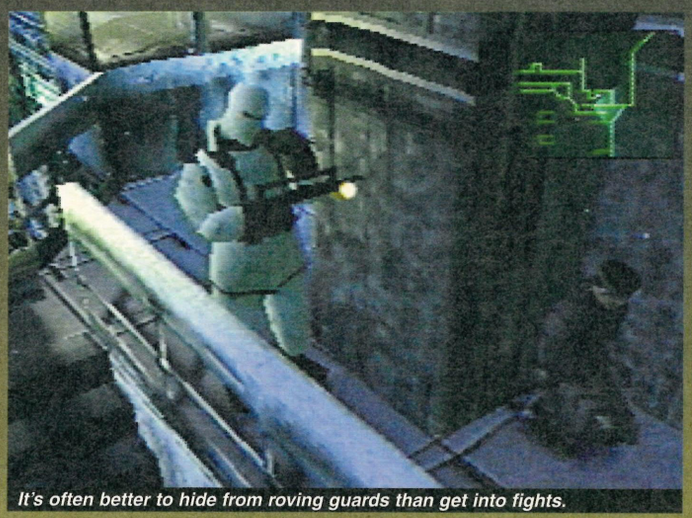
PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Konami	Konami CE Japan	3D Adventure	Out Now (Import)	Japanese	£60-£100 (Varies)	1	Memory Card	Dual Shock

Metal Gear Solid

Metal Gear Solid most certainly is 'the big one'. It has completely re-written the action adventure game rules in Japan, and is certain to do the same when it gets released around about Christmas time over here.

Alaska, in the near future. A terrorist organisation has taken over a nuclear weapons storage facility and have threatened to launch a devastating attack if their demands are not met. Unfortunately the terrorists, know as the Fox Hounds, happen to be former elite soldiers. To make matters worse, it's up to you to stop them at all costs using any possible means.

The plot behind the game may well sound rather like a Hollywood picture, and you wouldn't be far off the mark. Metal Gear Solid has one of the most in-depth stories imaginable, and it unfolds as the game progresses and you get deeper into the action. Sections of the game are joined together almost seamlessly with incredibly realistic cut-scenes that get your heart pounding and your adrenaline pumping in a way that has never before been seen.



It's often better to hide from roving guards than get into fights.





Metal Gear Solid has one of the most in-depth stories imaginable

Covert Actions...

You won't get very far through the game if you go in guns blazing and fists flying - you'll be dead before you make it inside the first building. Stealth is your best option, and you would do well to use your vast array of moves wisely. You do get the opportunity to fight and exchange gunfire, but doing so in the wrong place at the wrong time ends in disaster. You can crawl up behind an idle guard, get up and snap his neck if you like, and because of the surprise element he won't even know you were there.

There are weapons and tactics beyond your comprehension in MGS. You can use C4 explosives, grenades and silenced machine guns as much as you like in the game, though you may find the best means of progression in a hostile situation is to hide under a cardboard box and wait. The graphics portray the spy-like feel of the game like nothing I've ever seen before, and like I always say, you have to see it moving for yourself to appreciate the quality. You'll have to duck security cameras, out-smart patrolling guards and even avoid lasers by puffing cigarette smoke in the area you think is under protection.





Jap Happenings

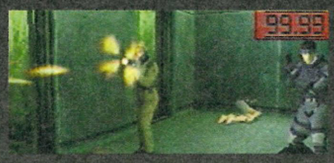
The only real drawback with MGS as it stands at the moment is the lack of understanding of the game when you first start to play. There are countless mission briefings and communications during the game, but it's all in Japanese - it's a simple case of trial and error all the way through. There's an excellent training mode for you to get the hang of some of the controls, but you're still going to struggle because of the sheer volume of Jap text that I'm sure is directing you through some parts of the game.

The gameplay and lifespan scores strongly reflect the language barrier problem. This review is only a guide to the Jap version, and should only be taken into account by those of you that are thinking of buying the rather expensive import. Everyone else should wait for the UK release, to be reviewed at a later date.

It's a real shame we've only got a single page to cover this massive game, but rest assured you'll be seeing the biggest, boldest review of the PAL version when it finally gets a UK go-ahead. Sit tight, it's on its way!

Russell

This is the big one!











SECOND OPINION

This is one of the best games ever made, but don't buy it. Instead wait a few moths and get it on UK PAL - the atmospheric storyline is far too good to waste by buying a Japanese import just to get it a little earlier than your friends.

Ian

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	9
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	8

92%

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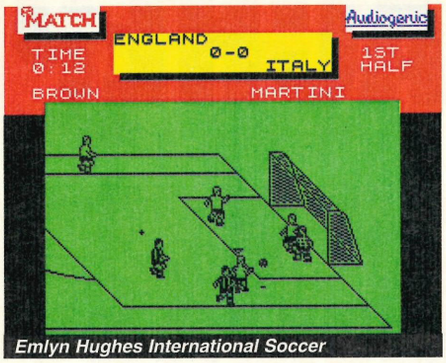
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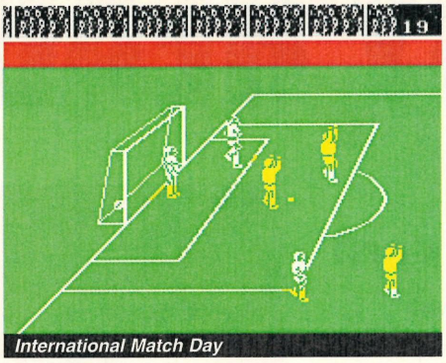
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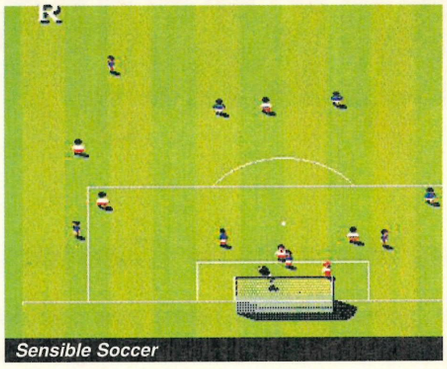
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From kick-about to top tourney...



Back in the early days, when the first home computers and game consoles where shipped across from America, the first football sims resembled a paddle game of tennis more than a football pitch - Pong with multiple bats. It wasn't until the early 80s, with John Ritman's Match of the Day, that we had a football game that actually resembled the game itself, even if the players did look like stick men and ran in a restricted formation.

1983's Commodore 64 release International Soccer took the genre a stage further, becoming one of the most popular games on the 8-bit machines. Its side-on perspective won it a lot of friends, but many preferred the top-down viewpoint of MicroProse Soccer, released in 1988 and programmed by the guys from Sensible Software before they became famous. This was the first soccer game to offer instant replays of goals. The same year, Audiogenic released Emlyn Hughes International Soccer, another game that offered a grandstand view of the action. Thus the two main graphical styles which exist to this day had already become established a decade ago.

A notable disaster from the late 8-bit/early 16-bit era was Empire's Gazza's Superstar Soccer. It used a ridiculous mixed perspective that had you viewing the action from the sides in the centre of the pitch and towards the goal at the ends. Can you imagine how hard it was to stay on the ball as the viewpoint changed?

It wasn't really until 1988 when the SNES and Mega Drive domination the videogame market that the games began to resemble what the developers where aiming for. Kick Off (designed by Dino Dini, who was also responsible for Player Manager), and Konami's Hyper Soccer where two of the best available at the time and were considered as the starting blocks used by other game publishers from which to set the mark.

Sensible Soccer was released on the Amiga in 1992 (nicknamed Sensi by its loyal lovers), and was the footy game that really turn things around. It gave just a glimpse of what could really be achieved and gave a feel of control that hand never been seen or felt before.

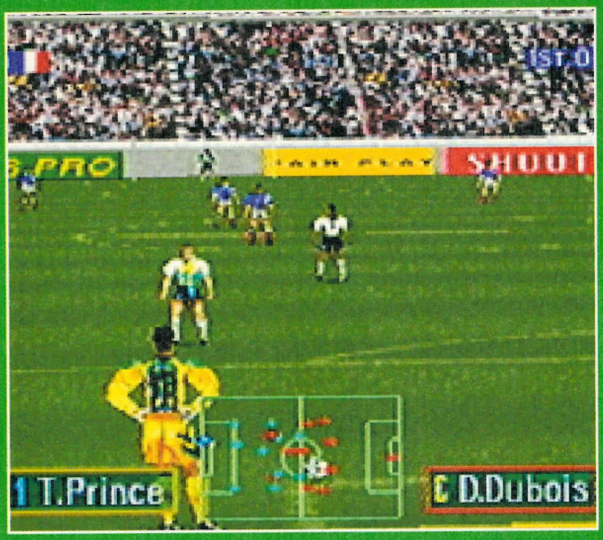
FIFA first emerged on the Mega Drive in 1993 which seem to be another ground breaking achievement at the time. It showed new heights of realism graphics, never previously dreamed possible. It also marked the point where graphics seemed deemed to be more important than gameplay. But soon came International Superstar Soccer to redress the whole situation...

Even today, when the PlayStation sits proud at the top of the videogames console tree, ISS and FIFA are still the market leaders, but for how much longer? Eidos have already achieved success with World League Soccer, and WLS '99's on the way. The Sensible boys are back with Sensible Soccer 2000, and Gremlin's Actua Soccer 3 looks set to put in a Premiership performance. Virgin's Viva Soccer seems to have been in development forever, but if they get it right, they could yet take the title. The World Cup may be over, but the soccer games just keep coming.

IT'S A RESULT...

A good footie sim requires...

- Good player animations which don't compromise character control.
- Controls that let the player choose from a variety of moves without too many button combinations.
- A perfect balance between user-friendly controls and in-depth gameplay
- Goalkeepers' intelligence must be free from soft-spots (areas you're more often than not guaranteed to score from), but at the same time allowing scope for the occasional wonder goal from outside the box.
- Commentators that offer verbal variety and don't repeat themselves too much or give coverage to an incident that happened minutes before.
- Menus must serve a purpose and should be as straightforward and easy to use as possible



INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER PRO
Konami

ISS Pro offers a perfect blend of arcade simulation that makes it easily accessible for the beginner as well as challenging to the seasoned pro. The graphics aren't up to today's standards but the gameplay certainly makes up for this by offering a realistic feeling of action on the screen. The control system is enjoyable, and there's a decent amount of information and strategy options, including fitness levels for each player. ISS Pro still ranks as one of the best PlayStation football games.

90%

ADIDAS POWER SOCCER
Psygnosis

It doesn't lack in the options department and you're able to customise league and cup tournaments, but that's about as good as it gets. The gameplay is shoddy, giving the feel of a game and not a simulation, and in a nutshell the graphics are crap. As well as the D-Pad being over-sensitive, the perspective is pretty ropy as the camera insists on keeping the ball in the centre of the screen at all times, making it jerky and difficult on the eyes. The game's biggest failings are its inconsistency and ball physics that fall well below par.

39%

FIFA '97
Electronic Arts

Although EA made a real effort to improve matters from the previous version, FIFA '97 doesn't really hit the mark. The texture-mapped players are a huge improvement and the team management allows you to adjust position of individual players before each match. The graphics appear to be clean and fresh, but occasional slowdown is noticeable. As far as gameplay goes, it handles well but doesn't really have any feel for playability. There's a choice of eight different camera angles while the action takes place on the pitch, which also includes a close-in camera angle only usable during replays as you can't really see where you player is heading. The major downfall is that the teams are all last year's Premier league, and that the goalies are exceptionally poor and very often miss anything that comes their way. A disappointing performance.

70%

INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER DELUXE
Konami

ISS Pro Deluxe was quite something when first launched on the SNES, but those days are gone and the PlayStation version leaves a lot to be desired. There's no motion capture and the sprites are 2D, but the controls are still user-friendly and allow passes to be strung together which greatly enhances the gameplay. The simplistic nature of the game makes it easy to pick up and play, but the game has it's limitations and suffers from easy goal syndrome.

66%

ADIDAS POWER SOCCER '98
Psygnosis

On the surface, adidas Power Soccer '98 looks like a competent soccer game, and graphically it is. The problem is the gameplay. It just doesn't flow enough. The terms slow and tedious spring to mind. And even though the animation is up to scratch, it doesn't add any realism. There's also a slight delay when passing or shooting, making it frustrating having the ball taken away from you each time you're about to have a shot at the goal. It's not a bad football game, but nothing compared to the opposition.

55%

ALL STAR SOCCER
Eidos

All Star Soccer tries to mix football and humour, but fails on both accounts. It features over-the-top violence with a range of bone-crushing tackles and off-the-ball fouls that can be switched off if required, but this goes to show this is more of a comical game than a serious football simulation. The sprites make the game look dated, and that's exactly what it is. There's a serious lack of animation making the graphics far from smooth and the gameplay feel basic. The controls are sluggish and offer slow reactions with limited accuracy, while the CPU has the ability to pull off stunning shots that are difficult to defend, all of which increases the whole frustration of the game. All in all, a dated and frustrating game.

34%

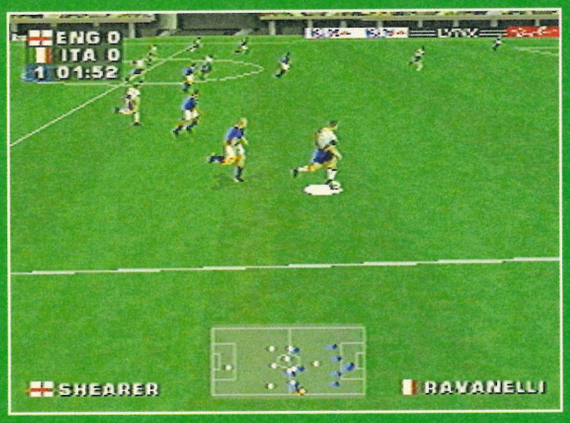


FIFA: ROAD TO WORLD CUP
Electronic Arts

FIFA games have always been highly regarded on the visual front, and RTWC is no exception. The graphics are top-notch, with well drawn players that are animated at a health pace. There's are a plethora of camera angles and some close-up views that look superb, although they can make it harder to play, and a good control method makes the game intuitive as well as fun to play as it doesn't take you long to get used to. The options available can make it hard when choosing a team as there are so many, but also include team formations and positioning that can be completely customised, as well as being able to set how aggressive your players are. Additional touches when playing a league provides you even more control as a manger by allowing you to buy and sell players in the transfer market, adding another dimension to the game. FIFA RTWC plays an extremely decent game of soccer.

91%





THREE LIONS
BMG

This game offers a decent kick-around, with fast and smooth gameplay that can be described as frantic, good animation and atmospheric crowd sound, but that's about as far as it goes. The players look dodgy, especially when close up, making goalscoring replays comical. The controls take a while to get used to, and there's no commentary, just in-game chat which doesn't really work. Overall Three Lions is a contender, but certainly not a winner.

85%

INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTAR SOCCER PRO '98
Konami

This is one of the best football games to date. The player animations, gameplay and overall game mechanics are second to none, providing you with players that move around the pitch much more realistically than ever see before, and it doesn't look like the ball is glued to their feet. Other nice touches include players that actually look at the ball when they are waiting for a pass or when the goalkeeper gets possession. The goalies are also nicely balanced, not being too hard or too easy to beat, and in order to score goals you need to create situations that make openings and use set plays, which is how it should be. The only minor floor that ISS Pro has is the duff commentary.

95%

ONSIDE SOCCER
Telstar

Onside Soccer is one of the ugliest, most awkward and dire football games available for the PlayStation. The sheer speed at which the action takes place is extremely slow, making real time passing a nightmare while the gameplay is limited and frustrating. There are neat blobs that follow the players to illustrate the direction they are moving in and their momentum, but this is a small compensation for the poor gameplay. Tackles are half-hearted, and fouls are punished at random and without any consistency what so ever. Fortunately there's the management side for when you're tired of the pitch action or lack of it and want to try your hand at the tactical side of things. But even this side of the game is limited and only offers eight pre-set formations. You've been warned.

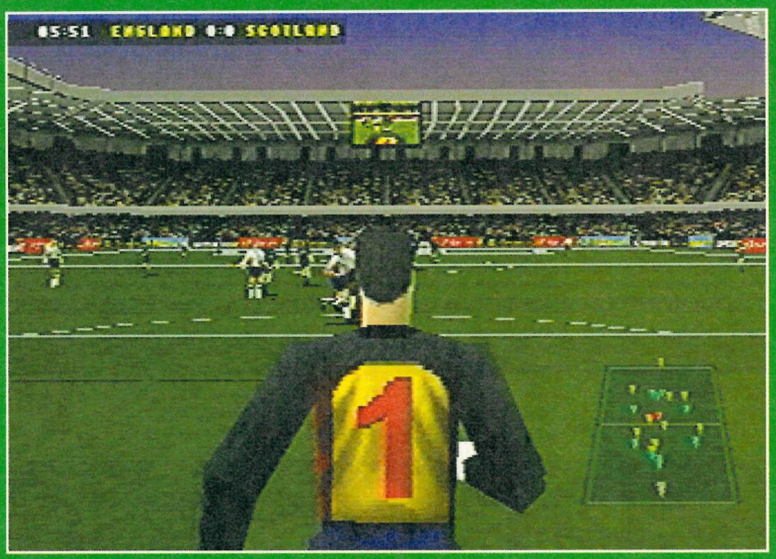


45%

ACTUA SOCCER 2
Gremlin

Apart from the slightly dodgy control method that is controlled to a certain degree by the CPU, gameplay is pretty decent and the visuals are even better. The commentary's excellent. There are a total of 64 international teams to choose from, including all the correct players and kits, ranging from England to San Marino. An editor allows you to save up to 24 customised teams to a memory card and there's even a team editor that lets you create your own kit, right down to the socks. Other options allow each player to be fine-tuned by determining their height, weight and even skin colour. Fortunately, Gremlin have added enough extras and attention to detail, so that the realism overshadows the slightly dodgy control method.

80%



4-4-2
Virgin

There's no denying that this is the worst football game you'll find on these pages. Everything is controlled by using three buttons, there are no fancy lobs, no diving headers or bicycle kicks. You just tackle, pass and shoot. It really is that simple and straightforward - and boring. The sprites are small and crap, and run along barely moving their legs. The gameplay doesn't even attempt to make up for the dreadful flaws that plague this dull title.

20%



WORLD CUP '98
Electronic Arts

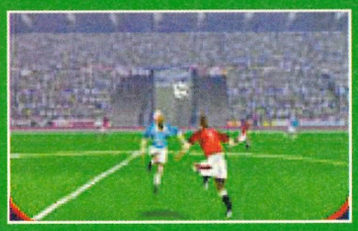
Having the official licence under its belt, World Cup '98 allows you to play all the official stadiums in an exact replica of the tournament, with each match being taken from the original French counterpart to give real football fans the next best thing to actually being there. Graphically, everything is silky-smooth with the exception of the scrolling which could be more polished, but the game itself is very easy to pick up and play, and also incorporates an exhaustive menu system which allows the action to be tailored to your needs, although these can often be difficult and fiddly to navigate. Other finer details include commentators who actually name the players when they receive the ball, and eight different control set-ups making things that little bit more user-friendly.

90%

WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER '98
Eidos

WLS '98 is one of the few PlayStation football games that ranks along side the best of them. The gameplay is excellent with a learning curve that needs to be mastered before you can really start to play competitively. It incorporates 190 teams which represent ten leagues from around the world, 14 different stadiums that are modelled on Premiership grounds, and a player editor feature that allows you to change the names of all players for that personal touch.

94%



KICK OFF '97
Maxis

This game has all the right features. Loads of tournaments to compete in, and skill rated international teams and players to pit yourself against. The on-pitch action is what you'd expect from a strong title like this, but the style is middle of the road. Although graphically the players don't come up to scratch, the gameplay is manageable. The downfalls are that player selection which is awkward and soon becomes annoying. There is an inclusion of a training mode which is and added bonus that allows you to hone your shooting and passing skills before taking on the big boys. Although an excellent game, Kick Off '97 doesn't live up to today's expectations.

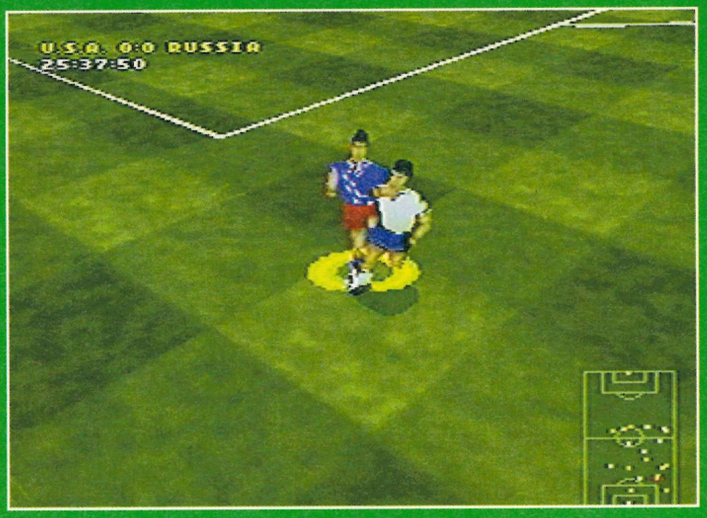
60%

OLYMPIC SOCCER
US Gold

Due to its arcade-style feel and fast playing, Olympic Soccer has a lot of on-pitch realism to offer. Although the game has that arcade feel, it doesn't lose out on the tactical side of things and offers a variety of pre-set tactics for you to chose from. The camera views can be changed from a floating position to fixed one and also includes the overhead view that many Sensible Soccer fans will remember. Replays can also be viewed from any imaginable position. There's a wide range of moves to choose from but they're not essential to master, making it ideal for beginners as well as old footy pros. A fun and enjoyable football sim.

82%

ACTUA SOCCER
Gremlin



Actua Soccer boasts a full complement of international sides. Graphically everything's smooth and fast, with precision passing and motion capture which lets you see the action, helping the gameplay flow. There's an infinite number of shot styles to chose from, with controls that are delightfully simplistic, making volleys, one-shot lobs and turning shots very effective. Other fine details include players who hold their arms out when about to shoot, to add balance when aiming the shot. The only noticeable problem are the goalies, as they tend to push the ball back to the attacking players instead of grabbing hold of it or flicking it over the bar, making rebound goals very common indeed.

88%

KICK OFF WORLD
Funsoft

Kick Off World doesn't have anything that makes it shine above the rest. In fact, it's so average it hurts, and is best described as middle of the road. The game itself tries to cover every aspect of the game, including a management section, loads of different tournaments and leagues, plus the World Cup. The gameplay is particularly great, but is easy to get to grips with due to the lack of skill modes, speed ups or special moves. All you really have to concentrate on is passing and shooting. In general it's a good game, it just doesn't stay interesting for long enough.

70%



WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER
Eidos



World League Soccer has the usual options and choices of teams, ranging from the Premier League sides to the top teams from ten different countries. The controls are ambitious and sometimes a little over-complex, but they work as a combination of taps, holds and double-taps that provide almost three times as many control options. Sadly, though, the distinction between a tap and a double tap isn't broad enough and you often find yourself kicking the ball with too much power. Graphically everything is pretty much there, but some of the players look deformed during certain views. The one outstanding thing that World League Soccer has to offer above the other football games is the excellent replay facility which allows you to view all replays from whichever perspective you wish. Overall, it's an average football game at best.

70%

ADIDAS POWER SOCCER 2
Psygnosis



On the surface, adidas Power Soccer 2 looks like any other competent PlayStation football game. There are plenty of national and international teams to play and all the real-life players are correct and present, which to some soccer fans is enough to make a great footy game; but not for the majority. The gameplay is at best average, but suffers due bad controls that have been poorly thought out, are limited and ultimately boring. The graphics aren't particularly eye-pleasing and the commentary gets extremely repetitive. Although in two-player mode the action is fun and fast, but it won't hold your interest for more than a few matches at a time. It's a Division One game that's trying to mix it with the big boys of the Premiership.

65%

tips & cheats

More rock-solid cheats, codes and tips for just some of the latest and greatest PSX titles...

Air Combat

Cheat Mode:
Press R1 + ● on the bird logo screen before the 'Now Loading' message appears. A black screen with the phrase 'Now Loading' and bouncing CDs will confirm that the cheat mode has been activated. Each time a code is successfully entered, a small Namco character will appear in the lower-left corner.

999,999,000 Credits:
In cheat mode, press ↓, ●, ▲, ▲, ▲, ●, ▲, ●, ▲, ● + ▲, then press and hold ● + ▲ again at the bouncing CD screen.

Change Plane's Colour:
In cheat mode, press ↑, ↓, ←, →, ↑, ↓, ←, → and hold R1 at the bouncing CD screen. In two-player mode, enter ←, →, ←, →, ↓, ↑, ↓, ↑, ●, ●, ▲, ▲, then press and hold ▲ again.

Change Wingman Plane's Colour:
In cheat mode, press R1 + START ten times.

Hidden Mini-game:
Enter cheat mode and press ↑, ←, ↓, →. Start the game, then return to the title screen. A mini-game lasting approximately six seconds begins while the main game loads again. Control the icon with ← or L2 and ● or R2. Press R1 to switch between control options. Destroy as many of the ships and missiles as possible before the bird walks across the screen.

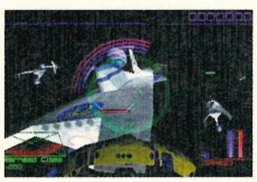
Extra Fighters:
Complete the game in Easy mode then allow the credits to complete after the boss has been defeated. The phrase 'Extra 10' will appear on the title screen. Now use the Plane Select option to access the extra fighters.

Batman & Robin



Invincibility:
Press L1, R2, R1, L2, SELECT, ✖, ● at the title screen to gain full invincibility.

Blast Radius



All Ships Powered Up:
Press →, L1, ↑, ↑, ↓, →, R2, L2, R2, ↓, ↑, ↓ at the main menu. An explosion will confirm the correct code entry. Select any ship and begin the game, then quit. All four ships will now be powered up and Sector 5 will become accessible.

Wraith Ship:
Enable the 'All Ships Powered Up' code. Then, press ←, →, L1, ←, →, L1, R2, R2, L2, ←, →, ↑ at the main menu. The sound of an explosion will confirm the correct code entry. Select any ship and begin game play, then quit. The Wraith Ship will become accessible.

Alternate Planets:
Press ↓, ↑, L1, →, L1, ↑, →, SELECT, →, R2, L1, L2 at the main menu. The sound of an explosion will confirm the correct code entry. The faces of the development team will now appear in the place of the planets in the first four levels. The next four levels will have other objects replacing the planets.
Note: This code may not be enabled with the 'All Ships Powered Up' or 'Wraith Ship' code.

Bonus Levels:
Press L1, ←, L2, ↓, SELECT, ←, ↓, R2, R2, R2, SELECT, ↑ at the main menu. The sound of an explosion will confirm the correct code entry. Four bonus missions that feature World War II aircraft and other hidden targets will become accessible. Note: This code may not be enabled with the 'All Ships Powered Up' or 'Wraith Ship' code.

Micro Machines V3

Cheat Codes:
Enter these codes while the game is paused, a beep sound will confirm the correct code entry. To disable any of these codes, simply re-enter it.



Any Object: ↓, ↓, ↑, ↑, →, →, ←, ←
Behind Car View: ←, →, ■, ●, ←, →, ■, ●
Big Bounces: ■, →, →, ↓, ↑, ↓, ←, ↓, ↓
Double Speed: ■, ✖, ●, ■, ▲, ✖, ✖, ✖, ✖
Floating Objects: ■, ▲, ■, ■, ▲, ■, ■, ▲, ✖
Slow CPU Cars: ●, ▲, ■, ✖, ●, ▲, ■, ✖

Easter Eggs:
Enter these codes on the Name Entry screen, a beep sound will confirm the correct code entry.

CATLIVES
9 lives in one-player mode
GIMMEALL
All tracks in multi-player game
NOTANKS
Tanks cannot shoot
TANKS4ME
Tanks can be used on all tracks except those with water
WINTERY
Slippery roads

Turbo Start:
For a faster start, press the accelerator button during the second beep whilst waiting on the starting line.

Overboard

Level Passwords

2: ship, skull, fish, anchor, ship, anchor
3: ship, anchor, skull, ship, anchor, fish
4: skull, ship, fish, anchor, anchor, ship

Bubsy 3D

Cheat Mode:
Enter one of the following passwords at the load and save game screen. Note: Press ← + START after enabling the Zoom cheat to be able to move around.

Level select:
XMVLCHTMSB
99 lives:
XMUCHOLIFE
Level select and 99 lives:
XALLDBUGCR
All rocket parts:
XTOOROCKER
Add co-ordinates to Paws:
XDBUGLOCNC
Enable zoom cheat:
XZOOMERKB
Change shape:
XURASNAKER
Access bonus rounds:
XBNSCHTMMM

The Need For Speed 3: Hot Pursuit

All Cars and Standard Tracks:
Enter SPOILT as a name on the options screen.

Additional Camera Views:
Enter SEEALL as a name on the options screen. Additional views normally only available during replays will be available under the options screen. Note: The extra views may only be enabled in single player mode.

Crash Other Cars:
Press START to load the race after selecting the game options, then immediately press and hold START + SELECT + R1 + L2 before the loading screen appears. Keep the buttons held down until the loading screen disappears. Simply beep the horn during game play to flip the other cars.

Horsepower Boost:
Press START to load the race after selecting the game options, then immediately press and hold ← + ■ + ● before the loading screen appears. Keep the buttons held down until the loading screen disappears. The horsepower of your car will now be boosted by 25%.

Heavy Car:
Press START to load the race after selecting the game options, then immediately press and hold SELECT + ■ + ✖ before the loading screen appears. Keep the buttons held down until the loading screen disappears. Simply bump into other cars during game play to push them off the road.

Gum Ball Police:
Select the Redrock Ridge track. Press START to load the race, then immediately press and hold ↓ + R1 + L2 before the loading screen appears. Keep the buttons held down until the loading screen disappears. The green Landrovers will be replaced by Gum ball police during the race.

No Police Jeeps:
Select the Rocky Pass track. Press START to load the race, then immediately press and hold → + R1 + L2 before the loading screen appears. Keep the buttons held down until the loading screen disappears. The white and blue Jeeps will be replaced by Crown Victorias during the race. To enable this code on The Summit track, hold Down + R1 + L2 while the track loads.

Police with New Accent:
Press START to load the race after selecting the game options, then immediately press and hold ↑ + R1 + L2 before the loading screen appears. Keep the buttons held down until the loading screen disappears.

Casper

Free Movement:
Position Casper to the upper left corner of any game location then press and hold: [UP/LEFT] + L1 + R1 + START to pause the game. Now release [UP/LEFT] + L1, and then press [DOWN/RIGHT] + ▲ while continuing to hold R1+ START. The game will now resume in free movement mode. Press R1, then use the D-pad to fly over any wall. Press L1 to resume normal game play.

Destruction Derby 2

All Tracks:
Enter MACSrPOO as your name then start a new practice race to immediately access the new tracks.

Animated Credits:
Enter CREDITZ! as your name. Animated credits of the main programmers, artists, and other development staff members will now appear.

FMV Credit Sequence
Enter ToNyPaRk as your name. A video of all the credits with a background FMV sequence will now appear.

Duke Nukem: Total Meltdown

Super Kick:
Hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 and press ■ during game play.

Energy Refill:
Destroy any water source, including fountains, fire hydrants and toilets then stand in the water and hold the button configured as Action to restore energy. This also works while standing in front of a toilet or urinal.

Final Doom

All Weapons, Ammunition, and Keys:
Pause the game then press ✖, ▲, L1, ↑, ↓, R2, ←, ←. All weapons, ammunition for them, and keys for the current level will become available.

Map all Lines:
Pause the game then press ▲, ▲, L2, R2, L2, R2, R1, ■. All walls and boundaries will now appear on the map for the current level.

Map all Objects:
Pause the game then press ▲, ▲, L2, R2, L2, R2, R1, ●. All objects including enemies, items, weapons, and secret switches will now appear on the map.

Invincibility:
Pause the game then press ↓, L2, ■, R1, →, L1, ←, ●

Level Select:
Pause the game then press →, ←, R2, R1, ▲, L1, ●, ✖

Transparent Walls:
Pause the game then press L1, R2, L2, R1, →, ▲, ✖, →. Your character will now be able see through a layer of wall or sprites.

Passcodes

Episode 1:
2: 610QNNFT35
3: F!R251P1FD
4: RBB4M6HRST
5: QWC5CS83QS
6: NJJ64RFRPM
7: N1J74MYSPR
8: 811TMQ8W64
9: 7KKNL7D443
10: 28RFDDS5YX
11: C66YZLSGGG
12: GR85XJVNBD
13: C33V2DHGHK

Episode 2:
2: 7GGLPXL746
3: YZGLPX2!56
4: XHHSNYB965
5: 75NK!VGZZO
6: C2253RNRML
7: NT!3JRNDCB
8: 8LLT8KRV02

Episode 3:
10: !6PQGGJVOZ
11: WHHTNNPS65
12: O1JQYV3N34
13: 5MMD72GFZ1
14: HK25JRDQNL
15: S772MKWKCF
16: J226DG5PNL

Gex 3D: Enter The Gecko



Debug Mode:
Press START to pause game play and highlight the 'Exit' option then press and hold L2 and press ←, ●, ↑, ↓, →, →, ←, ▲, ↑, ↓. A sound will confirm the correct code entry. Now press START to resume game play, then press SELECT to display the debug menu.

Unlimited Lives:
Press START to pause game play and highlight the 'Exit' option then press and hold L2 and press ↑, ↑, ↓, →, ▲, ↓

Invincibility:
Press START to pause game play and highlight the 'Exit' option then press and hold L2 and press ←, →, ▲, ↓, →, ←

Level Select:
Press START to pause game play and highlight the 'Exit' option then press and hold L2 and press →, →, ←, →, ▲, ↓, →. Resume game play and press SELECT to choose a new level.



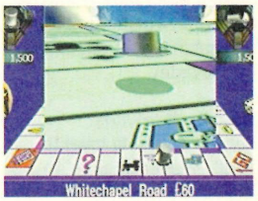
Gex Quotes:
Press START to pause game play and highlight the 'Exit' option then press and hold L2 and press ▲, ←, ●, ↑, ↓. Resume game play and press SELECT to force Gex to make a comment.

Rambling Gex:
Press START to pause game play and highlight the 'Exit' option then press and hold L2 and press ↓, →, ↑, ■, →, ←, →, ↓, ↓

Level Times:
Press START to pause game play and highlight the 'Exit' option then press and hold L2 and press →, ▲, →, ←, ▲, ✖. Resume game play and return to the Media Dimension then press SELECT to view the level statistics or ■ for the fastest times.

Monopoly

Extra Money:
Configure the game for three players using controller one and the CPU, then begin game play and transfer all the money to one of the players. Now select the bankruptcy option for the other two players then continue game play against the CPU with $4,500.



Cheaper Auctions:
When playing a two player game against the CPU, always bid $1 over the CPU. Your character will win the auction on the second round.

Star Wars: Masters of Teräs Käsi

Alternate Costumes:
Press L1 at the character selection screen.

Level Select:
Select Chewbacca as a character then set the difficulty level to 'Standard', 'Player Change' to 'No', and 'Continue' to 'No'. Now complete the game in practice or arcade mode. A level

German Police:
Press START to load the race after selecting the game options, then immediately press and hold ↑ + R2 + L1 before the loading screen appears. Keep the buttons held down until the loading screen disappears.

Spanish Police:
Press START to load the race after selecting the game options, then immediately press and hold ↓ + R2 + L1 before the loading screen appears. Keep the buttons held down until the loading screen disappears.

Italian Police:
Press START to load the race after selecting the game options, then immediately press and hold ← + R2 + L1 before the loading screen appears. Keep the buttons held down until the loading screen disappears.

French Police:
Press START to load the race after selecting the game options, then immediately press and hold → + R2 + L1 before the loading screen appears. Keep the buttons held down until the loading screen disappears.

Slow Motion Mode:
Press START to load the race after selecting the game options, then immediately press and hold ↑ + ✖ + ▲ before the loading screen appears. Keep the buttons held down until the loading screen disappears.

Advanced Options:
Win both the Knockout and Tournament modes on simulation mode.

Bonus Tracks:
Enter one of the following names at the options screen, then select the single race option to race on the corresponding track. Note: The bonus tracks are unlocked normally by winning the entire tournament on any setting except for multi-player. The Empire City track is obtained by winning the Beginner's knockout mode.

The bonus tracks are well worth a look, especially if you've completed the standard ones.

The Room
Toy car track
PLAYTM

Caverns
Underground track
XCAV8

Auto Cross
Canyon track
XCNTRY

Space Race
Space station track
MNBEAM

Scorpio-7
Underwater track
GLDFSH

Empire City
Bonus track
MCITYZ

select will now be accessed in versus mode.

Full Screen:
Hold SELECT + L1+ R2 after choosing a character and keep the buttons held until the match begins.

Fight as a Stormtrooper:
Select Han Solo as a character, set the difficulty level to 'Standard', 'Player Change' to 'No', and 'Continue' to 'No'. Now complete the game in arcade mode.

Fight as Darth Vader:
Select Luke Skywalker as a character, set the difficulty level to 'Standard', 'Player Change' to 'No', and 'Continue' to 'No'. Now complete the game in arcade mode. Note: The hidden Mara Jade character will appear instead of a mirror match when playing as Darth Vader.

Fight as Mara Jade:
Set the difficulty level to 'Jedi', 'Player Change' to 'No', and 'Continue' to 'No' then select team mode and hold L1 + L2 + R1 before the first match starts. Defeat the side designated as the Empire to select Mara Jade as a playable character.

Fight as Jodo Kast:
Set 'Player Change' to 'No', and 'Continue' to 'No'. Then select survival mode and defeat at least seven characters.

Fight as Slave Leia:
Select Princess Leia as a character, set the difficulty level to 'Jedi', 'Player Change' to 'No', and 'Continue' to 'No'. Now complete the game in arcade mode.

Small Fighters:
Select versus or practice mode. Hold SELECT + ↑ + ✕ + R2 after choosing a character and keep the buttons held until the match begins.

Super Deformed Mode:
Select versus or practice mode then press and hold SELECT + ↑ + ✕ after choosing a character and keep the buttons held until the match begins.

Big Head Mode:
Select versus or practice mode then hold SELECT after choosing a character and keep the button held until the match begins.

Big Head, Feet, Hands and Legs:
Select versus or practice mode the press and hold ↓ + ✕ + SELECT after choosing a character and keep the button held until the match begins.

Control Credits:
Press ↑ or ↓ during the credits sequence to reverse or speed up the scrolling.

ACTUA SOCCER 2

Cheat Codes

To activate the following codes, simply enter them at the start menu:

Gremlin 11:
←, →, ■, ●, ↑, ↓, ■, ●

Super Furry Animals:
←, ←, ■, →, →, ●, ↑, ↓

Ghost Ball:
■, ■, ←, ←, →, →, ●, ●

Beach Ball:
←, →, ←, ↑, ←, →, ■, ■

Small Players:
●, ↓, ↓, ■, ↑, ↑, ←, →

Invisible Players:
■, ●, ↓, ●, ↑, →, ■, ←

Giant Players:
↑, ↓, ↓, →, ■, ■, ●, ●

Break Reflectors:
←, ←, ←, ●, →, →, →, ■

Black & White Mode:
↑, ↓, ↑, ■, ●, ↑, ↓, ↑

BREATH OF FIRE III

Beat Gaist Easily:
Your confrontation with the sole living guardian besides Garr can be made easier by getting rid of the two torches positioned on either side of Ryu (your main character). At first it seems they just replenish 25 HP to Gaist, but in reality they also make his fire-based attacks much more deadly. Note: For a really easy battle, have Ryu equip something like Magma Armour that absorbs Gaist's fire-based attacks.

Beat the Dragon Zombie Easily:
Battling with the Dragon Zombie after Ryu becomes older is a tough battle because of its poisoning abilities. To quickly destroy this monster, have Ryu cast all his best heal spells on the creature as this takes care of him in no time at all. This trick works on any undead creatures except vampires. Note: Do not use items! Healing Herbs and Vitamins give HP back to zombies during a battle.

Control the Kaiser Form:
When you choose the Kaiser, most of the time Ryu is out of control. For the best results, choose Infinity+Trance+Radiance as your only dragon genes.

Deis:
To get Deis go to Zublo Mountain after you have freed her, go up the stairs when you enter Zublo Mountain then go up to the slab and press [X]. She now asks if you would like to be her apprentice. Note: you might have to go back there a few times, because she won't apprentice you right after she has been freed.

Easy Experience:
Later in the game, develop the Faerie Village until you have a copy shop, then copy the Ivory Dice until you have 12 of them. You can now use those dice in battle on a enemy. Depending on what enemy you use them on, you can get between 20,000 to 80,000 experience points.

Easy Ghosts:
If you're having trouble beating the ghosts in McNeil Manor, use Heal on them. This trick even works on the boss.

Free Berries:
For free berries, simply go to the coffee shop and kick the tree with apples in it for berries. The berries give you 5 HPs back when eaten.



Coolboarders 2

Alternate Clothing:
Highlight the 'Competition' option on the main menu then quickly press ↓, R1, ↑, R1, ↓, R2, ↑, R2, ↑, ↑, R1, ↓, ↓, R2. Cindy will now have a leather outfit and Irin will have a school girl uniform in any mode except Competition. Note: For the Japanese version of the game, highlight the 'Snow Boarding Combined' option before starting the code.

Play as Snowman:
Complete Competition Hard mode in first place or complete Freestyle mode in first place for the 'Trick', 'Time' and 'Total' categories in all ten courses.

Play as Boss:
Complete Competition Mirror mode in first place.

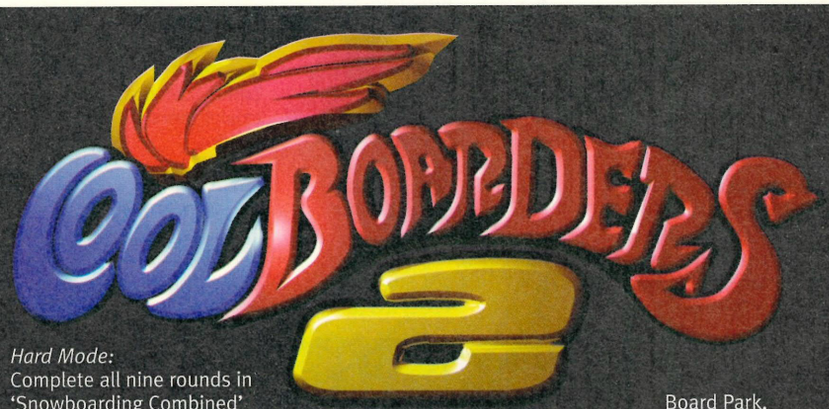
Play as Gray:
Score 37.5 or higher in Half Pipe mode or by completing all the tricks in Trick mode and rank as Master.

Bonus Boards:
Enter Freestyle mode with all the tracks then set the top record for each tracks.

Freestyle SP Board:
Complete Freestyle mode in first place for the 'Trick' category in at least five courses. The board will be accessible in all modes except for Tour Competition.

All-Around SP Board:
Complete Freestyle mode in first place for the 'Total' category in at least five courses. The board will be accessible in all modes except for Tour Competition and Half Pipe.

Alpine SP Board:
Complete Freestyle mode in first place for the 'Time' category in at least five courses. The board will be accessible in all modes except for Tour Competition and Half Pipe.



Hard Mode:
Complete all nine rounds in 'Snowboarding Combined' reverse mode and achieve any ranking. Then hold L1 and SELECT 'Freestyle' or 'Snowboarding Combined' modes to play hard versions of the courses.

Mirror Mode:
Complete Snowboarding Competition mode (Snowboarding Combined in Japanese version) and enter the options screen. Press SELECT on controller two, then press R1 + ■ at the mode selection screen.

Reversed Courses:
Complete all nine rounds in 'Snowboarding Competition' and achieve any ranking. Then hold R1 and select 'Freestyle' or 'Snowboarding Combined' modes to play reversed versions of the courses.

Course Select:
Quickly highlight the following selections in order at the mode selection screen:
Board Park, Option, Freestyle, One Make, Snowboarding Combined, Half Pipe, Freestyle and then press ●. Now hold L1+ L2 + R1+ R2 and press ● at the one player and two player selection screen.

Disable Music:
Rapidly tap START during game play until the music remains playing while the game is paused. Then, press START to resume game play with no music.

Stuck on your favourite game? Write to the Tips Clinic and we'll see what we can do...

DIAGNOSED AND CURED

Can you give me a complete guide to FINAL FANTASY VII? Dyne is driving me mad.
Richard M Kendall, Lincoln

For the boss Dyne, continually exchange blows while keeping Barret's health as high as possible. Watch out for his S-Mine which, combined with his normal attack, drains up to 300hp. For a full solution, check out the guide given free with Issue One or the extreme Solutions book given with Issue 9. There's also a Side Areas guide in Issue Six - all these mags are available through our back issues service.

Please could you give me cheats for Command & Conquer and Red Alert?
Andrew Bolton, Stevenage, Herts

Command & Conquer Cheats

View entire map:
Hold R1+R2+L1+L2+●+■ while the game loads. Keep the buttons pressed until the mission briefing begins. The entire battlefield is displayed. An alternate method to activate this mode is to pause the game and press ●, ●, ●, ↑, ●, ■, R1, ●, ●, ●

Instant Ion Cannon:
Pause the game and press →, ↓, ←, ←, ↓, →, →, ↓, ←, ✕, ■, ▲

Instant Air Strike:
Pause the game and press →, ↓, ←, ←, ↓, →, →, ↓, ←, ✕, ■, ●

Instant Nuclear Strike:
Pause game play and press →, ↓, ←, ←, ↓, →, →, ↓, ←, ✕, ↑, ✕

Unlimited Money:
Pause the game and press →, ↓, ↓, ←, L1, ←, →, ↓, ← for an additional 5000 credits. Repeat this code as needed for unlimited money.

Bonus Level:
Enter PATSUX as a password on the GDI disc. A bonus level with $10,000, extra tiberium, and 12 commandos begins.

Covert Operations Missions:
Enter COVERTOPS as a password. This password can be enabled on either disc with different results.

Japanese narration:
Enter GODZILLA as a password.

View FMV sequences:
Enter CINEMA as a password, then wait until the FMV sequences appear.

View credits:
Enter JC as a password.

Command & Conquer Passwords

GDI Missions:
2: 45P55BEN4
3: GCSA7DA419
4: C9ROF2ADO
5: OXL3NYNNO
6: 506262HHJ
7: GTI2NBE51
8: RZ6MTG54Y
9: C99X345PC
10: EAYHKOSNI
11: 45P5QoXAO
12: MWLJPU955
13: SZMYPPPOF8
14: GTJ2PV460

Special Ops Missions:
SZ4VH22RY
878FRoG1M

NOD Missions:
1: C99FAXKW8
2: RZNLQZ3NL
3: W1954XWLF
4: W15DASRS8
5: 8PH1MR53W
6: GTJKWOJDK
7: YKK424K3D
8: 874LCPUT4
9: A8SHPAHXW
10: OX3UKOP94
11: QGDUMSK2J
12: SZPo9VDSB

Command & Conquer: Red Alert Cheats

Cheat mode:
Click on the 'Teams' button menu with ● (or which ever button is currently configured as 'Cancel') or the Right Mouse Button. Then move the pointer over the following icons on the tool bar and press Cancel or the Right Mouse Button on each.

Instant Victory:
Press ● or the Right Mouse Button with the pointer over ✕, ■, ■, ●, ▲, ●

PATIENTS CURED

According to Daniel Wray of Doncaster, the TOCA cheat Neil Prassad is looking for is CMGARAGE - the FLEXMOBILE cheat doesn't work. Cheers, Dan.

Nuclear Attack:
Press ● or the Right Mouse Button with the pointer over ●, ✕, ●, ▲, ■, ▲

Parabomb:
Press ● or the Right Mouse Button with the pointer over ■, ✕, ●, ●, ✕, ▲

Money:
Press ● or the Right Mouse Button when the pointer is over ■, ■, ●, ✕, ▲, ●

Convert Ore to Civilians:
Press ● or the Right Mouse Button when the pointer is over ✕, ●, ▲, ▲, ●, and ✕. Note: This code may only be enabled in multiplayer mode after a refinery is present.

Chronoshift:
Press ● or the Right Mouse Button with the pointer over ▲, ●, ●, ■, ■, ✕

Full map:
Press ● or the Right Mouse Button when the pointer is over ■, ▲, ●, ✕, ▲, ■

Command & Conquer: Red Alert Passwords

Soviet Missions:
1: 17DUXFJ6C
2: VMBWOQ284
3: XN37MCCSO
4: LHo6FZZQL
5: BUVV2oLFF
6: AVYQ10YA8
7: LZRJTMQAN
8: YQX4C9GFH
9: 1QESO8LEo
10: RKPoUOXJA
11: CDLKYL7Q4
12: 8T5GGDK25
13: X5CDEoKN8

Allied Missions:
1: LZ9SE4HPN
2: FGoWEUoOO
3: EC5NAHTU
4: 9BFVYZAZ8
5: P4XS4CZVC
6: FMNAE6Uo8
7: 7XIQW4KOI
8: WPLAGLJ2G
9: 4TNT8RJ21
10: FZoZY7ZQA
11: X9FJZVJZI
12: 5RNHTXLRY
13: J7VEWVTo9
14: OLHDAPYHL
15: 17LE3FDV

THE CRITICAL LIST

Richard M Kendall and Andrew Bolton both want cheats for JERSEY DEVIL. Can anyone help?

'Anyone got a cheat for LONE SOLDIER?', asks Brian Williams of Cheshire. Blimey - that's a seriously old (and crap) game.

Finally, Andy Gorman of Basildon, Essex, is looking for cheats for IN THE HUNT. We can't help you, but perhaps someone else can.



William Jones of Kensington, London, wants cheats for BLOOD OMEN: LEGACY OF KAIN.

99 Items from Spirit Forge
Take over an enemy with the Mind Control spell and send them into the Spirit Forge instead of yourself.

Access all Movies:
Press ←, →, ■, ●, ↑, ↓, →, ← during the game.

Blood Refil:
During the game, press ↑, →, ■, ●, ↑, ↓, →, ←

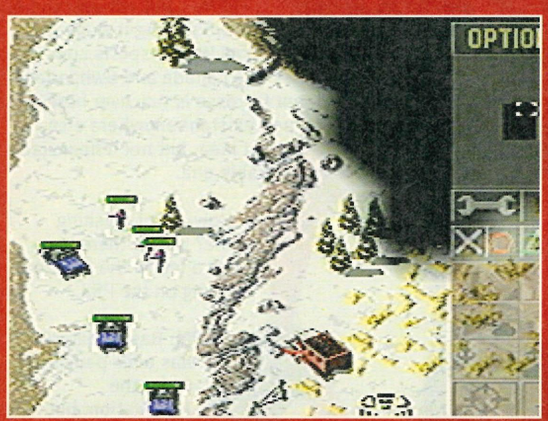
Magic Energy:
Again during the game, press →, →, ■, ●, ↑, ↓, →, ←

'How about some FROGGER cheats?' says Mary Fredrikson of Birmingham, West Midlands.

Infinite Lives:
Pause the game and press →, ■, ▲, ■, ▲, ✕

Access all Levels:
Pause the game and enter →, ■, ▲, ■, ▲, R1, L1, R1, L1, ●



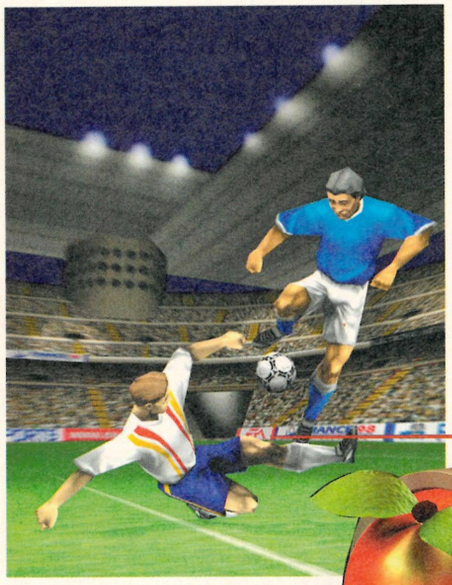




exchange

EPM SAYS...
Not much response to last month's call for new genres and angles on existing styles. Does this mean you're all happy with the types of games you're getting, or you just can't think of any new ideas? No great surprise, though - videogames have covered just about every possible genre (the last truly new and original one we can think of was Lemmings), and virtually all useful angles have been covered. No one's done a game based on toilet cleaning yet, but who the hell would want one? The only realistic angle on a genre we can think of is a field hockey sports sim, which would be great fun to play and should sell well on the continent and in India and Pakistan, where the sport is huge. Anyone got any other ideas?

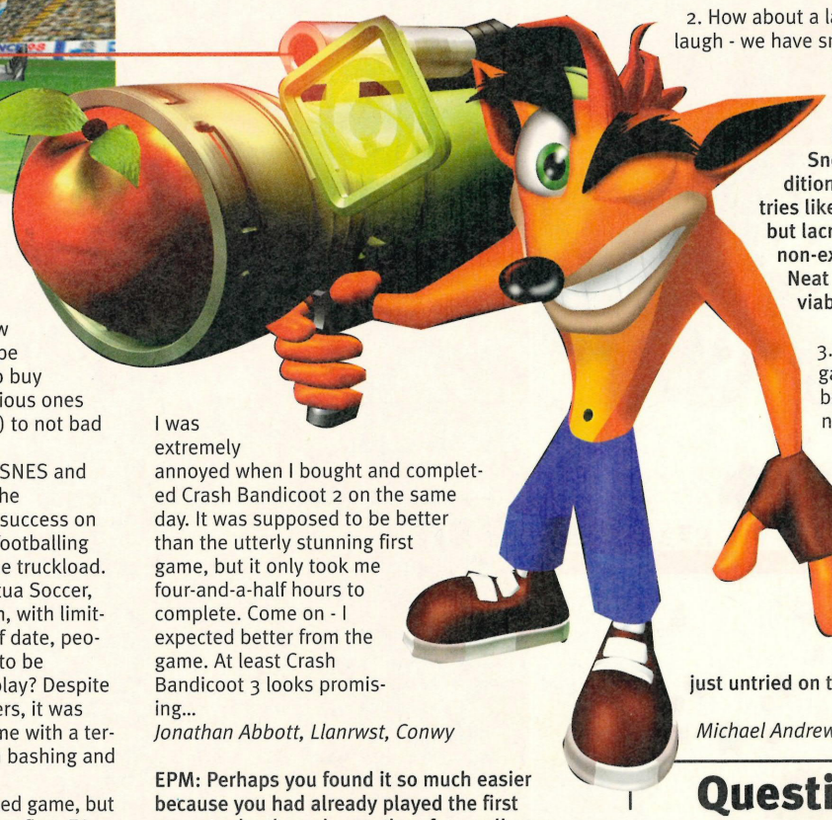
Star Letter



As Electronic Arts unveil yet another FIFA game, in development for the new season, a large portion of the gaming public (mainly children below the age of 13) are taken in by the hype and advertisements and get ready to buy another FIFA game, despite the previous ones ranging from awful (FIFA '96 and '97) to not bad (RTWC and World Cup '98).
Starting with the FIFA games on the SNES and the Mega Drive, the series came to the PlayStation with FIFA '96. Due to its success on the 16-bit machines and the lack of footballing competition at the time, it sold by the truckload. When matched against Gremlin's Actua Soccer, though, it was tiresome and sluggish, with limited appeal. With FIFA '96 going out of date, people looked to FIFA '97. So what was to be improved? The Graphics? The gameplay? Despite FIFA '97 again selling in huge numbers, it was soon described as a deeply slow game with a terrible time lag between frantic button bashing and on-screen action'.
We awaited a better France '98 licensed game, but instead we got FIFA: Road to World Cup first. EA spread the jam very thinly here, producing a game with jerky, second-rate animation and players who looked like geriatric 65-year-olds. The continuous scripted commentary didn't help either.
After continually being messed about by EA, we then got the better World Cup '98, which is already out of date following our poor showing in France. Finally a good game to play, but still not the best soccer game around.
It has taken four attempts for EA to give us World Cup '98. Actua Soccer (Gremlin's first attempt) is better than FIFAs '96 and '97. Actua Soccer 2 is better than RTWC and Eidos' first effort, World League Soccer, and Konami's second ISS Pro game both play a better midfield game and attack than World Cup '98, with its soft spots for scoring and its unsporty-looking players that are hard to control.
I conclude that if it takes over two years for EA to give us even a glimmer of a decent FIFA game, but Gremlin, Konami and Eidos can outclass EA with their first and second attempts, it's better to steer clear of the inevitable FIFA '99 until we know what's coming.
Chris Royston, Norfolk

EPM: We agree some of the early FIFA games weren't as hot as they should've been and that Eidos' World League Soccer '98 and Konami's ISS Pro '98 are top of the league, but let's face it - the producers of these games had the early FIFA offerings to look at before they started designing, and were able to take into account all the criticisms and comments made by the gamers. Thus, their own games avoided making the same mistakes. Likewise, FIFA '99 will also benefit from past experiences, both inside and outside the FIFA series. It should be great. Let's wait and see - it's unfair to assume the game won't live up to expectations when it's barely been started.

Crashin' In...



I was extremely annoyed when I bought and completed Crash Bandicoot 2 on the same day. It was supposed to be better than the utterly stunning first game, but it only took me four-and-a-half hours to complete. Come on - I expected better from the game. At least Crash Bandicoot 3 looks promising...
Jonathan Abbott, Llanrwst, Conwy

EPM: Perhaps you found it so much easier because you had already played the first game to death, and were therefore well practised. If you read last month's preview, though, you know there are substantial changes to the game engine for Crash 3. Did anyone who played Crash 2 but not the first game find it too easy?



Something Old, Something New...

I was interested to read your comments about new game genres on the PlayStation, or at least new angles on genres already catered for (EPM #9). It got me thinking:

1. We've all played beat-'em-ups, some good, some not so good. I've never seen a fight game where more than two players can compete on the same screen at the same time, though. With a Multi Tap, eight-player brawls should be possible.

EPM: Sorry, been done. Archer MacLean's International Karate+ allowed up to three players to fight, and that was released in 1988. Watch out for THQ's Shao Lin too. This allows up to nine fighters on the screen at once, four of which can be human-controlled.

2. How about a lacrosse game? Don't laugh - we have snowboarding efforts, and lacrosse is just as big over here...

EPM: ...but not over there. Snowboarding is huge in traditional Winter sports countries like Canada and Switzerland, but lacrosse is tiny over here and non-existent anywhere else. Neat idea, but not a financially viable one.

3. How about a fishing game? I know there have been a few in the past, but nothing on the PSX.

EPM: Bass Masters was once pencilled in for the PlayStation, but now looks unlikely to appear. We were really looking for new genres and angles, though, not just untried on the PSX.

Michael Andrews, Chatham, Kent

Questions...

Where can I buy Breath of Fire I and II?

EPM: These are SNES games, and not available on the PlayStation. They'd make an ideal retro compilation, though.

Where can I get some Resident Evil 2 merchandise?
EPM: Virgin Megastores, and most Virgin high street shops. If you've got Internet access, try www.capcom.com for mail order details too (credit card only).

Why did you print a guide for Lucky Luke long before the game came out?

EPM: Fair comment - we won't do it again.

Richard M Kendall, Lincon

Blush and Shove...

I'm a third year senior now, but for some reason in class my face always goes bright red. Everybody always looks at me and smirks. So if this letter gets published could you please tell them to P*** OFF! Thank you.
Daniel Bayley, Liverpool

EPM: Well, if you're in David's class, you heard what he said - leave the beetroot alone.

Sex, Drugs & Rock 'n' Roll...

Great idea of yours, to look for a new games genre or angle on a genre that hasn't been tried before (Exchange, EPM #9). What are you going to do with all those ideas when you get 'em? Make a game?

EPM: No, we're no good at programming. Besides, we've got a mag to write. We won't use the ideas, but thought it would make for an interesting discussion.

I know it's unlikely, but what about a game based on drugs? It could even be educational.

EPM: And that's a genre, is it? Actually, in the early Nineties, Health Wise brought out an Amiga game where you could take drugs, their effects being offered in an educational way and the main character reacting accordingly, eg. staggering when drunk. We forget the title, but it was a platform game, and a bloody awful one to boot.

Failing this, how about sex? I've never seen a game based on good, old-fashioned poking.

EPM: the text adventures Leather Goddess of Phobos and Soho Sex Quest, old Speccy games On the Pull and Vasectomy, 16-bit graphic adventure Fascination (about the theft of a sex hormone), forthcoming PC title Sin; need we go on?

As the first two seem unlikely, what about a game based on music? Surely this should've been done by now?

EPM: It has - many times. Beatle Quest, Frankie goes to Hollywood, Queen: the Eye, MotörHead (ageing beat-'em-up, not Gremlin's ace racer), Revolution X (based on Aerosmith), and, of course, Spice World. Look out too for the forthcoming Ed Hunter, based on Iron Maiden.

If the software companies had a bit more courage and tried something different, we could be in for some wonderful and original games.

EPM: Agree whole-heartedly with your last comment, but as you now know, your ideas weren't as original as you thought. Incidentally, Sensible Software planned a PC-only adventure game called Sex, Drugs & Rock 'n' Roll, which covered everything you've described. The project collapsed, though, when the publishers got cold feet.

Frank McKenzie, Glasgow

Fact-Finding Mission...

I have a few questions for you.
1. Will the Dual Shock joypad work with any game or is it just newer games like Colin McRae Rally and Dead or Alive? I'm seriously considering buying one, but most of my games are fairly old.

EPM: The only games that offer analogue controls or force feedback are those compatible with the Dual Shock, but the Dual Shock pad also functions as a standard controller - you can still play your old games on it, you just won't get the benefit of the analogue or force feedback functions.

2. My friend recently went on holiday to Spain and bought two Saturn games, which worked perfectly on his UK machines. Are PlayStation games also universal?



EPM: No. Look on the front of a PSX game box - under the PlayStation symbol is the word PAL. Any game labelled PAL in this way works fine on an unmodified UK machine, but if it says NTSC, forget it.

3. Can you give me information on the forthcoming Rug Rats, South Park and Driver?

EPM: What we have, we've printed.

4. What about the Tomb Raider and Resident Evil movies? Are there to be any more Mortal Kombat films?

EPM: The Tomb Raider script is almost finished, so casting should begin soon. Resident Evil's a long way off yet, though. Regarding Mortal Kombat, there's nothing in the pipeline, but who knows?

Barry Allison, Penruth, Cumbria

No More (English) Heroes...

I would like to complain about games not having any English heroes. There's only one English videogame star I can think of, and that's Lara Croft. Why? It's always Americans in the Tekken series - there's not one English character. Sort it out!
Danny Yeomans, Eastbourne

EPM: Not every Tekken character is American - Nina Williams, for example, is Irish. You're right when you say there are far too few English characters, though. Hopefully Lara's outstanding success will inspire a few more.

Something to say? Fire away! Write to Exchange, and if you win our Star Letter award, you get a free game courtesy of Gameplay. Let us know what game you'd like just in case you win. Forward your outstanding epistles (he means 'write to' - Ed):

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stuff

Two pads and a link cable: Multi-player goodies at your finger tips. Have a read, answer an easy question and this month's highest rated peripheral is as good as yours.



SOFTTOUCH PAD

BY: WILD THINGS **PRICE: £14.99**

Wild things' Softtouch Pad is a strange creature. Its bizarre design and button placement has been described in Wild Things shiny brochure as being 'Super Ergonomic'. For those of you that don't know, the word 'ergonomic' is used in this context to describe the way the pad fits the user's hands. What the brochure cunning failed to mention was whoever the pad was 'ergonomically designed' for isn't a member of the human race. Unless you can pull your fingers clean out of their sockets or you've got hands the same size as David Seaman's, you're buggered, basically, and even then you're still going to feel that you've been done. I've got to say that this is one of the worst pads I've ever come across, and I'm surprised it came from the same makers as the Kick Back Pad.

VERDICT: 3.5 OUT OF 10

I wouldn't purchase this pad even if my local shopkeeper offered me a free PlayStation with it, it's that bad. Even though a joypad by its very nature is meant to be held in your hands, the Softtouch amazingly misses the mark altogether. Simply baffling...

LINK CABLE

BY: JOYTECH EUROPE

PRICE: £6.99



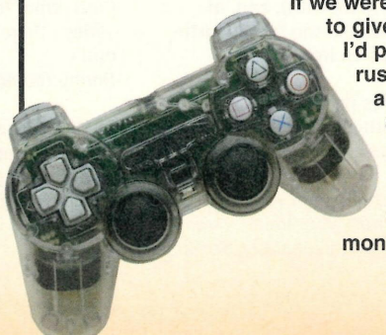
Not really something you can rate out of ten, this - either you want/need one, or you don't. Take two PlayStations, two TVs and two copies of your favourite link-compatible game. Mix until consistent then serve with a generous side order of curry and lager for best results.

DOUBLE IMPACT KICK BACK PAD

BY: WILD THINGS **PRICE: £19.99**

The second of the two pads brought to you by Wild Things this issue is a real stunner. It's dual analogue and dual vibrating. It has luxury chrome-like shoulder buttons that are hard wearing but not too stiff. The directional pad and the remaining buttons are all done out in the same chrome silver effect. It fits in your hand just nicely, and all the buttons are where they should be. It's hard-wearing with a nifty clear case and an extra-long cable for convenience. An all-round cracker this, well worth the money.

VERDICT: 9 OUT OF 10



If we weren't so determined to give one away to you, I'd probably tell you to rush out to your local and get one right away; check out the compo below for the chance to win one of your own by this time next month. Smashing.

COMPETITION

You're not mistaken; we've got 10 brilliant Kick Back Pads to give away this issue, courtesy of the smashing peeps at Wild Things. All you have to do for your chance to be one of the Wild 10 winners is to answer the dead easy question below:

Which football player was sent off for a 'kick back' incident in the third round of the '98 World Cup?

Answers on a postcard to:
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extreme PlayStation
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Entries received later than the 15th October will unfortunately fail to qualify. The editor's decision is final, unless you can beat him in an arm wrestle or come to the office and make the tea for a week. Good luck!

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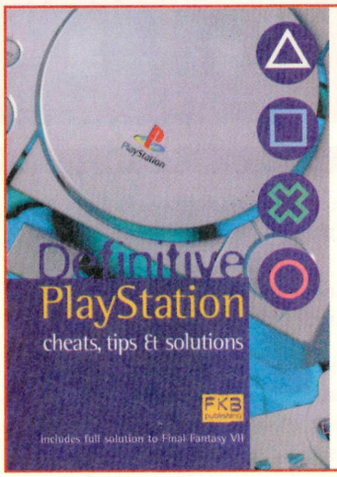
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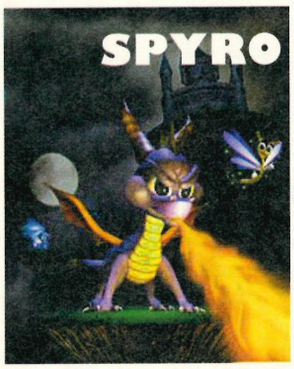
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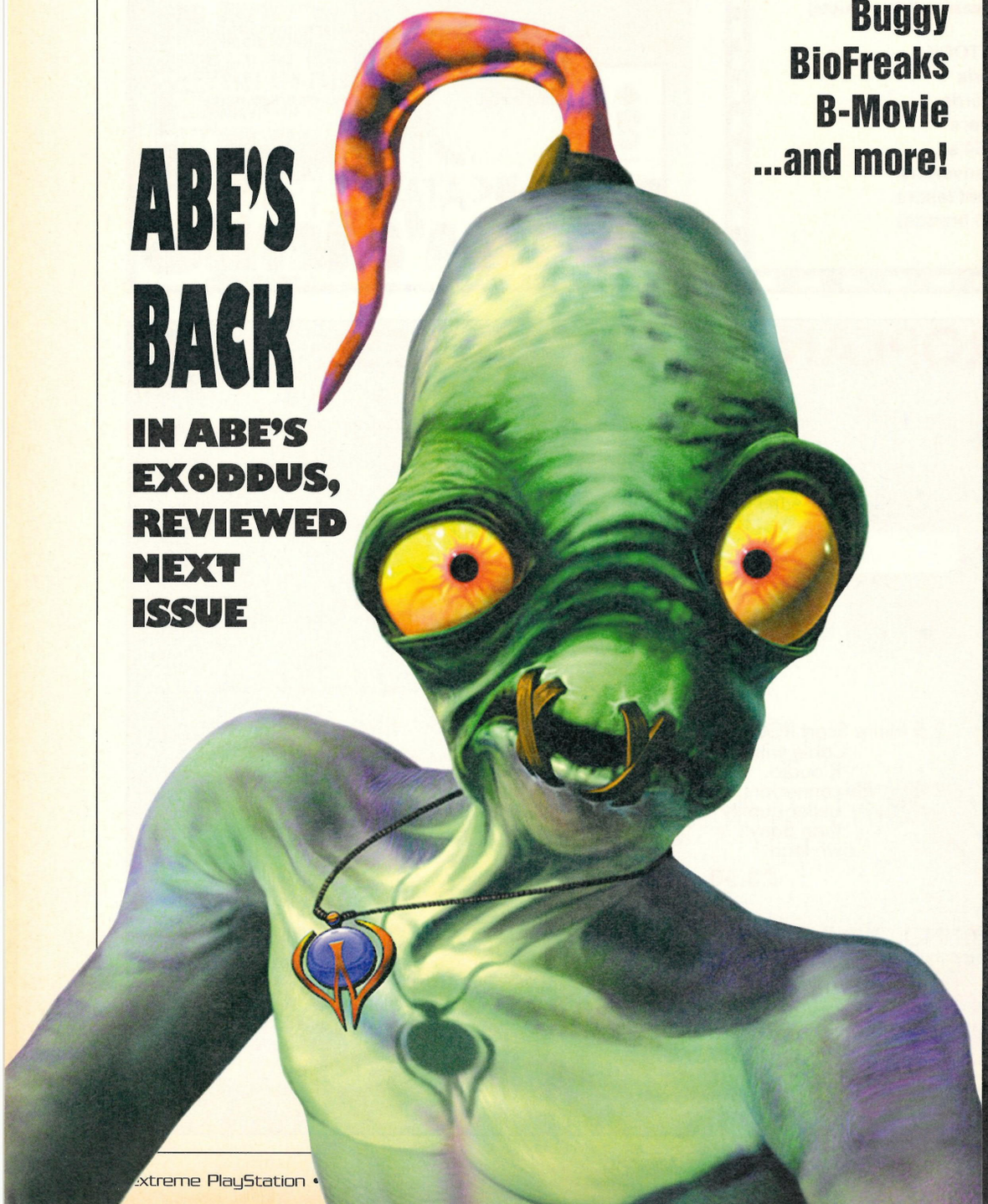
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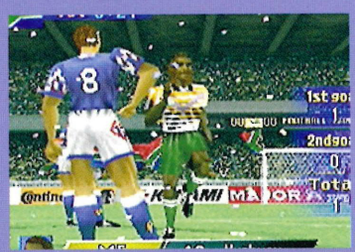
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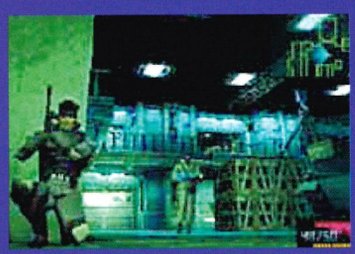
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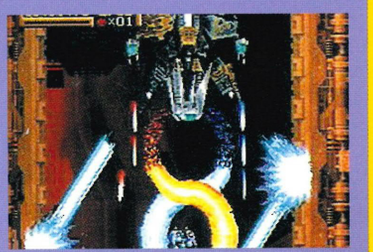
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