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ISSUE 11 November '98

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SPYRO THE DRAGON

IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF SONY'S LATEST BLOCKBUSTER

FORMULA 1 98

OFFICIALLY LICENSED GAME

Can Psygnosis' latest Grand Prix thriller keep pole position?



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V2000
ABE'S EXODDUS
BIOFREAKS
ACTUA TENNIS
BUGGY
FUTURE COP: LAPD 2100
ROGUE TRIP
HUGO
MUSIC
TEST DRIVE 4X4
BLAZE & BLADE
LEGEND
NASCAR '99
NHL '99
NFL BLITZ
ATLANTIS

PLATINUM

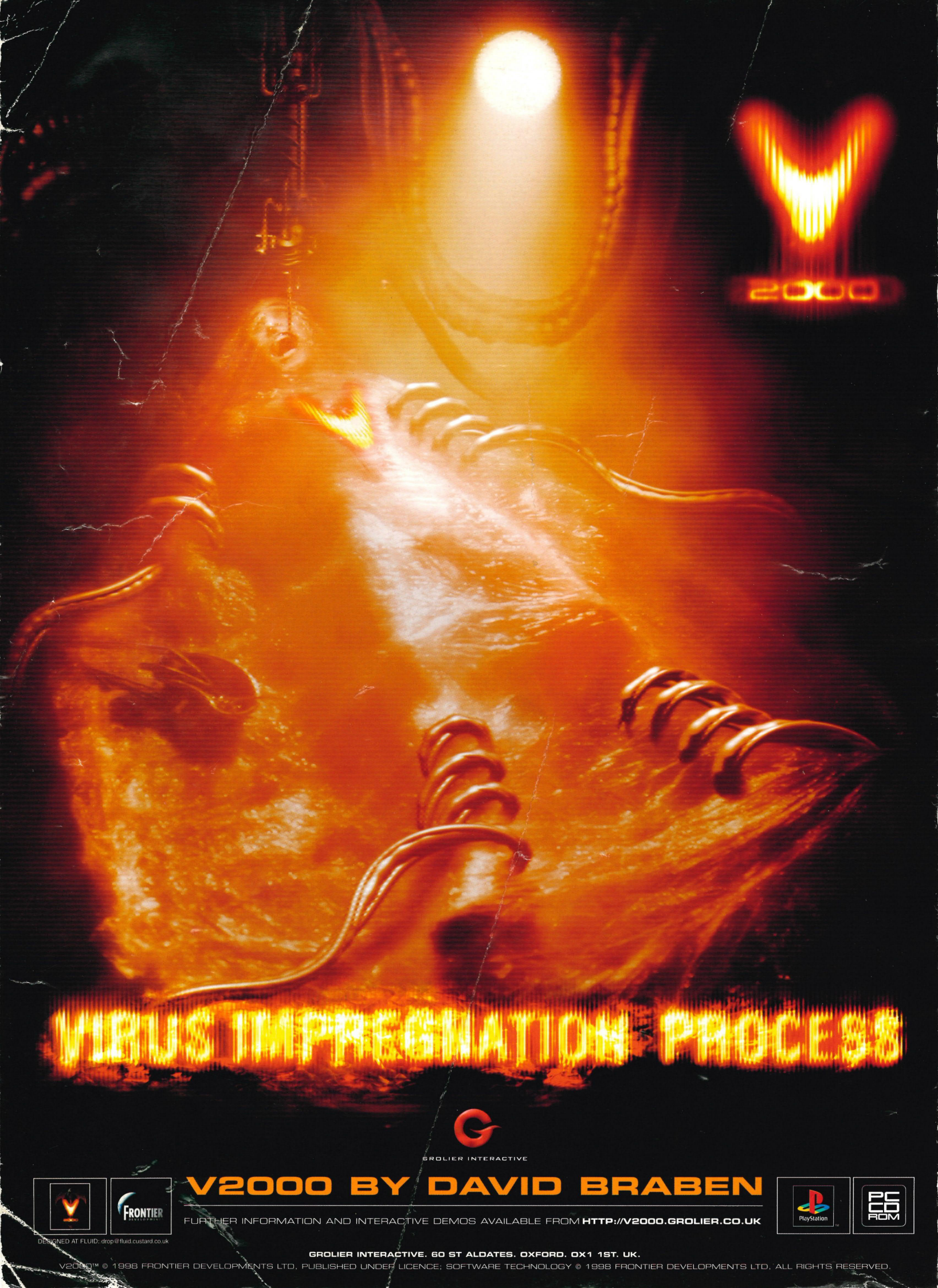
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PLAYSTATION PRO

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EDGE

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OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

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TOTAL PLAYSTATION

"....classic gameplay with PlayStation graphics."
STATION

"It's a timeless update that appeals straight away."
EXTREME PLAYSTATION



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FRONTIER DEVELOPMENTS

cont

Editorial

Another month, another mag. There are some spectacular games around at the moment, with Apocalypse, Spyro the Dragon and V2000 heading the pack, and more to come - check out our Expected section and Eidos feature, then write your Christmas lists.

With all this decent stuff around as UK releases, does anyone need to modify their PlayStations and buy expensive import titles? This month's Star Letter raises exactly this point - what do you, the readers think?

Also, what do you think of our new look mag? Better? Worse? Room for improvement? Write in and let us know; you could win our coveted Star Letter prize.

Ian Osborne
Editor

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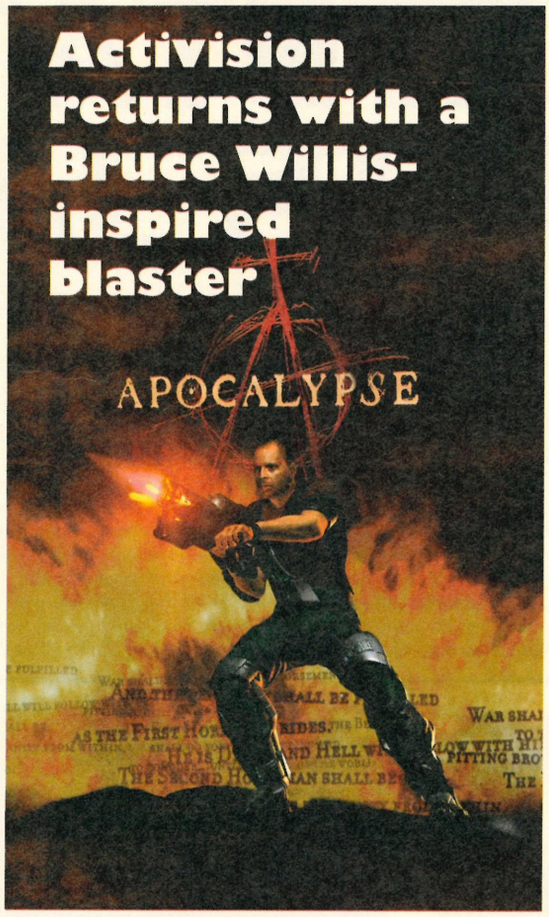
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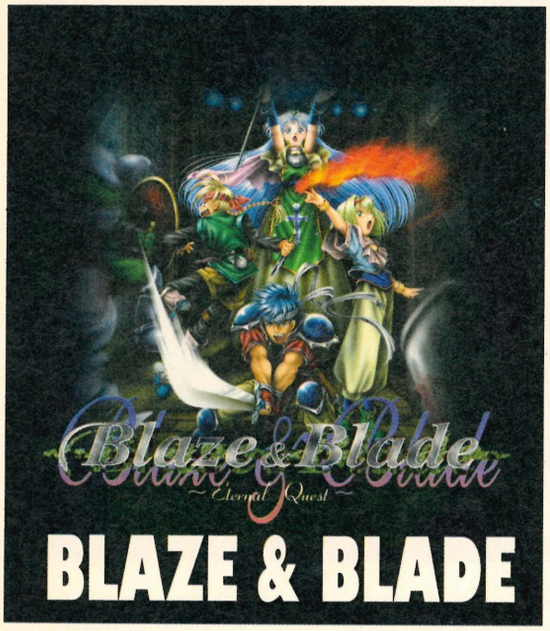


SPYRO

He's cute, he's athletic and he's got his own 3D platformer

Activision returns with a Bruce Willis-inspired blaster





BLAZE & BLADE

Is this the first ever four-player RPG?

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.

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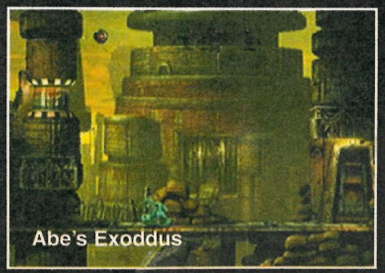
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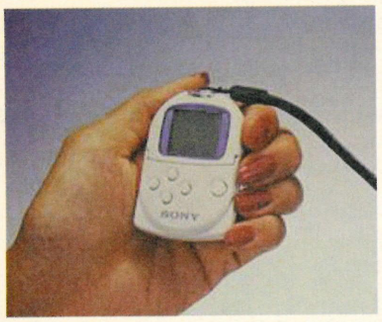
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Abe's Exoddus

signals

All the news and more...

POCKETSTATION HITS JAPAN



Is that a 'Station in your pocket?

The PocketStation, Sony's Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) which fits into the PlayStation's memory card slot, is to be launched in Japan on 23rd December. A European release is planned for some time next year.

The PocketStation, equipped with a 32-bit RISC processor, features an LCD screen, high-quality speaker and 'bi-directional infrared communication capability' - in other words, the units can transmit data to each other. It can be used as a PlayStation memory card, but also to download software from your favourite PocketStation-compatible CD, taking your favourite game or application anywhere you like. Naturally, you can't download an entire PSX game to the PocketStation and its screen is black and white, but simpler games could be incorporated into the PSX CD specifically for downloading. The PocketStation's calendar facility can even enhance a PlayStation game - the program can read what time of the year it is from the PDA and act accordingly, offering (for example) realistic rather than random weather conditions.

By using the infrared communicator, information can be exchanged between PDAs without going through a PlayStation. The scope for two-player games is enormous. Imagine a beat-'em-up where you each had your own screen, or a combat shooter where (unlike split-screen titles) you couldn't see where your opponent was.

How well the games work on the PocketStation remains to be seen, but we won't have long to wait - Sony expect 31 PocketStation-compatible titles to be out there by Spring of next year.

CORE UNVEIL LARA COLLECTION

Fashion clothing to license Lara's name and image



Core Design have teamed up with trendy surfwear and street clothes manufacturer Animal to produce the Lara © range of clothes. Featuring ultra-trendy T-shirts, fleeces, polo tops, sweatshirts, watches, bags and more, the collection is styled in fashionable black, white and grey styles and avoids garish images and logos. 'It's not just tacky advertising', says Core Design's Susie Hamilton. Prices range from £4.99 for a keyring to a £69.99 padded team jacket.

Initially the range will be sold via mail order and the Internet, though if there's enough interest, it could definitely hit the high street. The clothing, branded with a subtle Lara © logo, goes on sale on 20th November. A catalogue featuring the range will be given away with the forthcoming Tomb Raider III.

CLASSIC MOMENTS IN VIDEOGAME VIOLENCE

To celebrate SCi's porting their classic Carmageddon games to the PlayStation, and to wish them luck in their forthcoming battles with the BBFC, we've decided to salute the original Carmageddon in this month's Classic Moments in Videogames Violence slot.

The game's an ace racer with a difference. Here you get points for running down innocent pedestrians and bystanders. If you've seen the early Silvester Stallone film Death Race 2000 you've a fair idea about the plot. Trouble is, the BBFC refused to grant it an age rating certificate, effectively banning it. SCi overturned their decision on appeal, but this took 10 months.

The PlayStation Carmageddon offering, which will combine the best levels and vehicles from the first two PC games, will probably see the player running down green-blooded aliens rather than people, but here's a juicy look at the full-blooded PC gorefest in all its amoral glory...







PLAYSTATION 2 TO KILL THE DREAM

Sony aim to spoil Dreamcast launch

The arrival of Sony's much-rumoured but vehemently-denied PlayStation 2 looks set to be announced towards the end of November. Sony plan to unveil their forthcoming super-console one week before Sega's £199 Saturn-replacement the Dreamcast hits the shelves in Japan on 27th November.

The PlayStation 2 is rumoured to be based around a high-speed DVD drive and a 3D processor capable of holding 10 million polygons a second. It will not, however, be backward-compatible - in other words, you won't be able to play your PlayStation CD games on the new system.

Sony are (as always) remaining tight-lipped over the new machine, but if it's as good as the rumours suggest, Sony's spoiling tactic could seriously hamper the Dreamcast's attempts to get a foothold in the market.

ACTIVISION TO BOLDLY GO...

Star Trek games coming to the PSX

Activision have signed a ten-year license deal with Paramount Pictures, giving them the exclusive rights to produce games based on Star Trek. The deal covers all Star Trek-related TV series as well as their films, spin-offs and related material. For the duration of the agreement, all future Star Trek products are also included. Although there are no plans to release PlayStation Star Trek titles in the immediate future, these games are definitely coming.

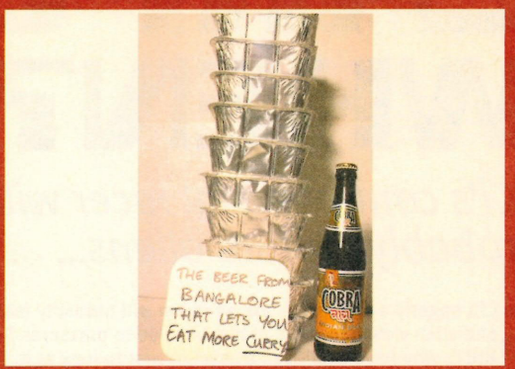
Activision's senior vice president Bob Dewer is understandably delighted. "For more than 30 years Star Trek has captivated the imagination of audiences worldwide. With this agreement we can extend the rich intergalactic history and traditions inherent in the Star Trek universe and bring many new and exciting products to the marketplace".

In the words of Jean-Luc Picard, "Make it so".



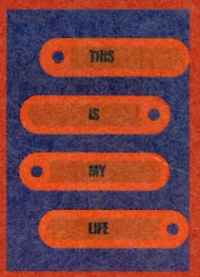


POST TASTE



The best and worst of our compo postcards

Not a great month for interesting, unusual or downright crap postcards. The best and worst cards selected from this month's competition entries came from James Mason of Hove, East Sussex, and Rupert Burton from London. Rupert wins some Small Soldiers water balloons for his rather amusing beer advert - 'the beer from Bangalore that lets you eat more curry'. A curry that let you drink more beer would be better, but what the hell - it's a mildly witty postcard.



The worst one we received this month (ignoring plain white ones, which are automatically disqualified), is from James, for which he gets a pot of V2000 slime. If my life was uniform, boring and made little sense, I wouldn't produce a postcard illustrating this. Never mind - at least it won a prize.

Remember, folks, when entering our competitions, think about your postcard. It it's very good or very bad, you could win a devastatingly bad prize.

CARPOCALYPSE WHEN?

SCi's controversial racer will probably feature aliens...

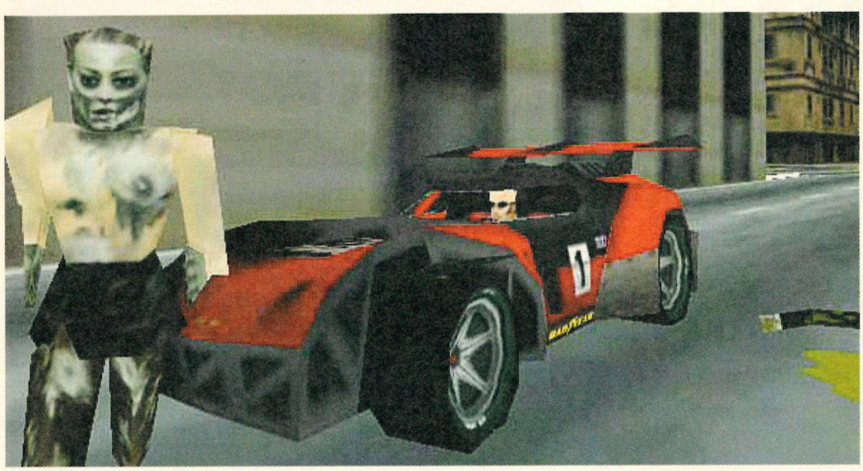


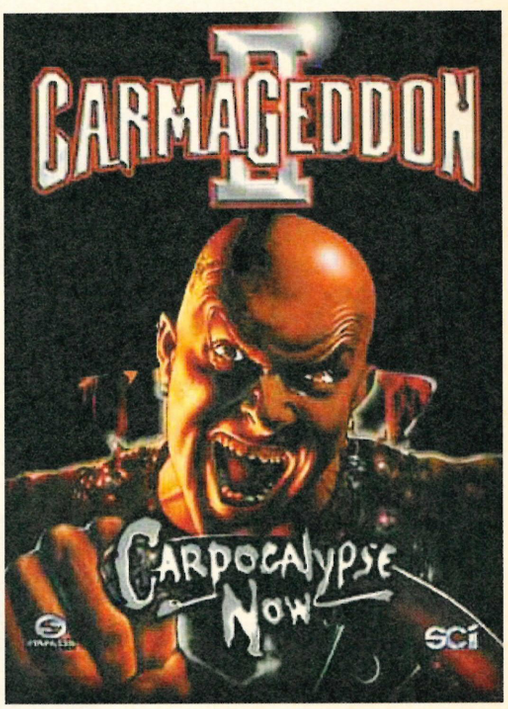
SCi's eagerly-anticipated Carmageddon will probably feature zombie and alien victims instead of humans due to pressures from the BBFC, who have employed a psychologist to look at it. The game, due for release in early April, combines the best of PC releases Carmageddon and the forthcoming Carmageddon II: Carpocalypse Now.

Last year the BBFC effectively banned the PC-only original Carmageddon when they declined to give it licence due to its violence and the fact that points were awarded for driving over innocent pedestrians. SCi appealed this decision and won, but the case took nearly 10 months. In order to avoid such delays with the PC's Carmageddon II, they intend to program two versions of the game, a less controversial offering where the player mows down green-blooded aliens and zombies rather than real people for release in November in time for the Christmas market, and a full blood-and-guts game for BBFC submission. The PlayStation game will probably use the aliens and zombies.

Despite the first Carmageddon game selling over 600,000 copies on the PC without causing the end of civilisation as we know it, the BBFC intend to employ psychologists to gauge people's reactions to the game. SCi are not impressed. "We can come back with our own psychologist", says international PR manager Sam Forrest. "We believe the PlayStation game will be the zombie version. Unfortunately we can't even include a cheat mode to play with real blood and people without BBFC approval".

The PlayStation Carpocalypse game (title to be confirmed) is pencilled in for release on 1st or 2nd of April.





GADGETS

Brings your wildest fantasies alive through the process of sleep' screams the box. Fantisleep - The Blue Dream Pill. But what does it do?



The brief description of the pill's properties offered on the back of the box promises the world. 'To experiment [sic] the most erotic dream imaginable, it offers, 'you must first unlock the door that imprisons your very wildest sexual fantasies'. According to the manufacturers (who, curiously, aren't named on the box), taking Fantisleep 10 minutes before you go to bed gives a guaranteed wet dream. 'Vivid sexual encounters will like reality [sic] as you let your own secret world of sexiness take you away to the distance [sic] delights of sexual slumber'.

But do they work? The salesman handing them out at the recent Toys for the Boys exhibition said they did, but he couldn't guarantee you would remember the dream on waking up. In the small type on the back of the box we read, 'This is a novelty item'; could they be expensive jelly sweets in a fancy box? Surely not!

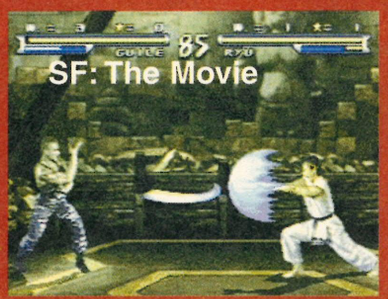
If you're still interested in buying Fantisleep, there's no hope for you at all - try the joke shop, or better still, get a life.

TRIUMPH AND AGONY

Street Fighter: The Movie / Street Fighter X Plus Alpha (Beat-'em-ups)

What do you do with a game series that's been flogged to death on the previous generation of consoles? How do you update it to take advantage of advancing technology, in this case Sony's all-singing, all-dancing box of tricks? If you're Capcom and the series in question is the all-conquering Street Fighter games, you do it twice - once with real style and panache, but not until you've already made a complete box-up on your first attempt.

Street Fighter: The Movie is a disaster. Using the increased processing power offered by the PlayStation, the team avoided the usual manga-style characters and instead digitised the fighters from the eponymous movie. And it sucked. The animation is appalling, with jerky, unconvincing attacks and fighters that walk like they're crippled. It's sluggish pace makes the game almost unplayable, the graphics would disgrace a SNES and the package as a whole is about as welcome as a randy dog in a Miss Lovely Legs competition.



Not so Street Fighter Ex Plus Alpha. The update here was to introduce polygon characters instead of the usual sprites and view the action through a 3D camera. Despite the claims on the back of the box, the game isn't true 3D - the perspective offers that previously-elusive third dimension, but the characters fight on a 2D plane - they can't walk into or out of the screen. Despite this slight limitation, the game's a real blast. The Street Fighter characters we all know and love look very comfortable in their new format, and the silky-smooth, combo-friendly action never stops.

Street Fighter Ex Plus Alpha is a superb update on the Street Fighter formula, losing none of the 16-bit marvel's tactical fighting. Street Fighter: The Movie is so technically inept only the most rudimentary moves are possible.



GAMES IN FOCUS

Interplay, the software company who gave you Lost Vikings 2, MDK, Crime Killer and Descent, is looking for games testers. Successful candidates will spend a day looking at a forthcoming Interplay game, offering feedback on its quality and explaining what they like and dislike about the title. In return for your efforts, you get a slap-up meal and a free copy of any game you worked on.

If you're aged between 14 and 26 and can get to Interplay's offices in Marlow, Buckinghamshire, you might be just what they're looking for. Call 01628 423775 and leave your name, address and telephone number. Interplay will contact you next time a playtesting opportunity arises. With hot games like Messiah, Earthworm Jim 3D and R/C Stunt Copter on the way, it could be an interesting opportunity.

THRILL KILL KILLED

Game abandoned when Electronic Arts buy developers

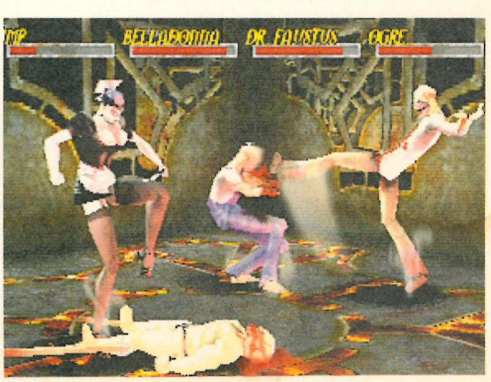


It's official - bloodthirsty beat-'em-up Thrill Kill, developed by the Irvine team, has been cancelled. Originally to be published by Virgin Interactive, the developers were taken over by Electronic Arts, who deemed the game 'unsuitable'. EA will not publish the game in its existing form or with its current name and has no plans to licence it to a third party.

Thrill Kill was always likely to court controversy. A four-player (!) beat-'em-up, the amount of blood on offer make Mortal Kombat look like a Tom & Jerry cartoon. Throughout the game violence is emphasised rather than played down, and the characters and backgrounds wouldn't look out of place in a seedy skin flick. Especially controversial was is the female fighter who simulated orgasm when she killed an opponent. Even Virgin Interactive described the game as, 'A gruesome bloodbath that pits eleven hellbound freaks, mutants and crazies against each other and lets them battle it out for a chance to return from hell to earth'.

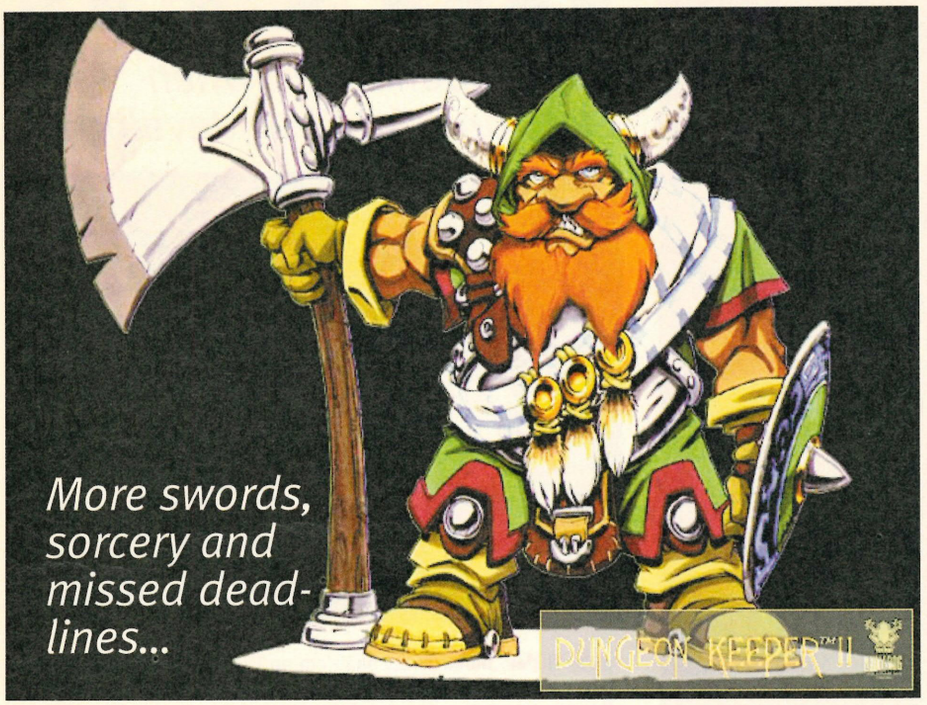


Whether Thrill Kill will be abandoned completely or rewritten with less violence and a more BBFC-friendly name remains to be seen, but one thing's for certain - the game's dead in its current form.

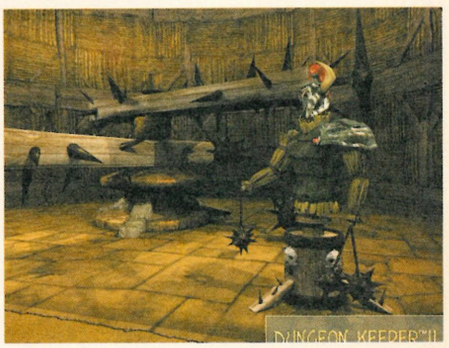


expected

Insider info on forthcoming games...









Dungeon Keeper 2

PUBLISHER
Electronic Arts

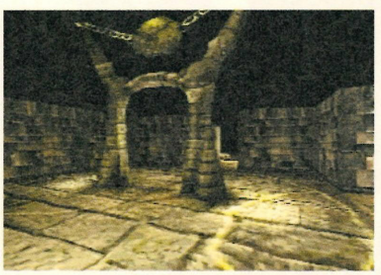
DEVELOPER
Bullfrog

RELEASED
February '99

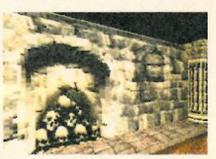
We've very little (in fact, next to nothing) to add to the Expected piece we did in Issue Nine, but we thought you'd like to see this rather impressive new artwork.

With Dungeon Keeper 2, you can construct the most loathsome horror-pit in a fully 3D environment. As (and I quote), 'overlord of a hero-quashing dungeon menagerie', you issue real-time commands to your slavering creatures or join the dungeon level action and battle from a 3D accelerated, first-person perspective.

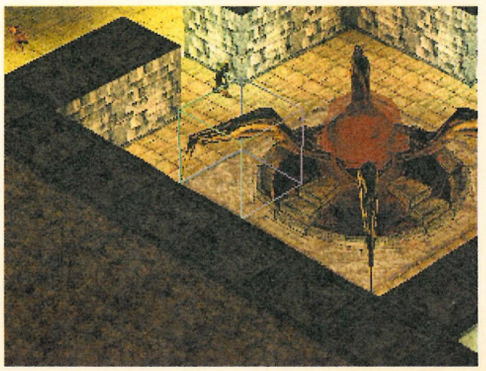
While keeping the flavour of the PC-only original, Dungeon Keeper II introduces deliciously new and wicked traps, rooms, as well as a bestiary of minions, many with devastating spells. The game was due a late '98/early '99 release, but as we said in Issue Nine, Bullfrog are notorious for missing deadlines. We've yet to see any playable code for this one; it's got little chance of meeting a late '98 release, but it could be one to look out for in the New Year.

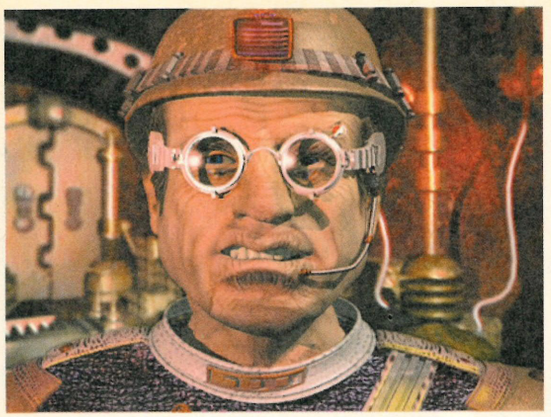












PUBLISHER Infogrames
DEVELOPER Melbourne House
RELEASED TBA

KKND

Command & Conquer with three armies?

Who owns the planet? The Evolved think they do as they nurture it, mutate on it and grow freaky killer beasts on it. But why shouldn't they own their birth world? The Survivors disagree. Being technically superior and possessing a gene pool which wasn't used as nature's khazi, they feel they should own the planet. While the humans argue among themselves, the Series 9 robots decided they should own the planet. Once mere agricultural machinery, they found world domination more interesting than sowing seeds and harvesting crops and turned on their human creators. Sounds like a theme for a console game...

KKND is a real-time strategy opus in the Command & Conquer mould. With three armies involved in the scrap, things can get very hairy indeed. A player can hold his own against the other two, or play against a buddy with the CPU taking over the third force. The game features a fast, controller-based orders system, air, land and amphibious units for each team and plentiful resources which allow you to build your armies and smash your foes - but don't forget they can do the same to you!

Populous 3

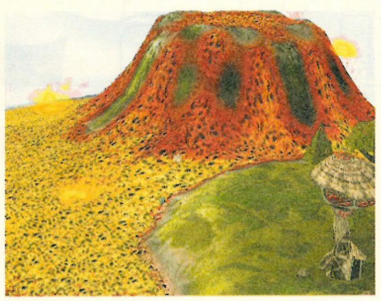
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
DEVELOPER Bullfrog
RELEASED TBA

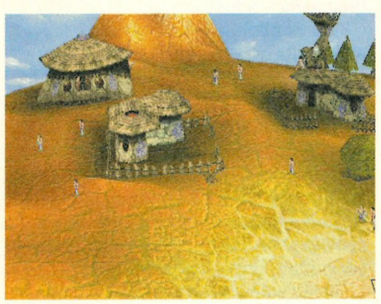
Ever wanted to play God?





Or is it Populous: The Beginning? This one's not out until the middle of next year and even the title has-n't been finalised, but we thought you'd like a sneak look.





The first Populous game was groundbreaking, effectively creating the god sim genre. You looked after a tribe of people over whom you had no direct control, but could help along by levelling ground, controlling the environment and generally making their lives as easy as possible. They in turn went forth and multiplied - the larger your tribe, the better your attacks on the rival god's people. Populous 2 continued in the same vein, but with more commands, a greater environmental variety and a wider range of calamities to throw at your foe.

Populous 3 reinvents the god sim, making the concept more personal, more strategic and more tactical. The game's been developed with the PSX in mind (the earlier titles were 16-bit), and takes advantage of its extra power with full spherical rotation and a true 3D game world.

Populous 3 is Bullfrog's first game since the departure of their founder, Peter Molyneux, so they're determined to get it just right. We'll take another look at it as more info becomes available, but don't hold your breath - Bullfrog are notorious for missing deadlines in order to get a game just right.

Shadow Gunner

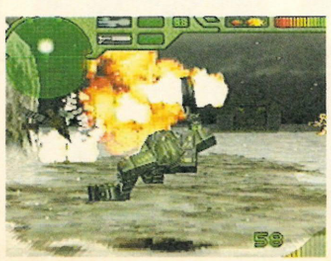
PUBLISHER UBISoft
DEVELOPER Vertex Multimedia
RELEASED November '98

Another mech-inspired robot riot...

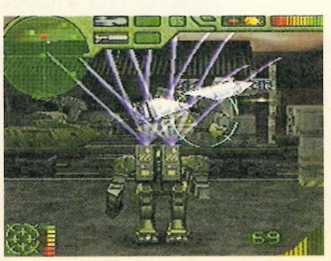
It's a little but Doom, it's a little bit Tomb Raider, it's a little bit mech, but it's completely Shadow Gunner. Your droid is viewed from behind á là Tomb Raider, but offers a mech-style head-up and targeting display. You must explore three Doom-style 3D worlds, namely Snow Canyon, the Dockyard and the City, each being divided into 15 battle arenas, with levels based around clearly-defined mission objectives.

Shadow Gunner features some heavy duty weaponry, covering all possible targeting ranges. Use your radar to identify and strike an enemy at long range, move in for a messy middle distance battle or stand toe to toe and batter it with your fists. Each of the different robots has its own unique abilities, so you must familiarise yourself with its motion and weapon capacities. You can destroy virtually anything in the game environment, but take care. There are some sizzling power-ups to be found, and you definitely don't want to trash 'em.

Shadow Gunner is shaping up pretty well. The explosions and weapon effects are impressive, though the game as a whole seems a little one-dimensional. Hopefully, by the time it's released in November, it will be an absolute scorcher.



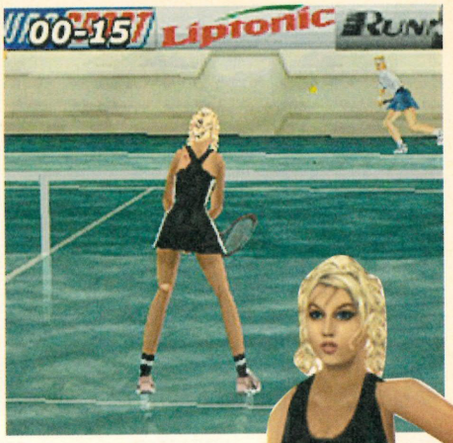












All Star Tennis '99

PUBLISHER
UBISoft

DEVELOPER
UBISoft

RELEASED
Late '98

Quite extraordinary...





Going head to head with Gremlin's Actua Tennis is this offering from Ubi Soft, due for release later this year. Aiming to be a realistic simulation rather than a sporty arcade game, All Star tennis '99 features some of the most important players in recent tennis history, including Michael Chang, Jonas Björkman, Amanda Coetzer, Richard Krajicek, Gustavo Kuerten, Conchita Martinez, Jana Novotna and Mark Philippoussis (ever noticed how top tennis players have impossible-to-spell names? No wonder Jeremy Bates never won Wimbledon).

According to Ubi Soft, the game has a sophisticated simulation engine based on real-life physics. The player, competing on eight types of court, can recreate slams, volleys and shots, placing the ball with (they claim) 'precision that has otherwise been unseen in a tennis game to date'. We presume they mean their game's a first.

One of All Star Tennis '99's key features is its arcadey special shot facility. Each player has a couple of unique special shots, won by playing well. Accumulate four merits, earned through scoring points or playing clever shots, and you can activate your first special shot. Alternatively, keep them in reserve and earn four more merits to win your second shot. These are definitely arcade-orientated, but fun nonetheless.

Until comparatively recently, tennis console games played more like Pong than Wimbledon, but towards the end of the 16-bit era some classy games were produced. There's been precious little strawberries and cream action on the PlayStation, though - only Namco's Smash Court Tennis really hits an ace. Rather than take the game head-on, Ubi Soft have gone for a simulation experience rather than an arcade outing, and might yet lift the trophy as the best tennis sim on the PSX.

BOMB TENNIS...

Another neat arcade feature in All Star Tennis '99 is the Bomb Game mode. Whenever the ball strikes the ground it leaves a Christmas pudding bomb where it bounces. These explode after a while, knocking nearby players off their feet.







SPECIAL SHOTS...

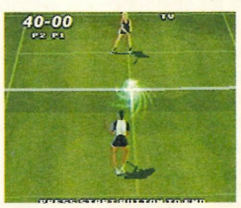
By playing well, you earn the right to play special shots. These break the laws of physics, but look great on the screen. Here we see the unpredictable Teleport Shot, where the ball disappears and bounces onto the court just about anywhere, and the immensely powerful Flame Shot.

TELEPORT SHOT

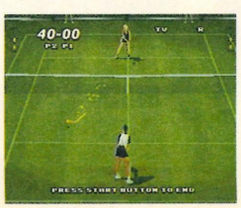
FLAME SHOT



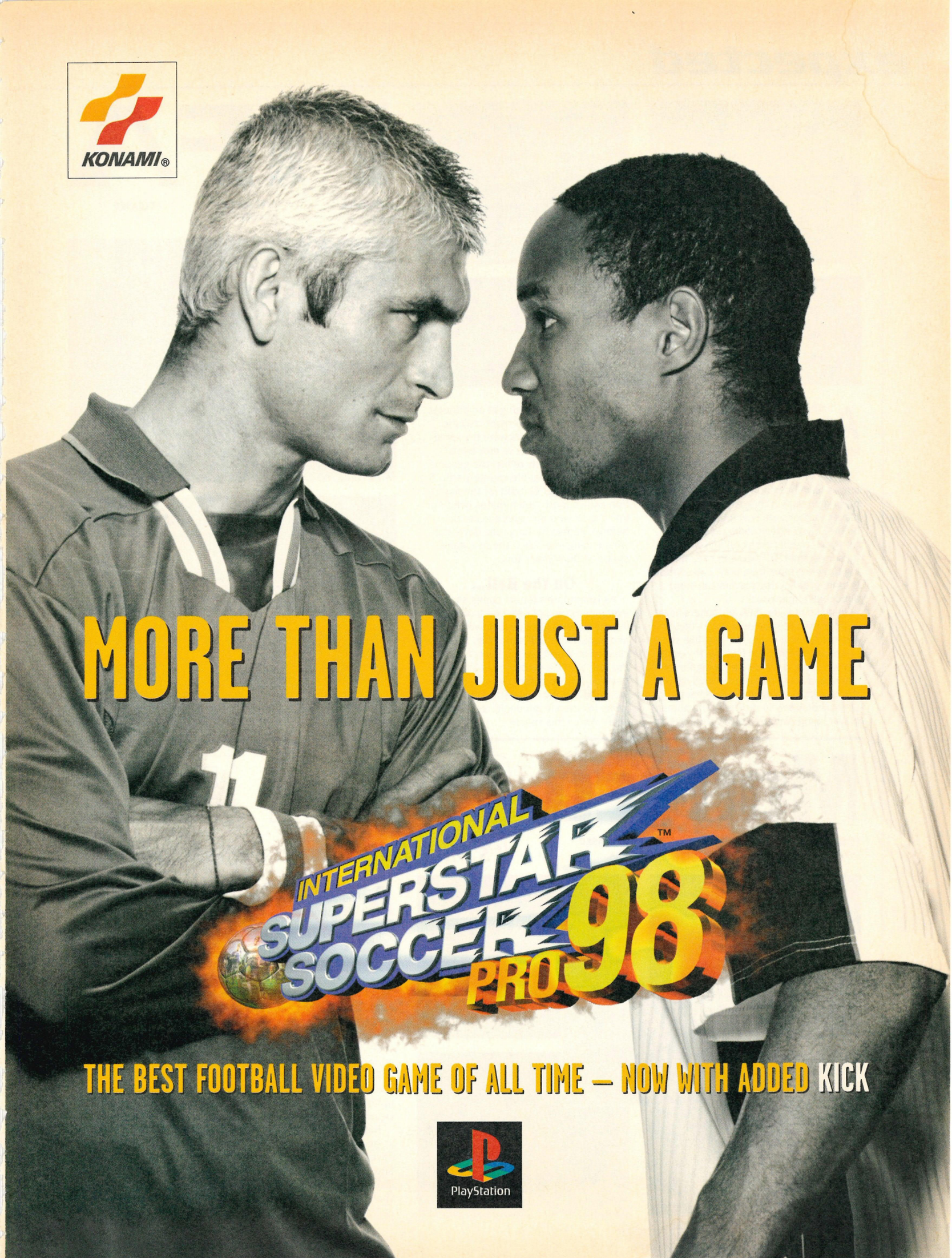










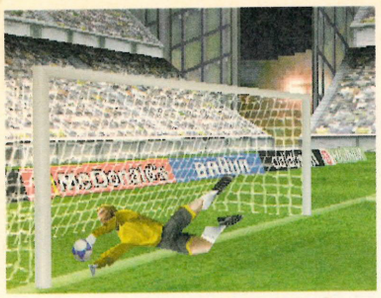

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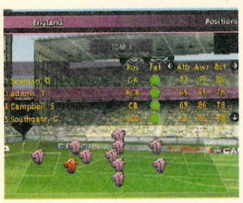
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts

DEVELOPER EA Sports

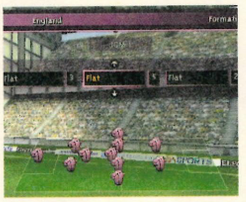
RELEASED TBA















Another disc, another update. This time it's FIFA that's being revised and resold, but without the World Cup licence.

Several changes have been made for FIFA 99. The frame rate is faster, and moves have been added. Perhaps the biggest change in this respect is that a player's actions are now interruptable - before, if you attempted a 180 degree turn you couldn't break off mid-move and do something else. Now you can, allowing for much more fluid play. Ball control is more precise, and players can stop almost instantaneously.

Just like real life, FIFA footballers have to accelerate to maximum pace - they're not just running or not running, like some lesser sports sims. For FIFA 99, the acceleration curve is steeper, allowing for more speed and a much quicker overall pace to the game. Goalkeepers' AI now have almost complete control, with the human player being limited to picking the ball up (when legal) and charging at an attacker. Player heights are now more realistic. While before all players were the same height on-screen, they've now been adjusted to properly reflect the genuine heights of their real-life counterparts. The CPU offers better AI, both for the opposition and your own team-mates (who run into the 18-yard box a lot quicker than before). Perfect for long runs down the wing ending in a cross. The new game supports Dual Shock too.

On the Ball...

As last month's letters pages show, not everyone is fond of EA's policy of updating their sports sims almost every year, and frankly, the FIFA series has been outclassed by World League Soccer and ISS Pro '98, but FIFA 99 could put the game back on the top of the pile. Whether it's worth buying if you already own a FIFA game (or even if you don't) remains to be seen. Watch this space!

Monaco Grand Prix

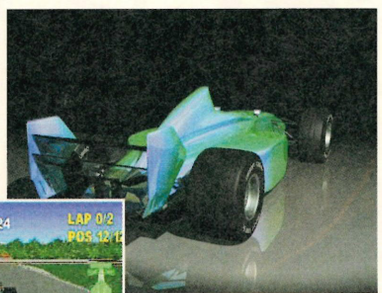
PUBLISHER UBISoft

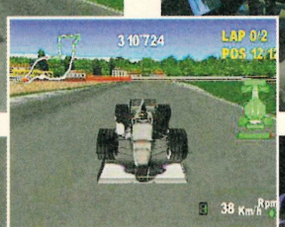
DEVELOPER UBISoft

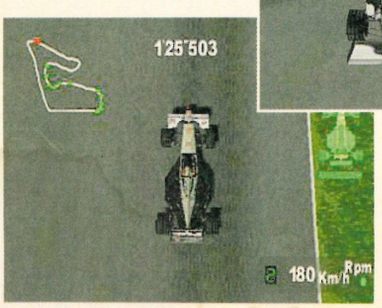
RELEASED TBA

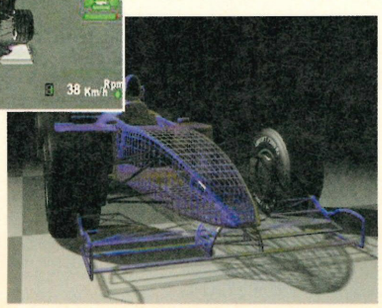
It's Mika Hakkinen in the lead again...











According to the press release, Monaco Grand Prix Racing Simulation is only a 'working title'. We hope they change it - it's about as dynamic and cutting-edge as Ricardo Rossett in his Tyrrell.

Judging by first appearances, though, the game could prove anything but a back-marker. The game holds 16 tracks, 11 racing teams and 22 drivers - just like the real F1 season. You can adjust your car with the technical set-up option, and even create new tracks with the course editor. Up to four people can play, but be careful not to bump into each other or your computer-controlled opponents - the game also offers differing levels of car damage.

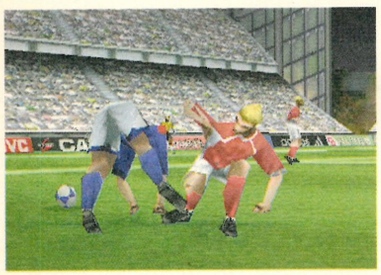
True to life regulations are included, including flags and marshals, and the car's telemetry (electronic read-outs of the car's performance) can be analysed after each race.

There are two new modes available, the Career Mode where you start as a young driver in a small team and work your way up to the top. Also, the Scenario Mode allows you to relive past victories or mistakes but to re-run a moment of your choice.

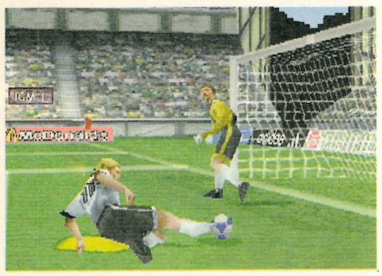
Naturally, the question on everyone's minds is, 'is the game as good as Psygnosis' Formula 1?'. Truth is, we don't know. We haven't seen any playable code of Monaco Grand Prix Racing Simulation. Without the licences, Ubi Soft's offering is bound to lack a certain degree of realism, but one look at the screenshots shows it offers a greater variety of perspectives, including bird's and driver's eye views.

'99

He shoots, and he scores...

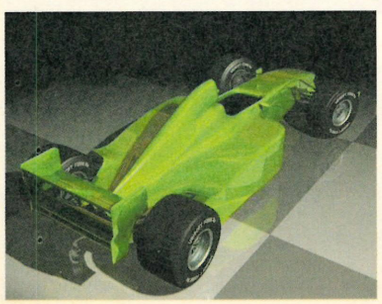






Racing Simulation





CoolBoarders 3





PUBLISHER
Sony CEE

DEVELOPER
Idol Minds / SISA

RELASED
December '98

Keep your cool...

The first two CoolBoarders games were a phenomenal success, which is no mean feat considering they're based around a minority Winter sport. It's therefore no surprise when Sony come back with a third game based on their snowboarding series.

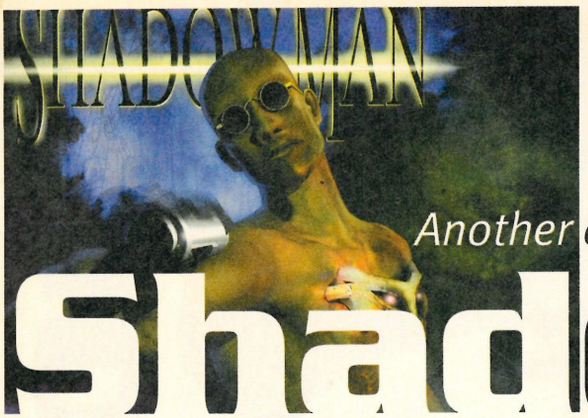
Resisting the temptation to simply tweak the second CoolBoarders game, CoolBoarders 3 has been completely rewritten, with a totally new game engine. The tracks are completely new too, with over 36 courses on offer, all light-sourced and gourand shaded. There are six events per course, including Downhill, Boarder Cross, Slalom, Half Pipe, Big Air and Slope Style.

Needless to say, the classy stunts and moves are still there. Compete with your opponents by being better than them, or if that fails, you can just punch them off the course. You can play with a buddy in some split-screen action, or (hurrah!) using a link cable. There are new gameplay modes on offer, and secret tracks earned as rewards for snowsurfing excellence.



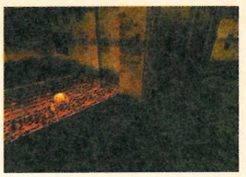


With 20 riders, two stance styles and 10 authentic snowboards, there's no lack of variety here. Expect a full review before the game hits the shelves in December.









Another comic-book character comes to the PSX...

ShadowMan

PUBLISHER
Acclaim Entertainment

DEVELOPER
Iguana Studios

RELEASED
May '99

ShadowMan is a 3D action adventure (isn't everything these days?), starring Mike LeRoi, the eponymous ShadowMan and star of Acclaim Comics' character of the same name. Straddling the divide between the Liveside and Deadside, ShadowMan must thwart the Apocalypse, which seems a popular theme in videogames these days (Ed Hunter, Activision's Apocalypse).

For once the game won't be cursed with ugly pop-up or lazy fogging. Acclaim boast it contains cutting-edge proprietary technology allowing the environments to stretch to all horizons, despite being incredibly detailed. The game involves tracking down serial killers with an arsenal of heavy weapons and voodoo magic. Despite being a 3D action adventure, Acclaim claim it offers a unique setting, mysterious, atmospheric gameplay and adult themes. It they succeed in putting a new spin on a well worn genre, it could be a real hit.









PUBLISHER
Telstar Electronic Studios

DEVELOPER
Creative Reality

RELEASED
Autumn '99

So there is life on Mars...

Unification: Martian Gothic

1984: Martian meteorite labelled ALH 84001, discovered in Antarctica

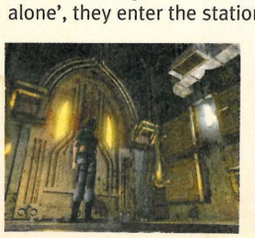
1996: NASA announces the existence of alien microfossils in meteorite

2009: First manned landing on Mars; establishment of Vita base.

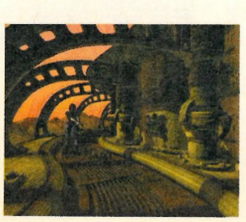
It's now 2019, and Mars space station Vita has a big problem. Communication with Earth has been lost, and the final radio message warned members of future manned rescue missions to 'stay alone, stay alive'. What could have happened? You play three scientists sent to the station to investigate. In order to 'stay alone', they enter the station independently but work as a team.

Telstar describe the game as 'a seamless combination of action and adventure', avoiding the trap of having the gameplay lurch uncomfortably between the two. You soon discover alien bacteria has infected the crew, but they're not as dead as they appear. The infection soon gets to you, too, causing each crew member to attack his colleagues on sight. Work together, stay apart.

Suspense is the name of the game here - we certainly look forward to seeing the movie-like visuals claimed by Telstar. More details will be revealed in the New Year, so stay tuned.







Actua





Toys with minds of their own?

Re-Volt

PUBLISHER Acclaim Entertainment

DEVELOPER Acclaim Entertainment

RELEASED Summer '99

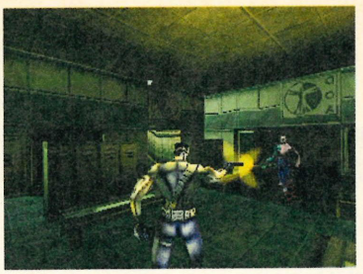


Billed as the ultimate for boy racers, Re-Volt sees a bizarre production line fault in a toy factory cause a batch of remote controlled cars develop minds of their own. Having escaped from toy store shelves, they live (if toy cars with amusingly-unfeasible minds can 'live') for one reason only - to race, any damned where they choose.

Needless to say, Re-Volt is a driving game. The race tracks are situated in a series of interesting and unusual environments. So far confirmed are supermarkets, fairgrounds and even a museum. Should you get bored with the standard tracks, you can always design your own on the track editor.



You certainly can't fault Re-Volt for being colourful, but its tongue -in-cheek style puts it in direct competition with Funcom's forthcoming SDR and the incredible Micro Machines series. Can Re-Volt cut it? Only time will tell.





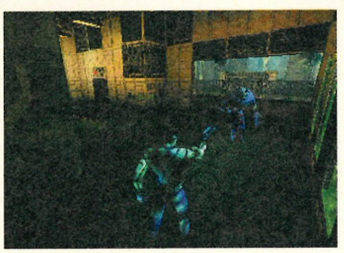
Covert operations, hi-tech zombies...

Bloodshot

PUBLISHER Acclaim Entertainment

DEVELOPER Iguana Studios

RELEASED Summer '99











Another game 'licensed' from one of Acclaim's own comics, Bloodshot sees a dead man resurrected by an amoral government agency. By operating on his cadaver and inserting molecular machines known as Nanites, the creature is given super-human strength and incredible resilience. He's controlled by his brutal creators via a direct brain-to-computer link. His role in 'life' is to carry out covert operations, usually involving assassination.

You've more than 20 gruesome missions in this 3D third-person action shooter. Brought to life by the same studio that's responsible for ShadowMan (hence the similarities), Bloodshot boasts the same technology and cutting-edge military weapons. Whether it can hold its own in this very over-subscribed genre remains to be seen, but the PSX faithful's enthusiasm for 3D action adventures hardly seems on the wane. Things are looking good...

Soccer 3

It's a game of two halves (again)...

PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive

DEVELOPER Gremlin Interactive

RELEASED Christmas '98



We're all familiar with the Actua Football series (if you're not, check out last issue's football feature), so let's get on and look at the features enjoyed by Actua Soccer 3.

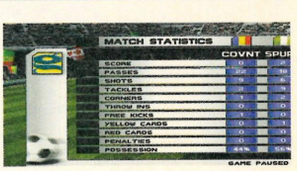
Over 450 teams featuring over 10,000 players compete. The action takes place in 30 of the most famous stadiums of the world, including Old Trafford (booo, hisss), Nou Camp, Wembley and Bayern Munich's Olympic Stadium. The stadiums are made of over 1000 polygons and are pre-lit, fully gouraund shaded and textured.

According to Gremlin, the sloppy defending seen in the World Cup this year will be absent in Actua Soccer 3. They player's AI has been improved, to give them a much better awareness of what's going on around them. Their positional sense has also improved, making for great, free-flowing football when you've mastered the controls (which have also been revamped).

There are many other features and improvements in Actua Soccer 3, and it needs them. With the World Cup over, Konami's ISS Pro 98 riding high and Sensible Soccer 98/99 on the way, it's up against some serious Premier League opposition.







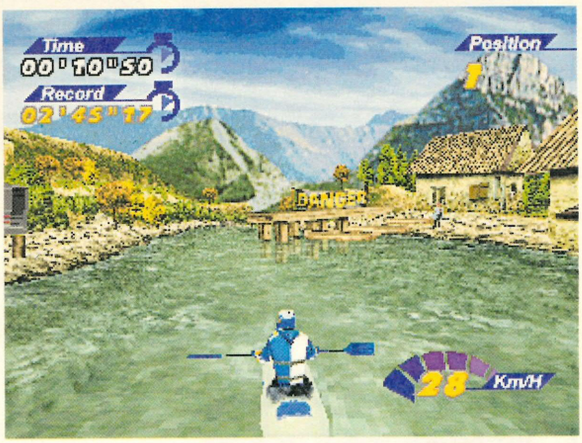


Rushdown

PUBLISHER
Infogrames

DEVELOPER
Canal+ Multimedia

RELEASED
Winter '98



By bike, by board, by kayak...

We've had CoolBoarders, Chill and numerous other snowboarding games (real or futuristic), we've had Courier Crisis for cycling fans, though there's never (to our knowledge) been a PSX kayak game. Rushdown offers all three.

Racing against the clock, you face five separate rallies set in each of the five continents. Each rally consists of three races against the clock in three different downhill sports - snowboarding, kayaking and mountain biking. Terminally trendy, or what? Wherever you go you're up against the local champion, so you need to be really fast to take the crown. When you've completed the real-world courses, you're offered a fantasy world event where (according to Infogrames), you 'can face the challenges of the realistic settings'. Hmm... when we work out what they mean, we'll let you know.

The game boasts arcade action in a real-time 3D environment. There are two playing modes, Arcade (for a quick blast) and Championship, and in each event you're offered a choice of kit, be it a board, bike or kayak. You also get a choice of character, though they're all scruffbags in baseball caps and ski gear, desperately trying to look cool. Sound is provided by six rock, fusion and jungle bands from France.

Rushdown hits the shelves in the Winter, so hopefully we'll get to review it next issue.

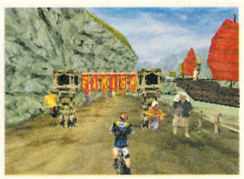














Player Manager 98-99

Tell him he's dropped...

PUBLISHER
Anco

DEVELOPER
Anco

RELEASED
November '98

This one's come a long way since it was previewed back in Issue Eight. It's now almost ready, and Anco seem to have developed it with the footie fan in mind. 'Who wants to spend their time dealing in shares or putting up the price of hot-dogs?'. Here it's football management all the way, with no irritating, pointless crap to get in the way of the action.



Player Manager 98-99 isn't easy. There's no beginner mode which gives you lots of cash - you have to build up funds by polishing your team, winning matches and buying and selling players. Are you up to it?

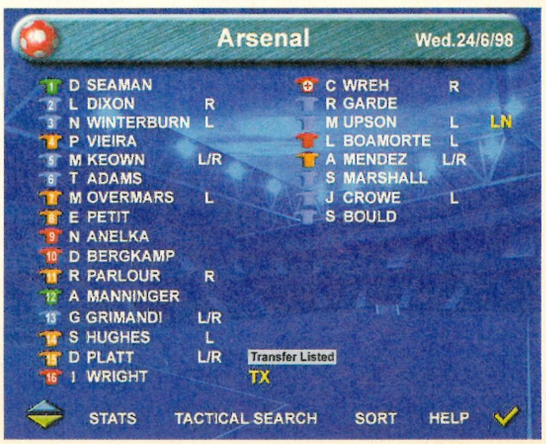
On the Menu...

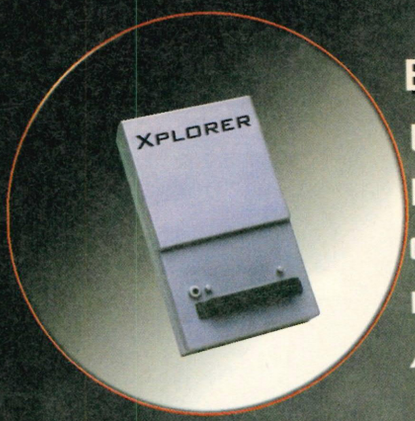
In a PlayStation first, the options are offered via PC-style pull-down menus. These are incredibly easy to use, offering straightforward sub-menus instead of lots of icon clicking. There are 7,000 players in the player's rosters, which will be fully up to date at the time the game's released. Powerful search engines can be used to look for players both inside and outside your squad who fit requirements demanded by yourself, eg. a midfielder who likes to fall back into defence or a defender who makes penetrating runs into the opponent's half.

Depth is emphasised throughout the game. Buy a foreigner, for example, and will he fit into the team, settle in a new country and pick up the language? To achieve consistency, there's no quick match option to take you from kick-off to the final whistle in seconds. This, according to Anco, uses a method of calculation which makes a mockery of the subtleties of the game. Anco's system uses all available stats.

With any luck, Player Manager 98-99 will be reviewed next issue. We're looking forward - it looks set to offer a real challenge to those who like their management sims tough and realistic.







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EIDOS INTERACTIVE

We take a look at Eidos' forthcoming Christmas releases...

Formed as a 'proprietary technology company (whatever that is) in the early 90s, Eidos have undergone a dramatic transformation which today sees them as one of the PlayStation's leading publishers. After a series of acquisitions, including respected software companies US Gold, Domark and most recently Crystal Dynamics and several top development teams, Eidos now enjoy a quality release schedule almost unrivalled on the PSX. They've some great games on the way for Christmas and early next year, so let's take a look...

Michael Owen's World League Soccer '99

DEVELOPER Silicon Dreams **RELEASED** Christmas '98

MICHAEL OWEN'S WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER '99 IS...

...an update on the respected World League Soccer '98, now with a big star licence. Needless to say, it's a football game.





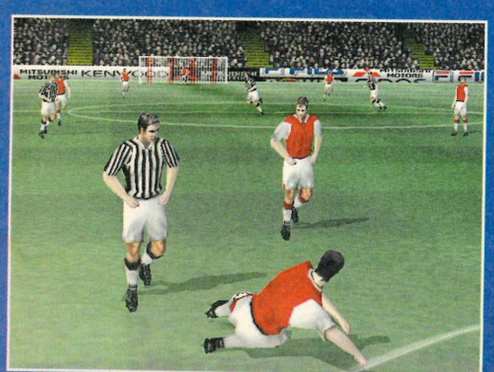


By now, most PlayStation gamers are familiar with the first World League Soccer game. Eidos promise the new version will feature 'an array of graphical improvements and gameplay enhancements' and retain the respected intuitive control method of its predecessor, and augment it with additional moves, speed optimisation and higher visual resolution.

The new WLS game features improved texture mapping and 'skinned' players, where their polygons are covered with a virtual skin, preventing the polygon break-up and improves realism. The players are once more built on virtual skeletons for realistic animation, but WLS '99 offers more 'bones'. Thus the players move even more realistically, especially as new compression techniques mean they boast more frames of animation.

Cosmetics aren't neglected, with a new front end and improved victory and loss sequences. New stadiums with improved crowds and floodlighting are also planned. Needless to say, player and team statistics will be updated.

World League Soccer '98 is a superb game and the improvements mean the update looks like being considerably better, but can Michael Owen's World League Soccer '99 hold its own against the plethora of current and forthcoming soccer sims? Only time will tell.

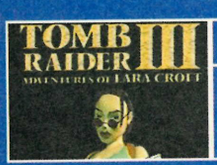






Tomb Raider III

DEVELOPER Core Design **RELEASED** Christmas '98



TOMB RAIDER III IS...

...The latest instalment of the adventures of Lara Croft. The game's a 3D action adventure, with levels to explore, enemies to shoot and platforms to jump.

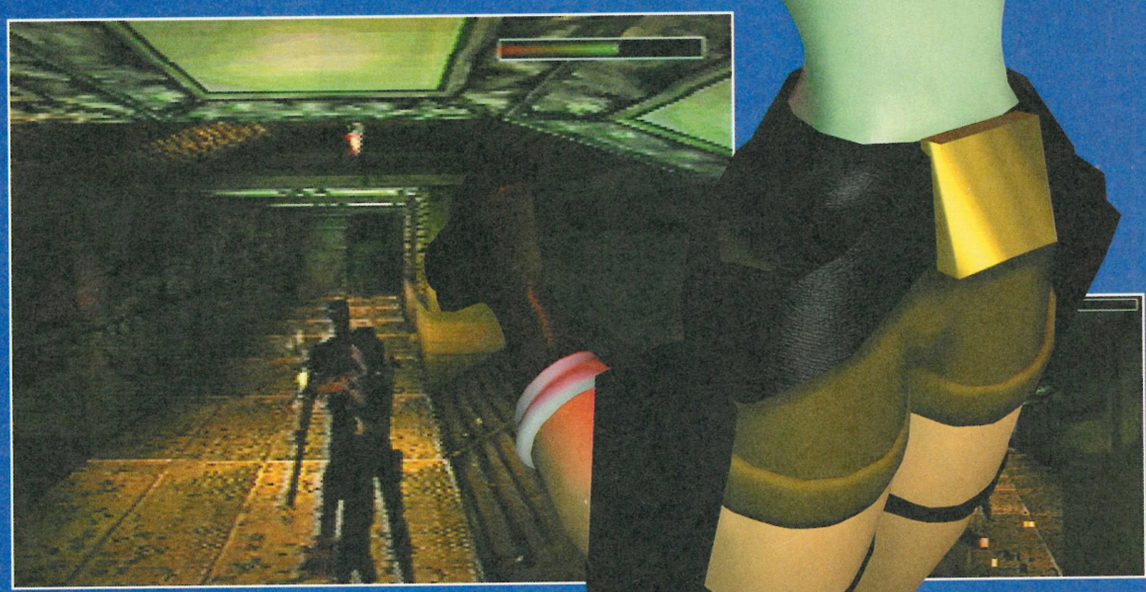
This is the big one. We covered the changes between TR2 and the latest game in last issue's four-page Tomb Raider spectacular, but since then we've seen the first playable demo of Lara's sure-to-be blockbuster. So how does it measure up?

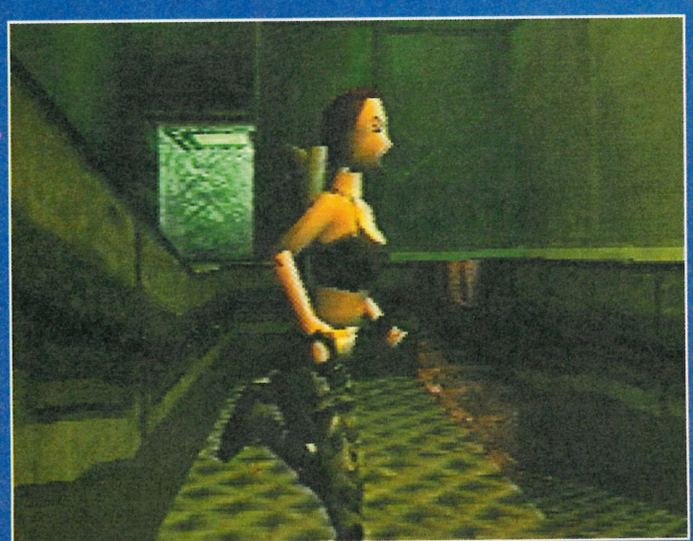
The control system works as well as ever, but now there are a few more moves to learn. Lara can dash for a few seconds, enabling her to run out of trouble or beat a timed puzzle, and to get through closing doors or other such obstacles, you can dive at the end of a dash. That bullet with her name on it is heading for her head, you can duck to avoid it. You can also crawl, allowing access to low tunnels or maybe wriggle under alarm triggers.

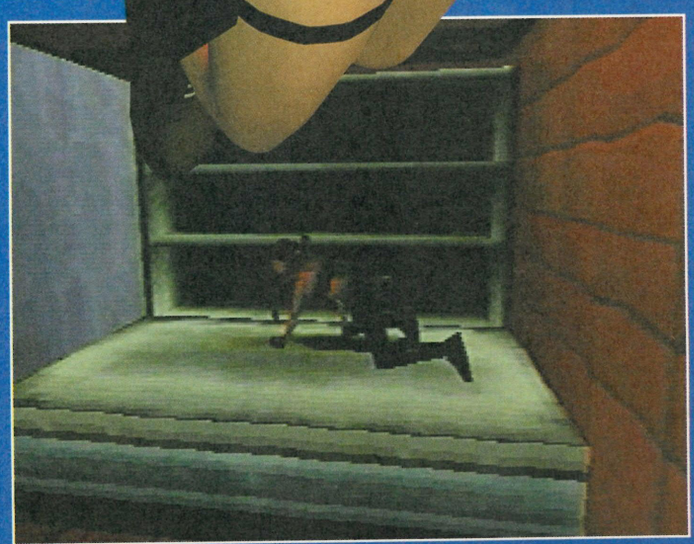
As always, you can jump up and grab an overhead handhold, but now you can also swing hand over hand monkey-style. You can swing on ropes too.

If Lara attempts to open a locked door, she now tries the handle instead of just being told 'No', a small cosmetic enhancement that definitely preserves the atmosphere and sense of being there. To make swimming easier, you can strafe while under water, and you'll probably need to - Lara's now affected by underwater currents while swimming. There are plenty of cosmetic and technological enhancements too, which were covered in last month's preview.

At the end of the day, Tomb Raider III is still Tomb Raider. If you didn't like the first two games, you won't like this one, but let's face it - is there anyone who doesn't like Tomb Raider? The overwhelming majority of PSX gamers will be delighted to hear this is more of the same, but with added spit and polish.







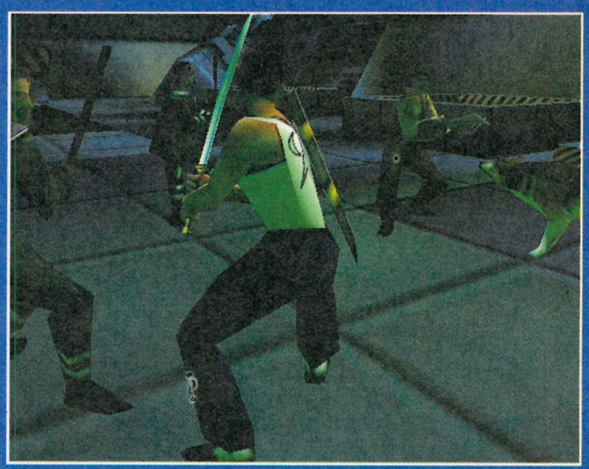
Saboteur

DEVELOPER Tigon **RELEASED** Second Quarter '99



SABOTEUR IS...

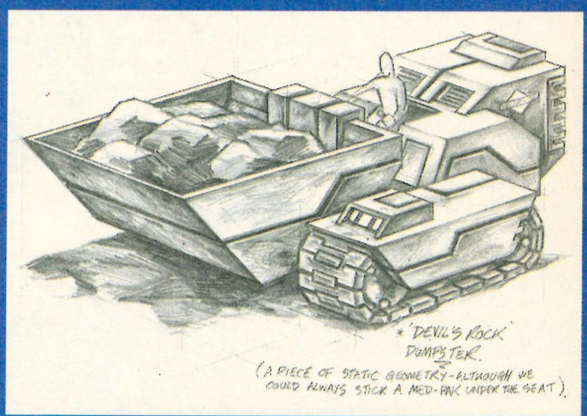
...A third person action adventure in the Tomb Raider mode, with some serious Soul Blade combat thrown in for good measure.

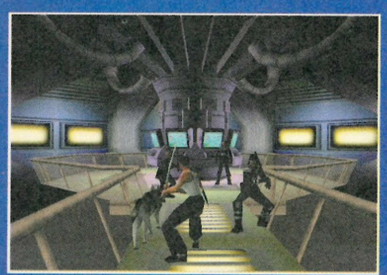


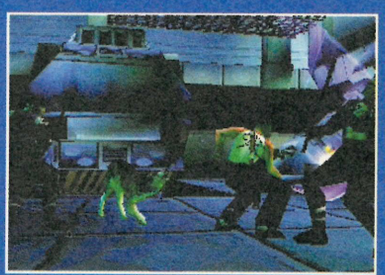
Action adventures are proving extremely popular of late. As well as the established Tomb Raider series, Duke Nukem has taken a leaf out of Lara's save-game passport and Activision's Tenchu and the forthcoming Metal Gear Solid add an element of stealth to the action, putting a whole new perspective on the genre. Eidos claim Saboteur will also add new elements to the third-person perspective game, once again taking the style a stage further.

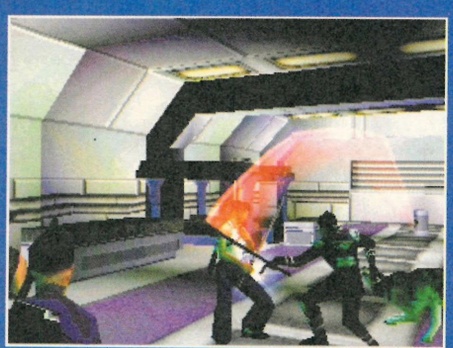
The storyline is progressive, unfolding as you go, and centres around a ninja main character. To aid him in his quests he has a trusty dog with him - the mutt is largely computer-controlled, but we hope he won't piddle up your leg if you leave the joypad alone. The animation is motion-captured, with the characters and objects single-skinned, avoiding ugly loose polygons. The PlayStation engine has been fully optimised for extra speed.

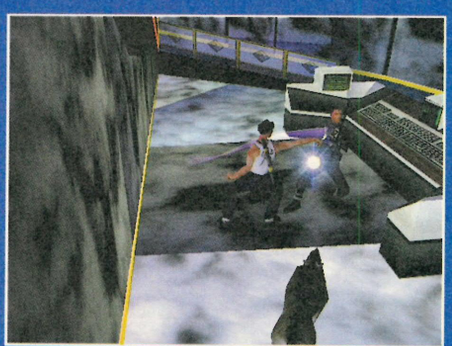
Tenchu and Parasite Eve show the Tomb Raider-style action game can be successfully married to the beat-'em-up, though whether Saboteur can match these top titles remains to be seen. Its release is a long way off, so don't expect this question to be answered too soon.

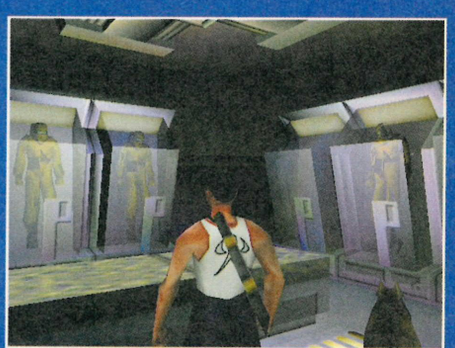


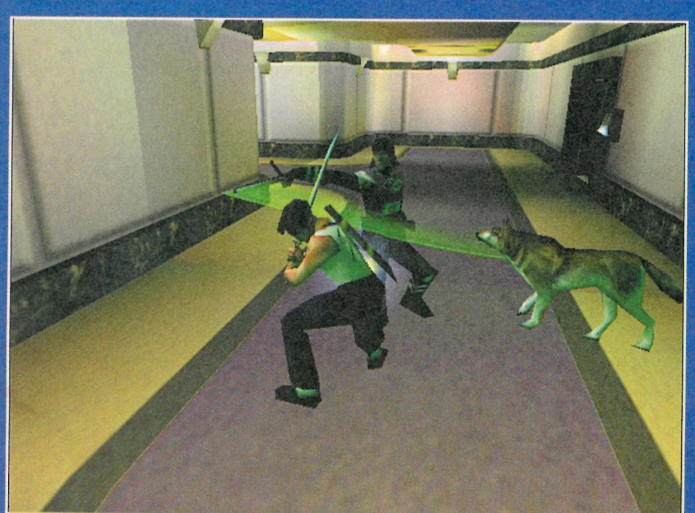


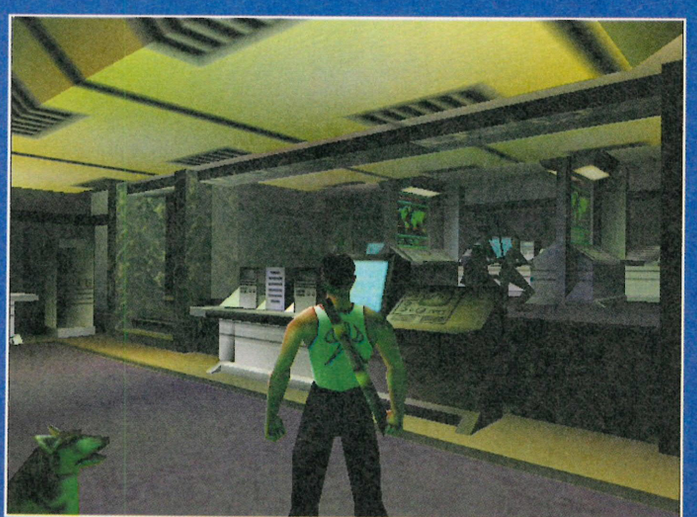












Urban Chaos

DEVELOPER Mucky Foot **RELEASED** Second Quarter '99



URBAN CHAOS IS...

...Largely under wraps, but Eidos claim 'a mixture of game styles', demanding stealth, agility and martial arts skills.



Eidos are keeping this one close to their corporate chests, especially concerning the plot, but it's a story of a 'turbulent cityscape' at the end of the millennium, the coming of Armageddon and other such Earth-shattering gaming elements. Its main selling point seems to be a totally interactive environment in which the player can do whatever he chooses. You can explore rooftops, buildings, streets and sewers as you, erm; well, we don't actually know what you have to do yet, but as soon as Eidos release this info, we'll let you know.

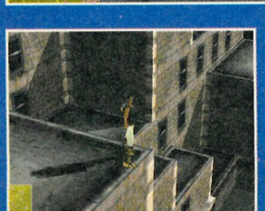
Like most of Eidos' current schedule, the game boasts some impressive technology. The shadows hug walls and floors in a realistic manner. Great, but what do they mean by, '3D volumetric fog'? Or, 'atomic matter simulation'? Let's just nod knowingly and say it sounds impressive...

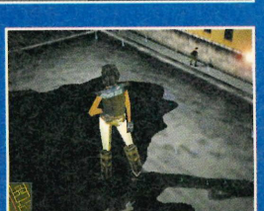
As well as freedom to roam the city, Urban Chaos also boasts freedom of objectives. You write the plot as you go, and decide how the storyline develops. As martial arts skills are demanded you can be sure there's plenty of beat-'em-up action, but look out for some great vehicles to drive too. Atmosphere is enhanced by day and night effects as well as weather conditions.

It's difficult to predict how this one will go when we've only seen these screenshots and details are being kept deliberately vague, but Eidos are excited - perhaps we should be too.









Omikron: The Nomad Soul

DEVELOPER Quantic Dream **RELEASED** Early '99



OMIKRON: THE NOMAD SOUL IS...

A futuristic 3D arcade adventure with real-time action animation and motion capture for combat and dialogue.



The bad guy's out to conquer the universe again. The bad guy in this case is Astaroth, a thousand-year-old demon prince, who collects souls in the domed city of Omikron. Your task is to make the tea and sandwiches for the demon hordes while they work; just kidding, you're out to stop him.



The motion capture in Omikron: The Nomad Soul is especially impressive. Not only does it cover characters running, jumping, ducking, diving and generally beating the squit out of each other, but also the facial features in close-up shots of people who are speaking. Again, Eidos claim complete freedom of movement within a detailed, hi-res cityscape with passers-by and vehicles adding to the feeling of being in a living, breathing city not just a gaming environment. Best of all is the 'virtual reincarnation', enabling you to take over the last body you touched before biting the dust. Shades of Interplay's forthcoming Messiah?

Omikron won't be finished this side of Christmas, but its original execution should put a new slant on a popular genre. It could be one to watch...



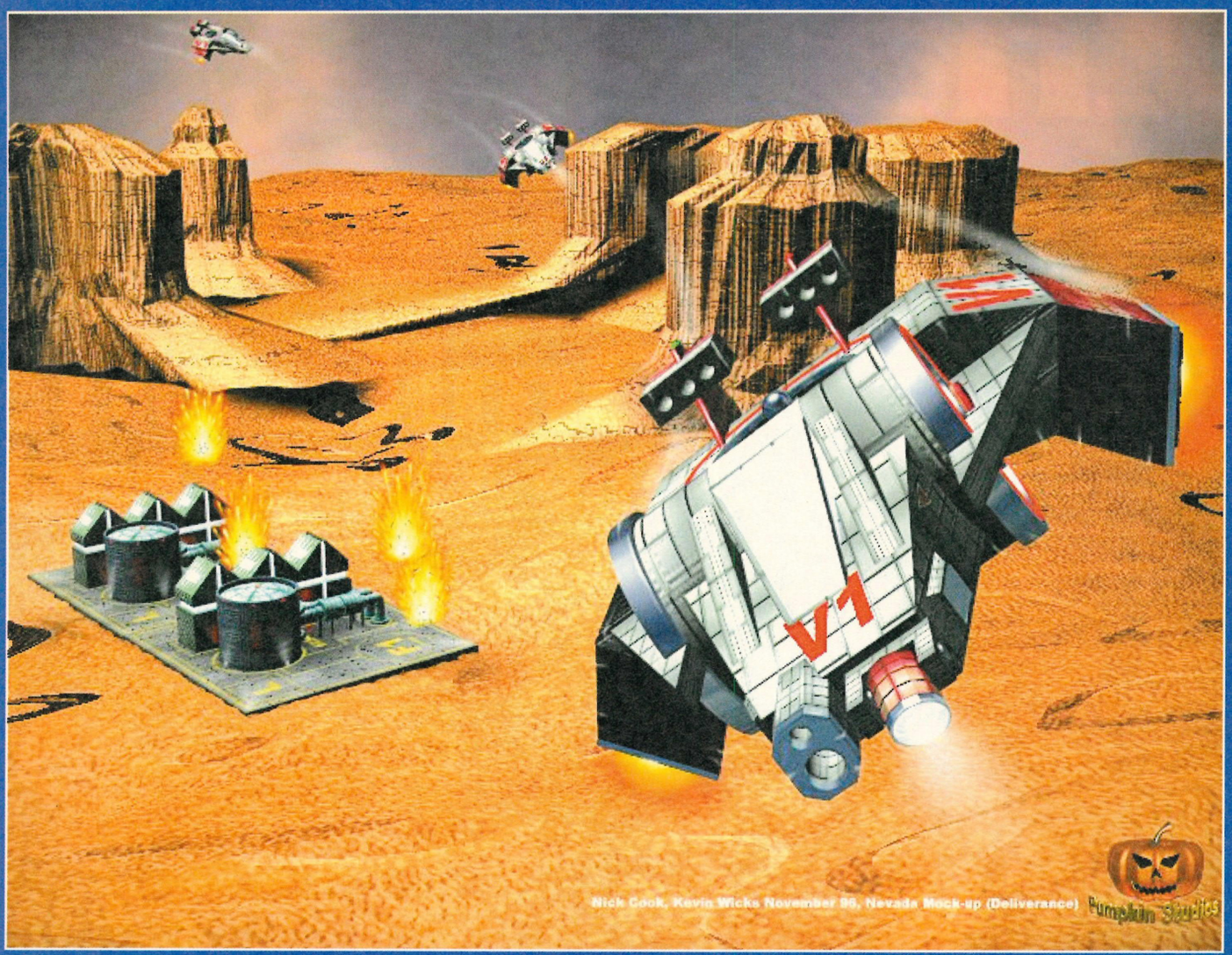








Warzone



Vermin!

DEVELOPER Kronos **RELEASED** Early '99

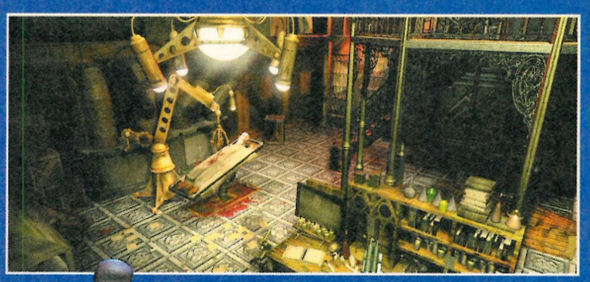


VERMIN! IS...

...A curious mix of platform, blasting, exploration, digging and resource management. You can't fault them for trying, can you?

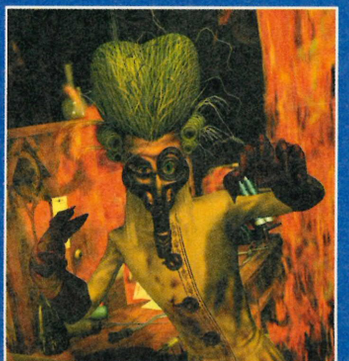
What a plot! As well as mixing several different game styles, Vermin! takes apart our history and reassembles the pieces in the wrong order. Although set in the future, in Vermin's alternate history, technology didn't develop beyond the 17th Century. Candlelight, hacksaw limb amputations, crapping in chamber pots and emptying them out of the windows - doesn't bear thinking about, does it? Thankfully, lack of sanitation is a positive advantage. You play one of three types of vermin and aim to invade larger host organisms, burrow through their decomposing bodies and avoid the 'evil' alchemy of Dr Cautious as he seeks vaccines to rid the host of your uninvited presence. Immunology from the virus's point of view? Whatever next?

Eidos claim an eerie world of 'strange environments' (they're not kidding), a unique storyline, 'irresistible characters' (come again?), and some serious technological wizardry. This is one parasite infestation which will leave you itching for more.









2100

DEVELOPER Pumpkin Studios **RELEASED** Early '99



WARZONE 2100 IS...

...An action/strategy game set in the 21st Century. Fans of Command & Conquer and EA's WarGames should be interested.

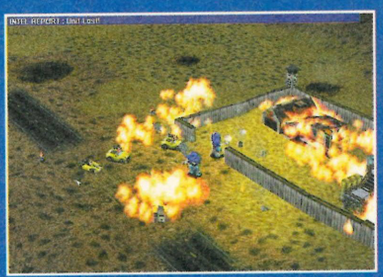


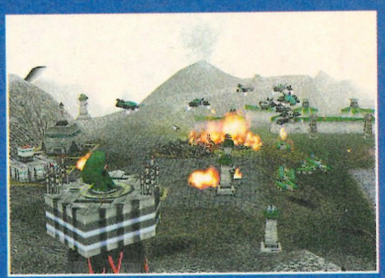
The ultimate goal of Warzone 2100 is to conquer North America and 'reclaim lost technologies'. To achieve your aims you must use your battle droids wisely, investing resources in developing new machines and repair damaged units. Of course, your enemies are out to conquer the States ahead of you, so be sharp.

The droids' behaviour is controlled by a sophisticated artificial intelligence system, making them a force to be reckoned with in combat. The 3D landscape is fully rotational, and decisions are made in real time - no turn-based battling here. Your command droids, essential to success, can be developed and enhanced as you progress. They also gain experience, learning from their battles. The terrain, buildings and structures are texture-mapped and highly detailed.

We've yet to see any playable code on this one - having read this far you know as much about the game as we do, but with three vast campaigns to tackle it could prove an epic struggle.















FA Manager

DEVELOPER Krisalis **RELEASED** Christmas '98



FA MANAGER IS...

...A platform light gun beat-'em-up - what do you think? Seriously, it's football management with an FA (Footballer's Association) licence.



Based on Eidos' own PC-only Championship Manager series, developers Krisalis have used the FA licence to squeeze every last ounce of realism out of the genre. Working closely with the FA, they gained inside information on players' contracts, wages, bonuses and general behind-the-scenes dealings. Along with the user-friendly interface, in-depth statistics, facts and figures and comprehensive database of players, this could give Gremlin's Player Manager '98 a run for its transfer fee.

Brian Moore provides the commentary during the 3D action sequences. As well as buying and selling players, you can borrow and lend them too. All four English leagues are covered, as well as the GM Conference. Top European cubs are there too, allowing you to buy foreign talent. Arsenal fans will be pleased to know taking bungs isn't catered for. Team tactics are decided using a Tactigrid, where you place your players where you choose; far more flexible than straightforward formations.

With far too many football management sims on other formats becoming over-complex and unwieldy, it's good to see a PSX offering that's focused on the heart of the genre - FOOTBALL MANAGEMENT. If the game remains single-minded and doesn't disappear up pointless blind alleys like setting the prices in the refreshments booths and selling the advertising on the touchline hoarding (this isn't the manager's job, guys), it should be worth transferring from Shop Shelf United to Games Collection City.







PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Activision	Neversoft Entertainment	Shoot-'em-up	19th November	UK	£39.99	1	Memory Card Analogue	Dual Shock



Bruce Willis, an alternative rock star babe and four Biblical creatures who signify the end of the world as we know it - the ideal recipe for a cool blaster?

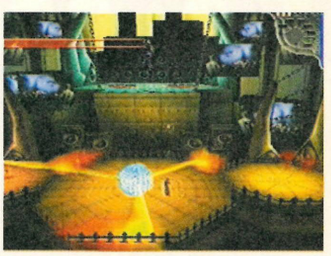
Apocalypse

What a difference a mere skill level makes. On getting this game, I set the difficulty level to 'Easy' and got stuck in, and found it enjoyable but fundamentally flawed. It's only when I switched to the 'Normal' setting (which, let's face it, is the 'true' game) that I realised it's classic great blaster. So what did the standard game get right which the simplified, just-for-the-kiddies version somehow lost? Let's take a look.

Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Well that's the game in a nutshell - how do the details bear out? Very well, actually...

Despite not being a film license, the game stars movie tough guy Bruce Willis. The main character, Trey Kincaide, is modelled on the Die Hard supremo (even down to the bald patch), and features realistic appearance, motion capture and even a series of one-liners recorded by Bruce himself. These are unintrusive, atmospheric and varied enough to avoid irritating repetition, though allowing Bruce to come out with a macho witticism as he falls to his death during a platform section is bloody ridiculous.





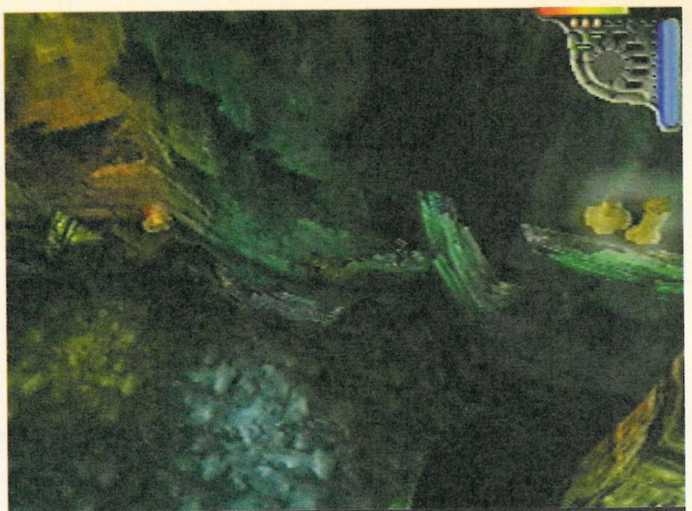


Making the implausible appear realistic is the art of good sci-fi...

Apocalypse is, in essence, a 3D shoot-'em-up. There are very few of the puzzle-type scenes favoured by Doom and Tomb Raider; just button-down baddie blasting and, in places, 3D platform pounding. The action is viewed from a third-person perspective, though not always from behind the main character - more of this later. To see that elusive end screen you must battle your way through 12 levels, eight standard areas interrupted by four boss fights with the eponymous

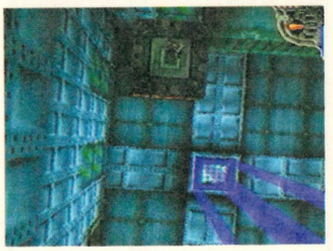
A sparklingly innovative thing about Apocalypse is its control system. Fans of the ageing SNES/coin-op Smash TV will be instantly familiar with its directional firing system. All four symbol buttons fire the currently selected weapon, the button you use affecting the direction of

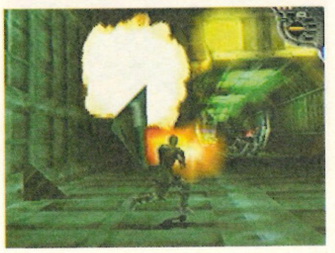


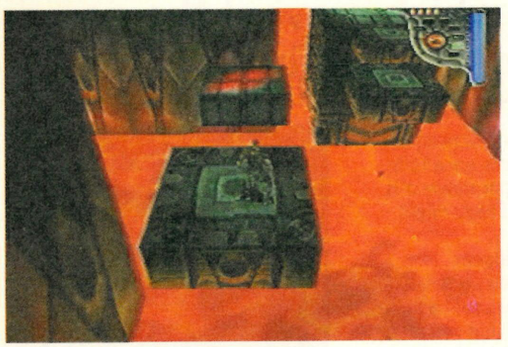


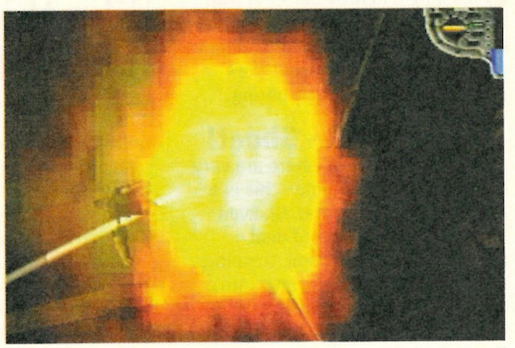
Always be on the look-out for bonuses such as this, a 1-Up found by ascending half-hidden platforms off the main game path.











ON-SCREEN ACTION...

At various points during the game you come across a video screen blasting out some serious alternative rock. As well as licensing POE and her single, Control, Activision have also secured the rights to a few more songs and bands. Stand by and watch as the video wall pumps out a lengthy snippet of rock video, accompanied (of course) by the thumping soundtrack. These are drawn directly from the CD, so there's no dodgy pause while they load.







One of the best 3D blasters on the PlayStation.

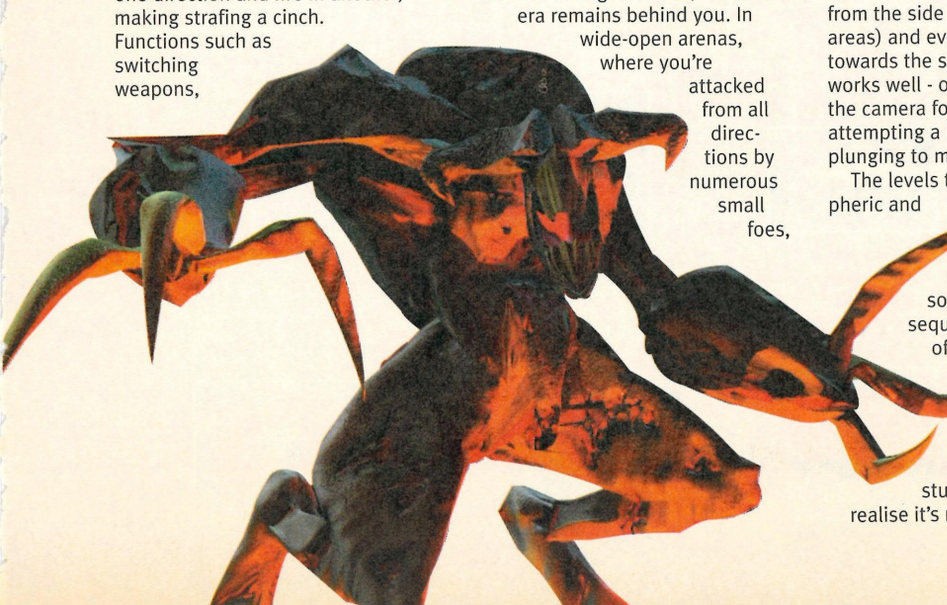
the shot. Thus Triangle fires forward, X backward and Square and Circle left and right respectively. By pressing two buttons at once you achieve a diagonal, and by rolling from one to another Bruce sprays lead in a deadly arc. Best of all, this directional fire is totally independent of the D-Pad - you can move in one direction and fire in another, making strafing a cinch. Functions such as switching weapons, jumping, crouching and the smart bomb are slaved to the shoulder buttons.

Cunning Camerawork

The control method is augmented by some nifty camerawork, which adjusts the perspective depending on the battle ahead. As you advance through tunnels, the camera remains behind you. In wide-open arenas, where you're attacked from all directions by numerous small foes, the action is viewed from high above the main character, allowing you to dodge and shoot on the move. Other sections are viewed from the side (usually platform areas) and even with Bruce running towards the screen. This system works well - only once did I curse the camera for moving while I was attempting a leap, sending me plunging to my doom.

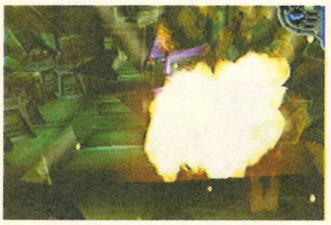
The levels themselves are atmospheric and graphically excellent, and augmented by some great cut sequences featuring some of the best rendered animations yet seen - when Kincaide (Willis) struts his stuff you have to blink to realise it's not FMV. It sets the scene nicely too, linking what would otherwise be disjointed scenarios (Prison, Sewers, Rooftops, etc). The cyberpunk visual style and angry alternative rock background music (which would've been termed 'heavy metal' had the term not become desperately unfashionable) make the settings seem almost believable, even though in the real world (future or otherwise) their features and buildings would range from pointless to impossible. What the hell - making the implausible appear realistic is the art of good sci-fi, and it's done very well here.

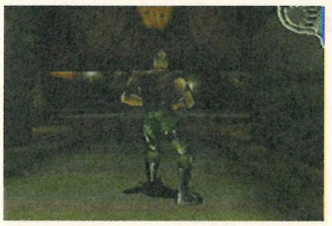
The enemies you face are a little less impressive, though. Foot soldiers and monsters are plentiful enough, some of who can fly or use jetpacks, and there are tanks, robots and helicopter-like foes to tackle, but they're all pretty standard. Sure, the infantry become zombies in the Graveyard level, but there's little in the way of variety.

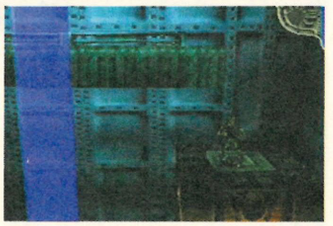














Thankfully, their placement means you hardly notice this. In wide-open arenas, swarms of creatures who attack with tooth and claw surround Kincaide. Stay mobile and use a rapid-fire or wide-area weapon, and use their lack of range to your advantage. Elsewhere troops fire at you from far-off platforms - homing missiles are the ideal response, taking out your foes at a distance and giving you the opportunity to crouch or hide behind a piece of scenery while it speeds towards your hapless target. If they're below you, lob a grenade to clear the area before leaping into what would otherwise be the firing line. Keep your eyes peeled for cheesy kills too - a whole host of bad guys can be taken out by blasting a nearby barrel or box, and you might find power-ups in them. It's changes of pace and tactics like this which prevent the game becoming flat and boring.

Don't Think - Shoot!

As mentioned earlier, there are very few puzzles in the game - this is a pure shoot-'em-up after all. Even so, there are a couple of neat touches. On the rooftops, trashing a chopper causes it to crash into a tower, toppling the construct and creating a new bridge. To get into the nightclub, you press a switch which slowly opens the door - unless a zombie can deactivate it again first. These ideas are a little under-used, but if Apocalypse 2 is planned, a change of pace might offer more of them.

To cap it all, developers Neversoft have beefed up the dying groans of stricken foes to the max. Blast them just right and you take their heads clean off, leaving blood spouting from their open neck

It's changes of pace and tactics like this which prevent the game becoming flat and boring.



POWER UP!

The power-up weapons on offer in Apocalypse are a little obvious, but extremely functional. The various tools on offer all have unique attributes, but perhaps this factor could have been emphasised a little more. All weapon power-ups are temporary - when their ammo is exhausted, the weapon is lost and you revert to your basic, infinitely-ammoed machine gun.

1-UP
Every game has a 1-Up power-up; grab this to win an extra life. Well, what did you expect? a junior can of 7-Up?



HEALTH
Returns a some or all of your energy bar. The higher the skill level, the less generous the award.



FLAMETHROWER
Burns enemies to a crisp. Because it shoots a jet of flame instead of single projectiles, it's ideal for mowing down packs of minor enemies, but lacks range and power.



PARTICLE BEAM
More powerful than the flamethrower, but less effective against a large groups of foes. Again, it hasn't a great range.



RIP LASER
A powerful weapon which automatically focuses itself on a nearby enemy. Ideal for taking out flying targets, but awkward when there's lots of blastable scenery around as it often targets the furniture instead of the foes.



HOMING MISSILE
Does exactly what you'd expect. Takes a near-direct route to the nearest foe, but sometimes fouls itself on scenery, especially if the enemy is on a higher platform.



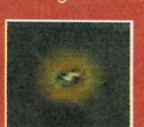
ROCKETS
Powerful, but very slow rate of fire. They're an incredible asset against end-of-level baddies, but if used against a pack of foes, make sure you hit.



PULSE LASER
Basically, this is a hi-tech machine gun, but with poorer range. It's more powerful than your standard weapon but, of course, has limited ammo.



GRENADES
Another obvious one. Lob these at your enemies and wait for the bang. Can take out numerous foes in one go, making it ideal for bombing crowds waiting for you on a lower platform.



SMART BOMB
A once-only device that takes out everything (apart from a boss) nearby. You can collect a stash of these and use them at whim.



POE, BOSS BADDIE EXTRAORDINAIRE...

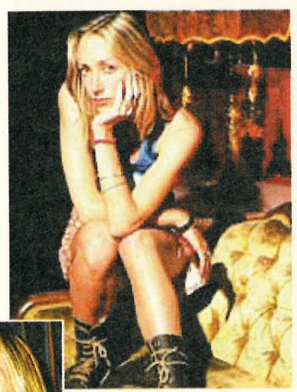
One of the enemies you face in Apocalypse is based on POE, a leading American underground alternative rock singer. Check out the cover of this mag - that's her, standing back to back with Bruce. She's also seen on the giant video screens performing one of her raunchy, hi-octane hits. The Apocalypse theme tune is POE's new single, Control.

Although a New Yorker by birth, POE has also lived in Europe, India and Africa. Although she started writing simple three-chord songs when she was eight, her first experiences playing in a band was at Princeton University.

POE's first album, Hello, sees her working with eight different co-writers ("I'm always willing to listen to ideas, but I have the final say"), three producers and a combination of computers and live musicians including Guns N' Roses drummer Matt Sorum. POE is always keen to make "the organic parts of our world work with the technical".

Despite the diversity of her music, POE's lyrics are easily identifiable. Trigger Happy Jack, for example, explores people's inability to communicate. The song is based on two things, somebody POE once new and a road rage incident involving a lunatic waving a gun. The album's title track, Hello, "uses the imagery of the Internet as a metaphor for trying to reach someone that seems unreachable". Remote identities are discussed, as are new ways of communicating.

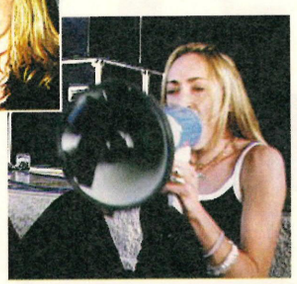
It's unlikely POE will ever trouble the Top Ten - her style of music will always be underground and appreciated by a cult following, but those that like their indie rock should definitely check her out.

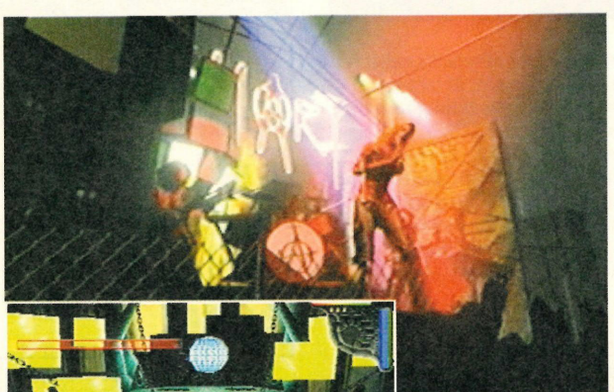


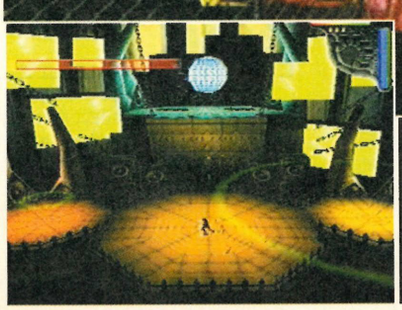




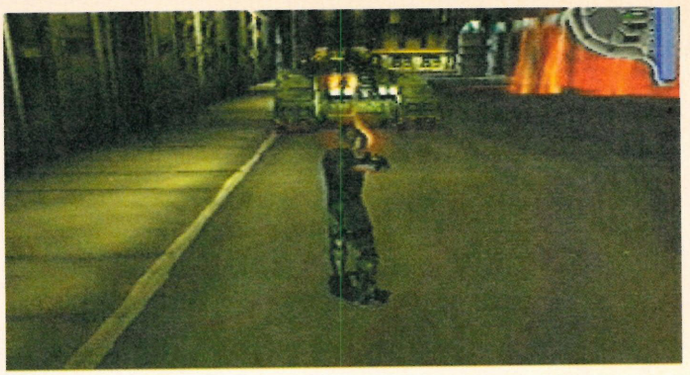




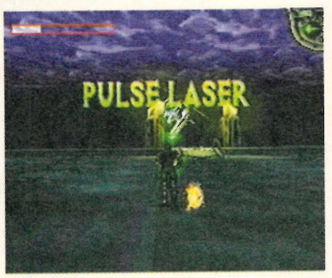




...and here's what she looks like in the game, from the cut scene that precedes the nightclub level and in the boss fight with POE as Horseman Plague.



A sparklingly innovative thing about Apocalypse is its control system.



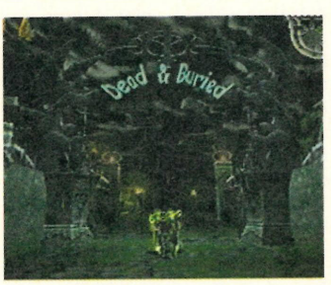
wounds. The flamethrower leaves them staggering in agony for a few seconds, burning like bonfires. No wonder Activision expect a BBFC rating of '15'.

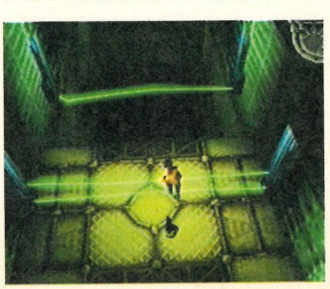
So why was the Easy setting not up to scratch? Well, you'd expect the power-ups to be more generous and the enemies less aggressive, but the dumbed-down baddies offer so little resistance that all the tactics are stripped out of the game. You no longer need to select the correct weapon for the job and use it with intelligence - just fire anything at everything and you'll easy make the next health bonus. All you have left are the platform sections, which are pretty-much the same as in the 'proper' game. Your energy bar is almost irrelevant. This destroys the balance and challenge of the game to the point where it just isn't Apocalypse any more, making it flat and boring. Oh well - the Easy level's for wimps anyway. Crank the difficulty up to Normal, play the game as it's supposed to be played and treat yourself to one of the best 3D blasters on the PlayStation.

Ian Osborne









SECOND OPINION

An exciting and innovative blaster. Some of the leaps are made trickier than they need be by dodgy camera angles, but these are far from common. Over all, the game's fast pace and varied tactics make it one of the best 3d action shoot-'em-ups on the PlayStation.

Alan King

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	8

90%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS
Sony	Insomniac	3D Platformer	Out Now	UK	£39.99	1

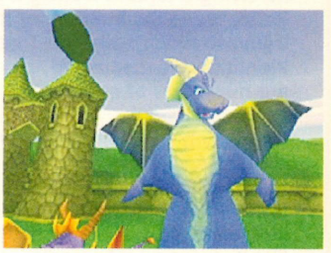
PERIPHERALS
Memory Card Analogue

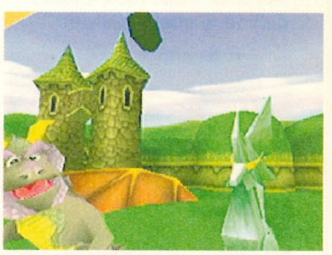
Can Sony's fire-breathing friend scorch the opposition?

Spyro the Dragon











Move over Mario, bugger off Banjo-Kazooie, cancel Crash Bandicoot - there's a new guy in town, and he's ready to set the 3D platform adventure world alight, in more ways that one. Spyro the Dragon is the new creation from the people that brought you the adventures of Crash Bandicoot - but don't let that put you off.

With the looks of a new Disney movie and gameplay that wouldn't look out of place in Super Mario 64, Spyro the Dragon comes to life on the PlayStation. It's a three-dimensional adventure game where you get to take control of a cute little dragon. This guy has stubby little wings, horns on his head and the ability to breathe fire. Plenty of potential for fun and games in a good gaming environment, then.

No adventure game would be complete without a plot. It turns out that all the dragons in Spyro's homeland have been bad-mouthing the dreaded Gnasty Gnorc. As punishment, he has turned them into crystal statues using a dastardly force. There's only one little dragon that escaped this fate, and that's Spyro. He's never been known for his bravery, but now he must summon up the courage to adventure off into the six worlds with six stages in each, freeing the dragons from their crystal cocoons and saving the day.

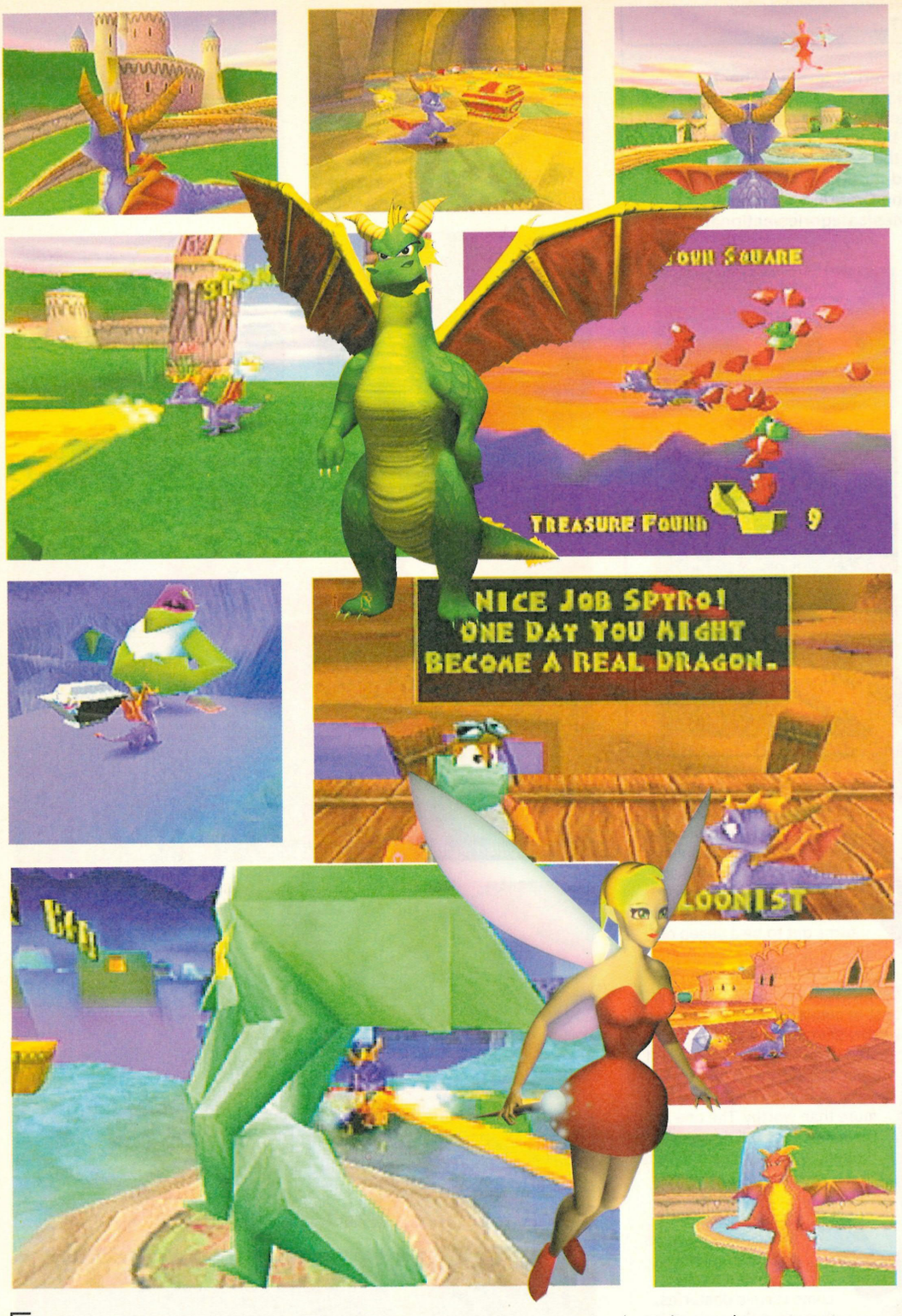
These worlds cover a range of styles, including The Artisans, Magic Crafters, Beast Makers, Peace Keepers and Dream Weavers, and each has its own boss and secret treasure stages to discover and conquer. The worlds can be accessed once Spyro has met the entry criteria. For some, it's freeing ten dragons, for others it's collecting the right amount of treasure - these tasks change throughout the game. With the task complete, Spyro is free to travel backwards and forwards between worlds using a balloon. The ultimate goal for Spyro is to reach the evil being who cast this spell over all the dragons of the land, and banish him forever.

Flying Tonight...

The 36 stages are a mixture of traditional 3D-adventure á là Mario on the Nintendo 64, with flying sections and treasure bonuses thrown in. The flying stages are reminiscent of an arcade game some of you might have played - Prop Cycle. In this game you had to pedal as hard as you could to keep your vehicle in the sky. Similar physics models have been used in these Spyro levels, where the object is to fly through rings and collect items to give extra time; you always get the feeling the little dragon could drop out of the sky at any moment.

> **Insomniac have really paid attention to detail with their new creation.**

Continuing the Disney-inspired styling, Spyro has a little buddy who comes along with him in the adventure, Sparx the dragonfly. This little guy is more than just a friend though - strangely, he actually



You're captivated by the slick presentation, gorgeous graphics and witty dialogue...

keeps track of how healthy Spyro is. The more hits Spyro takes, the less sparkle and colour Sparx has. You can perk up the little bug by killing the expendable beasts around the level and turning them into butterflies for Sparx to eat. Each level has its own beast-sheep, goats and chickens, and these are just a few I've come across.

So, I bet the question on your lips is, "How does a baby dragon survive in a world of whacked-out creatures?" Well, this little dude is far from defenceless. He can do all the usual things like walk, run and jump. Then, being a dragon with stubby wings, he can glide through the air to move further and to fly in the bonus treasure levels. Using his horns he can charge at creatures, knocking them over. Then, with his fiery breath, he can flame, super-flame or fireball his enemies - a very effective defence mechanism.

Well Thought Out

The developers of Spyro the Dragon, Insomniac, have really paid attention to detail with their new creation. Everything has been meticulously planned out to give the player something out of the ordinary, right down to the way the other dragons and creatures react to Spyro. For example, depending on how well you've been playing the game, the enemies might run and hide, hit each other, fire cannons, throw snowballs or even moon you. This always adds a welcome extra dimension to any game, giving a new experience each time you play.

As games on the PlayStation get larger, we have all come to expect longer loading times between stage. Not so in Spyro the Dragon. The stages are streamed directly from the CD, so loading times between them (while Spyro takes a balloon ride) are kept to a fraction of a second, instead of the long pauses of other games. This really boosts the enjoyment factor, giving the game an almost cartridge-like feel.

HERO AND SIDEKICK...

No review would be complete without a look at the hero of the story, and in this case his sidekick pal.

SPYRO THE DRAGON
He may look harmless, but Spyro the Dragon is the only hope for the dragons of his home world. The evil Gnasty Gnork has turned them all into crystal statues, and only Spyro survived the spell. Equipped with full fire-breathing powers, the ability to glide and his trusty side-kick and childhood friend, Sparx, Spyro has 36 levels of action to conquer. Good luck, little dragon.

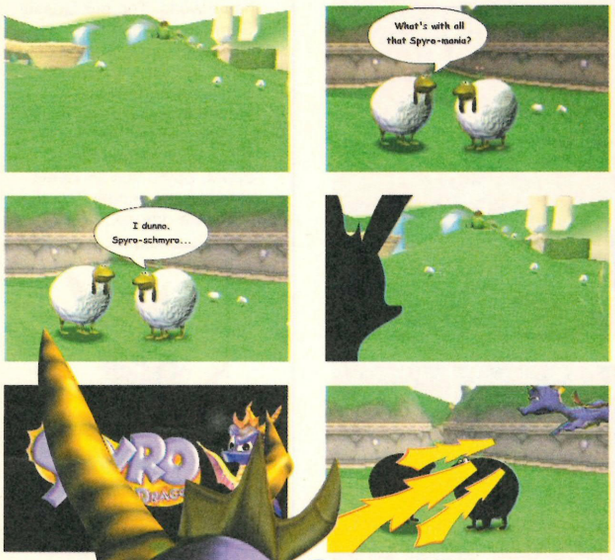


SPARX THE DRAGONFLY
This little sidekick has been a friend of Spyro's since he was in his egg, and Sparx was just larvae. He buzzes around Spyro's head and acts as an early warning system for Spyro's health. Sparx can take three hits, and then Spyro is vulnerable. You can tell how well Sparx is feeling by his colour - if he's yellow he has full health, when he's blue he's down to medium health, green and his health is low - then he's gone until Spyro can find some butterflies to feed him up.



CARTOON CAPERS ON THE NET...

If you're lucky enough to have Internet access, check out the DNN (Dragon News Network) on the PlayStation site. Not only will you find all the latest news and features from the world of Spyro the Dragon, but you're also treated to an exclusive cartoon to introduce the game, where Spyro singes two sheep who were bad-mouthing him. Nice one Spyro. You can find the Spyro the Dragon web site at: http://www.playstation.com/games/categories/actionadvent/spyro/





Slick Stuff

From the moment you set foot in the first world of Spyro the Dragon, you're captivated by the slick presentation, gorgeous graphics and witty dialogue between Spyro and the other dragons. The game really does gel together well, with a difficulty curve set just right, allowing you to make mistakes in the early levels, but becoming less forgiving as your skills improve. There are some really clever ideas packed onto the one CD too. A thief that has stolen the dragon's eggs must be chased and caught to fully complete a level, precision gliding is needed to survive past certain sections and the first boss you meet seems menacing - but then turns out to be a sheep on stilts.

Now comes the criticism. The developers have really tried their best to create a 3D adventure game worthy of standing next to the Nintendo 64's Banjo-Kazooie and Super Mario 64 with Spyro the Dragon, and on many levels it's more than worthy. The one area the game does fall down on, though, is variety. The different worlds and levels have been well thought out, with challenging layouts and tricky manoeuvres needed to overcome certain obstacles, but when the main objective is simply to find and touch the dragon statues, you can easily become bored. Mario and Banjo give the player a wide variety of tasks to complete, so you are always finding new challenges. Sadly, you've mastered most of what Spyro has to offer in an afternoon.

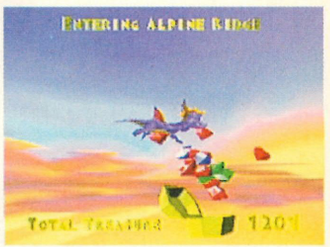
Don't let my moans put you off, though. This is by far the best 3D platform adventure game I've ever played on the PlayStation, and I'm sure it's going to be a mammoth hit this Christmas.

Doug Williams





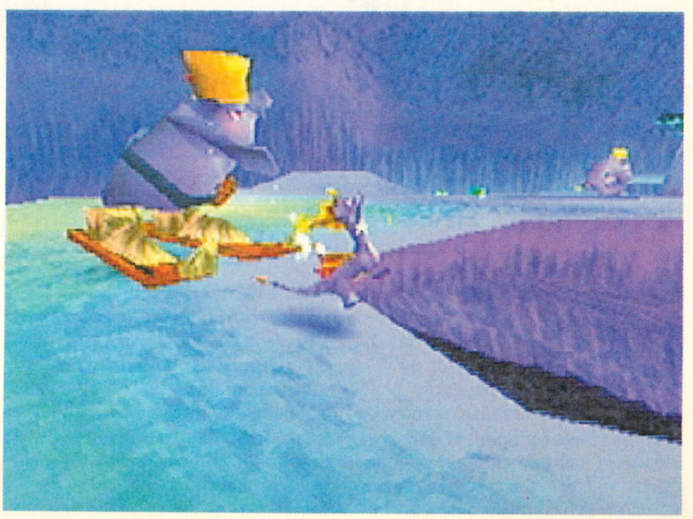




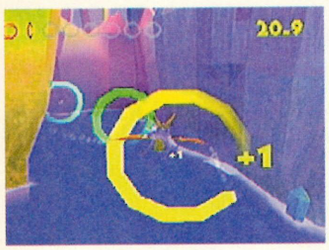


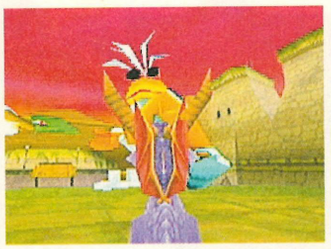
Spyro decided against a career as a dentist...













GENTLEMEN, START YOUR ENGINES...

If you want to know what a console can really do, you should never look at the first games to roll off the production line. It has now been three years since the PlayStation was launched in the UK, and we're just starting to see how well the console can be programmed when developers put their minds to it. Insomniac have done an excellent job with Spyro the Dragon, and much of the graphical richness of the game is due to the three game engines that all mesh together to create the 3D world. Here's a look at all three...

Environment Engine

We can guarantee you've never played a game with such a realistic environment. Insomniac have been quite innovative in what they have created for Spyro the Dragon. They have used multiple levels of polygons and textures with special routines that smooth the transitions between the levels of detail. This allows the game to have an infinite number of distance views, and still retain a high level of detail on closer inspection.

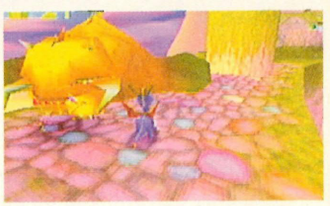
Character/object Engine

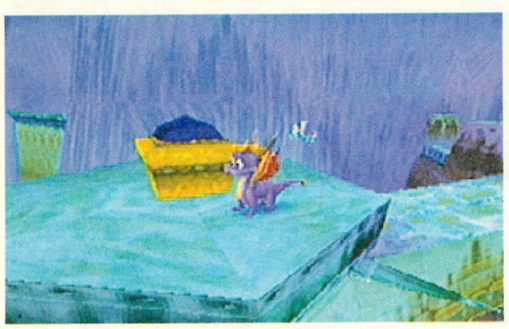
Using similar techniques to the environment engine, the character/object engine creates the characters Spyro meets on his adventures and the other interactive areas of the world. Large numbers of objects can be shown together using these new techniques which means you don't get the pop-up problems of other PlayStation games.

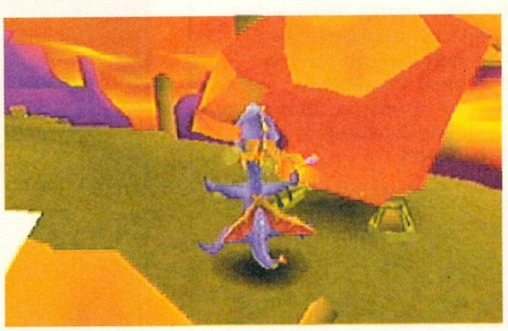
Cyclorama Engine

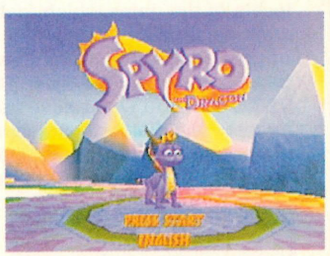
Cyclorama is a strange word, but when you learn what it means, all becomes clear. In most games, the sky in the background is made up of one simple image of clouds or stars. When the character moves, this is simply scrolled left or right to give the impression of movement - not in Spyro the Dragon. The Cyclorama Engine creates a sky that is a spherical mesh of over 5,000 polygons. This wraps around to create a sphere over the entire environment, so when you use the 'look around' feature, you're looking at an accurate representation of the sky at all times. There's no strange distortion of the kind we've all become used to in videogames.











BELIEVE IT OR NOT...

Sony, Universal Interactive and Insomniac have drawn on some interesting sources to create Spyro the Dragon. The most original of these has to be the source for the atmospheric music in the game, and the voice of Spyro himself. Stewart Copeland has created all the music. He's not that well known on his own, but if we tell you he used to play drums in The Police with Sting, you'll see just how distinguished a career this man has had. Since leaving The Police he's created many movie soundtracks, but this is the first time he has tried his hand at videogame music.

Carlos Alazraqui provides Spyro's mutterings during the game. Again, not a name that conjures up anything much, but Carlos has provided the voice for the Taco Bell Chihuahua in their advertising campaigns, and is also known as the voice of Rocko in the Nickelodeon cartoon.



TACO BELL



SECOND OPINION

What an excellent game. Technically, it's unbelievable - show this to your N64-owning buddies and they soon stop crowing about Super Mario 64. The gameplay's polished too, though perhaps a little samey. All in all, great stuff.

Dave France

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	10
SOUND	9
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	8

90%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Grolier Interactive	Frontier Developments	Strategy / Shoot-'em-up	Out Now	UK	£39.99	1	Memory Card	Analogue

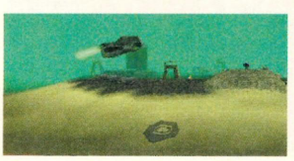
Braben's back, and he's brought his Virus with him...

V2000



I'D LIKE TO BE UNDER THE SEA...

Plummet towards the egg carton-like surfaces of V2000's imaginary sea and you go down into the strange sub-aqua levels of the game which feature decorative organisms such as shoals of stripy fish and - eek - sharks. The control of your craft is relatively slower, and the atmosphere is a bit spooky to say the least. There is definitely a mood to V2000 that you won't have found in other PlayStation games - the distinctly ambient tangent of what is, after all, supposed to be a Desert Strike-style shoot-'em-up is at odds with this theme. Strange stuff indeed.





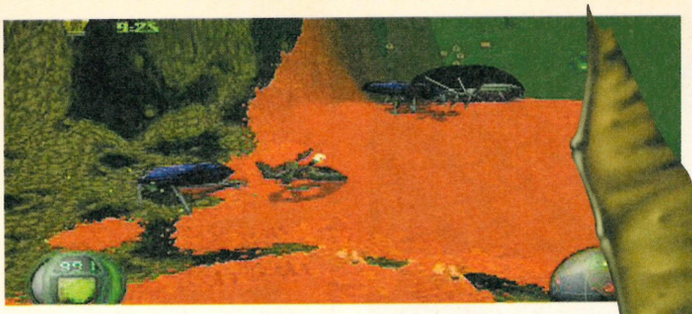

The designer of V2000 is the main man behind the seminal 8-bit space exploration sim Elite, which took home computers by storm in the eighties, and Virus, the similarly-themed prequel to Grolier Interactive's V2000. David Braben now has his own development studio and has embraced the PlayStation as well as the PC for his new project, V2000.

V2000 casts you as pilot of a very mobile hover machine which can move like a helicopter or, changing the control method with a flick of a switch, a harrier jet. The planetary climbs of each level consist of broken land and separated civilisations, the inhabitants of which you have to save by bringing them aboard using a Star Trek-esque tractor beam. The virus takes the form of a nasty red fluid and must be halted to stop it infecting the innocent people in the middle of it all.

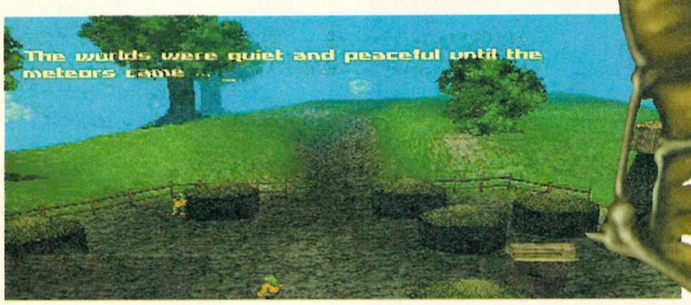
The swamps and flying creatures are excellently done...

The virus spawns a myriad of obstacles and enemies which blend hi-tech wizardry such as laser cannons with the more mythical - dragons and giant ants can be witnessed from early on.

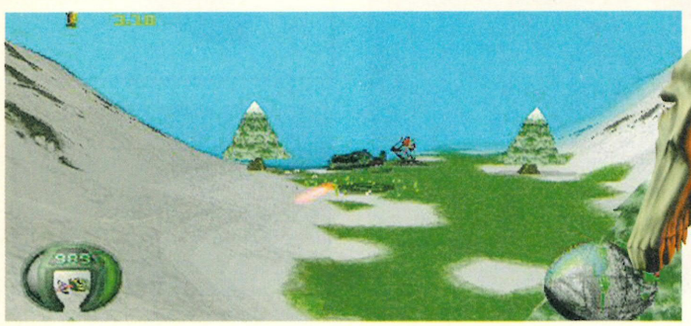
The first thing many gamers notice when they glance at the smooth-moving terrain is an undeniable similarity to Bullfrog's Magic Carpet. The people you collect in your cargo bay can then be put to good use by landing them near any factories you have in that world,





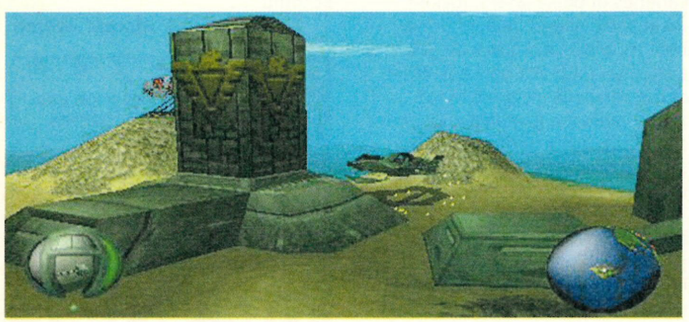












UP IN THE SKY...

It's quite fortunate that the vehicle in V2000 is an airborne object when so many perils are all over the rolling landscapes, but the flying enemies are a genuine pain in the arse as they often arrive with little warning other than a shadow. The dragons can inflict huge amounts of damage with their flames, and it's best to work out what weapon to kill them with very quickly because you only get a couple of hits before they start on you. Run away!





The Artificial Intelligence of the enemies is better than expected and demands much experimentation when killing foes.

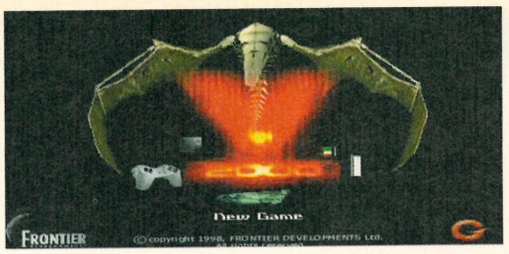
where they're trained to research and build new weapons and power-ups for your craft.

Joy of Sticks

Originality is a high point for V2000, despite being a sequel and obviously influenced by other titles. The dual control method is a brilliantly-handled device which does occasionally cause problems, but makes up for it by letting players traverse the levels with deft skill. The water you can see on some of the screenshots dotted around this page is not a barrier as it would be in most shoot-'em-up-style games. It's another sector of the level, as you can dive into it and continue to explore underwater. The world beneath the surface is a slower, more sedate break from the often frantic weapon-based action above. Its calming shades and pleasant movement serve as the ideal therapy for when you're tired. If there wasn't a timer, that is, because the game is against the clock and the people that stumble about their damaged villages are devoured and consumed by the virus or its offspring if you take too long. It's a good tactic to eliminate the moving threats such as obese caterpillars and green dragons first so that they don't have the opportunity to kill.

If the concept seems a little simple, that's largely because it is, but sheer variety of execution stops it from being boring. The array of weapons totals almost thirty harmful tools, and the worlds are also substantially different in their objectives and overall look. From swampland to urban village to underwater castles, V2000 has superb environments. One particular level, the world features huge, texture-mapped castles without causing the game to slow down at all, and the 3D engine employed



















DOUBLE SWIVEL...

V2000 makes great use of a Dual Shock analogue pad, in the same way that Shiny Entertainment's Stunt RC Copter uses it. The dual control method of the game lends itself perfectly to the double axis of the analogue sticks, and it feels like you're moving a radio-controlled vehicle.



suggests it is built by an eager bunch of coders headed up by a gaming guru. Incidentally, the silky movement of the game is due to Frontier Developments' custom development system which means the PC and PlayStation games have many technical similarities and aren't that different in game terms, so the PlayStation version loses next to nothing. The enemies are no less impressive, with clearly-defined animals and weapon structures gleaming in their hi-res attire. The pay-off is some borders which are slightly larger than you might expect, but if this is your type of game, it's unlikely you'll be fussed by this.

If you were to classify V2000 as a shoot-'em-up sub-genre, we could forward aged games like Core's Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2 as a loose reference point. V2000 offers much more than most PlayStation blasters, and bearing in mind the dull 2D shooters that have passed through the offices in the last 12 months, this is a firm recommendation, because the PlayStation has long been left without the kind of definitive shoot-'em-up you could really appreciate. Five-minute blasts such as Xevious 3D were fine, but V2000 can be played for either ten minutes or an hour. The central gameplay from the original Virus still remains in the updated

It's a timeless update that appeals straight away.

V2000 is a game suited to more experienced gamers, because good as the game is, it doesn't have the immediate appeal of a less demanding arcade-style offering. There isn't a plot to speak of (more a scenario), and the game's premise of collecting trophies and going for the high score accolade of 'Elite Player' seems tied to the Eighties school of videogame ethics. This isn't necessarily a criticism, but some may feel the game's better suited to the PC. We hope not - it's great to see games like this converted to the PlayStation, and hope more companies will follow suit.

control method, and it's a timeless update that appeals straight away. The gameplay isn't self-consciously retro and it's unlikely any gamer who hasn't played the original Virus will notice that this is a next-generation reworking of a game that won industry awards for its merits. Cheekily, though, there's a level which resembles the original Virus in gaudy patchwork colours and a plain background to keep elderly gaming folk happy.

The swamps and flying creatures are excellently done - the pterodactyl-style dragons snap and swoop with an eerie sense of ease. The Artificial Intelligence of the enemies is better than expected, and demands much experimentation when killing foes. If you direct your fire towards the middle of a group of enemies, the outer beings, leg it, so it's best to attack head-on rather than causing the blighters to disperse.

Swamps and Dragons

On the subject of firepower, it would seem a shame not to mention the military assortment of toys on show here. Water cannons, three varieties of pulse lasers, rockets (heat seeking and forward firing), bombs, mines and flares are all available. Yet that's only a fraction of the weapons included in the game - thus the gameplay is a voyage of discovery in the gameplay sense as well as seeing just what lies on the next level.

There are criticisms of V2000, however, mainly because the game's a bit old-fashioned and lacks the presentational buzz that would really make the game stand out. In 1996, V2000 would have been among the very best of the shoot-'em-up genre, but now we just expect more in terms of longevity and although there is variation, V2000 feels a little home-grown to be a major contender on the PlayStation. The multiplayer options of the PC version would've made the PlayStation offering a much better game, but it will have its own individual appeal to gamers that have arrived in PlayStation land after hitching a lift on home computers from the previous decade.

It's a pity that, overall, David Braben's sequel should have been released closer to the middle of this decade because there are similar games we'd advise you check out if you're not an incurable (sorry) Virus fan. The titles Return Fire and WarGames (reviewed in Issue Eight, scoring 93%) spring to mind. They've both got two-player modes, which is no coincidence, and highlights what V2000 should have ultimately taken into account.

Richard Ashton

SECOND OPINION

It's the Devil's own job to get used to flying the craft, but persevere and the game offers its own rewards. It's not for everybody (arcade addicts will hate it), but if you like your blasters a little more cerebral than average, check it out.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	8

80%

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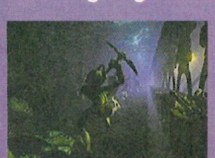
PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
GT Interactive	Oddworld Inhabitants	2D Platformer	20th November	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card Analogue	Dual Shock

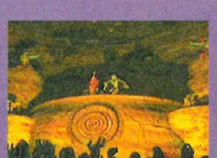
Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus

With a bug-eyed zombie as a lead character, a drink made from old bones and even fart gags, this is as original as they come...

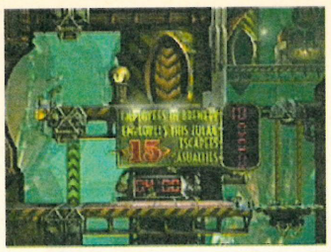
DEM BONES, DEM BONES...

After doing so well in his first adventure, Abe's Oddysee, we meet Abe again at a special ceremony where he is to receive an award for his bravery from the King of the Mudokons. While at the podium, Abe unfortunately let's rip with a particularly smelly fart (he's known for them) and the crowd crack up laughing.
The King forgives his little outburst and slaps Abe on the shoulder to show there's no hard feelings, but this sends our hero tumbling



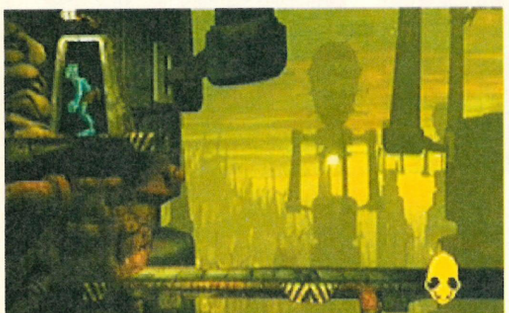








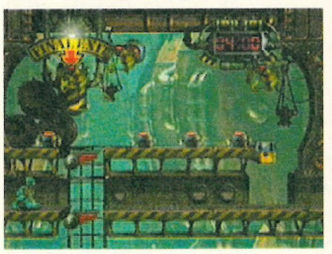


Would you buy a house like that and let a green bloke in a furry nappy take a dump outside your door?



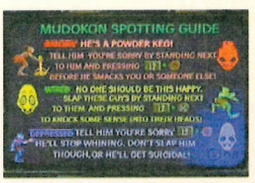


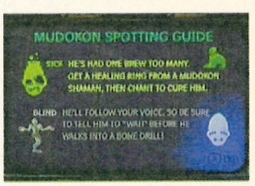




KNOW YOUR MUDOKON...

Another unique element of Abe's Exoddus is the way you can keep up to date on how your character is feeling. There are icons for different feelings, so you can adapt your game playing style to compensate and attempt to keep your character happy. The states of mind include... ANGRY, WIRED, DEPRESSED, SICK, BLIND





You may remember a game from last year called Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee. It was said to be the first instalment of a quintology of games (that's five to you and me), where each game would explore the life of a character from the Oddworld universe. The first was Abe, a Mudokon slave who worked on Rupture Farms. By now we should have moved on to the next instalment, but Abe was such a roaring success that developers, Oddworld Inhabitants, decided to give him a second bite of the cherry in a 'bonus' game - Abe's Exoddus.

Anyone for a Brew?

In the first game, Abe was saving his fellow Mudokons from the mincing machine in Rupture Farms where they were being turned into tinned food. This time around, the poor Mudokons are being forced to mine the bones of their ancestors. These bones are the main ingredient of a drink called Soul Brew, but Abe is on the case once more - ready to right the wrongs and save the day once again.

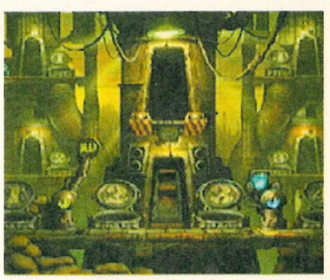
After an extremely cinematic intro sequence, the game moves seamlessly into the first section where Abe must learn the basics of gameplay via the large digital displays and signs around the place. Everything in Abe's Exoddus is in 2D, so you won't find any flashy polygons here - it's traditional sprites and backgrounds all the way. Abe can walk, run, or move stealthily around the place, jump over gaps, move wheels and levers and chant. The chanting is his main weapon against the enemies he encounters as it allows him to telepathically control their actions. Chanting also opens up bird portals - and it's through these that Abe must persuade his fellow Mudokons to jump through to safety.

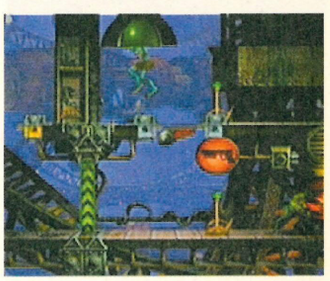
Sounds easy? Well, there's a fair amount of strategy involved in rescuing the Mudokons. Wheels must be moved in the correct order, or even all at once, meaning you need some help. Doors never seem to link to the place you'd imagine, and there are the Sligs and Glukkons to deal with - ugly creatures that like nothing more than sucking on a Mudokon's brain.

The developers did an excellent job creating this universe...

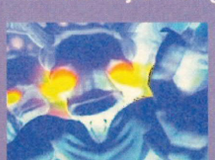
So, Shoot Me!

I know Abe's Exoddus has been praised to the hilt in various publications and is probably already on its way to winning awards for excellence, but I'm sorry, I just don't get it. Okay. So I can wow at the FMV sequence that sets the scene - it's one of the slickest I've seen in a long time, and it's rumoured to be nominated for an Oscar for best short animation. I can also see just how original the Oddworld world is. The developers have done an excellent job in creating this universe, along with atmospheric sound effects, characters you can sympathise with

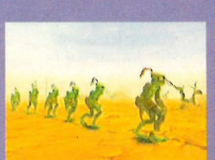




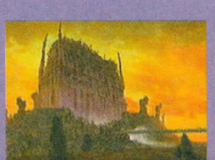
from the stage, hitting the ground hard. While unconscious on the ground Abe has a strange dream - his people aren't out of the woods yet. This time blind Mudokons are being used to mine the bones of their ancestors to create a special drink - Soul Brew. When Abe comes around he tells the crowd of his dream, and he and a bunch of Mudokons set out to infiltrate the drinks company and save the day once again. Hooray.

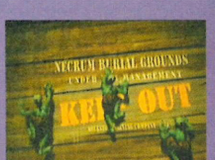










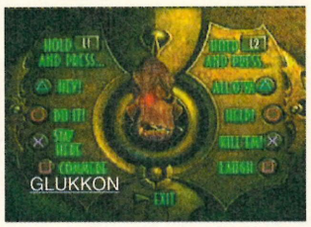


TACTICAL TALKING...

The one unique element of Abe's Exoddus is GameSpeak. This is an invention where all the characters have a set number of phrases they can come out with, and these must be used in the correct order for things to go your way. Abe, for example, must calm down his fellow Mudokons before he can get them to help him out, then talk to them to reassure them as he goes along. Oddworld Inhabitants tested the water with GameSpeak in the first game, but with Abe's Exoddus they have really enhanced the system. Take a look at what each character can say...



L1+T Hello
L1+O Work
L1+X Wait
L1+S Follow me
L2+T All ya
L2+O Sympathy
L2+X Anger
L2+S Stop it
L1+L2 Chant



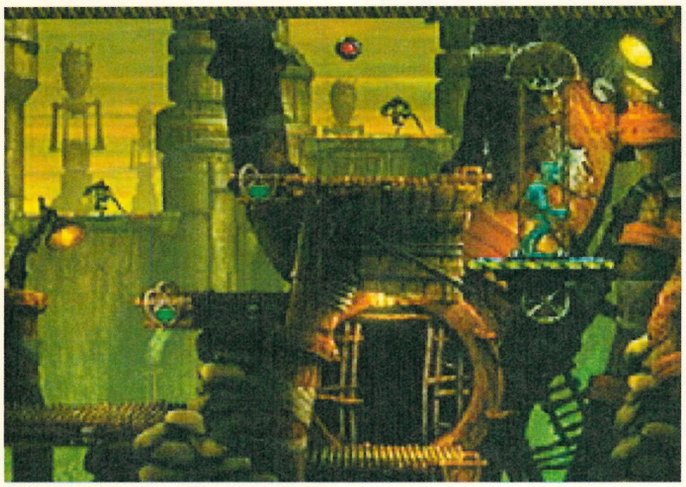
L1+T Hey
L1+O Do it
L1+X Stay here
L1+S Commere
L2+T All o ya
L2+O Help
L2+X Kill 'em
L2+S Laugh

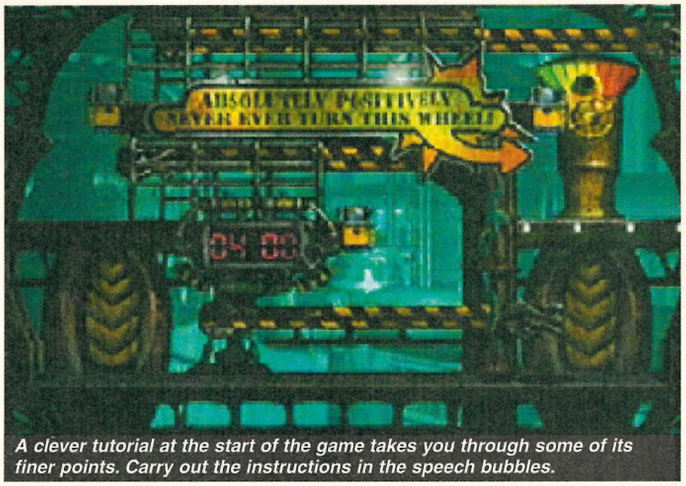


L1+T Howdy
L1+O Do it
L1+X Stay
L1+S C'mon
L2+T All a ya
L2+X Attack

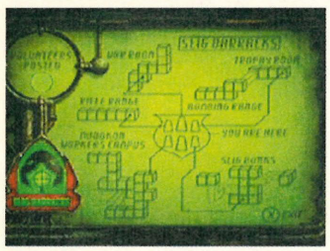


L1+T Hi
L1+O Freeze
L1+X Git 'im
L1+S Here boy
L2+T Bs
L2+O Look out
L2+X S'mo bs
L2+S Laugh

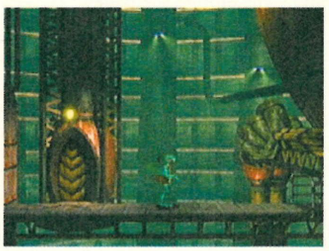


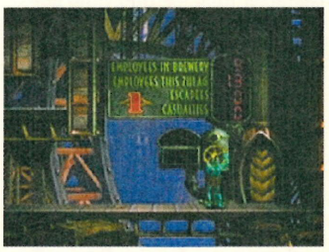


A clever tutorial at the start of the game takes you through some of its finer points. Carry out the instructions in the speech bubbles.













and a gritty, organic feel to the graphics. But sadly, when it comes down to gameplay, I personally think this game is seriously lacking.

The 2D, screen-by-screen method of game creation is the stuff of the 8-bit home computers, not a 32-bit PlayStation. As far as I can tell, it just makes things easier for the developers to put the game together, as well as making it easier for magazines to map the game. The one thing it doesn't do is create a game that flows well from start to finish -Abe's Exoddus is disjointed.

...Loading...

Then there are the awful loading times for each section. You sit there for what seems like an eternity waiting for the section to load, then attempt to cross a gap or outwit an enemy, and more often than not fail - Abe dies a terrible death. The game then has to load the entire section over again for you to have another try. This is outrageous. PlayStation games should be moving more towards a cartridge feel, minimising the waiting times between loads instead of glorifying them with messages like the 'LOADING, SO SIT DOWN AND SHADDUP.' that Abe's Exoddus gives you.

When you do start to stay alive for longer than a minute you still can't help feeling the game is too slow and methodical to be any real fun. It reminds me of the old Psygnosis classic Shadow of the Beast in look and feel, but where that game was fast-paced, Abe's Exoddus moves along like a wounded snail while you stand here, turn a wheel, run along a bit, jump up, pull a lever - only to find the wheel has moved back and you've got to start over.

No, sorry Oddworld Inhabitants. You've done a nice job on the 'world' Abe lives in, and the movie sequences are great, but try coming up with a game that's fun for the next instalment.

Doug Williams

SECOND OPINION

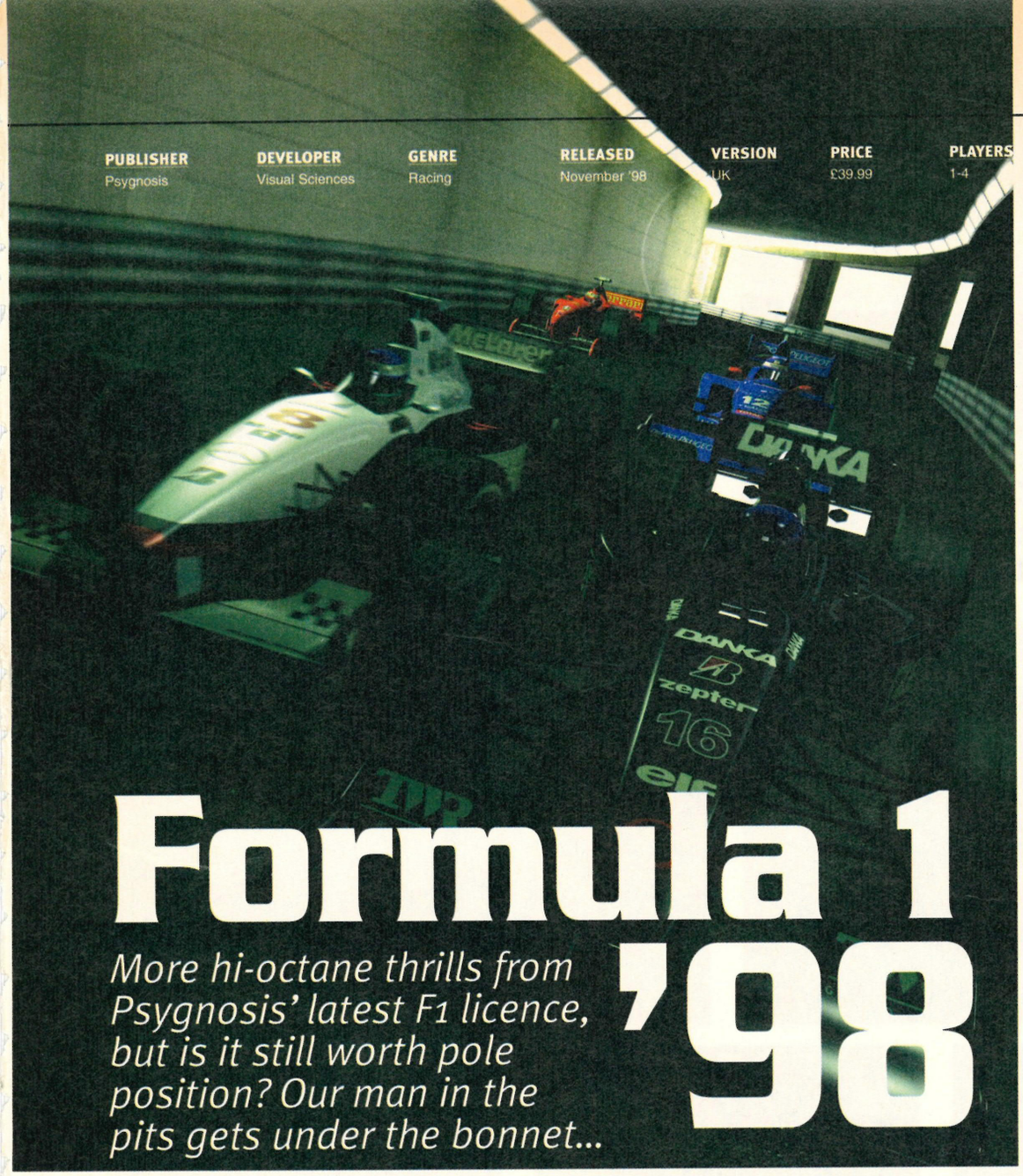
I usually like these puzzley platformers, but Abe's Exoddus left me feeling a little unsatisfied. The pace is sedate to say the least, and on the whole the gimmicks didn't amuse enough to justify shelling out £40. Buy it if you loved Abe's Oddysee, though.

Alan King

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	6
LIFESPAN	6

75%



PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS
Psygnosis	Visual Sciences	Racing	November '98	UK	£39.99	1-4

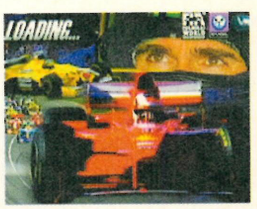
PERIPHERALS
Memory Card Multi Tap

Formula 1 '98

More hi-octane thrills from Psygnosis' latest F1 licence, but is it still worth pole position? Our man in the pits gets under the bonnet...

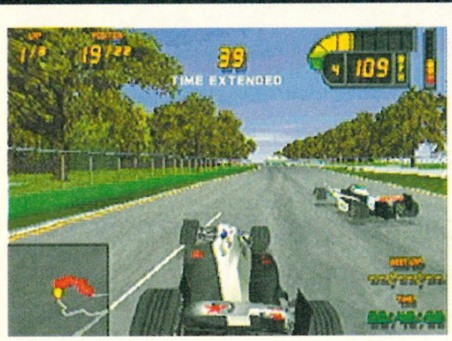
LUSCOUS LOADING...

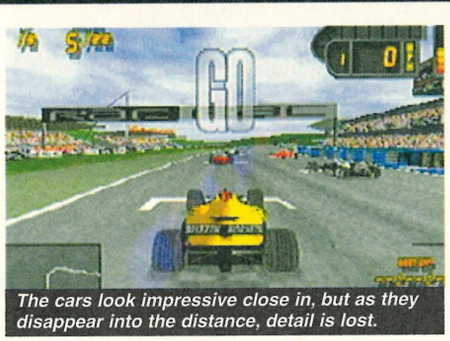
Formula 1 '98 is another game to suffer slightly from loading times, but at least players are treated to a rotating view of the track coming up along with a shot of the driver and his car. There are various cool loading screens in the game too with enough nippy cars in them to keep all driving fans happy. Take a look at some of them...



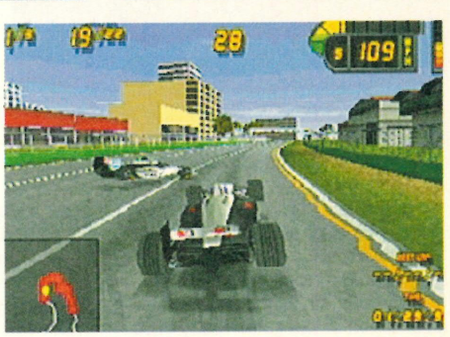








The cars look impressive close in, but as they disappear into the distance, detail is lost.





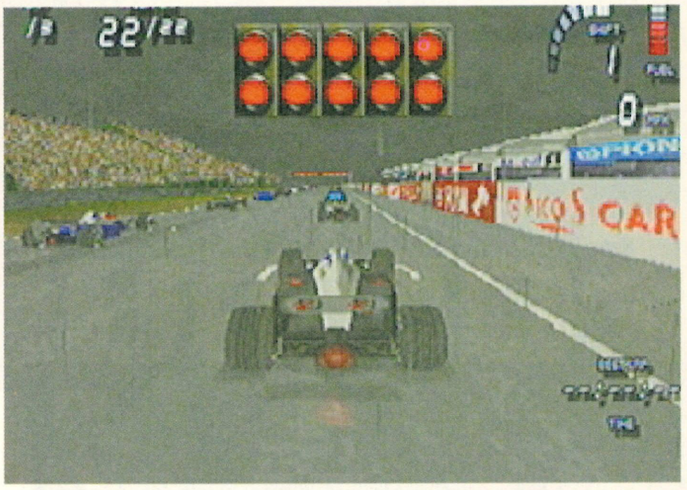




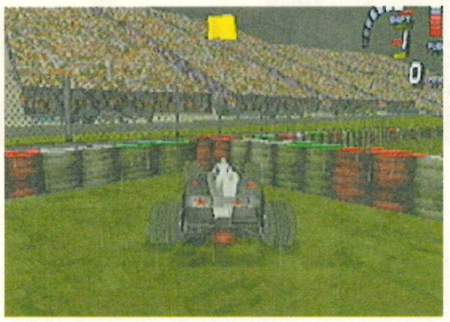


Once again Ralf Schumacher makes the gardener's life a misery.











How many more Formula 1 games can Psygnosis produce before they all start looking and playing the same? Is this one too many, or does the new incarnation of the game really have something to shout about? There's only one way to find out... gentlemen, start your engines!

If you played the previous Formula 1 games and thought they were the bees' knees, then it might surprise you to learn that Visual Sciences, the developer of this latest incarnation, has been contracted to produce another two after this! Okay, so you can update the statistics and driver names, but surely the game was nearly perfect before?

With an official licence from the FIA Formula One World Championship and all the team and racetracks from the 1998 season, Formula 1 '98 has some impressive features to brag about. The graphics around each track are now drawn from further away so you get less of the 'pop-up' that many PlayStation games suffer from. When you take a pit stop there's now a fully animated pit crew standing by in your team's colours! A new cockpit view has been included for those of you who want the 'real' driving experience and then there's the multitude of different player set-ups. one-player, two-player split-screen, two-player link-up or even a four-player split-screen via a link-up cable!

The Nutter Commentator

Of course, the game just wouldn't be the same without the screaming commentators that babble along in the background. This game has no less than 11 of them! Of course, you don't get to hear many of these

Formula 1 '98 has some impressive features to brag about...

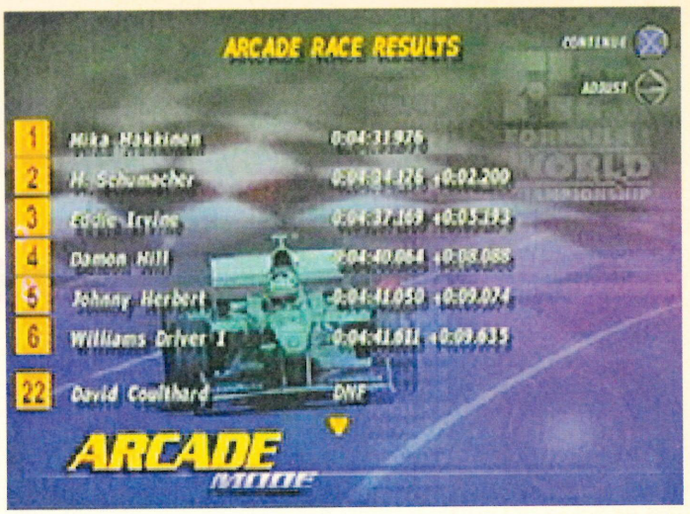
unless you play in Italian, Spanish, French or German, but for England we have two of the best. Martin Brundle and, of course, Murray Walker.

The one major criticism that was made of the previous game was that the other cars on the track had no artificial intelligence to speak of. All your competitors would do is race around the track sticking to the racing line - even if that meant knocking into the back of your car as they came closer. Well that has all been sorted out now. There are 10 artificially-intelligent cars in a multi-player game, and they really do think for themselves, pushing your skills to the limit. If they come up behind your car, they wait for an opportune moment and overtake.

All Change

The development of Formula 1 '98 has been dogged by the constant changes in Formula 1 racing. Psygnosis obviously want this game to be the more accurate and complete game on the shelves, so they have had to make and undo many changes as the 1998 season has progressed. A major change was the introduction of new narrower cars, with cut grooves in the tyres. These have been successfully implemented into the game. Near the beginning of the season some

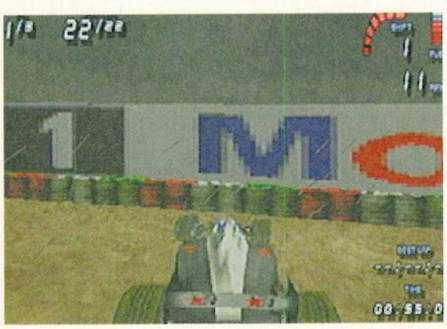


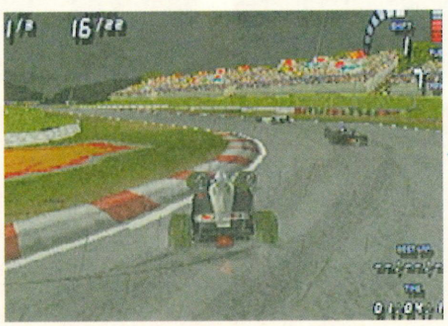




Looks like the Jordan driver's lost his hankerchief...









Visual Sciences tried to produce the most realistic game ever...

manufacturers tried out new winglets on their cars, so Psygnosis busily created the same for the game. Just as they had got the new wings up and running, the FIA banned them! So it was back to the traditional front and rear wings. Then there have been hassles with manufacturers changing their colours. Williams have gone from Rothmans blue to Winfield red, and the Arrows team has changed from blue-and-white to black. But don't fear - the game now has everything up to date!

From the Beginning...

The developers of Formula 1 '98, Visual Sciences, have started from scratch with this new game. None of the original Psygnosis code from Formula 1 '97 has made it into this version. They have also gone for a 'ultimate realism' formula, which just might be the game's downfall. I think Formula 1 '98 is just too realistic for its own good. The cars handle in such a real way using accurate physics models that you almost need to be a real Formula 1 driver to keep them on the road! In the full Grand Prix mode I just about managed to get around two laps before the car clipped a wall and disintegrated before my eyes. Fortunately you can continue driving with only three wheels and no wings!

On the 'up' side, the graphics really are fantastic. I thought the original games could never be bettered, but Visual Sciences have managed it with some great special visual effects on road spray and weather conditions and the fact that each car reacts accurately in crashes. Wheels and wings can detach from the car - and the next time you come around on the track they're exactly where you left them!

There's no doubting that Visual Sciences have gone all out to produce the most realistic game ever. There's even G-force on the driver's helmet as you go around corners - if you choose an in-car view you see the shudder in full effect! If you think you're a skilled driver who's up to the ultimate challenge in Formula 1 then give this one a try. Amateurs should stay in the pits!

Doug Williams

SECOND OPINION

There are significant improvements in the computer-controlled cars' artificial intelligence here, but in other areas the game's a step backwards. The graphics aren't as good, and the crash physics seem a little rubber. It's got the latest roster, though.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	6
LIFESPAN	7

80%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Midway Entertainment	Midway	Beat-'em-up	Out Now	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card

BioFreaks is the latest title from the guys who brought us the Mortal Kombat series, Midway. So what's their latest fighter like? Read on and all will be revealed...

BioFreaks

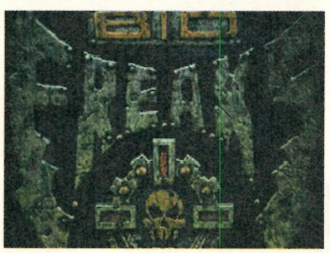
Imagine BioFreaks as a mix of some of the best beat-'em-ups of the last few years. Take the gore and mayhem of Midway's own Mortal Kombat series, add the 3D graphics of games like Tekken or War Gods, then finally sprinkle in a few new features and some outrageous special moves. Now you have BioFreaks...

You first job is to choose yourself a character. There are eight in all, and they range form human contenders like Bullzeye, who has huge weapons instead of arms, right the way through to Minatek, a half dragon-half human creature who looks so scary he doesn't need any weapons. The characters are diverse and all look really good, with excellent animation that gives them very real feel - no matter who abnormal they appear.

Graphically, BioFreaks is excellent, looking almost high-res, which gives everything a pin-sharp appearance that really looks good, and when you see just how much this feature improves the feel of the game it makes you wonder why other companies don't use it. Sound is also good, with plenty of the usually spot effects and the kind of grunts and groans you'd expect from a fighting game.

Freaky Fights

In terms of game features, BioFreaks has quite a few nice ones. For example, the weapons are not the normal run-of-the-mill stuff; we're talking huge laser guns and rocket launchers here. In addition to this, BioFreaks has interactive stages that allow you to knock



We're talking huge laser guns and rocket launchers here...



Didn't he used to be in Bros? So that's what he's doing nowadays...

MEET THE FREAKS...

Choosing yourself a character is the first step on the road to becoming a BioFreaks expert. You should choose a warrior that suits your fighting style, so you're best off trying them all out before you decide which one you're going to master. Here's a brief look at all eight fighters that feature in the game:

BULLZEYE

Bullzeye is one of the best all round characters in the game,. He has speed, strength and some excellent special moves that make him deadly when played by a BioFreaks expert. However, his ease of use also makes him a good choice for a beginner.



DELTA

This female warrior is every bit as tough as the male contenders in the game. With her combination of speed and leaping ability, Delta is a fearsome sight when played correctly. However, her lack of strength may make her difficult to pick-up in the beginning.



PURGE

Purge is another male character who is pretty good all-rounder. He has speed and strength that makes him a fast, yet powerful attacker. His special moves are nicely varied and give him the ability to fight in a number of different ways.



ZIPPERHEAD

This guy has huge weapons that he uses to overwhelm his opponents with powerful attacks and long-range laser blasts. However, this power comes at the expense of speed and this makes him tough to learn.



MINATEK

This huge monster-like creature is certainly not human and has the strength of an ox. He may not have much in the way of speed, but when he connects with an attack your opponent is really going to know about it. However, his lack of speed makes him a character suited to expert players.



SADO

This guy may sound a little strange, but he is far from sad. He has speed and power, but lacks a decent range of special attacks. However, having said this you can certainly cause some damage with the jump-in-attack-then-retreat tactic.



PSYCLOWN

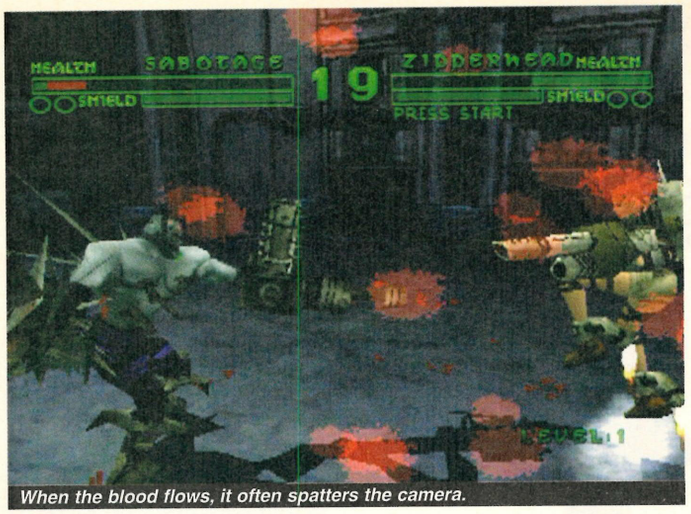
No this guy is mad, totally mad - just look at him. He is dressed in a clown outfit, but is far from funny. His special attacks are some of the best in the game, and when controlled by a decent player, Psyclown can be unbeatable.



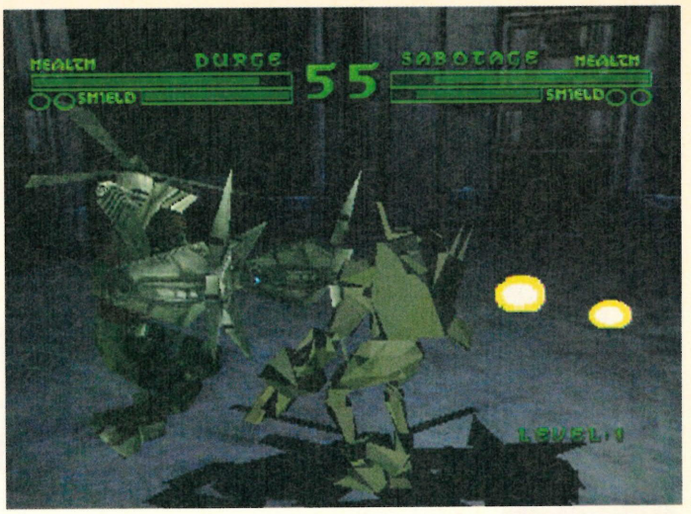
SABOTAGE

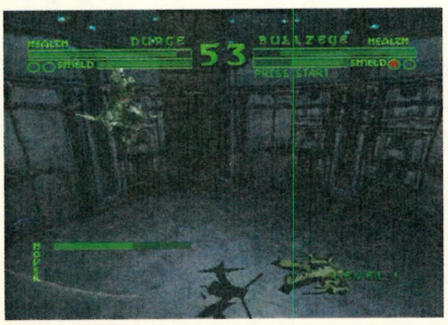
The second female character in BioFreaks is similar to her fellow female warrior in that she uses speed and jumping ability rather than power to overwhelm her opponent. This combination is very difficult to stop when Sabotage is played by any half-decent BioFreaks player.

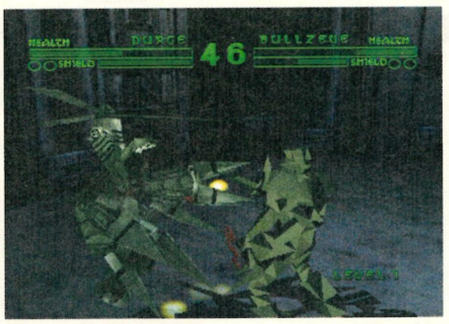




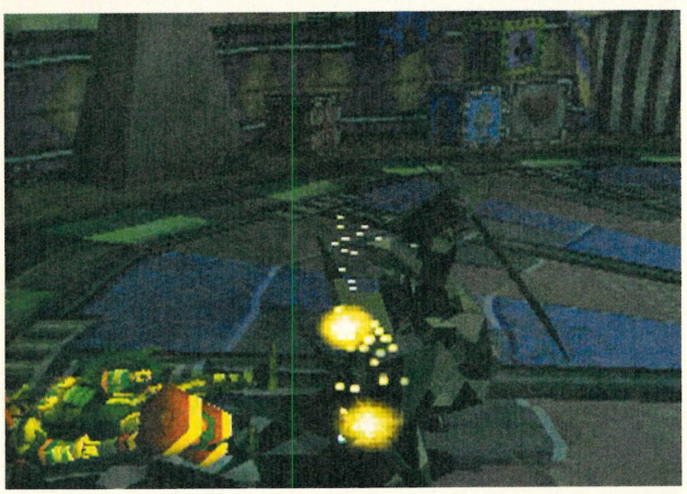
When the blood flows, it often spatters the camera.













opponents out of the ring and into lava, slime and the like. This feature has been done before, but here it can really be used as a tactical strategy and helps to add another element to the game.

So has BioFreaks got what it takes to be king of the fighters on PlayStation? Well, not quite. First off, I don't like the fact that the instant death moves are a little easy to perform. In most cases you could be forgiven for thinking they are basic special attacks, not a fatality-style move the should really prove a little more difficult, making the player work for the reward.

Even when you get down to your last your last few points of health and an opponent is at full strength, the game gives the underdog a chance of winning, and this is all well and good, but it means fluky wins are all-too-common. This takes away the skill element of using combos and special attacks, and in some cases the game degenerates into a button-bashing exercise. A little bit of tightening up from Midway would have stopped this problem and increased the playability greatly.



Another problem I have is there are hardly any combo attacks in the game. Each character only has a handful of combos to use, and this makes them very predictable, particularly when you are fighting against a good player of the same skill. Because both players can almost be sure of what the combo will be, they can stop it with relative ease and once again this takes away a skilful element of the game.



Other than these problems, it must be said that Midway have come up with a good game that has some really nice features, great graphics and eight original characters. Yeah, most of it has been done before (in many cases by Midway themselves), but this can't change the fact that BioFreaks is an enjoyable game that's well worth a look if you are into beat-'em-ups.

Alan King

SECOND OPINION

Sometimes this game's just too clever for its own good. All that flying about with jetboots or whatever is very clever, but taking the battle to the air like that becomes irritating after a while. The level of blood involved is incredible, though.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

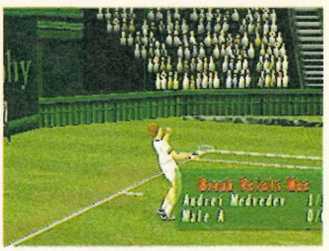
GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	6
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	8

80%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Gremlin Interactive	Gremlin Interactive	Sports Sim	Out Now	UK	£44.99	1-4	Memory Card Multi Tap	Analogue Dual Shock

Summer wouldn't be the same without bad weather, novelty pop songs and a first-round exit for Britain's latest hope at Wimbledon, but can Actua Tennis lift the trophy?

Actua Tennis





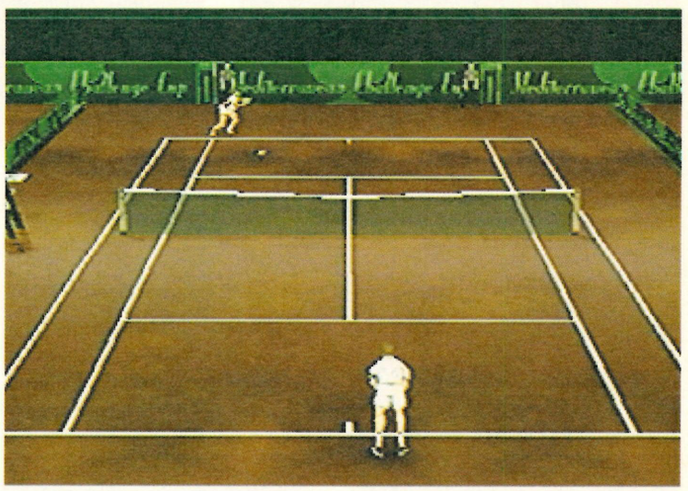
Dust off your dad's wooden racquet', screams the press release, 'and pick the cobwebs off the balls at the back of the shed'. Here at EPM, we recommend you do just that. It's a darned sight cheaper than Actua Tennis, and even if the racquet has no strings it's still more fun.

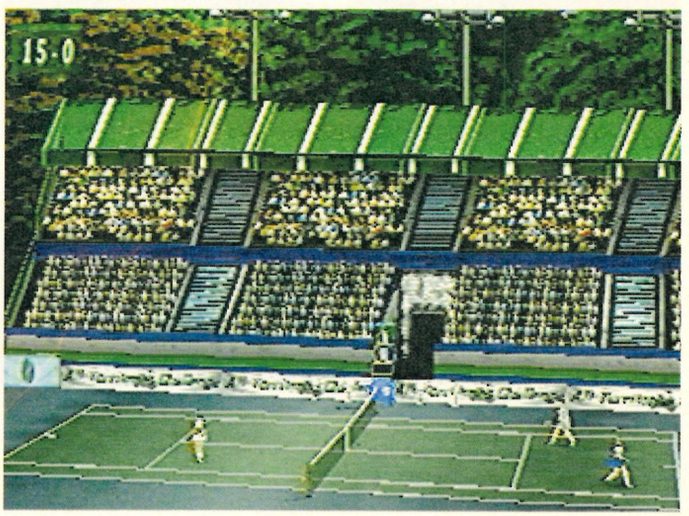
It's difficult to see why Actua Tennis went so wrong. The players are all motion-captured, so the animations should be spot-on. So why aren't they? The way the speed across the court like a five-year-old who's soiled his underwear on his way to the bog is hilarious - as long as you didn't pay for the game. The players look especially bad when playing a shot. They frequently return a ball that was nowhere near their racquet, and the players' shot animation is often completely out of synch with the on-screen action, the character swinging his racquet AFTER the ball has been hit.

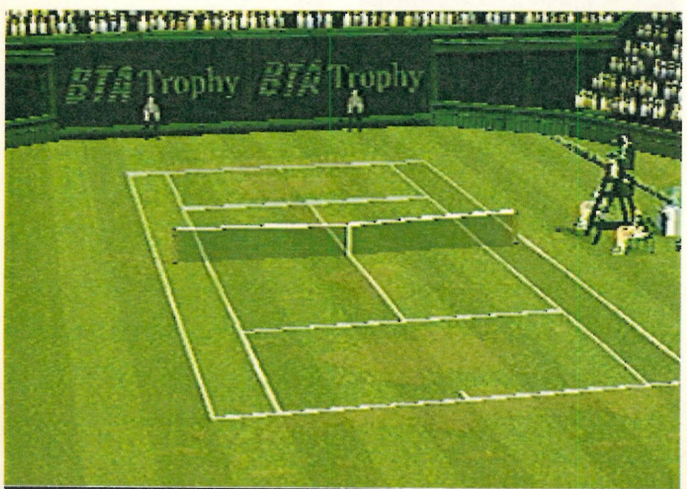
The gameplay's not much better either. The control method's tedious in the extreme, with a serve system that would look more at home in a golf game. Receiving serves is even worse - due to the poor animation on your opponent it's impossible to read where the serve is going, so you have to give it your best guess and hope for the best.

New Balls, Please...

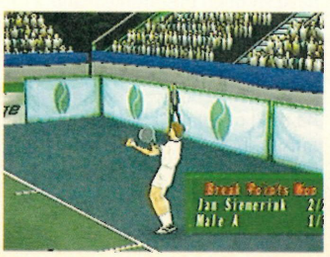
It doesn't end there either. Rallies are tedious and plastic - the after-touch, used to aim the ball when playing a shot, is a real pain in the arse to use, usually resulting in the ball falling at your feet. This is because you apply after-touch to the ball immediately after hitting it; not easy when the animation confuses the point of impact. It's far easier to just wellie it over the net and hope for the best, then. Unfortunately, this method of play is just as productive as learning to play the game properly, due to some hideous faults in the CPU players' AI. Smash the ball across the court, into the corner of the target area, and your opponent rockets across the ring and gets it anyway (the players move much too fast in this game). Wallop the ball into the corner opposite and again he pulls off a miraculous shot,

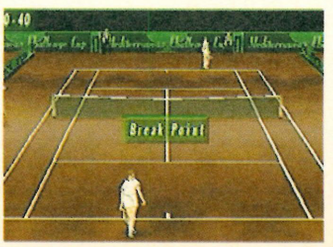




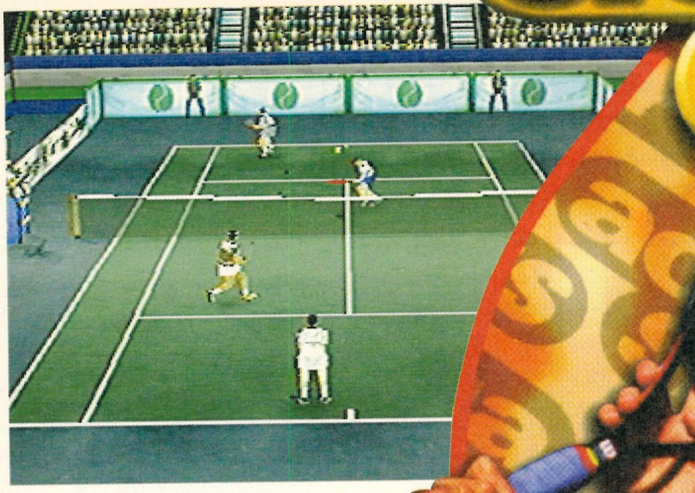


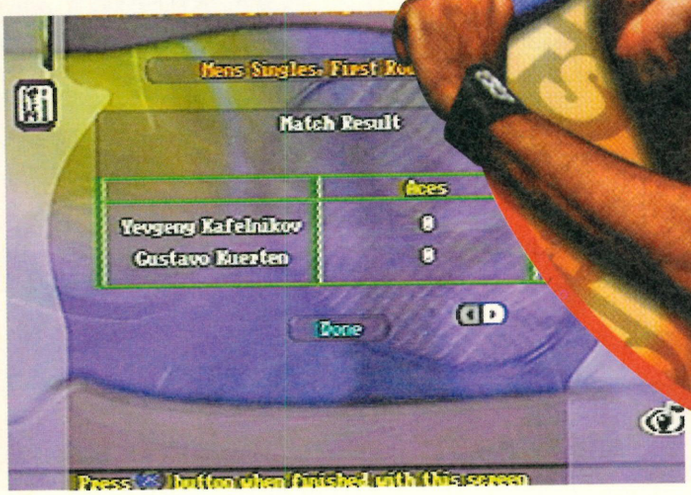
So far so good, but it all goes wrong when the players get up and play.

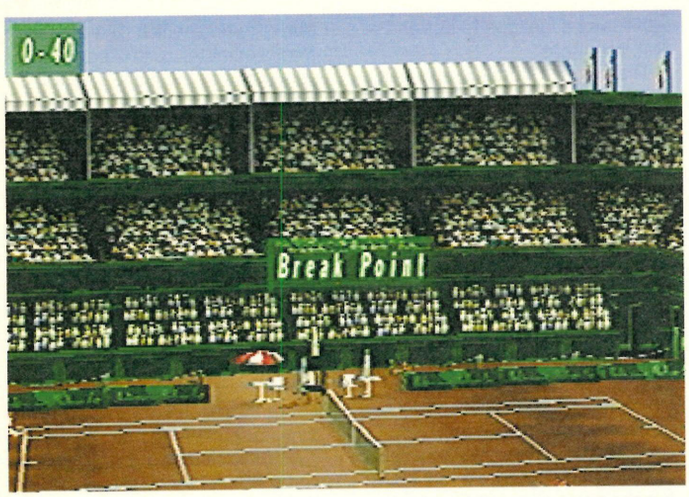




actua TENNIS







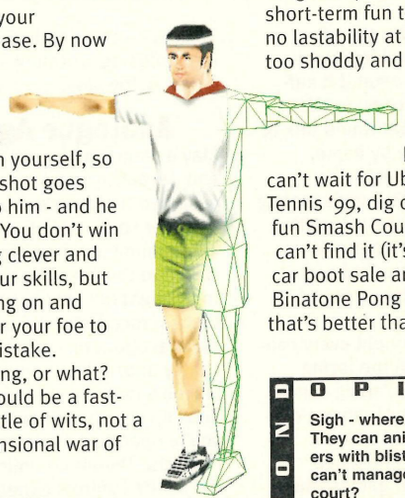


shoddy and unfinished product. When you've played for an hour or so and got used to the game's irritating idiosyncrasies there is a little short-term fun to be had here, but no lastability at all - the game's just too shoddy and too shallow.

I realise tennis sims on the PSX are few and far between, but if you can't wait for Ubi Soft's All Star Tennis '99, dig out the arcadey but fun Smash Court Tennis. If you can't find it (it's very old), go to a car boot sale and pick up an old Binatone Pong machine. Even that's better than Actua Tennis.

Ian Osborne

returning your ball with ease. By now you've probably been pulled out of position yourself, so your next shot goes straight to him - and he misses it! You don't win by playing clever and honing your skills, but by plodding on and waiting for your foe to make a mistake. Unsatisfying, or what? Tennis should be a fast-paced battle of wits, not a one-dimensional war of attrition.



Mindless Mutterings

There are further, lesser faults to be found in Actua Tennis. The commentary, for example, is appalling, with Barry Davies offering quips which would be helpful in a tutorial, but just grate during the match. The sound effects are so hollow you'd think the game was played in a long, thin tunnel and the general stop-start nature of the sonics (ball effect, ball effect, crowd effect, comment) does nothing for the atmosphere at all.

On the positive side, all the options and variables you'd expect from an Actua game are there and the overall presentation's sound, but this can hardly save such a

SECOND OPINION

Sigh - where did they go wrong? They can animate 22 soccer players with blistering precision, but can't manage two on a tennis court?
There is fun to be had here, but the game's not worth anything like £40. Or even £4.

Dave France

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	4
SOUND	6
GAMEPLAY	4
LIFESPAN	4

31%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Gremlin Interactive	Gremlin Interactive	Driving	November '98	UK	£39		Memory Card NeGcon Steering Wheel Analogue

Buggy

Aw damn it, the batteries have run out..

It takes gonads the size of Gatwick to call a video game 'Buggy'. I mean, what if it suffered graphical glitches, or if it crashed? The reviews would talk of nothing but; 'Buggy by name, Buggy by nature', they'd say. Thankfully, Gremlin's games testing department have done a decent job, so smart-arsed magazine reviewers will have to find something else to take the rip out of. Damn!

Just when you thought every conceivable variation on the racing game had been tried, along comes Buggy. Based on those remote-controlled cars we all had as kids, Buggy features two Challenge modes, single-player games where you must beat your three computer-controlled foes to win the coveted gold medal. Complete the first to open both the second Challenge and also the Track Attack, where you can race against the clock or simply search for secret areas and short-cuts. Choosing tracks is achieved by driving around four circular level hubs bordered by 'doors' which access tracks, the Game Selection screen and save areas. It's confusing, irritating, and frankly a pain in the arse.

Analogue Agony

May a plague of locusts descend on and devour the person who designed the game's analogue support. For some bizarre reason, acceleration and braking have been slaved to the left stick and steering to the right one, the exact opposite to most racers. There's nothing illogical about this, of course - it's simply unusual, but anyone who's played a racer on analogue before finds it virtually unplayable as you're operating against your instincts. There's no option to swap the stick's controls either. We can forgive the instruction manual for attributing a function to button 'R3', I suppose.

The buggies handle pretty well, bouncing along like the lightweight toys they represent. You get a selection to choose from, offering different (but not very different) acceleration, top speed, grip and weight ratings. Bonus cars can be found during the game, and these offer more extreme differences in stats. Steering can be imprecise in digital mode, though - another reason to curse the analogue snarl-up.

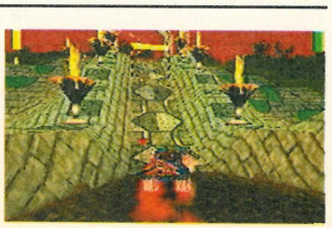
Driving is unsophisticated (what did you expect? Gears?), but it's a laugh nonetheless. Races consist of three laps round short track, offering just enough time to plan ahead. The two-player game's a real hoot, but the game cries out for a four-player option, which isn't offered. More computer-controlled cars would add to the game's frantic appeal too.

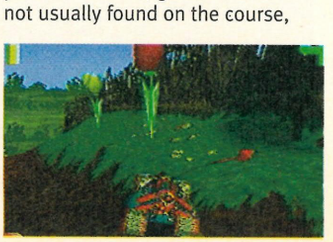
You can play it with a mate without the guy who owns the game winning every race simply because he's more experienced.

The tracks themselves are set over a variety of terrains. One minute you're racing through your back garden, bouncing over bumps and dodging mushrooms and trees, the next it's on the road through a small cityscape. Other courses (there are 15 tracks in all) cover beaches, woodlands and even a volcanic jungle. Although the cars aren't really fast in themselves (they're radio-controlled buggies, not F1 racers), the tight courses and huge graphics lend a feeling of speed and immediacy which could easily have proved absent. You really drive by the seat of your pants as you take to the air once more, struggling to keep all four wheels on the ground as you veer up a dirt bank to overtake the race leader. While you're at it, try driving OVER the dirt bank too. There are numerous secrets and bonus areas to discover, such as short cuts to cut out part of the track, gates of a colour not usually found on the course,



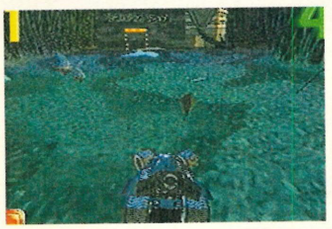


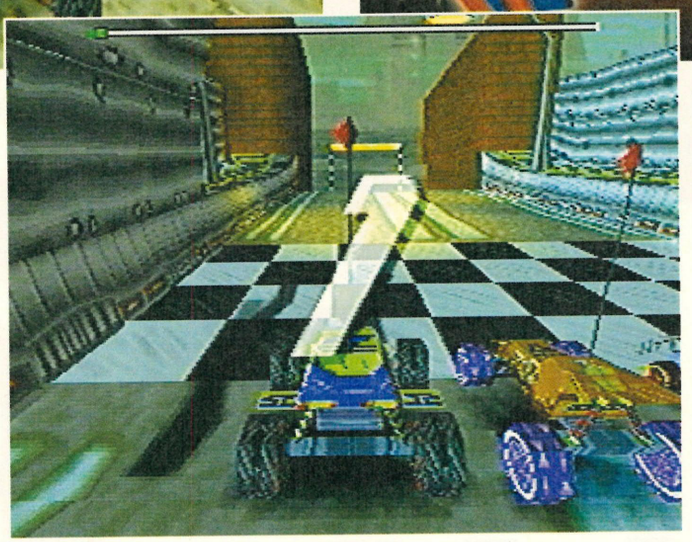


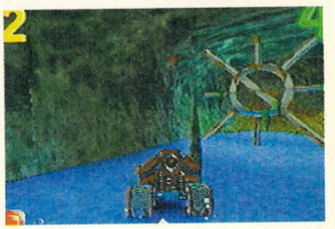


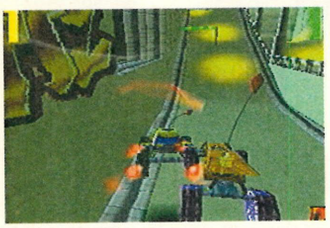














Driving is unsophisticated, but it's a laugh nonetheless

teleporters to take you to previously-unreachable areas and bonus buggies to add to your collection.

I Have the Power...

Talking of taking to the air, one of the power-ups offers you a pair of rotors, so you can fly over the opposition. Great stuff if you can get it - it's not easy to win. To earn a power-up you must drive through the coloured gates found dotted around the track. Speed through the first (any colour) and you're offered the colour of the next gate to drive through, building a colour combination which, when complete, offers its respective power-up. Some are relatively short, eg. yellow/red for a Speed-Up, green/yellow for Meanie Mode, but to get the really cool bonuses you need to chain four or five colours. These combos invariably end on a seldom-found colour, the gate for which is very well hidden. Some are found behind barriers or in mid-air. Indeed, occasionally essential gates are inaccessible unless you're already using a different power-up.

Driving through a gate out of sequence re-sets the colour meter. This is a major hazard as you find gates positioned on and off the racing line. Do you avoid an awkwardly-placed gate and preserve your chance of winning a power-up, losing valuable seconds and possibly your race position, or speed through and abandon the bonus in order to stay ahead? Many races are lost through spending too much time chasing power-ups, but ignore them and you're at a tremendous disadvantage (your opponents can use them too). Power-ups last for a limited time, but gathering a new one doesn't cancel a bonus you might already hold.

Buggy isn't a deep game and certainly lacks the long-term challenge of, say, Gran Turismo or Colin McRae Rally, but it scores heavily for sheer pick-up-and-playability. This makes it a great multi-player game, as you can play it with a mate without the guy who owns the game winning every race simply because he's more experienced. Shame four players can't go head to head, then. Even as a single-player game, the secrets and bonuses keep you interested.

If you tend to switch your PlayStation on in a spare 20 minutes, Buggy's accessibility and bite-sized challenges will suit you well. If, however, you like to set aside several hours at a time and thrash a game to death, you may find it too shallow.

Ian Osborne

SECOND OPINION

This one's interesting, but ultimately unsatisfying. The main problem with the real-life remote controlled cars is that the batteries wore out in seconds, and the game lacks lastability too. It can't keep pace with the likes of MotorHead and Gran Turismo.

Doug Williams

POWER UP!

There are six different power-ups to be won by driving through the gates in the correct order:

SPEED UP: Go faster. It can be built up through three levels by claiming the same power-up again.

MEANIE MODE: Barge your way through the field, knocking your foes out of the way.

TIME STOP: Freezes time for your opponents. The screen turns grey, and they're frozen for a few seconds.

MEGA-GRIP: Bigger wheels grip the road better, offering improved handling.

GHOST: Drift through doors and barriers. Short cuts become easier and mystery areas can be found.

COPTER: Grow a pair of rotors and fly over the track. Great power-up if you can find the purple gate needed to finish the combo.

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	6
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	6

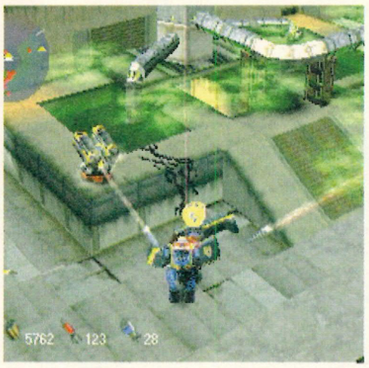
70%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Electronic Arts	Electronic Arts	Shoot-'em-up / Strategy	October '98	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card

With a main character like the ED-209 from Robocop and gameplay similar to Nuclear Strike, can this game offer anything original?



Schools aren't what they used to be...





Future Cop: LAPD 2100

Originality is dead - long live the Robocop clone! Well, let's face it, Electronic Arts' Future Cop: LAPD 2100 is nothing but another variant on the futuristic Robocop theme. The last decade has seen countless contenders to the futuristic police shoot-out crown, and this is just the latest. But that doesn't mean the game's no good...

The ED-209 mechanical beast from the Robocop trilogy was a menacing and effective movie villain. It towered above any man, was pre-programmed with every law and could deal out swift justice. I wonder if the mechanoid's creators knew they had created something that would inspire videogame and movie people for a decade to come?

It's obvious that Robocop was the starting point for the developers of Future Cop: LAPD, with the lead 'character' being an ED-209 lookalike called TAC X-1 Alpha, but with a twist - this mechanoid can turn into a hover car at the press of a button.

The theme behind this game may not be original, but the game itself certainly is. There are two variations on the shoot-'em-up theme here: Crime War and Precinct Assault.

Enter the War Zone...

In a Crime War game, the objective is simple; rid the city of its criminal element using the awesome array of weaponry at your disposal and by flitting between the two incarnations of walker and hover car. You first get to enter your name, adding a personal element for high score purposes, then the difficulty level: Easy, Normal or Difficult. With those options selected, you can go on to choose the zone you want to play in by highlighting a section of the LA map - they're all as ruthless as each other.

The final options to select before starting a mission are which weapons to take with you into the war zone. If you're on your first game, you don't have any choice, but picking up new weapons as you roam around the city makes this screen vitally important in later missions. Adjusting your firepower to suit the terrain and criminals you're up against is an essential strategic element to the game.

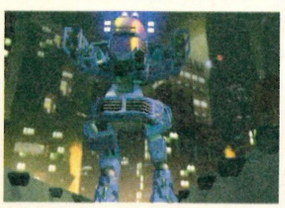
Now it's time to scour the city for criminals. As you progress, you're updated on the whereabouts of the scum and given specific tasks to complete by a sexy female voice from HQ. I don't know how she does it, but she's often got insider information on weak spots to aim for and tricks on winning the day.

I'VE SEEN THE FUTURE...

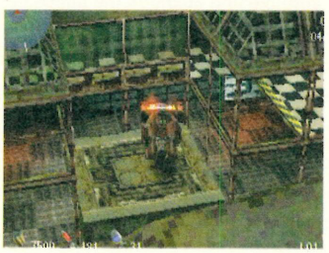
Electronic Arts not only treat you to a cool-looking intro sequence in Future Cop: LAPD, but there's also a rendered sequence to start each zone of the battle. These aren't just to look pretty, though - vital pointers and information on the challenges up ahead can be gained by intently watching the movie, so don't press that joypad button too soon!





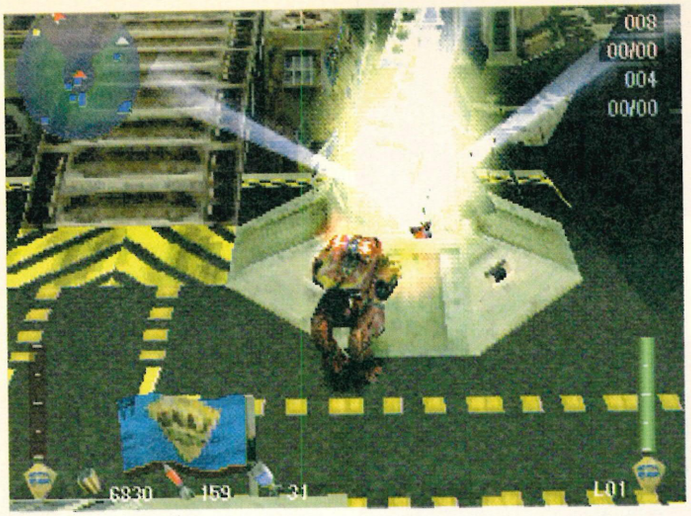




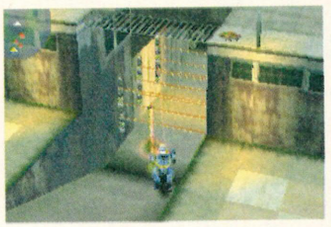




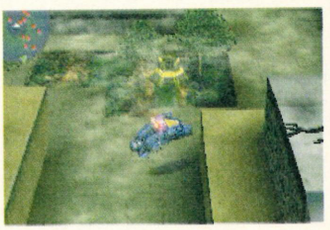












This is a well thought out, highly addicted game

The 3D layout of Los Angeles is highly detailed and contains many nooks and crannies where you find a diverse selection of enemies hanging out. You can quite easily lose your way, so the map screen can be your lifeline - press the map button and you get an aerial view of the level, showing the locations of enemies, pick-ups and, fortunately, you!

Precinct Assault

The Precinct Assault game adds a whole new element to Future Cop: LAPD 2100. It's set up in the same way as Crime War, by choosing a zone to play in and weapons to take with you, but this part of the game has a unique concept and design. This mode is made to be played by two players battling against each other, but there is a one-player option where you take on the Sky Captain, an Artificial Intelligence opponent, instead.

So what's the aim of the game, then? The two players take on the role of the Red Team and Blue Team and take part in a highly strategic battle. The ultimate goal is to infiltrate the opponent's base and win the round. With each victorious battle you win, the difficulty level is ramped up until you're completely out of your depth. Points play a vitally important part of the Precinct Assault game and are awarded for killing enemy forces, capturing neutral forces and blowing up pretty much anything. These points can then be used to purchase new units to build up your own battle force for the next game.

Upholding the Law

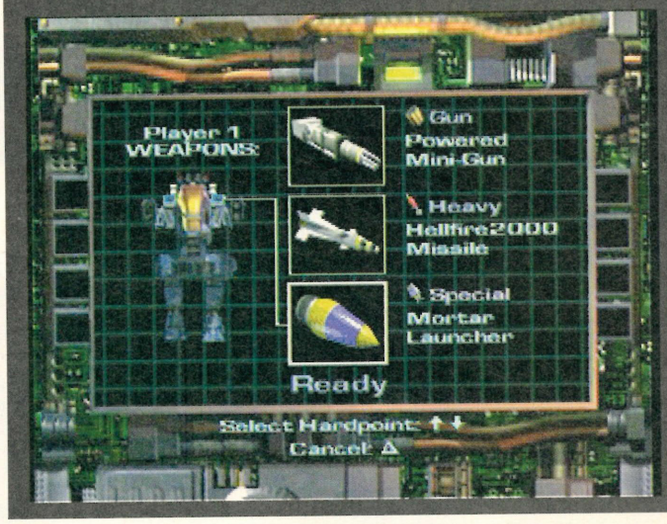
So does Future Cop: LAPD 2100 deliver the goods? Yep! This is a well thought out, highly addictive game, but you only discover this fact when you've played through a few missions. On the surface, the game seems like just another mixture of ideas and gameplay elements that we've all seen many times before. But persevere and you find a game that works really well as a mindless blaster or as a strategic mind-boggler. The two-player Precinct Assault is great fun, as are most head-to-head two player battles, as long as you're playing against someone with gameplaying skills equal to your own.

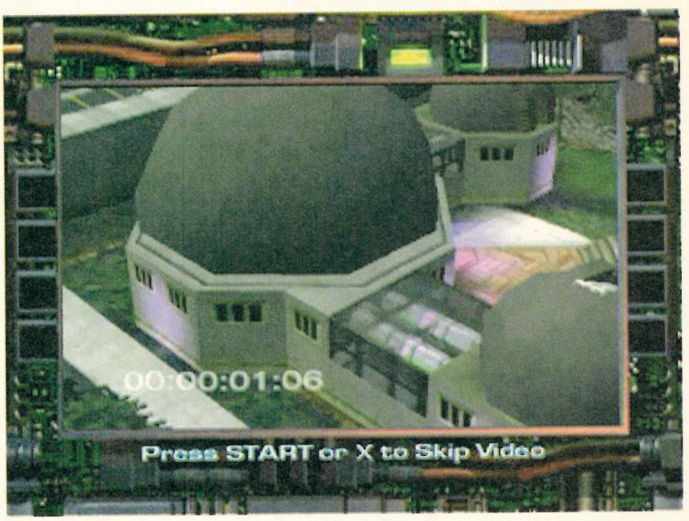
Give Future Cop: LAPD 2100 a whirl - it's a welcome addition to any PlayStation collection.

Doug Williams

PUT DOWN YOUR WEAPON...
YOU HAVE 20 SECONDS TO COMPLY!

On the one hand, Future Cop: LAPD is an all-out blast of a game where the objective is to shoot anything and everything to kingdom come! On the other, taking the time to think about the next battle strategically, and carefully selecting the weaponry you take into the battlezone with you could reap great rewards! Before each game, you are taken to the weaponry screen where all the weapons you've picked up can be chopped and changed to suit the terrain and enemies coming up.









SECOND OPINION

I didn't like this as much as Doug. I found the meandering camera a pain in the eyes, and the whole concept's just a shallow inmitation of Soviet/Nuclear Strike. That's not to say it's a bad game; just not one I'd put at the top of my 'must play' list.

Ian

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	9
LIFESPAN	8

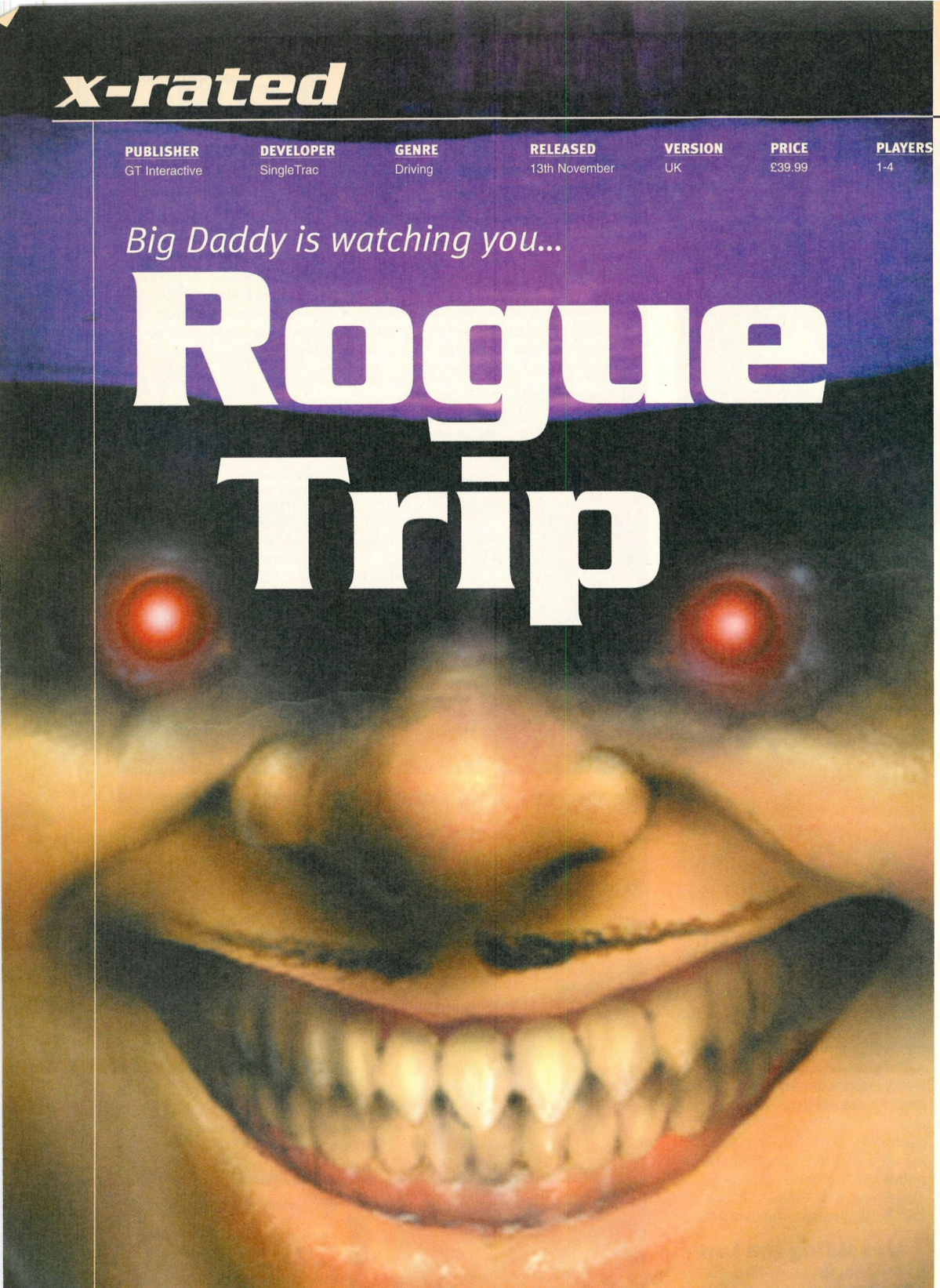
85%

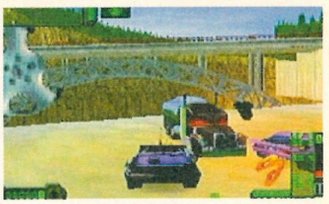
PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS
GT Interactive	SingleTrac	Driving	13th November	UK	£39.99	1-4

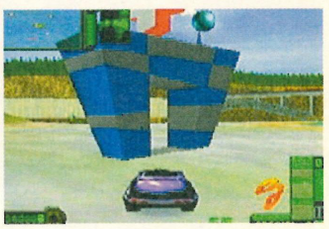
PERIPHERALS
Memory Card
Steering Wheel
Analogue
Multi Tap

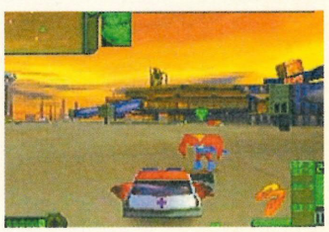
Big Daddy is watching you...

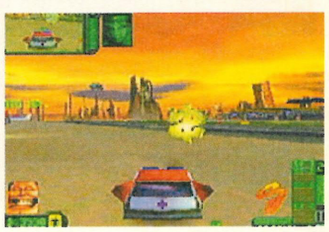
Rogue Trip

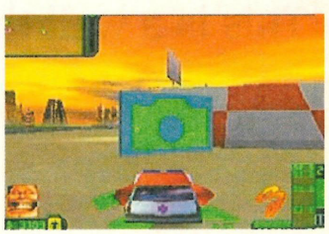














We all know the world is going to become a corrupt, desolate place in the distant future, but we never dreamt for a moment that we would have to hire mercenaries to take us on holiday. Alas, that's what has happened in Rogue Trip. It's 2012 and a media giant named Big Daddy has taken over all the world's holiday destinations, and is charging a fortune to visit them. Not everyone can afford his prices, though...

Most of the planet has been ravaged by war. Disease and starvation is widespread and life at home is bleak, so obviously everyone could do with a good holiday. Sadly, with the extortionate prices Big Daddy charges, only the privileged few can take up his offer. The rest use the AAA - a group of auto mercenaries. These glorified taxi drivers pick up tourists and take them around the sights for the right price. In Rogue Trip, you are an auto mercenary driver and tourists are few and far between.

With a tourist safely strapped into your car, you must fight off rival mercenaries and quickly make your way around the holiday location to find all the photo opportunities. Here they take snaps of their outing for their scrapbook while you keep your eyes on the road. Things are tough out there. The other mercenaries attack you without provocation, and if you have a tourist in your car you are even more vulnerable. They attempt to eject the tourist out of your vehicle, and pick them up themselves.

Luckily you're well equipped with the best weaponry the 21st Century can offer, and there are plenty of weapon power-ups stashed around each location. All you have to do to pick them up is drive on through them. In addition to these pick-ups, there are ammo and health stations that revitalise your ailing vehicle.

It's Flamin' Mad

Just like the Twisted Metal games that came before it, Rogue Trip is one manic game. As you battle your way through the mayhem it's really tough to keep track of what is going on. Luckily there are pointers to the photo opportunities and tourists, so you always have a rough idea of where you should be heading. It's this manic style that really makes the game work, though. In the first level alone you get missiles flying in from the left, some nutter attacking from the right and a plane landing on your head from above. It's really good fun.

Interesting tactics present themselves throughout; for example, a sneaky player can sit on the tourist's ultimate destination and allow an opponent to bring him to you. Then blast the squit out of

THESE GUYS ARE NUTS...

If this gaggle of loonies is what the human race will sink to in the future, I'm staying put in 1998.
It's obvious that a lot of time and effort has gone into creating these cool characters - sure they're barmy (they remind of the nutters from the Loaded games), but they could never be accused of being two-dimensional or boring.
If I ever take a taxi ride with one of these nutters, it had better be the nun - she's no less dangerous, but at least I'd die happy...





SCHIZ O'MANIC
Drives: Ozone
Special Weapon: Shock Treatment
Top Speed: ●●●●●●
Handling: ●●●●●●
Armour: ●●●●●●●
Mass: ●●●●●●●●
Where do they find these nutters? Schiz drives around the game with his feet on the wheel. He's still wearing the straightjacket he escaped from the loony bin in, and his hair is fried from the electro-treatment.





RATMAN
Drives: Intruder
Special Weapon: The Ripper
Top Speed: ●●●●●●●●
Handling: ●●●●●●●
Armour: ●●●●●●●
Mass: ●●●●●●
You can see why this guy got his name with a nose like that. Ratman has a motto, 'Man by day, rat by night, saving others from their plight'. If he sticks to that, he'll be a pushover.





FRANCIS 'LEGS' McGEE
Drives: Vermin
Special Weapon: Disrupt-O-Ray
Top Speed: ●●●●●●●●●●
Handling: ●●●●●●●●
Armour: ●●●●
Mass: ●●●
As you can probably tell by his large beer belly, Francis was once a pro-wrestler. He has a special way of attacking his foes. He turns away, then when they're least expecting it his prances towards them and attacks.





DAISY JUNE McCOY
Drives: Gator Bait
Special Weapon: Chicken Lickin'
Top Speed: ●●●●●●●
Handling: ●●●●●●●●●●
Armour: ●●●
Mass: ●●●●
She may look like a harmless babe, but Daisy June is a top mechanic with a mean streak. She has converted her airboat into a prop-driven death-trap. She's 'guar-on-teed to slit your chitlins'.





AGENT ORANGE
Drives: Biohazard
Special Weapon: Zoony Rockets
Top Speed: ●●●●●
Handling: ●●●●●
Armour: ●●●●●●●●●●
Mass: ●●●●●●●●●●
This guy is very mysterious, dressed in a nuclear fallout suit, elbow length gloves and a gas mask. He has escaped from chemical warfare duty by using his top-secret tank.





SNAKE EYE SHADDOCK
Drives: Sidewinder
Special Weapon: Exploding Arrow
Top Speed: ●●●●●●●●
Handling: ●●●●●●●●●
Armour: ●●●●●
Mass: ●●●●
This ain't no cowboys and indians game - this guy is a cyber-cowboy with a laser shot that beams out of one eye (hence the name) and a mechanical arm. Clint Eastwood would be proud.





SISTER MARY LASCIVIOUS
Drives: Destroying Angel
Special Weapon: Torched by an Angel
Top Speed: ●●●●●
Handling: ●●●●●●
Armour: ●●●●●●●●
Mass: ●●●●●●●●●●
Whoa. This is a nun? This sister has one mega-mean habit. She is armed with divine missile guidance and has a penchant for discipline. You don't want to mess around with her.





RICHARD 'DICK' BIGGS
Drives: Meat Wagon
Special Weapon: Weenie Whacker
Top Speed: ●●●●●●
Handling: ●●●●●●●
Armour: ●●●●●●
Mass: ●●●●●●●●
This bloke is meat mad. His clothes are blood-stained from chopped carcasses and he drives around in a giant hot-dog van. Don't let his size fool you though - he's as mean as they come.





MEGAROBOT
Drives: Pyro
Special Weapon: Vapor Cloud
Top Speed: ●●●●
Handling: ●●●●●
Armour: ●●●●●●●●
Mass: ●●●●●●●●
They always said the robots would go mad and try to take over the world - Megarobot is proof. This hunk of chips and processors is attracted to anything flammable or explosive.



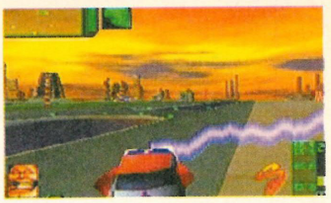


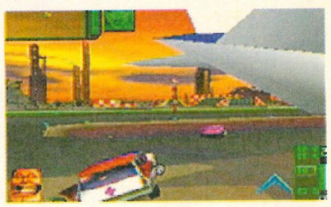
ELVIS D. KANG
Drives: Rock 'n' Rule
Special Weapon: Glitter Rocket
Top Speed: ●●●●●●●
Handling: ●●●●●●●
Armour: ●●●●●
Mass: ●●●●●
Dressed like the King of Rock 'n' Roll in his later years, this jump-suited jester packs some impressive firepower. The Glitter Rocket can only be measured in megatons.





BUNNY
Drives: Bitchin' Wheels
Special Weapon: Poodle Power
Top Speed: ●●●●●●●●
Handling: ●●●●●●●
Armour: ●●●●●●
Mass: ●●●●●
This girl used to be a beauty queen but she traded in her sash and sceptre for a sawn off shotgun. She has the biggest hair of any character in the game.









your unfortunate rival (the car with the tourist is clearly marked), pick up the passenger who's ejected when the vehicle's destroyed and take him where he wants to go yourself. Virtually all the scenery is interactive too - blast it to smithereens, toppling towers, battering buildings and generally wrecking the joint.

When you add to all this the extra dimension of up to four players battling it out at once, you know you've got a real winner on your hands. Congratulations must go to SingleTrac, the team behind Rogue Trip they've created themselves a monster hit.

Doug Williams

SECOND OPINION

I enjoyed Rogue Trip. The wacked-out characters, the laughably unrealistic plot, the crazy cars... It all adds up to one fun-packed game. Interactive scenery, great scenarios and spectacular weapons make this car combat at its best.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

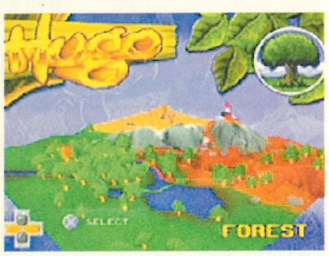
GRAPHICS	6
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	9

81%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
ITE Media	ITE Media	Arcade Adventure	TBA	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card



Just my luck - the first train that's on time this year, and I run into it...

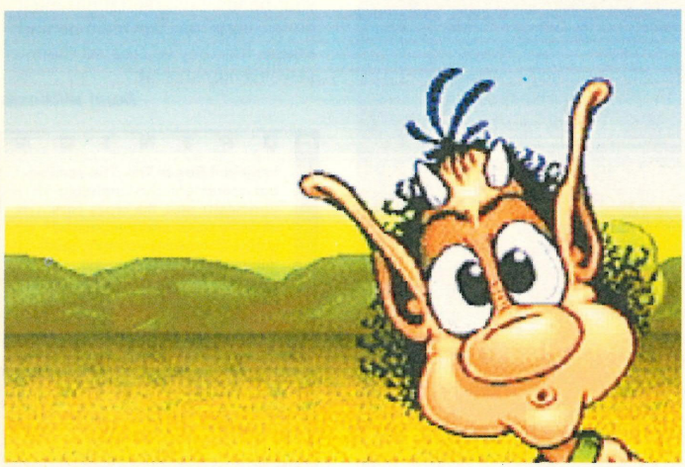


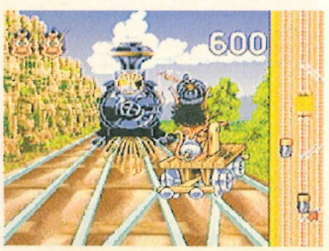




Although this cute little troll's a big hit on the continent he's but scarcely known over here, so can ITE Media's kiddie creation cut it?

Hugo







Now don't laugh. Before I start this review, there's something you need to know. Hugo has been created with six-year-olds in mind. It's never going to go head-to-head with Resident Evil 2 or Tekken 3, so I'm not going to review it in comparison to those kind of games. Instead I've borrowed my nephew and niece, and we're going to have a nice game of Hugo (and I'm charging them 10p a go).

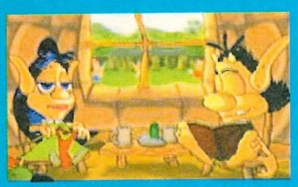
When Hugo first landed on my desk, I couldn't help feeling I had seen him before. I racked my brains trying to come up with the answer but it foxed me for days. Then it suddenly dawned on me when I looked at the publisher of this little adventure game - Interactive Television Entertainment. Hugo has appeared on Saturday Superstore/Going Live/Live and Kicking, or whatever the BBC Saturday morning show is called these days. That's where I had seen him before - when kids phone it to control a game for some Argos reject prize. You know that they're always going to be rubbish at it, and you could win everything if you were in control - so now's your chance, because this PlayStation version has all the games that you've seen on the telly - and more.

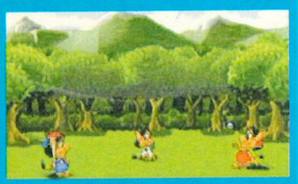
Setting the Scene

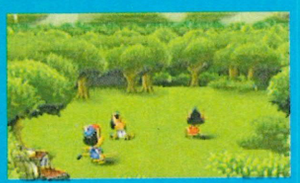
There's always some reason why a small troll has to put himself through so many dangers, so let's set the scene. Once upon a time, there was a happy little troll family. They lived in a woodland glen in their little wooden shack. Hugo is the dad, Hugolina is the mum and there are three little kids. This all sounds idyllic until you realise they live in the shadow of Witch Scylla's skull castle, and when she was bored one day, Scylla decided to trollnap Hugo's family from their back garden. Now our little hero must battle through forest, water, air, mountains and even travel on a train to reach his family and save them - strange really, the skull castle seems so near.

GOOD VS. EVIL - ONCE AGAIN...

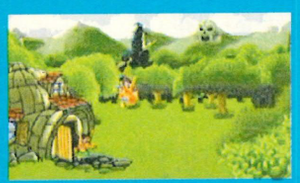
Oh no. Why can't evil people just leave good people alone? They're always getting into trouble when all they want to do is live their simple lives without any interference from nasty witches or devilish wizards. Hugo has gone and lost his wife and kids in this adventure - Witch Scylla has taken them off to her skull castle for a laugh. The trouble is, to get them back Hugo must travel through all kinds of dangerous places. Isn't it always the way?



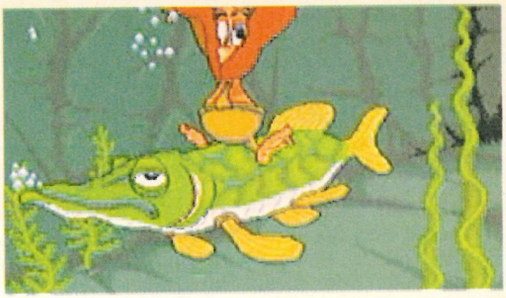


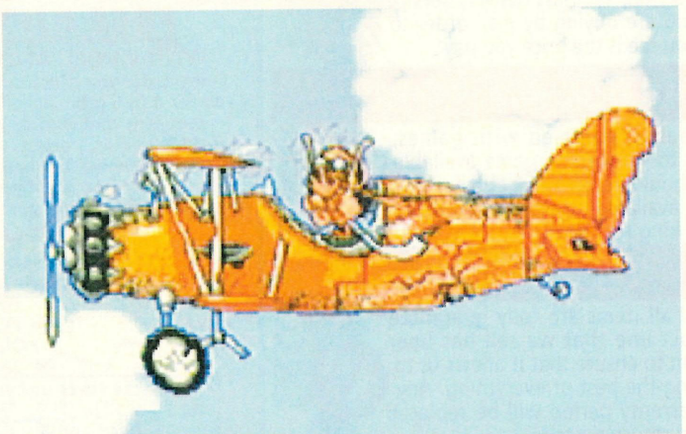




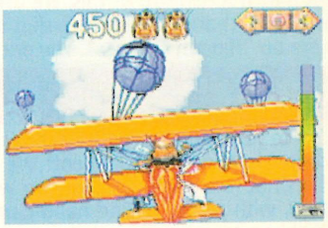


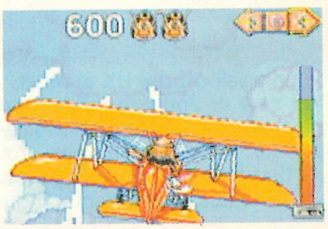






As soon as they saw Hugo's plane, EasyJet ordered two of them...





These games aren't challenging for 'grown up' PSX players...

As you can imagine, each of the sections of Hugo is very simple. If you've mastered the super-power combo moves in Tekken 3 then this isn't going to tax you too much. Let's take the forest, for example. Hugo can move left or right (are you with me so far?), and then he can jump to reach sacks of gold. But then there are the dangers of the forest to look out for. Trap doors send him shooting into a black abyss, rocks knock him flying and for some reason there are large springs dotted around that really give Hugo a jolt.

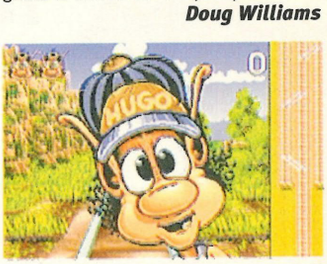
Left, Right, Jump

Other levels are just as simple: In the lumberjack section Hugo must jump from one log to another, Frogger-style, while avoiding branches overhead. In the scuba level, the underwater perils of an octopus, fish and waterfalls must be negotiated. Hugo finds himself flying a plane in a thunderstorm in another level. He can be struck by lightning and must collect as many balloons as he can. Then there's my particular favourite, and the one game I remember from TV - the train. Hugo in on a little trolley and is trundling along the track. The track splits at various points and there is a train coming in the opposite direction. Hugo must make the right direction choices while grabbing as many sacks of gold as he can. I don't know why he has to bother with gold - perhaps he's going to bribe the witch when he finds her.

None of these games are challenging for 'grown-up' PlayStation players, but kids really love them. Things are made even easier for them by the controls you need to use to negotiate the perils of each level being posted on the screen. You just can't go wrong - unless you mistime your jumps, which happened much more frequently than I would have liked when I was playing. I guess when a game is so simple, you get complacent and start making stupid mistakes. This isn't good when you are playing for a high score against a six-year-old.

If you have a younger PlayStation player in your family, from the age of six and up, then Hugo could be the ideal present this Christmas. It's fun, simple and has some great cartoon sequences between levels. The graphics and sound are hardly state-of-the-art, but for the market the game is aimed at - it's just perfect.

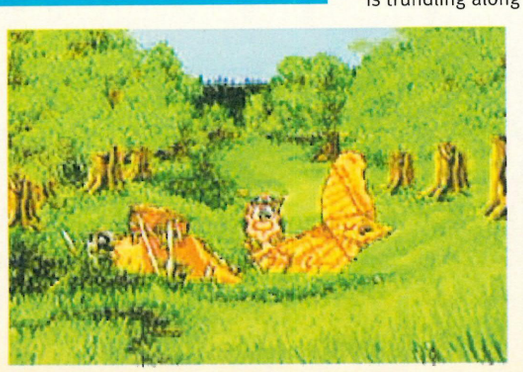
Doug Williams

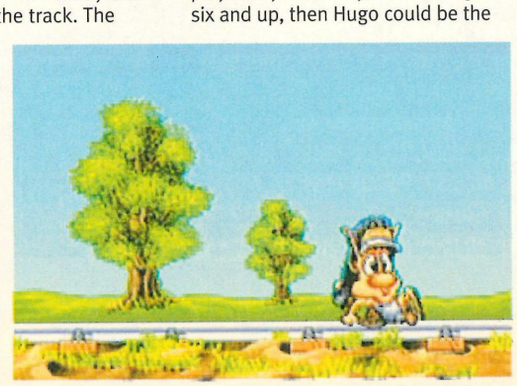


SECOND OPINION

Don't laugh - it's for the kids. Hugo won't trouble the PlayStation top ten and we certainly won't be publishing a complete solution to it, but its colourful cartoon graphics and cute main character really endear the game to young children.

Ian Osborne





THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	6
SOUND	5
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	6

64%

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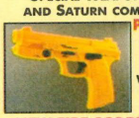
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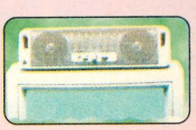
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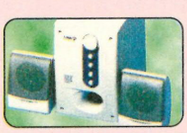
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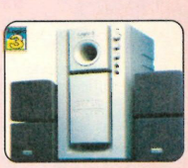


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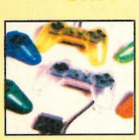
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Xplorer X-Link PC connector.....£9.99

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To assist in choosing the right game for you, we have included review scores from both Play and Playstation Plus, two of the country's leading PSX magazines. PY=Play, PP=Playstation Plus.

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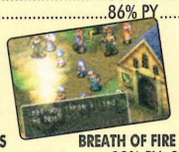
ADVENTURE / ROLE PLAYING




WILD ARMS

Sony add to the increasingly popular RPG genre with Wild Arms, a bizarre Wild West flavoured, Manga-style adventure. Featuring 3 characters, each with different abilities, the gameplay is very similar to old school RPGs such as Zelda. With magic, monsters and mystical quests, RPG fans will love it. **RRP £34.99 Our price £29.99**

Alundra	**91% PY, 91% PP**	**£24.99**
Azure Dreams	70% PY, 67% PP	£28.99
Breath of Fire 3	**80% PY, 84% PP**	**£32.99**
Broken Sword 2	90% PY, 91% PP	£29.99
City of the Lost Children	78% PY, 68% PP	£34.99
Diablo	91% PP	£31.99
Discworld 2	80% PY	£34.99
Excalibur	86% PY	£24.99


AZURE DREAMS BREATH OF FIRE 3 RIVEN

Final Fantasy 7	93% PY, 97% PP	**£34.99**
Kingsfield	61% PY	£24.99
Last Report	N/A	£19.99
Legacy of Kain	81% PY, 92% PP	£21.99
Magic the Gathering	N/A	£28.99
Riven	84% PP	£31.99
Sentient	84% PY, 71% PP	£26.99
Treasures of the Deep	83% PY, 78% PP	£29.99
Versailles	10% PP	£19.99



BREATH OF FIRE 3 Following on from the success of Final Fantasy 7 and Alundra, Breath of Fire 3 is the quest of a young boy named Ryu. Featuring beautiful Manga-style graphics, turn-based and real-time combat and a massive world to explore.

BEAT 'EM UP




After months of waiting, the ultimate in beat 'em ups is here at last! 100's of moves and combos, 24 characters, plus play modes, advanced animation and an amazing soundtrack. **RRP £44.99 Our price £34.99**





MORTAL KOMBAT 4 BLOODY ROAR TEKKEN 3

Biofreaks	N/A	£32.99
Bloody Roar	92% PP	£19.99
Bushido Blade	**94% PY, 83% PP**	**£25.99**
Cardinal Syn	85% PY, 82% PP	£29.99
Dead or Alive	91% PY	£29.99
Dynasty Warriors	71% PY, 68% PP	£17.99
Fantastic 4	69% PY, 59% PP	£16.99
Fighting Force	89% PY, 66% PP	£20.99
Marvel Super Heroes	**87% PY, 90% PP**	**£24.99**
Mortal Kombat 4	87% PY,	£34.99
Mortal Kombat Trilogy	92% PY, 91% PP	£18.99
Mortal Kombat Mythology	71% PY, 50% PP	£27.99
Pitball	66% PY, 73% PP	£12.99
Psychic Force	73% PY, 76% PP	£14.99
Rise of the Robots 2:The Resurrection	88% PY, 78% PP	£16.99
Soul Blade	96% PY, 94% PP	£34.99
Star Wars: Masters of Teras Kasi	74% PY	£26.99
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**	**£34.99**
Tobal No.1	94% PY, 91% PP	£19.99
Toshinden	76% PY	£18.99
Toshinden 2	74% PY	£16.99
Toshinden 3	78% PY, 76% PP	**£29.99**
X Men Children of the Atom	78% PY	£30.99

DRIVING / RACING



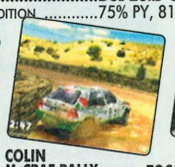
F1 '98 Psygnosis return with another hi-octane Grand Prix experience. All new stats for the new season bring the realism up to date, while a brand new game engine allows for brilliant graphics and a 4 player link-up mode! **£35.99**





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	N/A	£31.99
Burning Road	**90% PY**	£14.99
Circuit Breakers	81% PY, 80% PP	£28.99
Colin McRae Rally	**93% PY**	**£33.99**
Destruction Derby	86% PY, 72% PP	£18.99
Destruction Derby 2	82% PY, 89% PP	£18.99
Dodgem Arena	Due 20th November	£29.99
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**	**£24.99**
Formula 1 '98	**Due 23rd October**	**£35.99**
Formula Karts Special Edition	75% PY, 81% PP	£14.99


N2O COLIN McRAE RALLY TOCA TOURING CARS 2

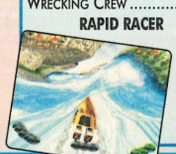
Gran Turismo	**97% PY!!!**	**£34.99**
Grand Theft Auto (18+)	88% PY, 90% PP	£18.99
Impact Racing	87% PY, 82% PP	£12.99
Jeremy McGrath's Supercross 98	67% PY, 52% PP	£32.99
Jetrider 2	78% PY	£24.99
Micro Machines 3	**92% PY, 95% PP**	£17.99
Motorhead	79% PY, **92% PP**	£17.99
Motor Mash	68% PP	£19.99
Moto Racer	86% PY, 85% PP	£24.99
Moto Racer 2	87% PY	£32.99
N_2O	70% PY, 89% PP	£30.99
NASCAR Racing '99	82% PY, 64% PP	£32.99
Need For Speed 3	87% PY, 89% PP	£24.99
Newman Haas Racing	74% PY, 75% PP	£21.99
Off Road Challenge	N/A	£32.99
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	£14.99





TOCA TOURING CARS DESTRUCTION DERBY 2 GRAND THEFT AUTO

Red Asphalt: Rock N Roll Racing 2	55% PY, 68% PP	£14.99
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
Rogue Trip	Due 20th November	£CALL
Street Racer	84% PY, 79% PP	£17.99
Supersonic Racer	91% PY, 74% PP	£14.99
Test Drive 4	86% PY, 70% PP	£17.99
Test Drive 5	Due 6th November	£32.99
TOCA Touring Cars *Dual Shock*	**92% PY, 91% PP**	**£17.99**
TOCA Touring Cars 2	**Due 27th November**	**£35.99**
Tokyo Highway Battle	73% PY, 77% PP	£15.99
Tommi Makinen Rally	N/A	£17.99
Vigilante 8	**94% PY, 91% PP**	**£23.99**
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**
Wrecking Crew	83% PY	£19.99





RAPID RACER NEED FOR SPEED 3 GRAN TURISMO

ARCADE ADVENTURE

TOMB RAIDER 3



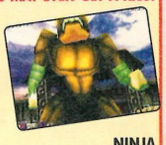
Competition! *We've got a Lara Jacket, Lara Fleece, Lara Watches, Lara T-shirts and more to give away! All you have to do is order a copy of TR3 before November 28th to enter!*



Apocalypse	Due 13th November	£31.99
Batman & Robin	78% PY, 73% PP	£33.99
Deathtrap Dungeon	**86% PY**	**£19.99**
Fade To Black	90% PY, 87% PP	£17.99
Fifth Element	50% PY, 79% PP	£29.99
Frenzy	73% PY	£29.99
MDK	90% PY, 80% PP	£19.99
Medievil	**86% PY**	**£34.99**
Men In Black	35% PY	£31.99
Nightmare Creatures	90% PY, 86% PP	£29.99
Ninja	78% PY, 82% PP	£34.99
ODT	Due 6th November	£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**	**£33.99**
Rosco McQueen	88% PY, 78% PP	£21.99
Small Soldiers	Due 6th November	£32.99
Spawn	49% PY	£22.99
Tenchu	77% PY	£31.99
Tomb Raider	94% PY, 92% PP	**£17.99**
Tomb Raider 2	95% PY, 95% PP	**£24.99**
Tomb Raider 3	**Due October**	**£34.99**

Free Poster of Nell McAndrew (the real life Lara Croft) with every Tomb Raider 3. Come and see Lara Croft at our birthday party in Leeds on 28th November. She will sign all copies of Tomb Raider 3 bought on the day and you may even get a kiss!





DEATHTRAP DUNGEON BATMAN & ROBIN NINJA

ARCADE SHOOTERS

Asteroids	Due 4th December	£CALL
Blast Chamber	82% PY	£24.99
Blast Radius	72% PY	£34.99
B Movie	Due 20th November	£33.99
Crime Killer	81% PP	£19.99
Crusader No Remorse	80% PY, 85% PP	£19.99
Future Cop LAPD 2100	**94% PY, 89% PP**	**£32.99**
G Darius	88% PY	£28.99
Hard Boiled	29% PY, 40% PP	£19.99
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
Viper	46% PY	£24.99

STRATEGY / SIMULATION





THEME HOSPITAL C &C RETALIATION C&C RED ALERT

Command & Conquer	79% PY	£18.99
Command & Conquer Red Alert	90% PY, 93% PP	£25.99
Command & Conquer Retaliation	OUT NOW!	£32.99
Constructor	88% PP	£31.99
Monopoly	75% PY, 78% PP	£33.99
Risk	81% PP	£29.99
Sentinel Returns	62 % PY	£34.99
Theme Hospital	**88% PY**	**£24.99**
Theme Park	**86% PY, 85% PP**	**£17.99**
Transport Tycoon	78% PY, 86% PP	£19.99
Unholy War	Due 30th October	£35.99
V2000	82% PY	£30.99
Warcraft 2	86% PY, 88% PP	£24.99
War Games	60% PY	£31.99
Warhammer: Shadow of Horned Rat	82% PY, 86% PP)	£29.99
Warhammer 2: Dark Omen	**85% PY**	**£28.99**
Worms	92% PY, 82% PP	£17.99
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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
Lemmings & Oh No! More Lemmings	Due November	£19.99
Pet in TV	77% PY	£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



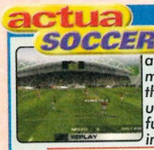
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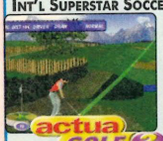
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actua SOCCER 3 — SPORT



Combining sim style accuracy and arcade gameplay with enhanced control methods and the most realistic 3D graphics yet, this is a footy game for every type of player. Full up to date statistics on over 10,000 players and fully customisable game options. This is the most in depth football game ever available.

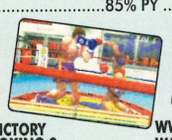
2 Extreme	55% PP	£19.99
Actua Golf 2	**80% PY, 83% PP**	**£17.99**
Actua Golf 3	**Due 21st October**	**£29.99**
Actua Ice Hockey	91% PY	£17.99
Actua Soccer 2	**92% PY, 93% PP**	**£17.99**
Actua Soccer 3	**Due 28th October**	**£29.99**
Actua Tennis	N/A	£31.99
Brian Lara Cricket	**Due 30th October**	**£35.99**
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	£19.99
Everybody's Golf	85% PY, 85% PP	£29.99
FIFA Soccer '96	N/A	£14.99
FIFA Soccer '99	**Due 27th November**	**£32.99**
Int'l Superstar Soccer Pro	84% PY, 92% PP	£17.99
Int'l Superstar Soccer Pro '98	**92% PY, 94% PP**	**£32.99**





actua GOLF 3 — BRIAN LARA CRICKET — PREMIER MANAGER '98

International Track & Field	85% PY, 90% PP	£17.99
Jonah Lomu Rugby	86% PY, 84% PP	£20.99
Knockout Kings	Due 4th December	£32.99
Michael Owen's World League Soccer	**Due 13th Nov**	**£30.99**
Nagano Winter Olympics '98	83% PY	£25.99
NBA Live '98	87% PP	£24.99
NFL Blitz	Due mid October	£24.99
NFL Madden '98	92% PY, 89% PP	£24.99
NFL Madden '99	N/A	£32.99
NHL Face Off '98	80% PY	£24.99
NHL Hockey '99	**N/A**	**£32.99**
On-Side Soccer	76% PY, 65% PP	£14.99
PGA Golf '98	63% PY, 68% PP	£32.99
Pool Shark	Due 27th November	£30.99
Powermove Pro Wrestling	N/A	£19.99
Premier Manager '98	**89% PY, 92% PP**	**£26.99**
Premier Manager '98 & Actua Ice Hockey		**£31.99**
Pro Pinball Timeshock	89% PP	£22.99
Rushdown	Due end October	£32.99
Sensible Soccer Club Edition	Due 11th December	£32.99
Snow Racer	85% PP	£24.99
Tiger Woods Golf '99	Due 4th December	£32.99
True Pinball	85% PY	£17.99
Total NBA '98	92% PY, 85% PP	£29.99
Victory Boxing	90% PY	£24.99
Victory Boxing 2	90% PY	£32.99
Virtual Pool '97	68% PY, 85% PP	£24.99
WCW Nitro	80% PY	£29.99
World Cup '98	**86% PY, 90% PP**	**£24.99**
World League Soccer '98	**90% PY, 93% PP**	**£18.99**
WWF In Your House	N/A	£19.99
WWF Warzone	85% PY	£32.99


ISS '98 — VICTORY BOXING 2 — WWF WARZONE

GUN GAMES



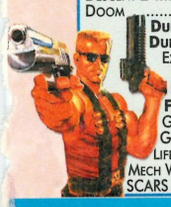
DIE HARD TRILOGY & PROTECTOR GUN
£26.99



Crypt Killer	38% PY	£35.99
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**

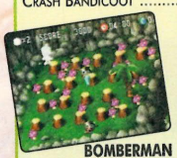
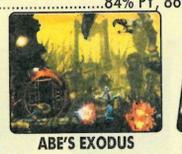
3D SHOOTERS

Alien Trilogy	**91% PY, 85% PP**	**£17.99**
Armoured Core	69% PY, 86% PP	£29.99
Assault	80% PY	£28.99
Colony Wars	92% PY, 93% PP	£19.99
Colony Wars Vengeance	**Due 13th November**	**£34.99**
Dark Forces	75% PY, 84% PP	£24.99
Darklight Conflict	79% PY, 87% PP	£14.99
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 Time To Kill	**87% PY**	**£32.99**
Exhumed	84% PY, 91% PP	£24.99
Final Doom	82% PY, 89% PP	£19.99
Forsaken	**92% PY**	**£24.99**
Future Cop LAPD 2100	**94% PY, 89% PP**	**£32.99**
Ghost in the Shell	73% PY, 90% PP	£29.99
G Police	84% PY, 93% PP	£23.99
Life Force Tenka	86% PY, 82% PP	£19.99
Mech Warrior 2	91% PY, 83% PP	£19.99
SCARS	82% PY, 83% PP	£32.99



PLATFORM

Agent Armstrong	75% PP	£24.99
Baby Universe	22% PY	£25.99
Bomberman World	85% PY, 83% PP	£29.99
Bubble Bobble/Rainbow Island	85% PY	£22.99
Casper	65% PY, 62% PP	£25.99
Castlevania Symphony of the Night	89% PP	£18.99
Crash Bandicoot	84% PY, 86% PP	£18.99


BOMBERMAN — ABE'S EXODUS — SPYRO

Crash Bandicoot 2	86% PY, 87% PP	£29.99
Crash Bandicoot 3	Due end November	£CALL
Croc	78% PY, 84% PP	**£18.99**
Frogger	69% PY, 88% PP	£24.99
Gex 3D	**92% PY**	**£24.99**
Heart of Darkness	**88% PP**	**£27.99**
Hercules	63% PY, 81% PP	£34.99
Jersey Devil	90% PP	£22.99
Klonoa	83% PY	£29.99
Lost Vikings 2	72% PY	£24.99
Lost World: Jurassic Park 2	79% PY, 81% PP	£19.99
Lucky Luke	79% PP	£29.99
Megaman 8	82% PY	£26.99
Megaman X3	82% PY, 81% PP	£24.99
Mr Domino	72% PY, 70% PP	£32.99
Oddworld Abe's Exodus	**Due November**	**£32.99**
Oddworld Abe's Oddysey	90% PY, 91% PP	£18.99
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	£22.99
Skull Monkeys	83% PY	£32.99
Spyro The Dragon	**Due 23rd October**	**£34.99**
T'ai Fu	Due 4th December	£CALL
Tombi	79% PP	£29.99
Trash It	55% PY, 57% PP	£29.99
Wild 9	72% PY, 90% PP	£31.99



FLYING





ACE COMBAT 2 — NUCLEAR STRIKE — THUNDERHAWK 2

Ace Combat 2	84% PY, 85% PP	£29.99
Air Combat	81% PY, 65% PP	£18.99
Nuclear Strike	88% PY, 91% PP	**£19.99**
Soviet Strike	83% PY, 92% PP	**£18.99**
Thunderhawk 2	85% PY, 82% PP	£18.99

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
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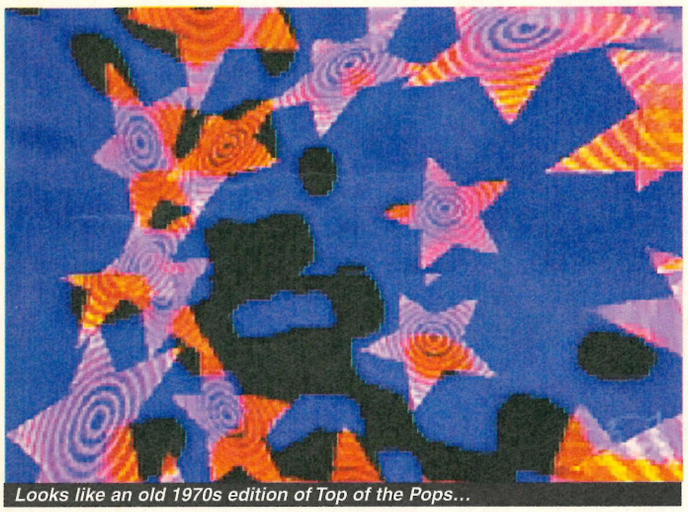
QUALITY SERVICE

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Codemasters	Jester Interactive	Music Creation	20th November	UK	£34.99	1	Memory Card

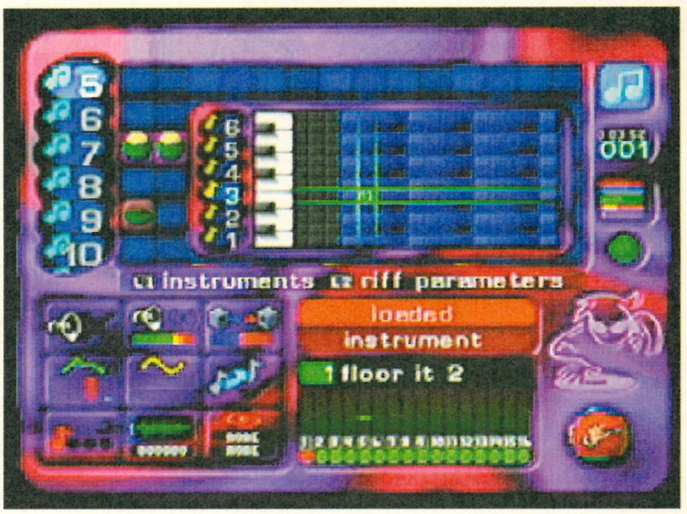
Ever wanted to be a dance music star? Do you dream of spinning the decks in front of a thousand-person dance floor? This could be your first foot in the door...

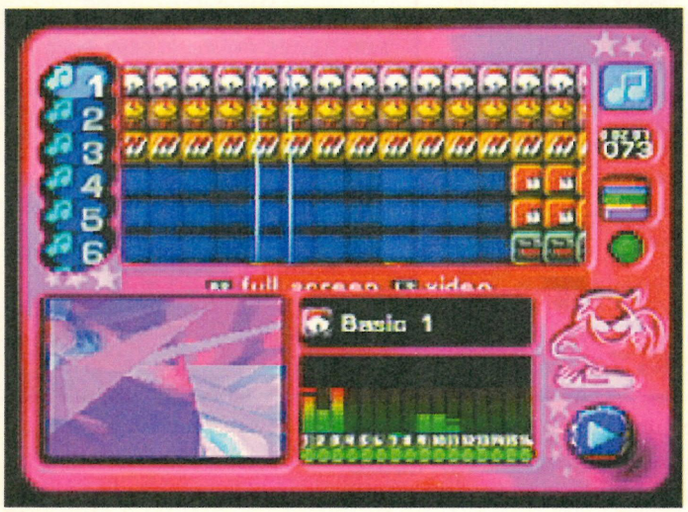
Music

Music Creation for the PlayStation



Looks like an old 1970s edition of Top of the Pops...







Yo man. Give me some skin, get on down and do your groovy thing... or something equally fitting for a dance music creator. We all know Codemasters as a company who know their videogames. They've been at this game long enough to know a good sprite from a bad one and how much gameplay is important in a videogame - but now they've moved into a whole new genre.

As the title suggests, this is another music creator for the PlayStation. There seems to have been a run of them recently with the dolphin-friendly Fluid and the bizarre (and let's face it, pretty useless) Baby Universe. Codemasters' Music basically takes both of the those titles, and rolls them all into one - with knobs on.

Everything you need to create a cool dance track is here...

The world is your oyster with Music - the number of options and user definable sections is pretty impressive. You get to set your own melodies using a tiny keyboard on screen with a wide selection of sounds to select including a bank of voices so you can have singing on your track. You then choose the drum patterns, hi-hats, samples - everything you need to create a cool dance track is here. The way all this is displayed on-screen is simplicity itself too - tiny icons for each sound are placed on a time grid, so you can always tell what sound is playing and when it will play.

Windows and Icons

While creating your musical masterpiece, you notice a window in the bottom-left of the screen. This shows the video that accompanies your track - yes that's right, not only can you create dance music with this program, but you can also cre-

VIDEO KILLED THE RADIO STAR...

Once you have created your dance music masterpiece, you can create a visual feast of a video to go along with it. There's a phenomenal number of visual options you can play around with to create a personalised video for your track - and with the full-screen mode you can easily put the whole creation down on videotape for that up-coming rave. Here are the options available...

OBJECTS
There are both 2D and 3D shapes to choose from and many of them are animated too. Smiley faces are obviously top of the list, but there are also aircraft, spiky balls, weird shapes - you name it, you can find it.

TEXT
All the best videos have words that punch up onto the screen - and you can do the same. There are a variety of text styles to choose from, and within the number of characters allowed, you can write anything on-screen in 3D.

CAMERAS
Once you have created a 3D scene, you can move the camera angle the viewer watches from and zoom in and out, creating even more spectacular effects. Just remember - you're not trying to make the viewer sick.

PATHS
If you want an object to move around the screen - you can set it to follow a set pathway. This way you can anticipate where it's going to be at a set time and work the rest of your video around it.

LIGHTS
All objects, particles, backgrounds and text can be lit up in a wide variety of ways. Lights come in a variety of colours and there are some flashing ones for strobe effects.

BACKGROUNDS
A good backdrop on your video makes all the difference. There are cloud effects, chessboard patterns and some really sick looking wallpaper. You can change their appearance with the palette and light options.

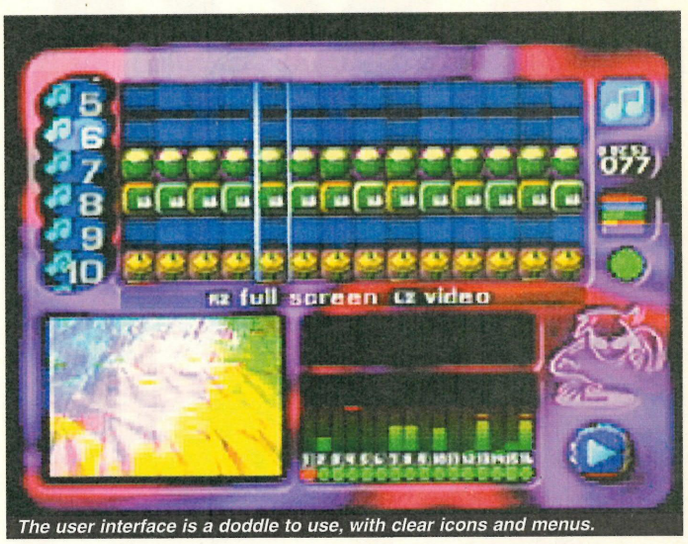
PARTICLES
The particle generator takes small objects and kind of sprays them together in an animated form to create special visual effects like smoke, clouds, spheres or explosions.

ROTATIONS
All backgrounds and objects you place into your video can be rotated in any way you wish. Rotate the background and objects in opposite directions for some really spacey effects.

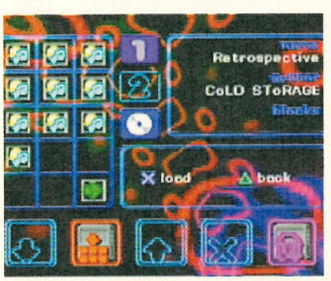
SCALE
There's no need to use objects the way they are stored on the CD - you can stretch and shrink them to suit your needs - in any direction and to any amount.

WIREFRAME
We all know what wireframes look like from reading the preview sections of many PlayStation magazines - a wireframe is the collection of lines that a 3D object is made from. You can make wireframes of any object.





The user interface is a doddle to use, with clear icons and menus.



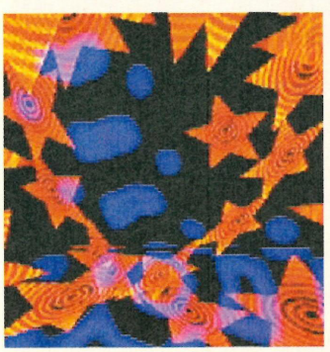




ate a customised video to go along with it. The video editor is displayed in a similar way to the music editor, again with tiny icons to represent different visual effects, objects and backgrounds. This is what sets Music apart from previous efforts in this genre. Instead of purely random patterns and effects your video is your own creation - and with a full screen mode you can record your dance track and video onto videotape to store forever. Of course, you can also store all the settings and patterns to memory card for future editing at a later date.

I must admit I'm impressed by Music. Out of all the music creation products that have appeared for the PlayStation lately, this is undoubtedly the best - and it's the same price. If you feel creativity welling up inside you, and you have no outlet for it-then grab a copy of this and let rip. You never know - you could be number one in the charts before you know it.

Doug Williams





SECOND OPINION

This system's surprisingly powerful, combining the contents of Sony's Fluid and Baby Universe in one tight package and (frankly) piddling over both of them. The developers are keen to support the product with further releases, so it could be the start of a whole new hobby.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	9
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	8

84%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Electronic Arts	Accolade	Driving	November '98	UK	£39.99	1	Memory Card	Dual Shock

Will Accolade's latest driving game, the follow-up to Test Drive: Off Road, make you soil your pants or just throw dirt in your face?

Test Drive 4x4



With the inclusion of four licensed songs from three different heavy metal bands (Sevendust, Gravity Kills and Fear Factory) and the exclusive Hummer AM General licence (not to mention the other 19 additional licensed off-road vehicles), Test Drive 4x4 has the makings of the fast-paced off-road racing game we were promised, so we thought we'd better take it for a little test drive of our own just to see how well it really handled!

Once into the game, you're confronted by two modes of play; Single Race mode, which is the equivalent to Arcade mode, and World Tour in which you have to prove yourself as a worthy driver and successfully complete preliminary races in order to gain credits. Without these vital credits you can't buy different vehicles and enter the difficult and more challenging events.

Muddy Tyres

In the Single Race mode, you're allowed to select one of the six real-world locations that range from the volcano track in Hawaii, the muddy trails of the Santa Cruz Mountains in California, the chilly mountains of Switzerland, deserts in Mojave and Morocco, and the green countryside of Wales. Reverse tracks of these locations are also available, but only they've been once unlocked.

When you know at which location you wish to race, you then have to make your vehicle choice. There are eight standard vehicles on offer (not including the 13 locked vehicles), each with their own different top speed, acceleration and handling attributes that you need to take into consideration when making your choice. Once you've made you've choice of vehicle, you can select the type of transmission you would prefer to use (automatic or manual) before beginning the race. The vehicles racing alongside you are all of similar class to even things out a little as you battle it across the different types of terrain that that particular world location has to offer.

Each track is not really a track at all, more of a twisting line that runs from one point to the next. All tracks are divided into continuous stages that must be completed within the allowed time if you're going to make it to the finish line.

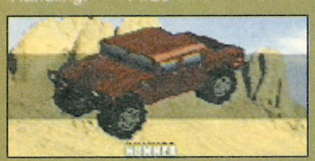
World Tour mode offers the same vehicles as the Single Race mode, but you need to purchase them and need plenty of credits to do so. Initially you can only select a Wrangler or a Cherokee as that's all you can afford, until you're managed to win a few races and earn more credits, that is. There are six events available for the World Tour

Graphically, everything is up to scratch.

WHAT'S YOURS CALLED?

When choosing the Single Race option, you can only access the eight standard vehicles until you have managed to unlock the remaining cars by completing the World Tour mode. Here's a look at those eight initial vehicles and their stats to see just how well they perform when down in the dirt.

HUMMER
Top Speed: 11/20
Acceleration: 12/20
Handling: 14/20



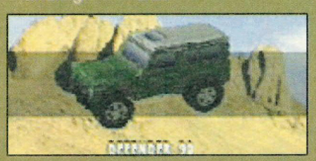
RAM
Top Speed: 12/20
Acceleration: 10/20
Handling: 7/20



WRANGLER
Top Speed: 7/20
Acceleration: 7/20
Handling: 8/20



DEFENDER 90
Top Speed: 8/20
Acceleration: 11/20
Handling: 9/20



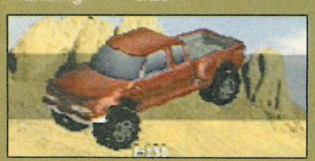
EXPLORER
Top Speed: 11/20
Acceleration: 9/20
Handling: 12/20



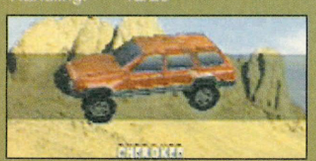
CHENOWTH DR2
Top Speed: 13/20
Acceleration: 13/20
Handling: 14/20

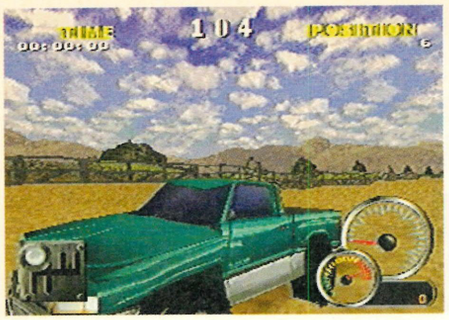


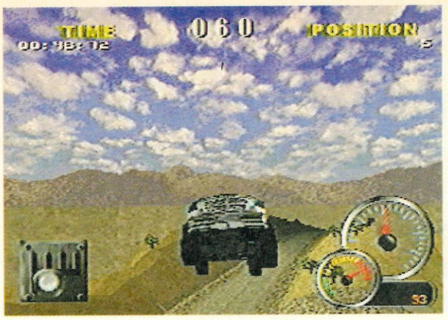
F-150
Top Speed: 11/20
Acceleration: 12/20
Handling: 9/20



CHEROKEE
Top Speed: 10/20
Acceleration: 8/20
Handling: 12/20









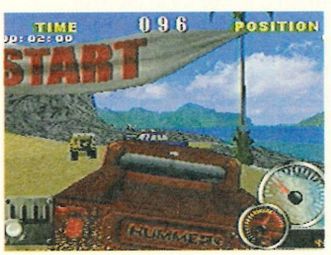


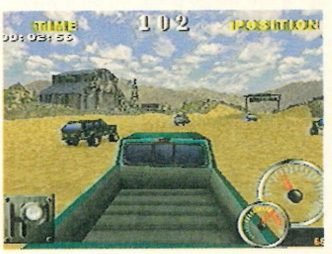




The tree had a conservation order on it and the road builder refused to alter his plans. The result was an uneasy compromise...















mode and all have multiple tracks for you to race and master. Each event is also categorised by class and can only be accessed once you have acquired the correct vehicle for that class. Therefore you're restricted to the only two available vehicles for a short time, which you need to use in order to win races and increase your credits. Once you have the credits you need to purchase your next vehicle, you can also sell your previous car to help your dosh go that little bit further.

Hit the Dirt...

Racing over mountains, through deserts and across many of the grass lands and beaches Test Drive has to offer provides an excitement and different challenge for each type of driver, whether they're a 4x4 fan or not. Each track contains all the elements needed to create a rugged and unforgiving terrain which can and often will vary from a dirt track to a rapid river within a single stage.

The standard controls provided are sufficient for racing, but the Dual Shock is ideal for best results. There are six chase view angles to choose from (as well an in-car view), and a rear view option that pans around your car for a view of what's behind, which isn't really usable as you need to keep looking forward all the time when racing. The on-screen displays show revs, speed and a little gear stick that moves each time use change a gear, which adds to that 4x4 feeling!

Graphically everything is up to scratch. Although some of it may not be pleasing to the eye, once things are underway you don't have time to stop and look at the landscapes. The soundtrack is hard and fast, which is a bonus if that's your thing, otherwise you may want to use the sound options to turn it down or better still, off. The sound effects are minimal, but help add to the realism, while the commentary is dire. All the poor chap can say is 'whooa' or 'awesome', which is very annoying after being subjected to it of long periods of time.

The actual look of the vehicles and the way they respond and react to the terrain below them is how it should be. The suspension can be seen visibly working in a realistic way that makes react true to form. Another nice feel to the game are the controls. There's a noticeable difference to the way each vehicle's handling changes slightly each time they are driven from one terrain to the next, which not only feels good but also adds to the overall experience of 4x4 racing that Test Drive is very good at achieving.

Dave France

SECOND OPINION

This one's much better than the previous Test Drive off-road game, avoiding gimmicks like being able to drive anywhere off the track and instead concentrates on the game as it's played. It works well, offering all the thrills and spills of off-road racing.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	5

82%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Funsoft	Funsoft	RPG	November '98	UK	£39.99	1-4	Memory Card	Multi Tap

Throwing down the Gauntlet one more in another fantasy-style battle for one to four players - but this time it's an RPG!

Blaze & Blade: Eternal Quest







Here we go then, off on a wild but cutesy wannabe epic voyage through the mists of an unlimited 360-degree rotating, isometric 3D wilderness courtesy of the bright young things at Funsoft.

It's fairly easy to imagine the excitement the concept of a four-player RPG, Zelda meets Gauntlet, would cause in the coffee hothouses and pubs that generally pass as the hotbeds of game-design inspiration. That's to say, where everyone gets thoroughly relaxed and throws ideas at each other.

Zelda meets Gauntlet, uh-huh. Before any indication of whether this attempt at merging two classics from the video game hall of fame, here's a brief recap on each classic for those under 23. Gauntlet was one of the key arcade games of the 80s. Its four-player, we're-all-in-this-together, Dungeons-and-Dragons-inspired, hack-&-slay, adrenaline-fired gore-fest was an unparalleled gaming experience. It rocked, in other words. Oh, and Zelda was the best RPG series ever, at least until Final Fantasy VII tarnished Link's halo.

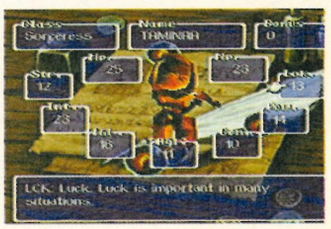
So, you can see the attraction on paper, a worthy idea indeed, worthy perhaps of a better execution than is to be found in Blaze & Blade, which is a nice try in the 17th Century meaning of the word nice. For everyone who doesn't digest the Oxford dictionary in the bath every morning (no I don't either, honest), 'nice' means 'precise'. Not so bad at first appearances; 'precise' sounds cool, 'precise' sounds definite, but 'precise' also sounds, and in this case is, a little lacking in the kind of gut-churning, bowel-wrenching sweat-inducing symptoms that signifies passion. Eighties synthesiser pop kind of stuff.

Still, it's more than a little useful, though, and the four-player mode turns a roast chicken of an RPG into a spicy Cajun chicken-winged taste fest for a while.

Epic effort

Funsoft's epic trial (they call it a quest, it's more of a question of how far you get into it before it becomes a trial) is set in the land of Foresia, a marvellous land ruled by a culture of magic. A culture controlled and administered by 12 wise men and a lot of demons who duly took over the Foreasia asylum and ran the whole Foreasia show. Nasty. Your task is to nip round the magic kingdom, fend off the drastic demons and bag the swag in form of jewels. Jewels, jewels and more jewels are the order of the day.





B & B is above average standard RPG fare with a few nice touches...

Blaze & Blade is above average standard RPG fare with a few nice touches, and don't get me wrong, if I blow hot and cold in this review, playing Blaze & Blade is by no means an unpleasant way to while away the hours of the day, but there's something missing. More of that later; let's skip to the creation.

Setting up my party of four with their characteristics and kit took a surprising 23 minutes. Lengthy, perhaps, but not overly bothersome. And creating life is always more fun than being landed with somebody else's baggage.

Each character is allocated one of seven styles of speaking, from polite, through childlike to arbitrary. Although why anyone would want to be deliberately nasty to somebody beats me. Likewise, each character has a guiding element, the light, earth, fire, water, darkness and evil amongst others. The elements influence some of the weapons, armour, accessories and even magic defence of each character. Chose this, then split up your bonus points into attributes such as strength, intelligence, willpower, agility, constitution, magical power and luck. Don't know about you, but I've always thought it's more important to be a

INTRO SEQUENCE...

The heavily Anime-inspired intro shows off the artistic talents of the development team, and provides a clear idea of the nature of the task at hand. Sharp, precise stuff.













This little piggy went to market...









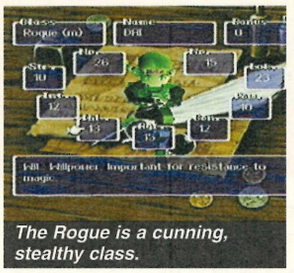


CHARACTER GENERATION...

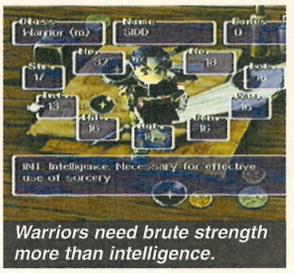
Before playing Blaze & Blade: The Eternal, you have to create a party. This should be well balanced, with characters that specialise in speed, strength or magic.
It is possible to get straight into the game using default characters, but isn't it more fun to make your own?



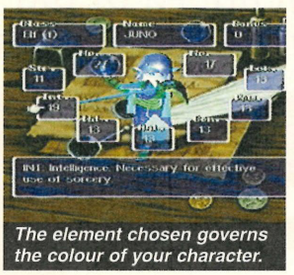
Here we have a male Warrior who uses the Light elemental.



The Rogue is a cunning, stealthy class.



Warriors need brute strength more than intelligence.



The element chosen governs the colour of your character.



Magicians aren't good fighters, but they're very bright.

lucky character than a good one.

Once you're loaded up, kitted out and have successfully wandered around the tavern passing the time of day with the motley crew residing therein, it's off through the gates and into the action. Beginning with the woods.

Wood you believe it

The default controls are reasonably well thought out, simply D-Pad equals directions in the walking up, down and to the side stakes whilst the shoulder buttons are reserved for camera angle trickery. One of the features of Blaze & Blade is that your party of four characters (controlled in one player mode in a follow-the-leader basis) can spin the Foreasia universe through 360 degrees. The top buttons, then, are used to switch the scenery around to your liking. Total control, as the Sony mini disc ad has it.

This can be useful at times, although later on, as the background to your adventuring grows a little more detailed and built up, it adds a slightly irritating degree of complexity. By this point, however, you've usually progressed too far into the game to be bothered risking life and limb experimenting with a new control system.

As far the irritating elements of 360 degreesness go, well, at heart of hearts, nobody minds screwing up when it's down to them, but when it's due to distorted camera vision, much gnashing of teeth and hurling of joypads can be the only outcome.

Should one of these instances result in death for one of your party, it may be worth bearing the mind that sometimes it's better to take one step back to go forward. Play the game for a while and you'll get the idea.

Wandering free

Although the world is touted as unlinear, it soon becomes a question of wherever you may wander there's no place quite like home. Each scene is built up and bolted on to another in one almighty jigsaw puzzle. Whilst the little fade-aways, fade-ins provide a break to the action, this is not always a good thing. Alright, puzzles and using your brain are important to RPGs but they should surely be introduced when a break is needed. Also, enter a new set at the wrong camera angle and you can find your view of the action obscured, with your fearsome foursome copping unnecessary damage. Get the action right first, and the adrenaline of the gamesplayer going first boys before trying to produce an epic masterpiece.

Now, the concept of a four player RPG should be able to be made to work, but in my opinion such a game needs to be tighter drawn and defined than Blaze & Blade is.

For a start, consider the likely scenarios of having four players in one place, regularly. This is a game which demands a regular commitment. In the history of video games there have been precious few games which unite four fractious gamers together regularly, GoldenEye, definitely, Bomberman yup, but there isn't a lot of similar games. Blaze & Blade isn't a weekday night with a few beers and a pizza kind of game. Not enough happens, the scale is simply wrong

Whether, and how, a sequel is produced should be interesting. Have another go chaps, and think about the actual playing rather then grandiose mock universe creation please.

Ian Lynch

SECOND OPINION

Maybe more people than Ian thinks will enjoy this as a four-player game. After all, didn't console RPGs grow out of Dungeons & Dragons, where people had to play in large groups? This could put a whole new perspective on the genre.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	6
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	8

81%





Axel is truly the toughest baseball player in town...

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Funsoft	Funsoft	Scrolling Beat-'em-up	November '98	UK	£39.99	1-2	None

Is Legend truly legendary, or did the scrolling beat-'em-up reach its peak with Golden Axe and Double Dragon?

Legend

WEAPONS...

Weapons play a large part in legend, and can be the different between finishing the level or begin killed by that tricky end-of-level boss. check out the screenshots for a glimpse of the goodies you have to look forward to, but remember your opponents are free to use this weapons as easily as your are, so watch yourself.







Legend's adventuring beat-'em-up style is not one we see on the PlayStation very often, despite the fact that in the 16-bit days this kind of game was very popular. So let's take a trip down memory lane and see what Funsoft's latest has to offer the PlayStation world.

Those of you that have been playing games longer than the PlayStation has been available know all about games like Legend; It's a scrolling beat-'em -up in the Golden Axe and Double Dragon mould, brought bang up to date in this moody tail of monsters heroes and magic.

A Living Legend?

It has to be said right from the start that Legend is a dead ringer for the old Sega game Golden Axe. The gameplay is essentially the same, and the weapons and magic are also very similar. However, for an older gamer like myself, this is something of a treat. I must admit games like the aforementioned Sega title and other similar games like Streets of Rage (also from Sega) and even the ancient Double Dragon have always been some of my fave all-time offerings, so as you can imagine, when I heard Funsoft were releasing a game of this genre on the PlayStation, I couldn't help but get a little excited.

You start off by choosing yourself a warrior. You have three from which you can select, two male characters and a female fighter.







Legend makes a change from Tekken and Street Fighter clones

Each has his or her own strengths and weakness which give the game a slightly different flavour each time you choose a different warrior. For example Tara, the female character, has excellent speed and good magical abilities but loses out when it comes to pure strength. Here, however fellow warrior Karo is the exact opposite. These skill strengths and weaknesses help the game become more than a plain beat-'em-up.

In single-player mode, Legend offers a great challenge with loads















of levels to explore, baddies to bash and weapons to discover. However, it's in two-player mode that the game really comes alive. You and a mate choose your fave characters - selecting a pair that work well together is essential - and then battle it out against the forces of darkness. Nothing is more satisfying than you and your buddy ganging up on the CPU fighters and kicking seven bells out of them - this is where the gameplay really comes into its own.

Graphically, Legend uses polygons for the characters and backgrounds, and this means the scrolling effect of the multiplayer fighting areas is very smooth, the animation on the character is excellent and you experience very little slow-down. In addition to this, the very moody and dark style of Legend also really helps to give atmosphere and edge to the game; you just never know what is around the next corner.

Hack 'n' Slash

However, I do have a few problems with Legend that prevent it from being a 90% game. For a start, the control method is a tad fiddly. It's very easy to get caught out attacking an opponent then getting pummelled from behind by your foes accomplice, simply because you cannot turn around fast enough. The sensitive and response needs to be a little faster, and this becomes even more of a problem when you're playing one-player mode with three or four baddies attacking you at once. In addition to this, the number of attacks you have at your disposal is quite limited. You can either punch of kick and opponent, and this basically involves repeatedly pressing the relevant button. Now at this point it must be said that Legend does feature combo attacks that players can use, but to be honest I found them more trouble than they were worth. The problem with over-complex combination attacks is you tend to not bother with them, and simply use the basic attacks instead, and this can make the gameplay seem a little repetitive. The weird thing is all these problems were a factor in the older games I mentioned and the start of this review; it's surprising they haven't been ironed out in this day and age.

Having said all that, I'm pleased to see the good old scrolling beat-'em em-up back on form and on a 32-bit console, and Funsoft have come up with a really good-looking game that proves to be fun, exciting and really playable - albeit for a limited time. If you're a fan like me, then Legend is a great purchase and one that gives you a great trip down memory lane while adding a whole host of new features to this old genre. If you haven't played this type of beat-'em-up before, it's also well worth checking out as games like this are great fun, particularly in two-player mode. It's just a shame some of the gameplay flaws that dogged previous games in this genre still haven't been ironed out, but maybe that's just the nature of the beast. Legend makes a great change from all the Street Fighter and Tekken clones knocking around on the PlayStation - well worth a look.

Alan King

THE CHARACTERS...

Choosing your character is the first task when you begin to play Legend. You have three to select from: Axel, Tara and Karo. Each have their own strengths and weaknesses, making your selection more than simply a case of who you like the look of. Let's check out the three warriors and their stats:

Name:	Axel
Power:	3/5
Speed:	4/5
Throwing ability:	3/5
Overall:	3/5

Axel is the all-rounder of the gang. He has decent stats in all three areas, but doesn't excel in any; good for beginners.

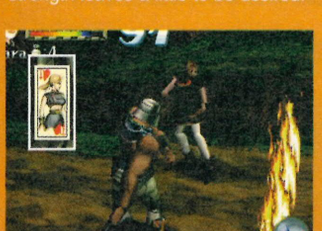
Name:	Tara
Power:	2/5
Speed:	5/5
Throwing ability:	4/5
Overall:	3/5

The only female warrior in the game, her talents are her speed and throwing ability; just be careful, as her strength leaves a little to be desired.

Name:	Karo
Power:	5/5
Speed:	2/5
Throwing ability:	4/5
Overall:	3/5

Karo can pummel opponents quickly and with force. However, his speed makes him hard to control at times - not recommended for novice players.







SECOND OPINION

You can get far too far in this game just by walkig up th the nearest enemy and pressing a single button to attack. It's impressive and fun in the short term, but I can't see people coming back to it too often. A welcome change from one-on-one beat-'em-ups, though.

Doug Williams

THE SCORE

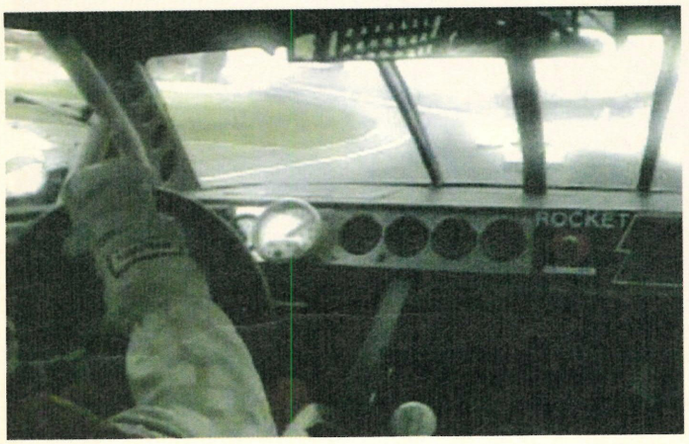
GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	7

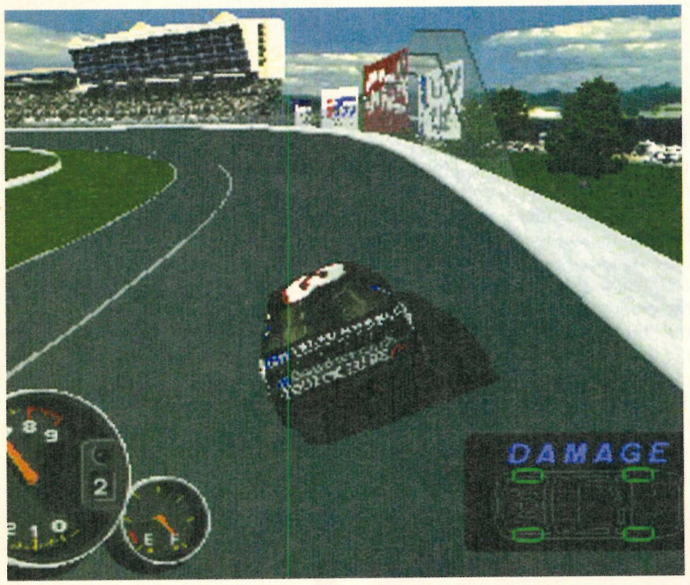
81%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Electronic Arts	EA Sports	Sports Sim	Out Now	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card	Steering Wheel

Electronic Arts, masters of the America sports sim, have turned their attention to NASCAR, the yank equivalent of the British Touring Car Championship. Let's check out this high-octane title...

NASCAR '99





When you think of American car racing the first thing you come up with is the Indy Car series. However, in America this plays second fiddle to the all-action world of NASCAR.

You first job is to choose a car to race in. All of the real-life drivers are included in the game, along with their teams, so if you follow NASCAR on TV you'll find your fave driver here in all his glory. This alone helps to add so much realism to the game; when you have real-life drivers to race against the entire experience is heightened, and games that are as true to life as possible have become EA's hall-mark. NASCAR 99 certainly lives up to this.

Next thing to do is select a race course, and again you've got each and every course that features in the real-life sport right here in the game. All 17 championship tracks are featured, from the Las Vegas speedways to the Michigan Oval. In addition to the 17 normal tracks, the Bristol raceway can be played at either night or day, and this in effect brings the total up to 18 as driving at night offers a far greater challenge. With these two variables chosen, it's time to head off to the pit lane. Here you have full control over the car's set-up, and this is where a little bit of knowledge of how race cars work can come in handy. For example, you can change the downforce settings of the car to suit your own taste and this means you can tailor the car to how you like to drive. For example, if you like lots of straight-line speed, then low downforce is the way to go - you just have to take it steady on the corners or you could end up eating the wall. This feature is what makes NASCAR more than a basic driving game. Each time you race on a new speedway course, you can change the car setting to suit the amount of corners and straights.

Graphically NASCAR 99 is very good. The cars are extremely well detailed and some are complete with sponsor's logos for added realism. NASCAR 99 also uses the PlayStation's hi-res mode to amazing effect for the detail of the cars the crowd and even the track. For example, if you put your foot down to hard you leave huge skidmarks on the race way. Once again this greatly helps increase the experience.

Bumper to Fender

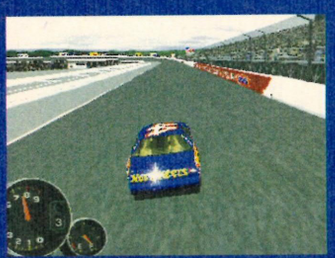
Sound is another area that EA have really worked on, and it's sure paid off. As you race around the track you're provide with a blow-by-blow account of the action from Bob Jenkins and Benny Parsons. As the race progresses, they give tips and information on the drivers, the tracks and loads of other interesting things. Now this may sound like a minor factor, but for me this really helps to draw you into the game and increase the enjoyment. In addition to the commentary you're in constant communication with your pit crew through out the race. They send you information on how

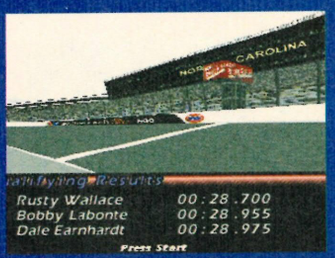
THE QUALIFYING LAP...

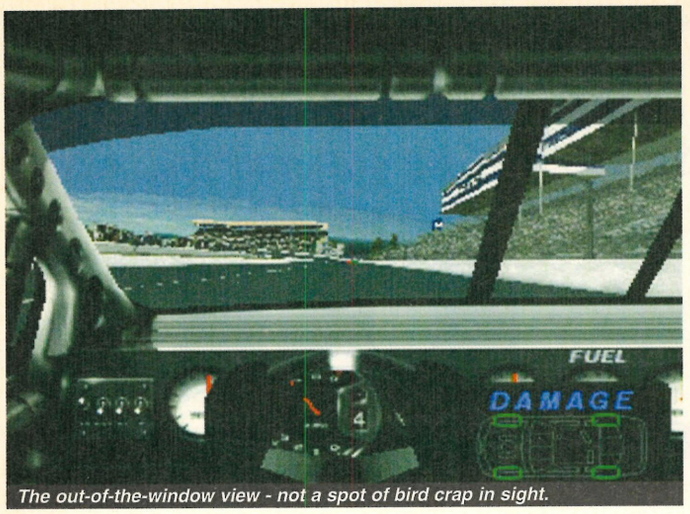
While the race is obviously the most important thing, getting a good qualifying lap also plays a major part in how well you do. If you can get a starting position near the front of the grid you put yourself in a much better position. You can challenge for the lead without having to make your way through all the back markers, and keep out of trouble as most accidents tends to happen at the back of the grid where things are more tight.
Check out our screenshots to see what we mean; one good lap here and you put a totally different perspective on the race. You can set up the car slightly different for the qualifying sessions if you like, just to squeeze every last bit of time you can out of your car. Take a look how we did...









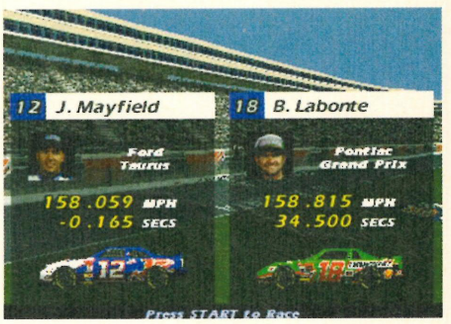


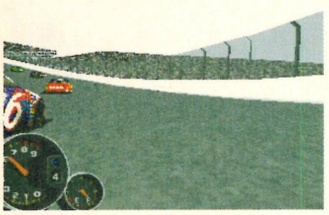
The out-of-the-window view - not a spot of bird crap in sight.





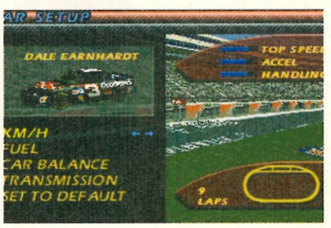














Basically, you're going round in circles for up to 100 laps...

you're doing, who is leading, where the cars are behind you are and the like. Now this also adds to the realism, but it's also an invaluable driving aid as the pit lane information can tell you if you need to pick up your lap times, block overtaking cars, etc.

As a game I quite like NASCAR 99. It's just a shame that all the stats, cars and tracks will probably be a waste of time for the average European player. I don't know about you, but I've only ever watched about three laps of the real thing. Another problem is a criticism that seems to be levelled against all racing games based on either NASCAR or Indy Cars; the tracks are just too boring. Well over half of the circuits in the game are basically ovals, which means you've only got four, or maybe six bends to take on a lap. Basically you are going around in circles for anything up to 100 laps, which I found to be a little tiresome. However, this is more a problem with the sport itself rather than the game. After all, EA have kept the tracks true to life - it's just a shame they are so dull to begin with.

The Finish Line

NASCAR 99 isn't a bad game, and to be fair EA have made the package much more than a basic racing game with their usual mix of statistics, action, graphics and even strategy. You must take into account, though, the glut of racing games we've seen over the last year, and in particular the amazing Gran Turismo, have taken the genre to a whole new level and this is what NASCAR is up against. If you follow the sport on the TV, obviously the chance of racing in real cars against real drivers on real circuits will be something that you cannot replace, no matter how good the rival games are. If this is the case, I'd recommend you get NASCAR 99 as soon as possible. However, if you just want a top-quality racing game I'd have to say Gran Turismo must be your first choice. NASCAR is a nice try from EA, but this time they've chosen one of the toughest genres on the PlayStation and they haven't quite pulled it off. Still, it's a valiant attempt.

Alan King

SECOND OPINION

The nip-and-tuck overtaking in NASCAR 99 is fun for a while, but as Alan said, it can't hold its own against the likes of Gran Turismo or MotorHead.
Fans of the sport will appreciate the accurate rosters, cars and logos, though.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

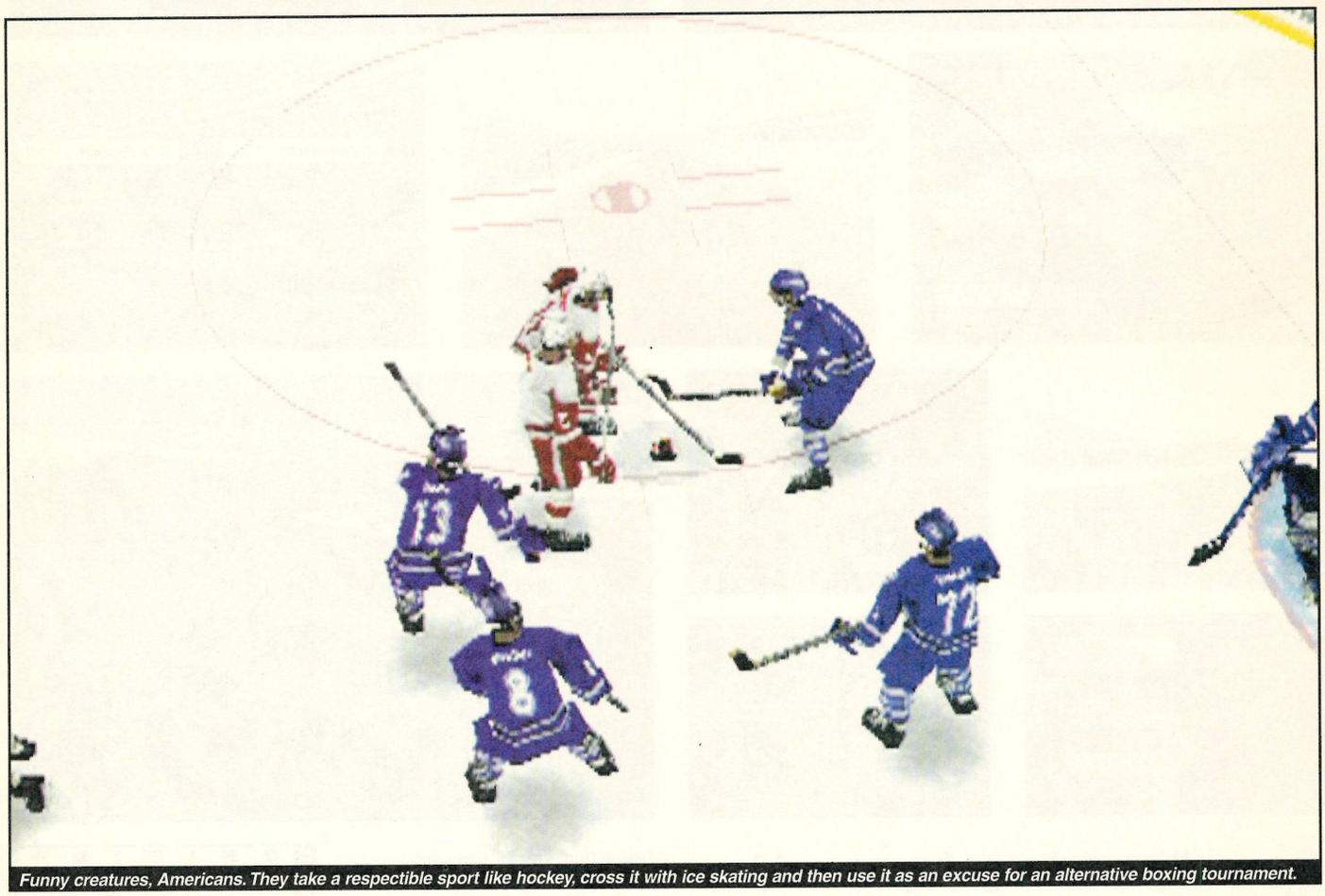
GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	9
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	6

79%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Electronic Arts	EA Sports	Sports Sim	Out Now	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card

Each year EA produces another version of its best-selling hockey game, and this year is no different. So has NHL 99 got anything new to offer? Lets take a look...

NHL 99



Funny creatures, Americans. They take a respectible sport like hockey, cross it with ice skating and then use it as an excuse for an alternative boxing tournament.

The NHL hockey series is probably one of EA's most successful, in fact, it seems like a lifetime ago when the original game was released of the Sega Mega Drive, and every year EA have take the basic game and improved it, making it better and better. NHL 99 is the latest version for the PlayStation, and it's not just improved in the obvious way, ie. teams, players and stats, but it also has many cosmetic and gameplay changes that make it a whole new ball game ('ball'? - Ed).

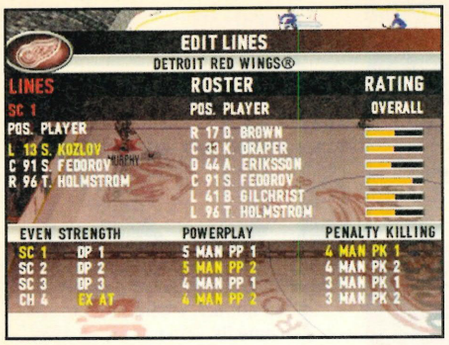
However, before we take a closer look at these, the one question which everyone reading this review is asking themselves must be addressed - 'why do we keep getting tweaked versions of the same game each year?' Now it doesn't take a genius to figure out the yearly NHL revamp is primarily for the American market. In fact, you could say the European release is something of an afterthought! Yes, this sounds like a criticism, but it's not; it's simply a fact, and one that must be acknowledged in order to understand why the sequels keep on coming. The bottom line is that whole idea behind EA's sports games is they are trying to creating an accurate, strategic and playable game of ice hockey on a console, and to do this the American game-playing public demand that each year the statistics, player rosters, player attributes, draft picks and player retirements are updated and revised. If EA didn't do this year's update, all these factors would be out of date, and this would blow the entire thing. This is something us Brits, or at least the ones of us that don't follow the NHL, fail to realise!

The strategic element of the game has also been improved.

On Thin Ice?

Well, with that out of the way, let's look at what has changed cosmetically this year. For a start, the graphics have been greatly improved. They're fully motion-captured to give the players the most realistic animation you've ever seen. You can almost feel the body-checks as players smash into each other on the boards. The players move, turn on their skates, perform spin turns and everything you'd expect in a game of hockey just like it was real life. In particular the manner in which the netminders move is amazing. If you just sit back and watch a friend play the game you could easily be forgiven for thinking you where watching the television; it really is that good!

In addition to this, the strategic element of the game has also been improved. You can change your player line, edit the members of the team who play, call time-outs; in fact everything that you could do if you were the head coach of a real

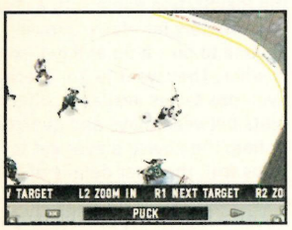


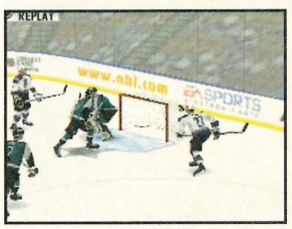




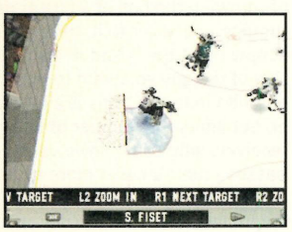
SCORING GOALS...

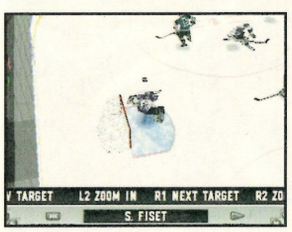
This is what it's all about. If you can't score you can't win, no matter how good your defence is. Here's our guide to scoring goals...



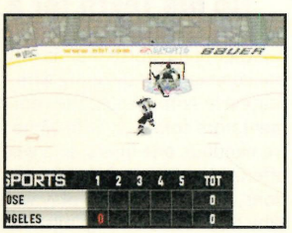


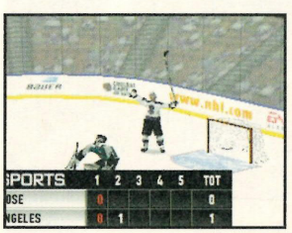
THE ONE-TIMER:
The first and probably the easiest way to score is the one-timer. Skate down the ice with a wingman sticking to the side of the rink, then as you reach the face-off circle by the goal, pass the puck back into the centre. Time it correctly and there should be another of your players skating down the ice, right into the puck's path. Quickly tap the Shot button so that the player in the middle hits the puck first time. Using the joypad, you can slightly alter the direction of this powerful shot which flies home more often than not.



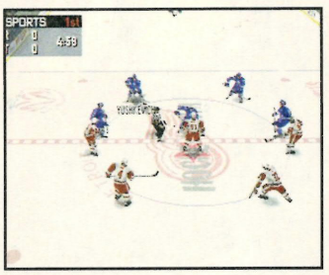


THE FAKE OUT:
Secondly there's the fake out, which is the tougher option. This is usually used when a lone player is on the attack. He goes one-on-one with the netminder in an attempt to fake past him and put the puck in the net. Making this play work in NHL hockey 99 is a very tricky business as it requires perfect timing and stick control. Skate towards the netminder, then turn slightly to the left as if to shoot the puck, and just as you get close, turn back to the right and use a wrist shot to flick the puck back the other way. It takes ages to perfect this method of scoring, and even then you may find it tough to pull off against the better keepers, but it's by far the best technique for scoring with a single attacker.

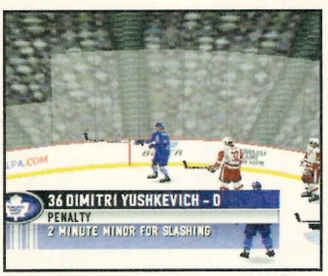


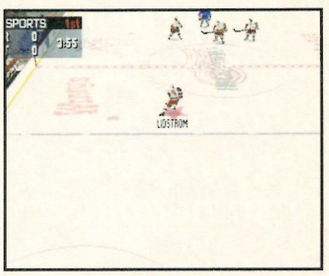


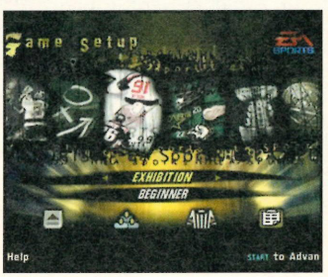
THE PENALTY SHOT
Known as hockey's most exciting play, and it's not hard to see why! The fouled player goes one-on-one with the netminder in an attempt to slip the puck past him. You get 25 seconds, so don't rush and don't forget you only get one shot; no rebounds or follow-ups are allowed. The best method is to skate into the centre of one of the two face-off circles (either side of the goal) then glide horizontally past the goal, hitting a slap shot just as you get halfway across. If you time this right you score every time, no matter who's between the pipes!

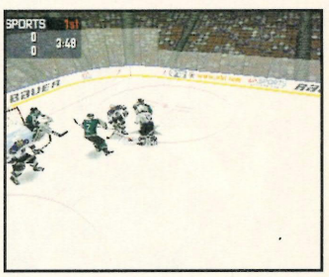












hockey team is at your disposal. This factor makes the game much more than just a simple sports title, and is a credit to EA's attention to detail. Yeah, it may be lost on a few people who just want to smash the puck around, but to a true hockey fan it's the icing on the cake.

As I've already said, all of the rosters have been updated so you're playing with the real-life teams. If a superstar has just retired (like Mario Lemuix did a season or so back) he's been removed. If you choose the team you support, you can be sure that everything will be up to date, right down to new kits and outfits.

The simple fact is that NHL 99 is the best slice of American hockey action you can buy for the PSX, and that's a fact! If you own one of the previous versions of the game and aren't to bothered about the stats, and instead just want a good hockey game to play with your friends, to be honest you've already got it. However, if you're an NHL fan and want all the updated stats, players, rosters and new graphics, NHL 99 is definitely worth getting as it really does represent the pinnacle of ice hockey on any home console. I for one am already looking forward to next year's update. Good job, EA!

Alan King

SECOND OPINION

Fans of the sport will appreciate the new rosters, but many are heartly sick of the annual updates. They're a boon to the ice hockey fan, but as a game there's no point buying it if you already have the last version. I wonder why they can't release rosters on memory cards?

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	5
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	9

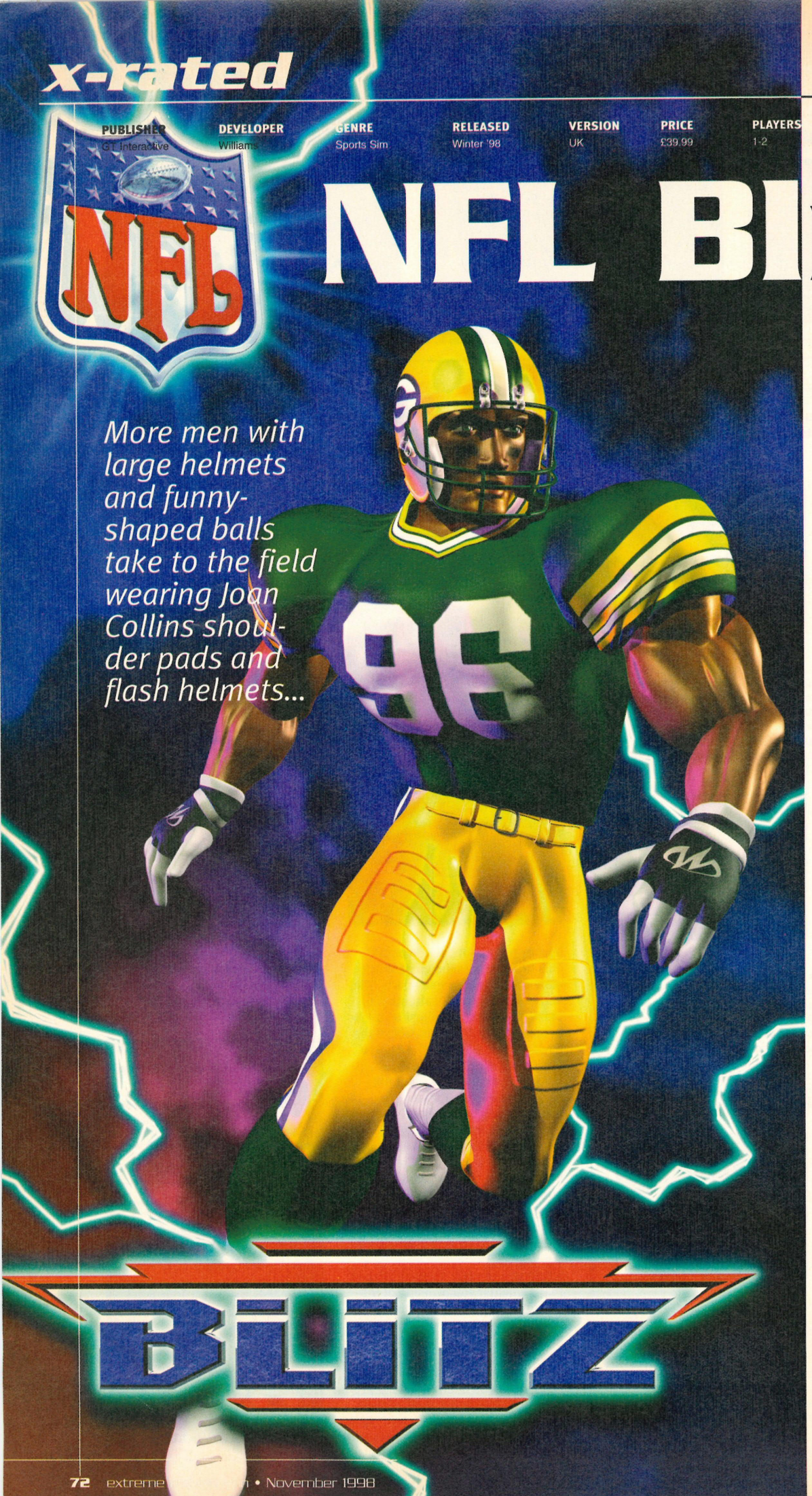
87%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS
GT Interactive	Williams	Sports Sim	Winter '98	UK	£39.99	1-2

PERIPHERALS
Memory Card Dual Shock
Analogue

NFL Blitz

More men with large helmets and funny-shaped balls take to the field wearing Joan Collins shoulder pads and flash helmets...



This one's been well received on import, where gamers welcome its fast-paced, arcadey approach to the gridiron game. The control system is easy to learn and the scoring high, making it ideal for beginners or those less knowledgeable about American football, but its advanced techniques prevent it becoming shallow. Likewise, Midway have blessed the PlayStation game with a great user-friendly interface, allowing anyone to pick it up and get exactly where they want to go. There are even tips boxes available, offering hints between plays and quarters to help the novice player get to grips with the finer details of American football. When you become more adept at the game, you can switch them off and go your own way.

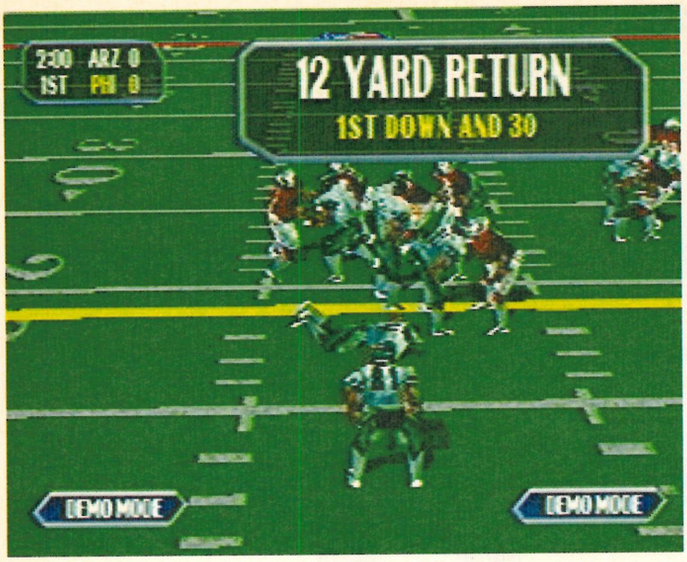
When the camera's in close, the players' graphics are enormous, though not as well defined as some NFL games. The animations are polished too. In keeping with the pick-up -and-play philosophy, the plays have been made easier too. Instead of throwing the ball at a cursor and running a receiver to it, here you simply point the D-Pad in the direction of the guy you want to throw to and hit Circle or X. This is a lot easier, but limits the number of free receivers who can receive your passes - there's never more than three, but this is more than enough. If you need an extra burst of speed, hit the turbo button. Pass while its activated and your throw is more powerful than usual.

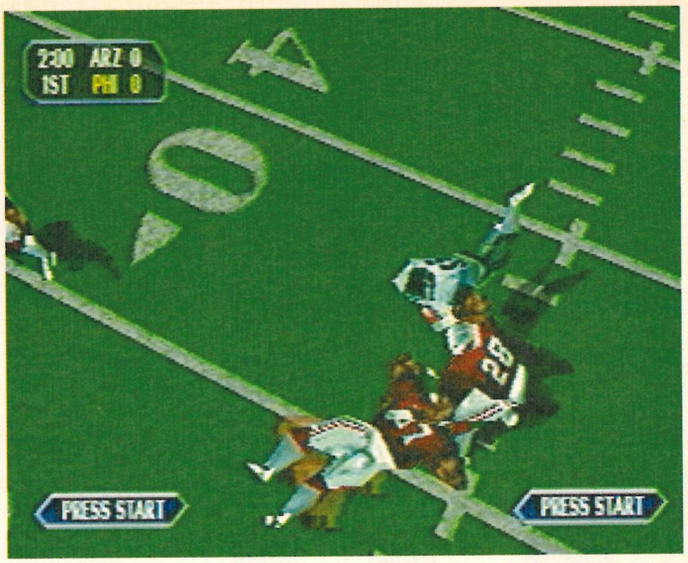
Fans of the coin-op original will be glad to hear the game is almost arcade perfect, and in addition to the Arcade mode, Season and Tournament options have been included for the home versions.

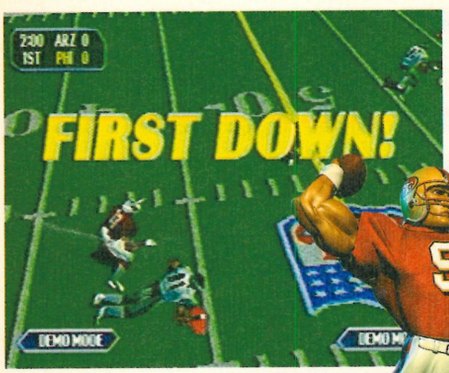
He's Gonna be Picking Up his Teeth for a Week...

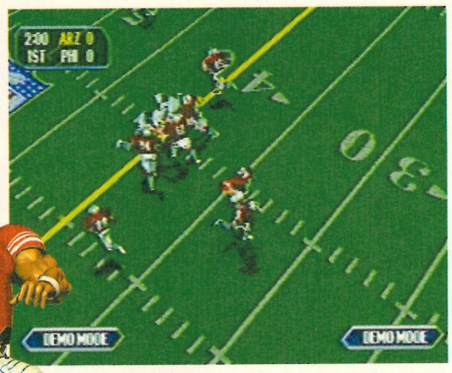
Another point worth mentioning is the commentary. Dripping with Stateside enthusiasm, the commentators come out with some tremendous one-liners, and when offering ore functional observations, keep up with the play well. Why he doesn't offer things like yardage gained or how many more were needed for the First Down is beyond me, though. The rest of the in-game sounds are effective, if unremarkable.

Just to make things perfectly clear, I'll say again that NFL Blitz is not a true simulation of the sport. There are only seven players on each side, you need only 30 yards



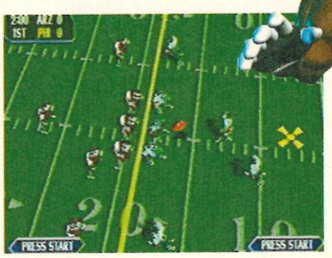


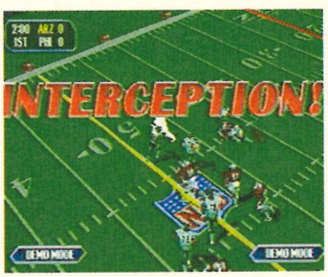












The computer adjusts its AI according to your abilities...

for a First Down and there are no penalties. This is gridiron lite, honed down for arcade addicts rather than armchair William 'The Refrigerator' Perry wannabes. There's no trading players or creating new ones - the rosters are set for you. What you see is what you get and what you get is generally good, but there are a few drawbacks. There are three skill levels on offer, but whichever you choose, the game will be close. Why?

BECAUSE THE COMPUTER ADJUSTS ITS AI ACCORDING TO YOUR ABILITIES! This is really annoying, and a lazy way of setting a challenge. The harder you play the better the CPU opponents get, and a clever tactic is to try and stay level rather than pull ahead until the dying seconds, when you storm your opponent's touchline and win before the variable AI can work against you. This has certainly cost the game several percentage points, but needless to say it doesn't damage the two-player offering.

NFL Blitz is almost ideal for armchair gridiron fans who don't consider themselves experts on the sport, though those who have bought every version of John Madden might find it unsatisfying. If the computer didn't cheat to keep the matches close (an artificial way of making them exciting, for sure), it would score much higher. As it stands, it comes highly recommended to those who want a simple, after-the-pub two-player knock-around or anyone who can't get their heads around a sim-type gridiron game and want an easy foot in the door.

Ian Osborne

SECOND OPINION

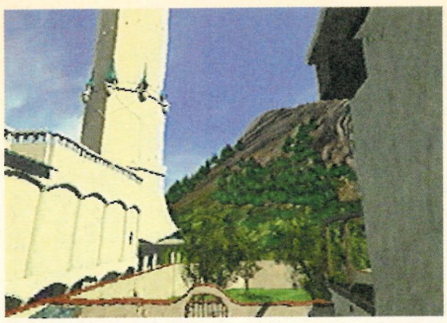
A nice idea, but it doesn't quite come off. If the CPU opponents behaved properly and offered a challenging skill level instead of just cheating, it would be ace, but as it stands, it's still a great two-player game.

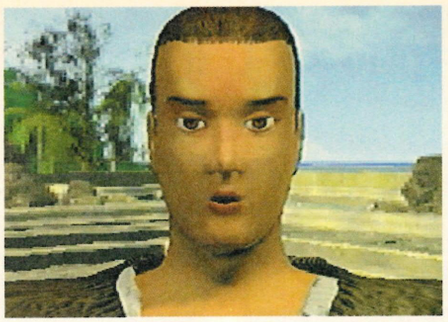
Alan King

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	8

73%







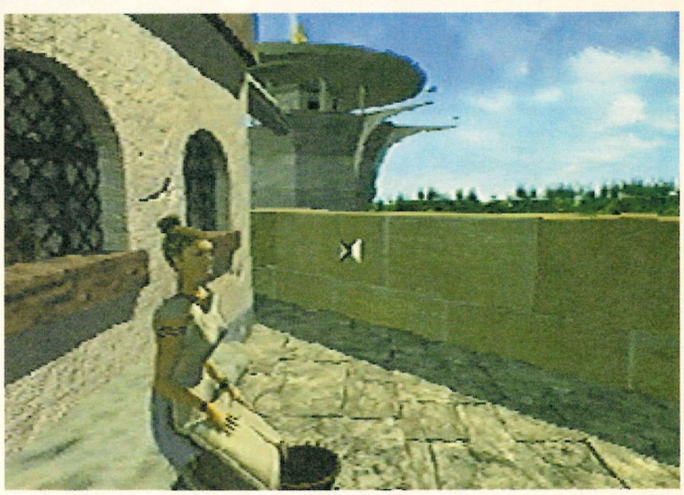
PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Cryo Interactive Entertainment	Cryo Interactive Entertainment	Adventure	November '98	UK	£39.99	1	Memory Card

Is this the sort of game legends are made of, or should it sink without a trace? It's up to the extreme PlayStation crew to find out...

Atlantis: The Lost Tales

Well, you've got to admire their bottle. While 3D point-and-click graphic adventures are common on the PC, the good old PSX adventure scene (an impoverished and under-rated genre if ever there was one) consists of 2D point-and-clickers like the Broken Sword games or City of the Lost Children-style epics which give you direct control of an on-screen character. Atlantis takes an entirely different tack, and offers the player a beautifully-painted 3D world viewed from an own-eye perspective. Movement is achieved in Myst style; point your cursor in the direction you want to go and click. The screen darkens, material loads and the player is standing in the area he indicated. This is somewhat limiting in that you can't walk around at whim Doom-style, but that's the price you pay for great graphics like these. Thankfully, you usually walk from one point of interest to another in Atlantis, unlike Myst where you get a new cameo of the world every ten paces, no matter what (or 'if') its significance. Even so, walking from A to B can be a tedious experience.

Another advantage Atlantis has over Myst is that you can turn your own-eye camera through a full 360 degrees in every location, looking behind, above and below you. This has to be seen to be believed, but we've done our best to illustrate it elsewhere here. Also worth a mention is the speech. Cryo's own OMNI SYNC system was used to create some of the best lip sync ever. This may sound trivial, but in giving the impression the guy in front of you really is talking, it boosts the game's atmosphere no end.



You can turn your own-eye camera through a full 360 degrees...

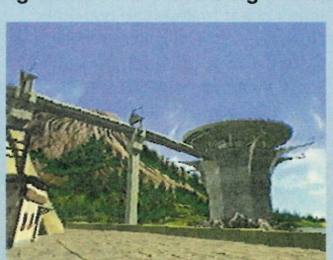
Sizzling Storylines

But what's it all about? Well, Atlantis sees you wandering through five separate game universes, each with a unique and exotic culture. The ancient city, although offering fashions and architecture in keeping with Classical Rome or Greece, possesses some seriously advanced technology. The intro sequence sees a flying ship with the appearance of an Egyptian royal yacht 'sail' through the air and land on an island. The society of Atlantis is very different from our own, too. It's

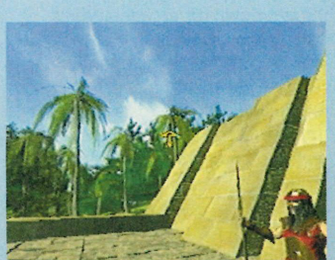
A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE...

All these shots were taken by looking around while standing in a single location. Lovely, aren't they?



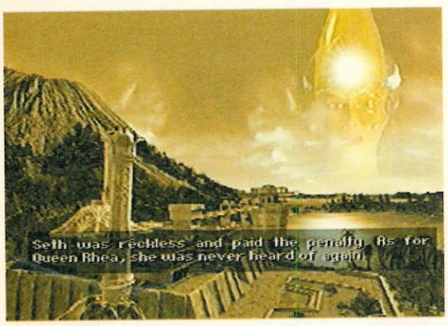


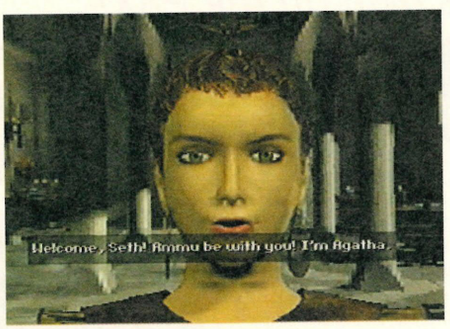




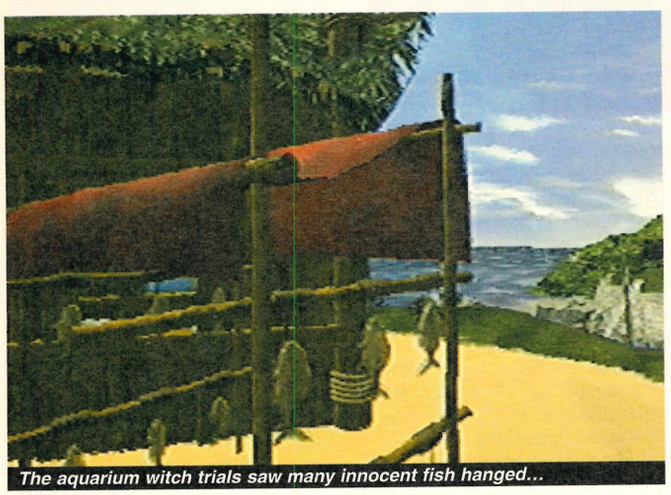




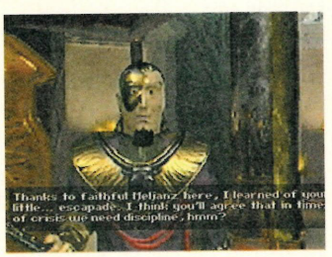


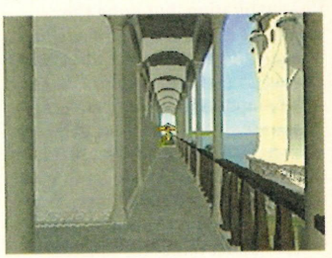




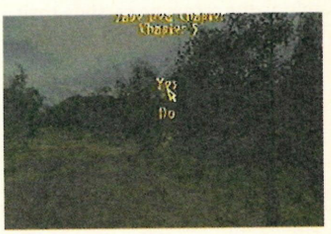


The aquarium witch trials saw many innocent fish hanged...











run under matriarchal lines (in short, the women are in charge). Your character, Seth, is one of the Queen's concubines and lives in a sort of reverse harem with other males used by the monarch for sexual favours. It all goes Pete Tong when her highness disappears. The aim of the game is, of course, to find her.

Cryo do a great job of weaving a mean plot. The intricacies in the storyline are a head and shoulders above the usual, simplistic good Vs evil crap. It's linear, but what's wrong with that? It doesn't destroy the atmosphere of the game. Unfortunately, the game's structure and content lets it down drastically.

Adventure games have a history dating back to the mid-Seventies, when people manipulated their environment by typing short sentences and getting the same in return. GET PLANK (you have the plank). PUT PLANK OVER HOLE (the hole is bridged. You can now go North). The technology's advanced since these graphics-free days, but the principles remain the same. Even by the mid-Eighties, when text adventures were becoming popular on the early home computers, sudden deaths the player could do nothing to prevent were frowned upon. Alas, Atlantis is full of them. You could put up with the dodgy loading times, the intrusive saving only when the game lets you and, because of the distances covered by a single mouse click, getting confused about which direction you came from when you arrived at the current location if it wasn't for this irritating flaw which makes the game a chore rather than a pleasure. "Seth was reckless and paid the penalty" screams the game yet again, as you bite the dust for the heinous crime of walking down an alley. Sure, you can avoid doing it next time, but this sort of trial and error isn't what adventuring is all about.

Hopefully Cryo will use their incredibly-impressive game engine to create a spectacular game, with graphics designed so you never get lost, an auto-map to take you straight to previously-explored areas and a game script that doesn't kill you for exploring your surroundings. In the meantime, BREAK DISC (your CD is broken)...

Ian Osborne

SECOND OPINION

If only. Atlantis could have been really good, but too much wandering about and too many sudden deaths reduce it to a boring plod through admittedly-excellent graphical landscapes. There's a killer game to come out of this engine, but this isn't it.

Doug Williams

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	5
LIFESPAN	5

40%



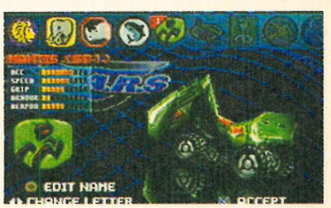




PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
UBISoft	Vivid Image	Driving	Out Now	UK	£39.99	1-4	Memory Card Multi Tap Steering Wheel Analogue Dual Shock

Combat racing for the PlayStation Population at last S.C.A.R.S. shamelessly borrows from successful games on other consoles, but can it hold its own on the PSX?

S.C.A.R.S.

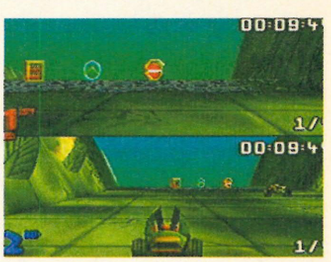


Ever wished there was a game on the PlayStation which played like Mario Kart? Wish no longer for S.C.A.R.S. is such a game. It's far less cartoony than its N64 inspiration, but none the worse for it. The cars are based on animal shapes, so you find yourself driving as a shark, preying mantis or an elephant to name but three. These sleek and futuristic vehicles each have their own individual handling characteristics, governing qualities such as speed, acceleration, cornering and armour. These factors affect handling considerably as the racers powerslide their way round the twists and turns of the various tracks on offer.

The cars handle extremely well, albeit without too much of a nod to accurate driving physics. You won't get away with just flooring the accelerator and steering, though. Take a bend too fast and you drift hopelessly, watching in frustration as the other racers take you on the inside. On narrower bends you can clip the barriers and flip the car, though they always roll back onto their wheels afterwards - a roll is annoying rather than terminal, but loses you precious seconds. The tracks are exciting, original and very well designed, with fast straights and tight corners, narrow bridges and wide arenas. They each have a style and character of their own too.







Go For Your Guns...

Like any good combat racer, S.C.A.R.S. features a host of collectable weapons like missiles, shields and turbos, but also more esoteric devices such as the skull symbol which counts down from 30, blowing you into the air when it reaches zero. You can send it to your nearest foe by hitting the weapons button, but he can do the same to you and send it back, and you're unable to use your other weapons while it's with you. Do you wait until its counter is almost on zero before sending it or just get rid of it so you can use your power-ups again?

The courses are fairly short, so you're always racing - there's no driving several laps without a sniff of an opponent. This leads to the game's only major fault. One mistake - just one - can often take you from first place to fifth or sixth, in a field of eight. This can be really frustrating at times, but ultimately it's a good incentive to avoid making that one mistake. The computer-controlled opponents don't cheat like those in many games of this nature - take a turbo while coming first and you won't be overtaken as soon as it's expired by a car that simply shouldn't be there. Although this means if you drive badly you can get half way through the race and then realise you've no chance of catching up (the opponents don't snail along for bad drivers too), it also offers an incentive to get ahead and stay there - it's entirely possible to build a lead and keep it.

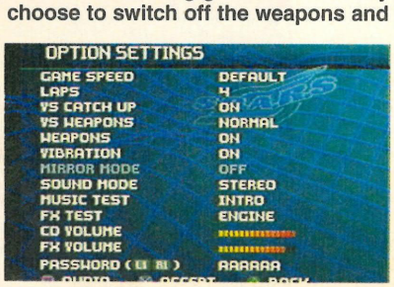
Overall, S.C.A.R.S. is a great game, much better than the silly title implies (it stands for Super Computer Animal Racing Simulation, if you're interested). In one-player mode the four challenge cups, each one accessed by completing the previous one, won't take forever to win but its qualities as a multiplayer game preserve its lifespan.

Ian Osborne

Its qualities as a multiplayer game preserves its lifespan

OUTSTANDING OPTIONS...

S.C.A.R.S. certainly doesn't leave you short of options. You can adjust virtually everything in the game, including number of laps, game speed and the sound. Unlike certain popular combat racing games on other systems, you can choose to switch off the weapons and pursue a full-blown racing event, or merely limit them to your favourite tools. It's range of options is really welcome in a multi-player game, where customisation can revise the challenge immeasurably.



SECOND OPINION

I really enjoyed S.C.A.R.S. The single-player offering won't last forever, but with a few mates it's a real scream.
Okay, the graphics lose a little with four players competing, but what do you expect? It's still great fun.

Doug Williams

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	7

80%

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- Porsche Challenge
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- Rally Cross
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- Ray Racers
- Ridge Racer
- Ridge Racer Rev
- Road Rash & 3D
- San Francisco Rush
- Speed Racer
- Speedster
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- TOCA
- Tommi Makinen Rally
- Total Driving
- VR Powerboat Racing
- V-Rally
- Wing Over
- Wipeout & 2097





SHOOT 'EM UPS

- Alien Trilogy
- Armoured Core
- Auto Destruct
- Bomberman World
- Colony Wars
- Command & Conquer 'Red Alert'
- Critical Depth
- Dark Forces
- Diablo
- Die Hard 1, 2 & 3
- Doom
- Ghost in the Shell
- G-Police
- Loaded
- Machine Hunter
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- Mass Destruction
- MDK
- Mech Warrior 2
- N20
- Nuclear Strike
- One
- Ray Storm
- Reboot
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- Shadowmaster
- Soviet Strike
- Steel Reign
- Time Crisis
- Twisted Metal 1 & 2
- Vigilante 8
- Warhammer: Dark Omen
- Worms
- X-Com: Terror from the Deep
- Xevious 3D
- Z





PLATFORM GAMES

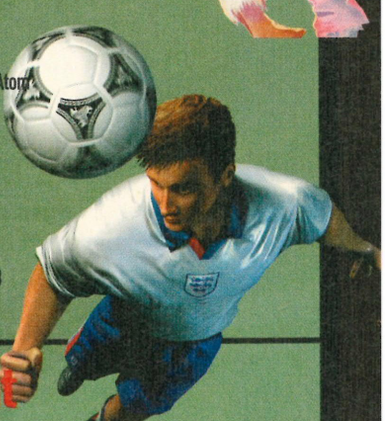
- Abe's Oddysee
- Bomberman World
- Bubble Bobble
- Bubsy 3D
- Bust a Move 1, 2 & 3
- Cheesy
- Crash Bandicoot 1 & 2
- Croc
- D
- Death Trap Dungeon
- Excalibur 2555AD
- Fade to Black
- Final Fantasy VII
- Firo & Klawd
- Forsaken
- Frogger
- Gex & Gex 3D
- Gunship 2000
- Hercules
- Jersey Devil
- Jumping Flash 1 & 2
- Klonoa
- Kula World
- Lemmings 3D
- Lucky Luke
- Monopoly
- Pandemonium 1 & 2
- Parappa the Rapper
- Pitfall & Pitfall 3D
- Pro Pinball
- Rascal
- Rayman
- Riven: The Sequel to Myst
- Rosco McQueen
- Sim City 2000
- Skull Monkey
- Spider
- Spot Goes to Hollywood
- Suikoden
- Super Puzzle Fighter 2
- Swagman
- Tetris Plus
- The Lost World
- Theme Hospital
- Theme Park
- Time Commander
- Tomb Raider 1 & 2
- Treasures of the Deep
- War Craft 2





BEAT 'EM UPS

- Bio Freaks
- Bloody Roar
- Bushido Blade 1 & 2
- Cardinal Syn
- Criticom
- Dark Rift
- Dead or Alive
- Dynasty Warriors
- Fighting Force
- Marvel Super Heroes
- Mortal Kombat: 3, 4, Sub Zero & Trilogy
- Nightmare Creatures
- Psychic Force
- Rise of the Robot 2
- Soul Blade
- Spawn
- Star Gladiator
- Street Fighter Alpha 1, 2 & Ex Plus
- Tekken 1, 2 & 3
- The Incredible Hulk
- Tobal Number 1 & 2
- Toshinden 1, 2 & 3
- Vs
- War Gods
- X-Men: Children of the Atom
- Zero Divide 1 & 2



SPORTS GAMES

- Actual Soccer 2
- Adidas Power Soccer
- Dead Ball Zone
- FIFA '96, '97 & '98
- Jonah Lomu
- Madden NFL '98
- NBA Hangtime
- NBA Jam Extreme
- NBA Live '98
- NFL Gameday '98
- NFL '97
- NHL Face Off
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- Total NBA '97
- Triple Play '98
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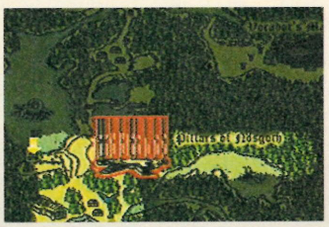
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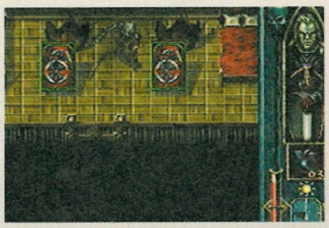
PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Eidos Interactive	Silicon Knights	RPG	TBA	UK	£19.99	1	Memory Card

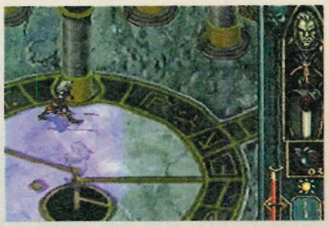
Suffering to the conquered...

Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain









Kain, an arrogant nobleman, wanders the world in search of adventure. After a late-night drinking session, he's brutally cut down by a gang of cut-throats, his tortured soul descending to Hell. Here he meets a necromancer called Mortanius, who promises revenge. In his folly, Kain accepts without considering the consequences and is returned to the world as a bloodthirsty vampire who must suck the blood of the innocent to survive.

The plot twists in this epic game could fill several pages.

The plotlines and storyline twists in this epic game could fill several pages. Suffice to say that in the beginning you know little about the world around you or your new-found vampire form, but gradually uncover a tale of corruption among the Circle, magical protectors of the world of Nosgoth. The Circle is decaying, and unless it's destroyed the world will fall with it. The self-interested Kain is a largely-unwilling player in the struggle ahead, and often regrets his decision to help Mortanius.

The game eases you into its world, not with an artificial tutorial, but by offering easily-won artefacts and features within your start location, The Sanctuary. Straight away you pick up a Sanctuary spell, shown within the game as a rotating card, and therefore will recognise such spells when found later in the game. Armour and weapons are also found this way. Easily-spotted switches on the walls and the floor open new rooms where you find prisoners chained to the walls - suck their blood for health if you wish, or just collect the artefacts which extend Kain's magic and health meters. A few weak enemies offer the chance to suck blood from a stunned foe - defeated enemies sway on unsteady feet, falling after a few seconds or when hit again. Kain can feed on them in this state. Take care not to feed on black, tarnished blood which decreases your health, or a monster's poisonous green blood which makes you ill.

Help Me, Kind Sir...

As is the norm for RPGs, the graphics are sprite-based and dated, saving valuable disc space for that all-important game world and storyline. Other RPG developers take note, though - Silicon Knights still found room for spectacular cut sequences and chilling voice-overs. These really are incredible, and add to the atmosphere of the game immeasurably. The visually-stunning rendered cut scenes are more than just fillers. Instead they elaborate key storyline elements without becoming a mere crutch to prop up dodgy plot lapses. Likewise, the voice-overs are well acted and a welcome change from the usual RPG text window, though the background cries of 'help me, kind sir' get annoying after a while.

The structure of the game is sound. Wilderness and dungeon areas are there to be explored, with Kain's hard-won abilities (found during the game) aiding immeasurably. Just as wandering through the wilderness becomes a chore, you discover a Bat Form which allows you to fly between areas you've already explored and to structures you can see. Mist Form allows you to cross water (damaging to vampires) and pass through small gaps, and the Wolf Form lets you jump previously-impassable obstacles. Watch out for the Mace too, a weapon which can smash through barriers.

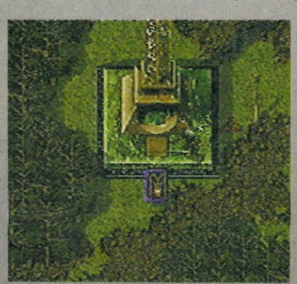
Likewise, spells offer abilities (providing you have the magic power) to shield yourself against attacks, possess the minds of foes, suck blood at a distance and more. Each time you find a spell or ability you're forced to use it almost immediately to solve a puzzle in a usually non-lethal situation, getting you used to its mechanics without becoming an obtrusive training excercise. You soon need all your wits about you as you're thrown into new situations which stretch your inventory to the full. Watch out for secret areas too, some of which you can only enter by returning to a previously-explored territory with a new talent or item.

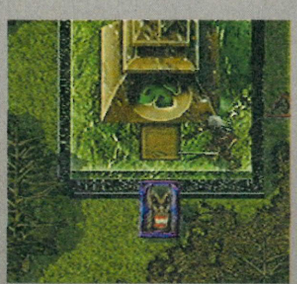
Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain is an excellent action-orientated RPG, with a powerful storyline and presentation which shows aesthetics can live alongside size. Okay, the in-game graphics are a little 16-bit, but even two years on its voice-overs and cut-scenes cast a long shadow over games like Alundra and Breath of Fire III. Finding spells and abilities lying around just waiting to be picked up can feel artificial at times, and non-player characters pacing back and forth like an expectant father in a maternity ward don't help either, especially as the game's so atmospheric overall, but these are hardly terminal faults. Its gothic horror atmosphere and disturbingly amoral storyline make Blood Omen a bargain at less than £20.

Ian Osborne

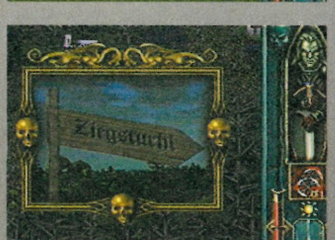
POINTS OF VIEW...

The close-in view is great for battles and picking your way through traps, though the distant camera affords a greater area of vision when exploring.









SECOND OPINION

The 16-bit nature of the graphics mean the game won't appeal to everyone, but if you like your RPGs huge, involved and with exciting and original plots, Blood Omen: LoK is for you. Here's to the next Blood Omen game, Soul Reaver...

Doug Williams

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	9
LIFESPAN	8

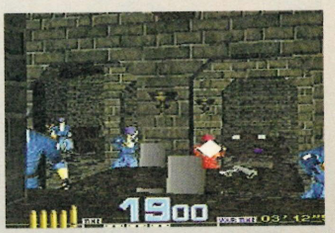
88%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Sony CEE	Namco	Light Gun	November '98	UK	£19.99	1	Memory Card	GunCon







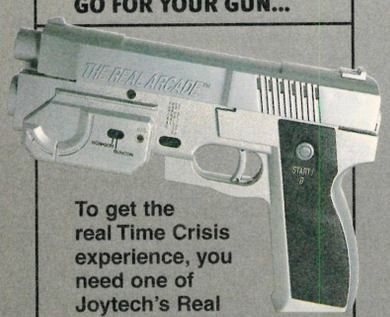


Time Crisis

Is that a gun in your pocket...




GO FOR YOUR GUN...



To get the real Time Crisis experience, you need one of Joytech's Real Arcade Light Guns, boasting a dedicated foot pedal and force feedback. They're not cheap at £45, but no other gun comes as close to offering the atmosphere of the coin-op in your own home.

The most frustrating thing about light gun games is there's little you can do about getting shot. Sure you can do it to them before they do it to you, but as the enemy soldier raises his rifle and prepares to fire, you know if he gets a shot in, he hits - and there's not a damned thing you can do about it. Not so with Time Crisis - this is a light gun game with a difference. Instead of the computer taking over all bodily functions except your gun arm, here you stay behind cover until you choose to show yourself and blast away at the baddies. If the going gets too tough, hide again until the heat dies down and you can get into the line of fire once more. Sounds simple, and it would be if you weren't fighting against the clock as well as against the evil crime syndicate, hence the title; Time Crisis.

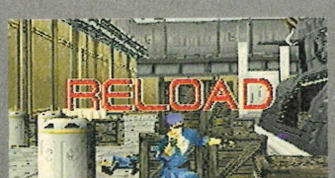
The control system works very well when using a gun. You need a GunCon-compatible blaster (though who, in this day and age, would be barmy enough to buy one that wasn't?), with the player assigning the Pause and Emerge functions to any button he chooses. Taking cover (by releasing the Emerge button) also reloads your weapon. Pressing and holding said button sends you into the firing line to kill or be killed, hiding again on releasing it. Get the picture? It's not so clear when using a joypad, though. The game has no analogue compatibility (it's just too old for that), and there's no option to redefine the buttons. Worst of all, instead of offering a decent-sized and easily-visible crosshair to aim with, Namco give you a tiny blue dot which is almost invisible against certain backgrounds. Not a problem with a light gun, but a major pain when playing with a joypad. Perhaps this is in deference to the coin-op, which had no on-screen gunsight at all (just a gun bolted to the cabinet), but not giving the player a choice of sighting sprites is inexcusable.



Shoot to Thrill...

There's certainly no shortage of things to shoot at in Time Crisis. Enemies attack thick and fast, and you must blast individual groups of enemies then advance to your next vantage point, the computer doing the running for you. Each time you clear a brace of bad guys you're given a time extension, and you need it if you're to reach the end of the area before the clock reaches zero. This leads to some perplexing decisions. Do you stand and fight, saving time but losing precious health and risking being killed, robbing you of one of your nine credits? Naturally the key to the game is getting the balance right, so the decision is yours.

Although being able to duck into cover offers a greater degree of control than the average light gun game, your route into the heart of the enemy castle is pre-determined and computer-controlled. This doesn't make the game boring, though. Each area is graphically different to the last, and the enemies behave in radically different ways, keeping interest high. Look out for pistol-packing terrorists who roll onto the screen and fire while lying down, foes who, like you, can duck and hide and even thugs with iron bars who smash your head in. End-of-level baddies include heavy pieces of military machinery like helicopters.



Time Crisis is no longer the best light gun game on the PSX (that title goes to Namco's other offering, Point Blank), but it's still a superb piece of code. It's certainly lost marks for its poor joypad compatibility, but is still a barg at £20.

Ian Osborne

SECOND OPINION

This one could work a lot better with the PSX's more usual controllers, but with a genuine imitation pistol in your hands, it's the best serious light gun action the PlayStation has to offer. Only Namco's own Point Blank beats it, and that's fairground frolics.

Alan King

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	8

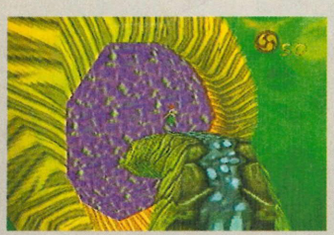
89%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Eidos Interactive	Crystal Dynamics	Platformer	TBA	UK	£19.99	1	None

This one definitely wins the booby prize...

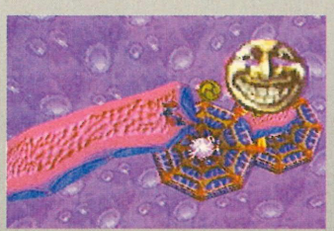
Pandemonium 2

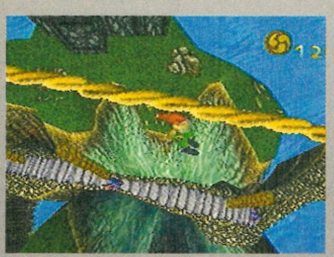


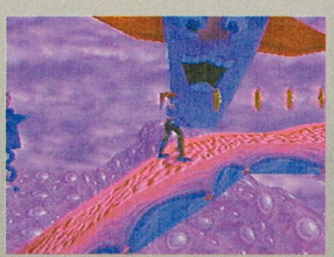














Doh; bleugh! This one was generally well received when it first came out, and adorned the cover of many a PlayStation magazine. Why? Probably because one of the main characters is a lush babe with big boobs - it certainly wasn't because the game's any good.

Technically, Pandemonium 2 works pretty well. The it moves along at a pleasing pace, with no draw-in, fogging or slow-down. The 2.5D action is credible, the player confused as to where he can and can't go, and the graphics offer a sumptuous psychedelic world, though they're a little dated now. When it comes to basic game design, though, it all goes Pete Tong.

For starters, the camera does an excellent job of showing of the surreal landscapes and kaleidoscopic backgrounds, but it isn't always where the player wants it. Look at the screenshots - the characters are sometimes tiny, the action being viewed as if through the back end of a telescope. This isn't because the game needs a wide perspective at these points, it's because the programmers felt like moving the camera.

Take a Running Jump...

The perspective isn't always this distant, of course, but (as irony would have it) you're often treated to a close-in view of your character when a wider perspective would've been more appropriate. Yes, folks, the biggest bugbear that's ever cursed a platform game is here - you frequently have to take a leap of faith, throwing yourself off a platform in the hope of arriving at an unseen safe area or indeed another platform. You can't actually see what you're leaping at, you just have to trust your luck. This is a basic, rudimentary flaw which wasn't acceptable ten years ago and certainly shouldn't be seen in a game that's not yet a year old.

Another major fault is that the characters, when running at speed, often run straight into a monster or hazard they didn't see. It doesn't happen all the time - it's a symptom of the differing perspectives again, but at certain times during the game you have to slow right down, inching your way forward for fear of running into something nasty with no chance of avoiding it. Is this really what we expect in a modern PSX game? You're given fair warning when something's about to fall on your head, though. For example, when picking your way through falling ice blocks in the Ice Prison, the tumbling hazards are preceded by a couple of harmless shards which warn you of their imminent arrival - get out of the way.

To cap it all, Pandemonium 2 is dull, DULL, D-U-L-L! It's impossible to identify with the characters, joker Fargus and the big-boobed Nikki - they're just too impersonal. The 'action' (such as it is) never sets the game alight, and while some sections are challenging and inspired, most of the time you just plod through with no real enthusiasm at all.

The first Pandemonium game, also on Platinum, was great - it offered a huge world, great atmosphere and some excellently-designed levels. The sequel beefs up the world and the psychedelia to the max, but the game seems to have been added as an afterthought. Doh!

Ian Osborne





SECOND OPINION

Play this back to back with the first Pandemonium game and its faults soon become apparent. Leaps in the dark, roving camera, boring gameplay - it fails on just about every level, except for the atmospheric graphics. The gorgeous Nikki deserves better...

Alan King

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	6
LIFESPAN	7

52%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Atlus	Atlus	Strategy/RPG	TBA (Import)	US	TBA	1	Memory Card

More swords and sorcery, traps and treasure, demons and dragons, and (of course) heroes with unpronounceable names...

Brigandine: The Legend of Forsena





Atlus Software are renowned for publishing strategic role-playing games, so it comes as no surprise that their latest release is another strategic role-playing game. The storyline for this turn-based strategy-come RPG is set in the World of Forsena, and revolves around a continent known as the Almekia Kingdom. The Kingdom is divided into six countries that are each ruled by a leader and contain various castles which mark out their domain. It's your quest to take on the role of one of the five leaders on offer (the sixth can't be chosen by the player) and command them and their country through the difficult time that's soon to effect the Kingdom. As the ruler, you're in command of various Knights and monsters that you need to move to your various castles in a strategic attempt to overthrow your neighbouring countries, and eventually the country of Esgares who have swore to unit the continent under their own rule.

Each Knight and leader have the ability to use Rune Magic, which can be used to summon new monsters as well as aid you on the battlefield. They can also create their own unit of monsters depending on their attributes; it's these units that you command on the battlefield when an attack takes place.

Cunning Commands

As is usual for a turn-based game, you're given the chance to examine, organise and move your forces before the enemy organises themselves. It's during these turns you can attack an enemy castle in a neighbouring country in an attempt to increase your domain. The enemy also have the chance to attack one of your nearby castles during their turn, and they may also wish to launch an attack on one of the other countries within the Kingdom. Each of the six countries takes it in turns to organise and move their forces as well as attack neighbouring countries.

When an attack takes place, you're asked to chose a maximum of three units to join you on the battlefield. Once again, each side takes it in turns to move their units across the battlefield as they engage in combat for territorial rights. Each battlefield scenario varies from castle to castle, and offers different terrains that you must use to your advantage.

As you gain control of more and more enemy castles, you can use the them to summon a wider variety of monsters that are required to combat stronger enemy monsters that you haven't encountered yet. You can also substitute a Knight's move and send them on a quest. Each quest either aids you by supplying your Knight with a useful item or adds hindrance by causing injury in one way or another. Other problems may occur if you're attacked and heavily rely on the Knight that's been sent away.

> Graphically, there is nothing new to see...

Graphically there is nothing new to see; the battlefield and continent views are both isometric, although the battlefield view allows two different perspectives. The character sprites are small and not very well detailed, except during the (optional) battle scenes where they can be seen in a lot more detail and colour. The gameplay isn't particularly demanding but the strategic aspect can be very taxing on the brain as there are a multitude of options as well as the initial choice of five countries which greatly increases the games lifespan. The only thing left to mention is the music and sound effects, which are to the usual uninspiring standard.

Dave France

SECOND OPINION

Interesting hex-based system - makes a change from Atlus' usual square maps. Like their previous offerings, the strategies involved in combat become predictable after a while, but it's not a bad game. It's about time a UK house signed up Atlus.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

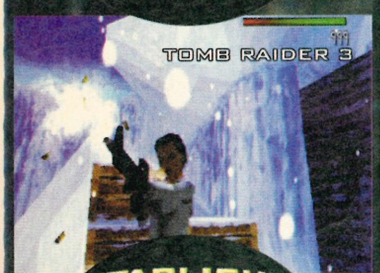
GRAPHICS	6
SOUND	4
GAMEPLAY	6
LIFESPAN	8

74%

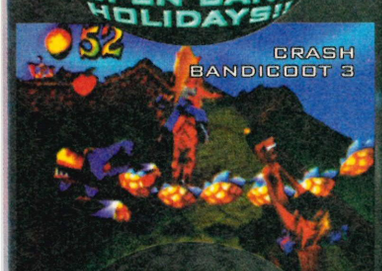
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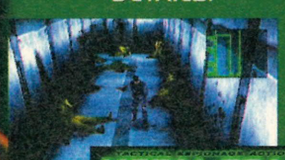
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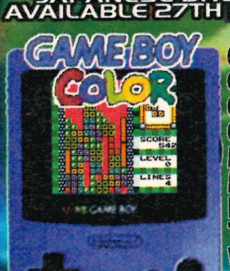


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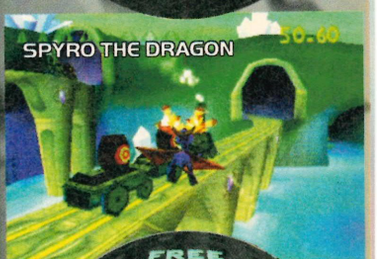
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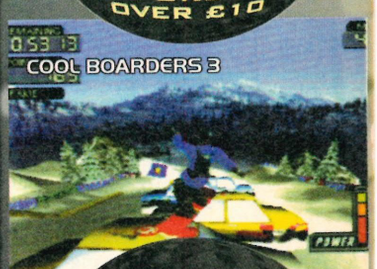
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Role

A guide to PlayStation RPGs

Role-playing games have been around longer than video games. In the early days, groups of friends sat around a table and described their actions, playing in a world which existed purely in their own heads. The game was governed by a Dungeon Master who controlled the monsters, non-player characters, traps, and everything else, really. They proved so popular it was inevitable the format would lend itself to video games.

Trouble is, while the Dungeons and Dragons-style Tolkienesque fantasy setting is well covered, other RPG scenarios are not. Anyone remember playing sci-fi pen-and-paper role-player Traveller? Where are the outer space RPGs on the PlayStation? Mercenaries, Spies and Private Eyes, another pen-and-paper role-player, showed that detective games work very well. Come on software houses, let's see a cops-and-robbers RPG on our little grey box. What about a James Bond-style game, or one set in the War? There are some great swords-and-sorcery epics out there and we're sure more will come, but wouldn't it be great if a developer took a risk and set their games in a different world?

An oft-heard gripe about RPGs is that the graphics look dated next to other modern PSX games. True enough, but here at EPM we want no part of this dodgy argument. Great graphics take up valuable disc space, and a role-playing game which featured rendered images, real-time light sourcing and texture mapping would either be delivered on half a dozen CDs or feature a pathetically small game world. No, it's far better to use the memory available to create a bestiary of believable creatures, scores of towns and villages and generally create a huge game environment. That said, though, Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain (reviewed on Platinum this very issue) augmented its decidedly 16-bit graphics with some great voice-overs and incredible rendered cut scenes. Why can't more games be like this?

People with no imagination often laugh when they beat a wandering monster and read statements like, 'You killed the giant slug. You find an oil painting'. Ho ho ho - did the slug have it in his pocket or did he drag it around in a carrier bag? Actually, neither . There are only two reasons why a creature like a giant slug would attack you - for food or because you disturbed its lair. Either way, the last person to fall foul of the massive mollusc could easily have been a trader on the way to market; you find the painting among his bleached bones. It would be disastrous if the programmers stated this or something similar every time you found a treasure through beating a wandering monster. They would have to include dozens of these explanations to avoid atmosphere-destroying repetition, and reading all that text would drive you up the wall, as well as clogging up memory. No, things are better as they are - just come to the game with your imagination switched on.

Video game RPGs have indeed come on a long way since the early days. Graphics have improved immeasurably since Valhalla on the Spectrum, the third person perspective has made the games more friendly and the advent of CD has let them grow to huge proportions packed with flavour and detail. The only thing which hasn't grown is the variety of the settings. Come on, guys - the 16-bit machines had sparkling sci-fi role-players like Buck Rogers and Corporation, even the eight-bits had Marsport and Lords of Midnight. Where are today's sci-fi classics? Why stop there? Let's have secret agent, World War II and western games too.

Now's the time to advance, not to play safe and rewrite Lord of the Rings for the umpteenth time.

ROLE-PLAY THE RIGHT WAY...

What makes a good RPG?

- The most important element in an RPG is character progression. Your characters must advance and develop as the game progresses, whether by earning experience and advancing through levels or finding new equipment and abilities making him or her more powerful.
- The game too must offer a sense of progress, either by an advancing storyline or a game world which opens as you play.
- The world the game creates must be believable. Towns and cities must look like people actually live there, not like facades erected specifically for your visit. How can you lose yourself in the game's atmosphere if you can never forget you're playing a console game?
- The characters must have, erm; character. Each and every one of them must have their own personality. The player should be able to identify with them, considering them people, not just tools.
- Above all, a good RPG should be like an interactive book. You play to see what happens next, with gold and treasures as a means to an end, not an end in themselves.

Final Fantasy VII

PUBLISHER Sony CEE



Is there anyone out there who hasn't heard of Final Fantasy VII? This is the big one - the bee's knees, the mutt's nuts and the best Japanese-style console RPG ever.

The storyline is a typical tale of good and evil, with the planet Mako being drained by the bad guys, a company called Shinra and trained killers SOLDIER. Ex-SOLDIER member Cloud Strife joins AVALANCHE (the resistance), then it's over to the player who must tackle 60 hours of gameplay (assuming you get everything right first time!) spread over 3 CDs.

The beauty of this game is the way it makes you feel about your characters. These beautifully-scripted creatures aren't mere troops or cannon fodder, but believable people who you genuinely come to care about. Also, there's no chance of getting bored even if you're stuck. There are scores of hidden areas to find, and also sideline attractions such as Chocobo racing and the amusements.

FFVII's perfect blend of sci-fi and fantasy, coupled with its blinding execution, make it a real game to remember. Here's to FFVIII...

96%

TACTICS OGRE

PUBLISHER Atlus Software (Import)

Another RPG/wargame hybrid in the Final Fantasy Tactics mould, this one takes the characters made famous on the PSX by Ogre Battle and puts them into a series of turn-based battle scenarios. Each turn, both your own and the enemy characters get to move (the fastest ones first), and carry out an action such as Attack or Magic. Terrain affects the outcome of a strike, as does whether you attacked a foe's front, rear or sides. All good, solid chess-like combat.

Technically the game looks like a SNES game stuck on a CD. There's no real presentation to speak of (even the cut scenes use sprites instead of FMV), the sound effects are low-tech clangs and grunts and the background music not really up to CD standards, but the game itself plays pretty well. Although not as advanced as Final Fantasy Tactics, the storyline's better and the paths you take through the game offer eight possible endings. It can get samey after a while, as the tactics you need are easily mastered and tend not to vary enough, but the strong plot wins through.

78%



Azure Dreams

PUBLISHER Konami



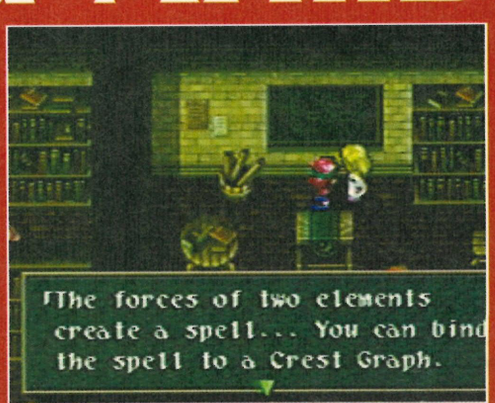
It's great to see a company doing something different with the RPG format, but unfortunately Azure Dreams doesn't quite work. You're based in a small village near the fabled Monster Tower, within which are magical eggs which can be sold or hatched into tame monsters. By earning money and spending it well you can upgrade buildings in your village and even build new ones. It's a veritable Sim City, right down to the townsfolk's level of satisfaction changing depending on how well you're doing.

The game fails due to two major flaws. The real-time combat control system is pathetic, making it really tough to keep an enemy in front of you while you're slashing at it with your sword. Secondly, to-ing and fro-ing between the Monster Tower and the village quickly becomes boring, despite being able to develop new and better monsters through finding and hatching eggs. Neat ideas, but they don't quite come together as a game.

69%

Wild Arms

PUBLISHER Sony CEE



This one's a slow starter. The first few enemies you meet are samey and predictable, but thankfully this isn't the case with the game as a whole. Starting the game with one of three characters (you choose), after a short prologue the team meet up and the player gains control of the party as a whole. From then on it's standard RPG fare, with the struggle between good and evil being fought with swords and sorcery, along with the occasional firearm. Combat is turn-based rather than the more action-orientated approach favoured by Alundra or Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain. Sound familiar? Yes, it's a blatant steal from FFVII, but who cares?

Wild Arms is far from perfect. It's too linear and too simple, though perhaps this makes it ideal for beginners. It's not Final Fantasy VII - it's not even Suikoden or Breath of Fire III, but it's far from disastrous. Buy it if you've already shelved an RPG 'cos you couldn't get to grips with it.

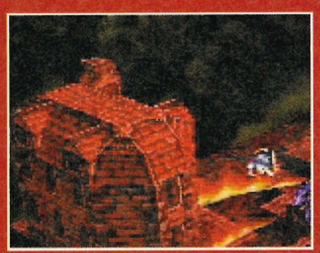
75%

Vandal Hearts

PUBLISHER Konami

These Konami RPGs are bloody good, aren't they? This turn-based strategy offering is set in the usual medieval/magical fantasy environment, and sees you leading Ash and his trusty followers through a series of blood-and-guts battles as you press forward into enemy territory.

The graphics, as is the norm for RPGs, are pretty 16-bit but the game itself boasts incredible depth. The battles are fun - you can rotate the battlefield at will, and even zoom in and out to get a better look at the proceedings. Best of all, you can develop your characters to suit your needs - archers can be promoted to snipers, healers to priests, etc.



All in all, Vandal Hearts is a solid RPG with an involving storyline and polished (if dated) presentation. It doesn't take the genre further of rewrite the rulebooks, but then, not every game can do that.

82%

Kartia

PUBLISHER Atlus Software (Import)

Co-created by Amano Yoshiitaka, the character designer who worked on the Final Fantasy games, Kartia features a choice of two main characters, each of which follows a different path through the game. It's almost like two RPGs in one. Another battle-based offering, the Kartia battlefields are presented in glorious, fully-rotatable 3D and feature interactive terrains. You can freeze rivers and torch trees during a skirmish, turning the tides of war to your advantage. There are over 150 spells to cast at your enemies too.

One near-unique feature in Kartia is that you can trade special items with your mates, transferring them from one PlayStation to another using memory cards. You can also carry your party into a two-player fight to the death.

Two strong storylines and a wealth of innovative features make Kartia a force to be reckoned with. With Konami building ties with Atlus, perhaps we'll see the game released officially over here soon.

82%





Final Fantasy Tactics

PUBLISHER Sony CEE (Import)

Can you understand why they haven't released this over here? You could monogram a bog roll with the Final Fantasy logo and watch it sell by the truckload. Not releasing it in Europe is insane - it's turning down guaranteed money.

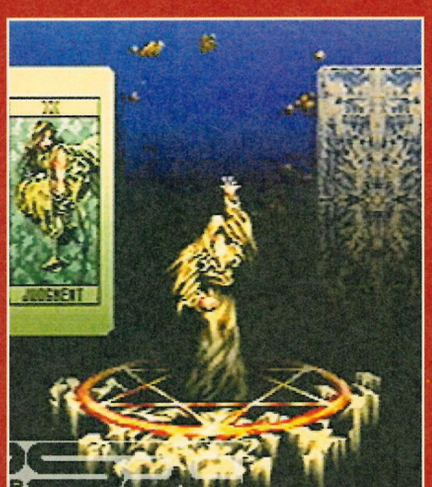
Whatever Sony's reasons for not releasing it in the UK, it can't be the quality of the game. It's ace, with turn-based battles in the Tactics Ogre mould and some of the most sumptuous graphics ever seen in an RPG. Okay, they're not quite as good as FFVII's, but they're still incredibly beautiful. Full 360 degree rotation allows you to view the proceedings from every angle, so you can drool still further.

Final Fantasy Tactics isn't blessed with the greatest storyline ever (the Ogre games piddle all over it in this respect), but it works well enough, though sometimes confuses. The battle scenes more than make up for this; they're some of the best ever. Lack of exploration means the battle-restock-battle-restock approach can get tiresome after a while, but if you're into turn-based strategy RPGs, this is the one for you. Just make sure you get the American version if you can't speak Japanese.

90%

Ogre Battle

PUBLISHER Atlus Software (Import)



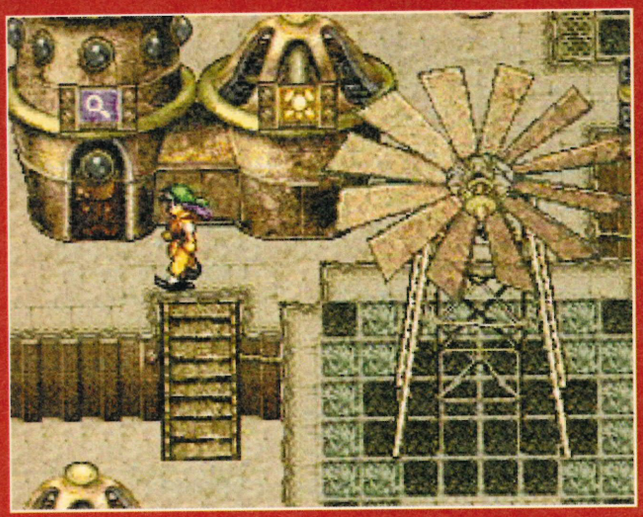
Hmm... not baaaaad, but it's painfully obvious that Ogre Battle is just a SNES game with a makeover.

A strategic RPG wargame, Ogre Battle sees you infiltrating enemy territory, earning money by liberating and holding towns. You can split your army at will; for example, you could send some troops to liberate a town, another team to block a pass and a third act as a decoy. Naturally, there are monsters to fight, culminating in a battle with each stage's big boss as you attack the level's main citadel.

There are plenty of neat touches to Ogre Battle, the game possessing more than its fair share of depth. For example, the relative strengths of your characters and their opponents in battle. No one likes a bully - pick on someone who's much weaker than you results in a loss of reputation, something which affects the ending you get on completing the game. Characters and items can be found along the way, opening sub-plots and again adding to depth.

Ogre Battle is a cool game, but aside from some shading on the map screen and revamped spells, it's almost exactly the same as its 16 bit predecessor. Sure it's the gameplay that counts, but you'd think the programmers could at least use the extra processing power.

79%



Suikoden

PUBLISHER Konami

How many characters does your favourite RPG have? Five? Ten? 20, even? Well Suikoden has 108, all of which you can recruit as you progress through the game.

Starting with a small rebel army, you find a home base and gradually build both it and your force by meeting different characters who join you. Needless to say, most require tasks to be completed before they're recruited. As the game progresses, with some of your recruits available for battle while others aren't, your base is built into a veritable castle by characters who you've recruited. When the shopkeeper joins, he sets up a shop in the castle, and the chef opens a restaurant, for example. Other characters require incidental items found along the way. Find Melodye and give her the sound samples and you can change the background music. Give Ivanoff the tins of paint and he paints a mural, and to build a library of useful information, you must find the Old Book Volumes.

Suikoden is fairly standard in its plot and technical execution, but the sheer variety offered within the game make it a killer.

88%

Alundra

PUBLISHER Psygnosis

Unlike the usual turn-based combat RPG, Alundra offers a more action-orientated approach to scrapping. You control a single character (the eponymous Alundra) and must explore both the real world and a mysterious place which exists inside people's dreams as you progress through the game. Character development is achieved through finding new objects and weapons rather than advancing in skill levels.

The plot's nothing to speak of - the storyline progresses little as you go. The puzzles are a little basic too, consisting mainly of activating switches in the right order, whether by flicking them, jumping over them or dropping a variety of objects onto pressure plates. However, its arcade-orientated combat, with real-time sword swipes replacing mathematically-calculated rounds, wins over those who find 'ordinary' RPGs tedious. Should appeal to PSX owners who've played Zelda on the SNES or Game Boy, but isn't quite as good as Nintendo's classic offerings.



84%

King's Field

PUBLISHER ASCII

First person perspective RPGs never really caught on as console games (they're dominant on the PC); this is the only one available in this country. There have been a series of King's Field games in Japan, but only one over here. King's Field (the UK game) was originally released as King's Field 2 in Japan.

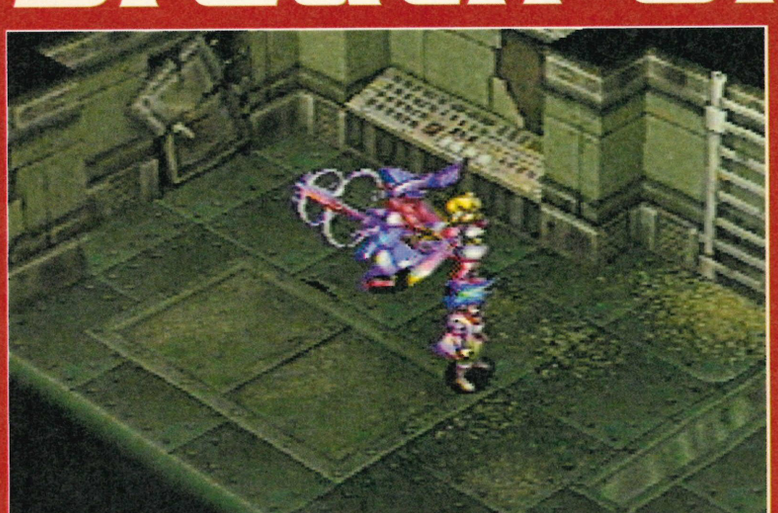
King's Field is definitely not for beginners. Despite its looks (the graphics are awful), it offers a huge and difficult challenge which sees you searching for keys, uncovering secret passages, purchasing weapons and doing all the usual things RPG gamers get up to. Purchase better weapons and equipment as you slash your way through the dragons, skeletons and other such fantasy fare the game throws at you. Battle sequences are real time, with you picking out an enemy in front of you and see a sword arm (or other weapon or appendage) strike out. Enemy attacks on you see them slashing into the screen. It's a little slow, but typical own-eye RPG fare.

Perhaps the game's biggest flaw is that it's too easy to get lost (and killed - surviving the first few areas is a nightmare). Own-eye RPGs were never as friendly as third-person console offerings. Go for it if you find 'ordinary' role-players too easy, but don't say we didn't warn you.



69%

Breath of Fire III



PUBLISHER Ocean

This one has a few flaws, but they don't stop it being a hugely entertaining role-playing opus, and a worthy successor to the SNES Breath of Fire series.

The game breaks no new ground technically. The graphics are very 16-bit, and speech is offered in text windows. The isometric perspective is retained, though now you can move the camera to look behind buildings or objects, though you can't fix it there. Overall this works well, the game's lack of technical wizardry allowing an intricate plot to unfold in a huge world, a trade-off that's the norm for RPGs, though when you reach the edge of the map area currently contained in the PSX's memory the world falls away, forcing you to seemingly walk off the edge and into the next section - ugly.

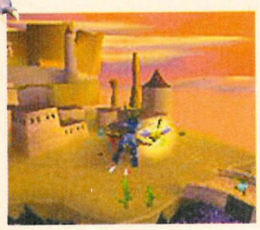
The usual overall objective laced with sub-plots and even sub-games is there, your explorations peppered with some cool turn-based combat, though the frequency of wandering monster encounters is annoying at times. Even so, BoF III is a good, solid RPG which will keep you busy for months.

86%

tips & cheats

Another tips section crammed with the latest cheats and codes, and helpful hints on older games too...

SPYRO THE DRAGON



Access All Levels:
Go to Inventory screen and press: ■, ■, ●, ■, ←, →, ←, →, ●, ↑, →, ↓

BLOOD OMEN: LEGACY OF KAIN

Cheat Codes

Press L2 for the area map mode, then enter one of the following codes:
Access All FMV:
←, →, ■, ●, ↑, ↓, →, ←
Refill Magic:
→, →, ■, ●, ↑, ↓, →, ←
Refill Blood:
↑, →, ■, ●, ↑, ↓, →, ←

BLOODY ROAR



Cheats

KID MODE:
Hold R2 when you pick your character
BIG HEAD MODE:
Hold L2 when you pick your character
BIG STAGE:
Defeat 10 people in survival mode
SLANT MOVE:
Finish time attack in under 10 minutes
LARGE ARMS:
Finish Arcade at Level 4 or higher without using continues



SMALL STAGE:
Finish Arcade at Level 4 or higher with Greg (Ape)
NO WALLS:
Finish Arcade at Level 4 or higher with Mitsuko (Boar)
INVISIBLE WALLS:
Finish Arcade at Level 4 or higher with Fox (Fox)
REGENERATING LIFE:
Finish Arcade at Level 4 or higher with Bakuryu (Mole)
NO GAUGES:
Finish Arcade at Level 4 or higher with Yugo (Wolf)
NO LIGHTNING:
Finish Arcade at Level 4 or higher with Long (Tiger)
NO BLOCKING:
Finish Arcade at Level 4 or higher with Gado (Lion)
POSITION CAMERA:
Finish Arcade at Level 4 or higher with Alice (Bunny)
ALTERNATE ALICE:
Finish Arcade at Level 6 or higher with Alice (Bunny). Hold START when you select her
AFTERIMAGE MODE:
Finish Arcade at Level 4 or higher with everyone.
GET URIKO:
Beat the game with Mitsuko five times in a row without losing more than twice.

CROC

Passwords

Ice Island:
RULURLURLUURLUD
Desert Island:
RUDURDURUUURLUD
Castle Island:
RDDURLURDUURLUD
All Levels:
LLLLDRRLDRDLUR

DARK FORCES



Cheats

Access all levels:
Enter P3JNDLDQY2 as a password.

To get the Cheat Menu begin new game and enter: ←, ●, ✖, →, ●, ✖, ↓, ●, ✖
If you do this correctly, the Cheat Menu appears. Select the cheat option you wish to use by turning it green.
Level Skip:
Select the Game Won option in the Cheat Menu. Exit and Pause the game. A new menu appears with the option to advance to the next level. Here are the Level Passwords you need to type in:



Level 2: Y7B5T7S183
Level 3: 3WKKVMKHWZ
Level 4: 9WJHBLCNoo
Level 5: 8XKGBKDPZ1
Level 6: 7YBKBJFL22
Level 7: Y7C4L7Q193
Level 8: X8D3L6R2C4
Level 9: W9F635SZB5
Level 10: V!Q534ToF6
Level 11: NVHL4LFQ1R
Level 12: MYGM!KBRS
Level 13: LXFN4JCSZT
Level 14: 205F6HJToV

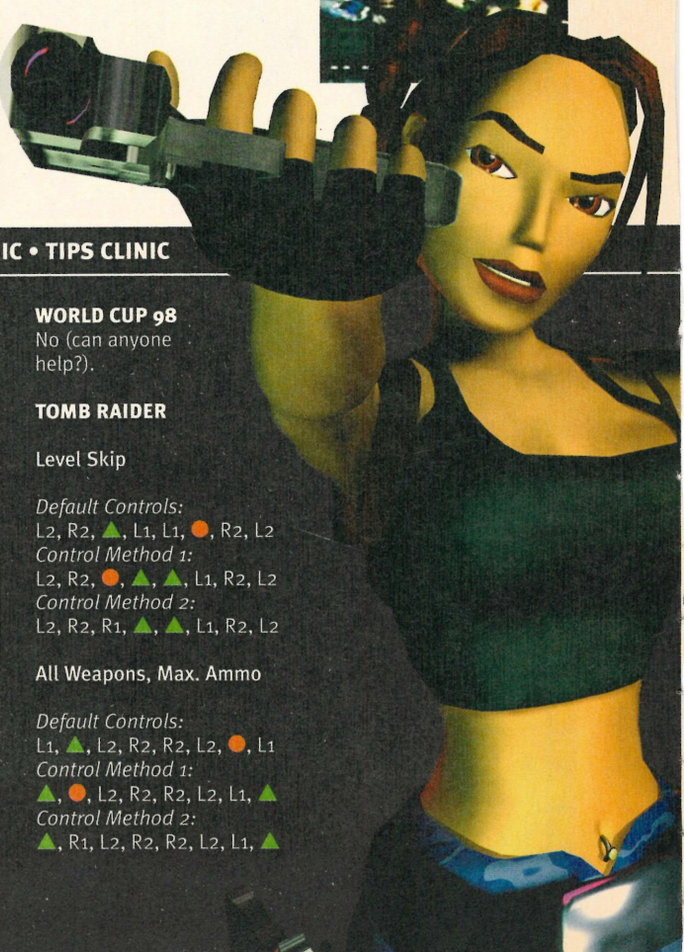
EINHANDER

New Ships:
Beat the game on 'easy' without continuing for a new ship. It looks like one of the flying cars in the first area. Beat the game on 'hard'



without continuing for a ship that scores 9,999 for the gunpods it finds or has equipped.





IPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC

DIAGNOSED AND CURED
The following problems have been solved by the Tips Clinic...





Last issue, Richard M Kendall requested cheats for **JERSEY DEVIL**. Rob Millichamp of Glasgow provided. For unlimited lives, collect the bonus life at the top of the fountain at the start of the game. Press START to pause the game and display the status screen. Resume the game and collect the same bonus life, which re-appears. Repeat this procedure to collect an unlimited number of lives.

Ollie Potter doesn't want much - 'can you give me cheats for PREMIER MANAGER, WORLD CUP 98, TOMB RAIDER, RESIDENT EVIL: DIRECTOR'S CUT or DIE HARD TRILOGY? Let's start at the beginning...

PREMIER MANAGER '98



When choosing friendly games, play Juventus in the two away games for £2,000,000 in gate receipts for each match. Thanks to Paul Hargreaves of Rishton for that one.

WORLD CUP 98
No (can anyone help?).

TOMB RAIDER

Level Skip

Default Controls:
L2, R2, ▲, L1, L1, ●, R2, L2
Control Method 1:
L2, R2, ●, ▲, ▲, L1, R2, L2
Control Method 2:
L2, R2, R1, ▲, ▲, L1, R2, L2

All Weapons, Max. Ammo

Default Controls:
L1, ▲, L2, R2, R2, L2, ●, L1
Control Method 1:
▲, ●, L2, R2, R2, L2, L1, ▲
Control Method 2:
▲, R1, L2, R2, R2, L2, L1, ▲

ESPN EXTREME GAMES



Fly:
At the Play/Help screen, highlight 'help' and press ▲ five times. Now, when you jump, you fly.

FORMULA KARTS

Bonus track:
Enter WOODSTOCK as a player name.

FRENZY!

Level Select Code:
Enter PICKLE

HERCULES

Level Passwords

The Hero's Gauntlet:
Serpent, Medusa, Coin, Medusa
Centaur's Forest:
Centaur, Hercules Silhouette, Minotaur, Archer
The Big Olive:
Centaur, Coin, Serpent, Hercules Silhouette
Hydra Canyon:
Coin, Gladiator Helmet, Coin, Soldier
Cyclops Attack:
Gladiator Helmet, Pegasus, Hercules Silhouette, Archer
Titan Flight:
Soldier, Coin, Coin, Thunder Bolt
Vortex of Souls:
Soldier, Lightning Bolt, Soldier, Centaur
End:
Pegasus, Soldier, Centaur, Soldier

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Cheat Screen:
Enter one of the following codes (in capitals, with spaces intact) as a player name, then go back to the Main Menu Screen and press:
←, →, ■, ●, ▲, ▲, ↓
A new screen called 'Cheater' appears, with codes activated or deactivated according to the name entered.

FOX ROX:
Opens up CITY. Select any level, including bonus levels.

MR HAPPY:
Opens up PLANE. Setting the plane to 'BAC' lets you fly the alien craft on any level.

GODZILLA:
Opens up KILL CIVIL (locks onto civilian objects) and KILL WING (locks onto wingmen and E3).

GO POSTAL:
Opens up FAST RELOAD (quick missile launches), DAMAGE BONUS (one missile to kill enemies) and WEAPONS (infinite missiles).

TOURIST:
Opens up CITY, TOURIST (all aliens removed from the world), DEMO CAM (detaches camera from the plane) and NO TIME (not timed).

LIVE FREE:
Opens up INVINCIBLE (You'll take no damage).

DAB DAB:
Enables all cheats.

JEREMY MCGRATH SUPER CROSS '98

Bonus Bike:
To get the hidden CR 500, press ▲, ■, ●, L2, ■, R2, ●, L1, R2, ■ on the bike selection screen.

Backwards Tracks:
You can race the tracks backwards if you finish the season in first place.

KILEAK THE BLOOD

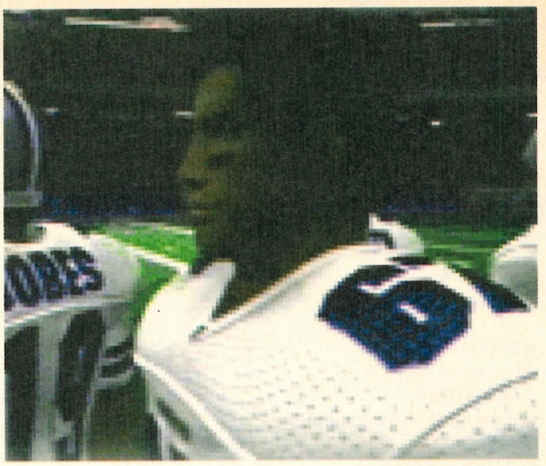
Every Item:
At the title screen enter ●, ●, ●, ●, ●, ●, rotate the D-Pad clockwise 3 times, ▲, ■, ■, ▲, ✖, START for every item.

KRAZY IVAN

Level Select:
Highlight Russia in the Arena Select screen press → and quickly press and hold both ✖ and L2 on the pad. Release these buttons when the globe lands on the arena you want to select.

MADDEN '97

Eight Secret Teams:



Choose an Exhibition game. Choose two different teams and continue to the Control Setup Screen. Choose your side and hit ✖ to go to the User Record Screen. Enter the name 'TIBURON' as the user. Now go back to the Team Select Screen and you should be able to choose from the following teams:

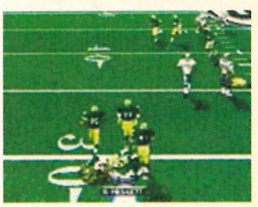
All '50s Team
All '60s Team
All '70s Team
All '80's Team
EA Sports Team
All Madden All-Time Team
AFC Pro Bowl Team
NFC Pro Bowl Team

MADDEN '98

Bonus Players:
Enter these names in the create player menu...

Cheats

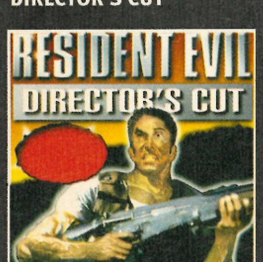
LEECH:
Better Defensive Back
GLOVES:
Easier Catches
BIGFOOT:
Better Kicking
JACKHAMMER:
Better Stiff Arm
Extra Teams



ORRS HEROES:
EA Sports Team
LOIN CLOTH:
Tiburon Team
LEADERS:
All Time Leaders
COACH:
All Time All Madden
PAC ATTACK:
All 60s Team
STEELCURTAIN:
All 70s Team
GOLD RUSH:
All 80s Team
ALOHA:
NFC
LUAU:
AFC

TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIP

RESIDENT EVIL: DIRECTOR'S CUT



Double Items:
Go to the Skill Level screen, highlight 'Advanced' and hold →. It turns green. Every item you pick up now counts as double.

Skill Level, Resident Evil 2 Demo:
Highlight 'New Game' and hold →. Both Normal and Rookie levels are now available.

DIE HARD TRILOGY

For all Die Hard episodes, pause the game and enter the desired code while holding R2.

Die Hard



50 Grenades:
→, ■, ↓, ● for 50 standard grenades.
Ammo & Weapons:
→, ↑, ↓, ↓, ■, → for infinite ammo. Enter again for the next weapon in your inventory.
Invincibility:
→, ↑, ↓, ■
Stick Man Mode:
▲ 10 times and → four times.
Dead Enemies Float Up:
↓, ■, ▲, ↓

Die Hard 2: Die Harder



Skeleton Mode:
↓, ■, ▲, ↓
Identical People:
●, ↓, ↓, ■, ✖, ■,
Map Editor, Choose Weapon, Invincible:
←, →, ↑, ↓, ■

Die Hard With a Vengeance



Fat Mode:
←, ●, →, ↓,
Identical People:
●, ↓, ↓, ●, ✖, ■
Floating Car:
→, ■, ←, ●, ✖, ■, ↓
No Textures:
↓, ↑, ←, ←, ↓, ↑, ←, ←, ↓, ↑, ←, ←
Slow Motion:
←, ↑, ←, ←, ■, ↓
Very Slow Motion:
●, ↓, ↓, ■, →
Sky Cam:
●, →, ↓, ■, ●, ←
999 Turbos:
●, ●, ■, ■, ↓, ↓, ✖, ✖
Big Mode:
←, ▲, →, ↓
Small Tyre Mode:
←, ↑, ←, ←, ■, ↓
Unlimited Lives:
←, ●, ↑, ↓, ■, →
Deactivate Clock/Select Level:
←, →, ↑, ↓, ■. Unpause and press START on the second controller press → or ← to select a level or ▲ to open or close the clock.

tips & cheats



Extra Stadiums

JETSONS:
Astrodome (Old Oilers)
DAWGPOUND:
Cleveland Browns Stadium
SNAKE:
Old Oakland Stadium
DANDAMAN:
Old Miami Dolphins Stadium
OLDDC:
RFK Stadium (Old Redskins)
SHARKSFIN:
Tiburon Sports Complex
GHOST TOWN:
Wild West (late 1800s Texas)

NUCLEAR STRIKE

Password Cheats

Infinite Ammo:
GOPOSTAL
Invincibility:
LAZARUS
Lower Enemy Armour:
AVENGER
Faster Helicopter:
WARPDRIVE
Infinite Fuel, Ammo, Armour:
PACKISBACK
Five Credits:
WARRIOR
No Enemy Fire:
PHOENIX
Fly Further:
MPG
Return to Last Mission:
ANDREAS
Secret Level:
LIGHTNING

Level Codes

2:	CUTTHROATS
3:	COUNTDOWN
3b:	PLUTONIUM
4:	PUSAN
5:	ARMAGEDDON
6:	RMAGEDDON

ONE

Debug mode:
Enter HEYBUDDY as a password. Options to select a stage, section, invincibility, all weapons, and removing the pause text appear.

Passwords

2:	DIYGIXRA
3:	KCSVJTJB
4:	RWLKLPBC
5:	YQFZMLTC
6:	FLZNOHLD

Eternal Life:
Enter DIEFOOLS on the password screen.

All Weapons:
Enter the password MAX-POWER.

Level Select:
Enter the password HEVYFEET.

PERFECT WEAPON

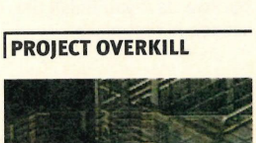
Infinite Health:
Start a game and pause it. Now quickly press: ●, ■, →, R1, R2, ←. You hear a sound if you've done it correctly.



Passwords

Garden Moon:
●, ✕, ✕, ▲, ●, ●, ✕, ▲
Forest Moon:
●, ▲, ■, ●, ■, ■, ▲, ▲
Desert Moon:
●, ✕, ✕, ✕, ▲, ●, ▲, ▲
Proteus Moon:
✕, ✕, ■, ✕, ■, ■, ▲, ●

PROJECT OVERKILL



Cloak:
Hold ▲, tap ■, ●, ●, ■, release ▲, hold ✕, tap ▲, ▲, release ✕

Shield:
Hold →, tap, ●, ■, ▲, release → hold ←, tap ■, ●, ✕, release ←

Full Energy:
Highlight 'Review Mission', hold ■, enter: ●, ✕, ▲, release ■, hold ●, enter ■, ✕, ▲, release ●

ACTION REPLAY CODES (For use with Datel's

3D LEMMINGS

MASTER CODE:
D00715B8 322E
Infinite time:
80089FB0 003B
Minimum release rate = 1:
801054FE 0001
Need rescue 1 lemming:
80105502 0001
Infinite blockers:
3011195C 0001
Infinite turners:
3011195D 0001
Infinite bombers:
3011195E 0001
Infinite builders:
3011195F 0001
Infinite bashers:
30111960 0001
Infinite miners:
30111961 0001
Infinite diggers:
30111962 0001
Infinite climbers:
30111963 0001
Infinite floaters:
30111964 0001

AIR COMBAT

Infinite guns:
800EEB44 0027
Infinite missiles:
800EEB40 0041
Infinite fuel:
300EEB34 8FFF

ALIEN TRILOGY

Infinite health:
8009A5D4 03E7
Infinite charge grenades:
8009A5EC 03E7
Infinite pulse grenades:
8009A5E4 03E7
Infinite handgun bullets:
8009A5DA 03E7
Infinite shotgun shells:
8009A5DE 03E7
Infinite flame thrower rounds:
8009A5E6 03E7
Infinite pulse rounds:
8009A5E0 03E7
Infinite smart gun rounds:
8009A5E8 03E7
Infinite batteries:
8009A5EE 03E7
Have shotgun:
8008F8D2 0001
Have flame thrower:
8008F8DE 0001
Have pulse rifle:
8008F8D6 0001
Have smart gun:
8008F8DA 0001
Fire weapons quicker:
8009A5BA 0001

ALONE IN THE DARK II: JACK IS BACK

Unlimited revolver bullets:
8010DA5E 0006
Unlimited thompson bullets:
8010DA4C 000A
Unlimited energy:
8010DA5C 0037

ARMOURED CORE

Infinite Money:
8003A2D4 FFFF

TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIPS CLINIC • TIP

BM (or so the letter is signed) of Livingstone has a problem with **BROKEN SWORD 2**. 'I've done everything you said in the magazine to get by the Film Set' he or she says, referring to Issue Three's solution, 'but it just doesn't work'. There seems to be a bug in the game at the Film Set location. It took us a couple of tries to get through this part, even when we knew what to do. If you're following a solution and still get stuck here, go back to your last save point before the Film Set and try again. It's annoying I know, but it's the only way.

Andrew Tait's after cheats for **BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN** (the other games you mentioned have already been covered). Sure thing - enter these codes very quickly on the title screen as the text enters from its sides.

Play as Gaia: ↓, ↙, ←, ■. A voice says, 'fight' and you can select Gaia by highlighting Eiji and holding ↑ while selecting him.

Play as Sho: Enter the Gaia code and wait for the demo to start. Press START on Controller Two to re-enter t he title screen, and ass the options speed onto the screen, enter ←, →, ←, →, ←, ■. A voice says, 'fight'. On the Character Select screen, highlight Kayin and select him while pressing ↓.

Carl White's been very helpful. Answering Greg Harwood's request for LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE cheats, he says there are none. He's got something to offer Justin Blake for GEX 2 and ROAD RASH, though.

GEX 2
Before entering these codes, pause the game and highlight 'Quit'. When properly activated, they produce a chime.
Infinite Lives: Hold L2 and press ↑, ↑, ↓, →, ▲, ↓
Invincibility: Hold L2 and press ←, →, ▲, ↓, →, ←
Level Select: Hold L2 and press →, →, ←, →, ▲, ↓, →. Resume play and press SELECT to pause, press ← at the top to access other levels.
Debug Mode: Enter the Level Select cheat then enter any other code in the Media Dimension. Press SELECT to bring up the Debug Menu. Choose Collectibles Menu to get all the remotes and collectibles you want. Select Get All Remotes to, erm, get all remotes, opening all the levels.
Timer: Hold L2 and press →, ▲, →, ←, ▲, ✕ for an on-screen timer. To see the best times, press SELECT and then hold ■
Gex Quotes: Hold L2 and press ▲, ←, ●, ↑, ↓. Now pressing SELECT during play makes Gex talk.

ROAD RASH
Press and hold ↑, R1 and L1 to jump off your machine and walk around.

• The Critical List
These questions beat us. Can anyone help?

David Smith of Carlisle wants to know how to play the Royal Rumble and the Gauntlet in WWF WARZONE.

B. Barrow of Derby wants a 'tip or solution' to ARK OF TIME. The Clinic's not the place for full solutions (tell us where you're stuck and we'll see what we can do), but has anyone any tips?

Adam Kennedy of Wigan wants the finishing moves for the wrestlers in WWF WARZONE. Anyone got 'em?

Finally, WJ Gravelle from Wales is stuck in ALONE IN THE DARK. He keeps getting caught by a tall woman, and then controls Grace Sanders but doesn't know what to do next. Is the car of any importance?

Action Replay Cart)

AREA 51

Infinite Lives Player 1:
8006D970 0005
Infinite Health Player 1:
8006D968 000A
Infinite Credits Player 1:
800699BC 0009
Infinite Ammo Player 1:
8006D944 0008
Infinite Grenades Player 1:
8006D948 0001
Player 1 Has Auto Shotgun:
8006D954 0003
Infinite Lives Player 2:
8006DA1C 0005
Infinite Health Player 2:
8006DA14 000A
Infinite Credits Player 2:
800699BE 0009
Infinite Ammo Player 2:
8006D9F0 0008
Infinite Grenades Player 2:
8006D9F4 0001
Player 2 Has Auto Shotgun:
8006DA00 0003

BATTLE STATIONS

Infinite Energy Player 1:
800C36C4 0064

BLACK DAWN

Infinite Armour:
8006048C 0064
Infinite Fuel:
8006048A 0575
Infinite Missiles:
80060554 0063
3006055E 0005
Infinite Rockets:
80060556 0063
3006055F 0005
Infinite Napalm:
80060558 0063
30060560 0005
Infinite Nuclear Bombs:
8006055A 0063
30060561 0005
Infinite Unknown Weapon:
8006055C 0063
30060562 0005

XPLORER CODES (For use with Fire International's Xplorer cheat cartridge)

ONE

Infinite Lives:
36659724 594f
Infinite Energy:
36659320 59a2
Full Rage:
3e659320 59dd
HyperState:
3e659320 59f0
Infinite Ammo (Weapon 2):
36659467 594f

THE LOST WORLD

Infinite Energy:
366015b2 59b6
Infinite Lives:
36596b5d 5956

TIMESHOCK

Infinite Balls Player 1:
865f2824 5959

CIRCUIT BREAKERS

Infinite Speedups:
3673e4e8 594f
Infinite Small Car:
3673e4c8 594f
Infinite Oil Spills:
3673e4d8 594f

ROADRASH 3D

Infinite Energy:
366647c5 59da
High bike durability:
366647fd 504f

MOTO RACER

Fun Fair:
86655b98 5958
Sea Of Sands:
86655b98 5957
Snow Ride:
86655b98 5961
Extra Speed:
8660a6da 9bfa

COLIN MCRAE RALLY

All Tracks & Cars:
865557f0 504f
Auto-Complete Rally School:
865556b0 504f
Zero Lap Time:
8662b7d3 5957

KULA WORLD

Collect BONUS Letters (press ▲):
7660ac88 695a
3660a848 596f

EVERYBODY'S GOLF

Unlock all Players:
86669f18 5a59
86669f16 5a59
86669f1c 5a59
86669f1a 5a59
86669f20 5a59
Unlock All Courses:
3666a070 5955

DEAD BALL ZONE

Player One Team Aways Wins:
86605090 5922
Player Two Team Awlays Wins:
86605094 5922
Infinite Guns:
866050e8 594f
Infinite Bombs:
866050ec 594f
Infinite Chainsaws:
866050f0 594f
Unlock All Teams:
8655ec84 595b

DEAD OR ALIVE

Infinite Health Player One:
865db448 59fa
Infinite Health Player Two:
865db1a0 59fa
Have Extra Menu:
865da1e6 d09a
Extra Voices:
365da89d 594f
365da8a3 594f
365da8a1 594f
365da8a7 594f
365da8a5 594f
365da8ab 594f
365da8a9 594f
365da8b3 594f

FINAL FANTASY VII

Stop Bomb Countdown:
865d288c 5bb2
Unlimited Gill:
865d2882 595f
Save Anywhere:
865d28c5 595a
Stop Clock:
865d2888 595a
865d2886 595a
Potion Super Code:
865d1d02 1b59
865d1d08 1b5c
865d1d0c 1b56
865d1d10 1b58
865d1e92 1ba1
865d1d0e 1b57

CLOUD
Limit Level 4:
365d1966 5956
All Limit Breaks:
865d197a 504f
Ultimate Weapon:
865d1978 595f
All Summon Materia (Master):
865d199c 50b4
865d199a 504f
All Command Materia (Master):
865d19a0 508a
865d199e 504f
All Magic Materia (Master):
865d19a4 50a1
865d19a2 504f
Max MP:
865d198a 785f
Max HP:
865d1986 785f

BARRET
Limit Level 4:
365d19ea 5956
All Limit Breaks:
865d19fe 504f

TIFA
Limit Level 4:
365d1a6e 5956
All Limit Breaks:
865d1a82 504f
Keiser Knuckle:
365d1a80 5970

AERIS
Limit Level 4:
365d1af2 5956
All Limit Breaks:
865d1a06 504f
Princess Gaurd:
365d1a04 59a2

RED XIII
Limit Level 4:
365d1f76 5956
All Limit Breaks:
865d1f8a 504f
Limited Moon:
365d1f88 598d

YUFFIE
Limit Level 4:
365d1ffa 5956
All Limit Breaks:
865d1f0e 504f
Conformer:
365d1f0c 59b6

CAIT SITH
Limit Level 4:
365d207e 5956
All Limit Breaks:
865d2092 504f
HP Shout:
365d2090 59c9

VINCENT
Limit Level 4:
365d2002 5956
All Limit Breaks:
865d2016 504f
Death Penalty:
365d2014 59d0

GRAN TURISMO

Unlimited Money:
7659fb3a 5a5a
865d0fca d04f
B Licence:
7659fb3a 5a5a
b65a5756 595a
165d361c 5c5b
A Licence:
7659fb3a 5a5a
b65a5756 595a
165d3624 5c5b
A International Licence:
7659fb3a 5a5a
b65a5756 595a
165d362c 5c5b
Unlock all goodies:
765baf38 5959
b6665756 595a
165e6ea0 5556
Dumb Opponents:
766f8dd2 5973
865d8e20 595a
GT Hi Fi Mode:
7659fb3a 5a5a
865d4f34 5a59
7659fb3a 5a5a
865d4f32 5a59
All Gold Cups (Special Event):
7659fb3a 5a5a
b65d5756 595a
165d4f38 5a59
Activate Garage:
7659fb3a 5a5a
865d0fde 59cc
Gimme Cars:
7659fb3a 5a5a
b6c857b8 5959
165d0d74 595a

For cheats, hints or help with any PSX game, write to:

The Tips Clinic, extreme PlayStation Magazine, 22 Strand St, Poole, Dorset BH15 1SB

State exactly where you're stuck and what it is you can't do. The more information you give, the easier it is for us to help. Don't send an SAE - we just haven't got the time to offer personal replies, and don't forget to tell us which game you're playing either. Don't laugh - several letters a month leave this out...

BLAZE

Tips & Cheats is sponsored by Blaze. Send in your hottest cheats and win some Blaze goodies.

exchange

EPM SAYS...

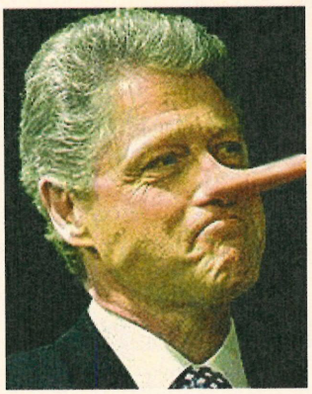
We've been getting some excellent ideas for new game genres, or at least games which put a wholly new slant on an existing genre. Some are more feasible than others, but we've yet to see THE definitive answer to this perplexing question - keep 'em coming.
Also, what do you think of the new-look magazine? It's undergone some radical changes over the past few months, with a new design, a new tips column with its own help section (Tips Clinic), a new-look letters page (as if you hadn't noticed) and lots more free gifts. Are our changes for the better or for the worse? What do you like about the new-style EPM? Is there anything you dislike, or think should be changed? Write in. All letters will be carefully considered, and all constructive criticisms welcomed.

STAR LETTER...

Getting your PlayStation chipped so you can play import games is an excellent idea - as long as you're an RPG fan who can read Japanese. Then chipping really does open doors and give you access to games the UK scene can only dream about. For everyone else, forget it.
Leaving aside the thorny issue of piracy, what do UK gamers with chipped PlayStations actually do with their modified grey boxes? They splash out £60-70 on a Japanese copy of Tekken 3 just so they can get it a few months earlier than everyone else. They call themselves hardcore gamers, but they're actually nothing of the sort. Sure, there are a few people who understand and enjoy the import scene, but most just buy blockbuster titles that are available as PAL releases a few months later anyway. And for this they invalidate their warranties and shorten the life of their PlayStations.
Why do it, guys? Wake up and smell the roses - there's a whole wealth of PSX games out there, not just the really big ones. Try them out. Instead of spending a ridiculous amount on an import game, put half in the bank for its official UK release and spend the other half on a game that's already out there. After all, who are the real hardcore gamers - the ones who pay over the odds just to be the first with a top title, or those who enjoy their games enough not to be so blinded by the hype surrounding the big releases they forget there are equally good games right under their noses.
James Wilson, Cambridge

EPM: There are one or two top games that are available on import but not signed up to a UK publisher, but we take your point about most gamers only buying top titles which are obviously going to be published over here anyway. Anyone with a chipped PlayStation disagree?

BUT I DIDN'T IMPALE...



I've been wracking my brains trying to come up with a new PlayStation genre. I've even tried to make one with cameras, but nothing has developed (groan - Ed). The only game I can think of is Theme Clinton. In this game you would sneak as many women into your bed as possible, and then lie about it. Bonus points if a cigar is used in any way.
The only other game I can think of is a Rugby League game, preferably by Codemasters, though I thought this would be on the cards anyway after the Jonah Lomu game came out.
I was going to ask you to beg someone to make a South Park game, but someone thought of it first. I'd ask for a decent football game, but nearly five years of FIFA have proved there's no such thing.
So, have I made a valid attempt to make a PlayStation company very rich, or at least very likely to receive a visit from big Americans with big badges and even bigger guns?

Kieran Westbrook, Dunfermline, Fife.

EPM: Neat idea about the President, though there have already been a couple of games about cameras, namely Snapparazi on the Amiga and the SNES/N64's Pilot Wings (at least in part).
We too would like to see a Rugby League game. We don't agree all PSX soccer games are crap, but if you don't like any of the current crop, wait for Sensible Soccer 2000.
Your full address has been passed on to the security services, who are as we speak compiling a file on your activities (only joking).

AN ENQUIRING MIND

I've a couple of questions for you.

1. Regarding the new game genres, what about sports sims like badminton and swimming? Swimming was an event in International Track and Field, but an entire game devoted to swimming would be interesting, don't you think?

EPM: Frankly, no. It was okay as one event among many, but what more could you do with the sport? How could you make it involved enough to justify a £40 price tag?

2. Why is the Glove so poorly rated and does it work with old and new PSX games?

EPM: It works with any PSX game, but it's fiddly, awkward and (unless you've only got one arm) pointless. An analogue pad costs less than half the price, and is a darned sight easier to use.

3. Is the Resident Evil joypad any good? Is it worth buying?

EPM: Again, why not just buy a joypad that caters for every game, not just one?

4. Why do some PlayStation magazines find it necessary to swear? I know a lot of people swear today, but children who read these magazines will pick up on these words and use them as everyday language. One PlayStation magazine I read swore in the reviews and at the people who wrote in - I find this annoying and magazines should not be published with this much swearing in.

EPM: We swear here only rarely, and only when it's appropriate. Some magazines do it just to look big and clever, not realising they come across like a bunch of giggling infants trying to be naughty behind their parents' backs.

5. I was reading your review of The Fifth Element (EPM #9) and wondered if the game's really that bright or is it just the screenshots?

EPM: The screenshots are a little lighter than we wanted, but the game's fairly bright too.

Ben Evans, Cranswick, Yorkshire

EURO TRASH

While raising taxes on pension funds and motorists, the Government is happy to spend over £7 million on promoting the unwanted Euro to firms and individuals.
Around 90% of our trade is concentrated within Britain or with countries that will not be joining the Single European Currency next year. Yet the official message insinuates that unless we get onto the Euro bandwagon, our businesses will produce a pathetic performance. That is quite a slap in the face.
There are also issues ranging from the cost of abolishing the pound to the loss of control of our economy. If it doesn't work out, there's no way out.

Lynn Riley, New Alliance: Educating the public on alternatives to the EU.

EPM: Believe it or not, this letter really was sent to extreme PlayStation Magazine.

DRIVIN' US ROUND THE BEND

I heard in your last issue you're looking for Total Drivin' cheats. Well I have looked and found a strange one. US callers are positive the game has been possessed by the spirit of Jim Morrison. They are convinced his image can be seen in the crowd. Tap the R1 button to the tune of The Doors' LA Woman and a new track rises from the grave. Programmers and designers are certain such a level does not exist, but with so many people ringing their office investigations have begun, Seeing as though I don't know the theme to LA Woman I haven't tried it. I'm not sure if it



exists, but remember the truth is out there - somewhere.

Daniel Bayley, Woolton, Liverpool

EPM: Didn't you write in last month and complain that people laughed at you when you blushed? We hope the nickname we gave you (beetroot) catches on.
You are, of course, quite mad. 'Possessed by the spirit of Jim Morrison' indeed. You're clearly mad. There are cheats in Total Drivin' where you tap out tunes, but LA Woman isn't one of them. In case anyone's interested, you activate a TD cheat by going to the main selection screen and tapping a tune on R1 to access all tracks in a certain country. These tunes are:
Switzerland: Doe, a deer, a female deer (The Sound of Music)
Moscow: Jingle Bells
Scotland: Hark, where the night is falling (Scotland the Brave)
Multiplayer: Zip a dee doo dah
This is the last time cheats will be offered in the Exchange section - in future, all tips correspondence should go to the Tips Clinic.

CO-OPERATIVE COMBAT

A type of game I would like to see is a space or flight sim shoot-'em-up in which, besides having the normal one-player and two-player modes, also incorporates a second two-player mode where the players have to work in unison as a team, one piloting the craft, the other operating the weapons. I have no idea how difficult this would be, but if it could be worked out it would be fun, with the pilot desperately avoiding obstacles and enemy fire while the gunner frantically tries to blast enemy craft, struggling to take aim against his won ship's motions.
Or, how about a racing game featuring vehicles of an unlikely or ridiculous nature, such as a forklift truck - if the driver in front won't get out of the way, pick him up and drop him on the driver behind. Perhaps a JCB could be thrown in too.

JD Humphries, Leicester

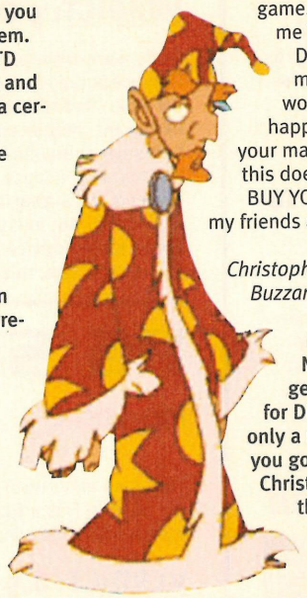

Player One: pilot, Player Two: Gunner?

EPM: GOOD ONE! This would put a whole new slant on the two-player split-screen (or even link-up) game. New strategies would be needed throughout - the pilot must get his gunner into the correct position for firing, the gunner must protect the craft. Trouble is, if the own-eye flight sim perspective is used, programming such a two-player offering would take a lot of time and effort (remember, most two-player modes are simply both players doing exactly what they do in one-player games). It's effectively an entire game in itself. Would a software company be prepared to invest the necessary funds just to offer an improved two-player game? We think not.
A two-player co-operative option where pilot and gunner duties are so split is being discussed for Activision's Asteroids: The Next Millennium, but this is a single-screen 2D game - hardly what you're looking for.
As for your barmy vehicles driving game, I suppose Micro Machines and Monster Trucks is the closest we've been, but that's not very close.

DISCWORLD DISGUST

I sent for EPM #1 the other day. I am very unhappy. I only bought it for Discworld 2, but what's there doesn't help me play the game. I would like you to give me THE FULL SOLUTION TO DISCWORLD 2 to make me feel I got my money's worth. It would make me happy and I will keep buying your magazine in the future. If this doesn't happen I will NOT BUY YOUR MAGAZINE and tell my friends about it.

Christopher Hancock, Leighton Buzzard





EPM: Nowhere - but NOWHERE - did we suggest there was a solution for Discworld 2 in EPM #1, only a review. And that's what you got. It's hardly a fiddle, Christopher. Besides, what's the point of buying a game and then running to a solution, effectively getting someone else to play the game for you? Write into the Tips Clinic telling us where you're stuck and we'll see what we can do. In the meantime, here's a handy hint from right at the beginning: Get the magnet from the high-energy facility and use it on the imp in the garden to win his boots.

ROAD WARRIOR

I've been playing video games since the days of the Atari 2600 - when I saw you request for ideas for games I just had to write in.
While playing Gran Turismo with my Mad Katz steering wheel my eyes fell on my brand new Scorpion light gun. At that moment I got an idea for the best game ever, one which I'm sure will win me letter of the month. My idea is for a game where you can drive (using my steering wheel) and shoot (using the light gun) at one and the same time. Don't you think this would be the ultimate gaming experience? It would be like Chase HQ but a million times better.

Mahmood Khan, Cowley, Oxford



EPM: Close, but no cigar. Your idea's an excellent one, but you've made a subtle oversight. While your Chase HQ-for-the-late-Nineties would play brilliantly with your own set-up, it would be unfeasible UNLESS you own a steering wheel and a light gun. How could you slave both the driving and gunsight controls to a standard PSX controller or analogue pad? Remember, you would need the following; a D-Pad or stick to steer the car, a D-Pad or stick to aim the gun, buttons to accelerate, brake and fire (even with a wheel and a gun the car would require automatic gears). This is just about possible on an analogue, using the left stick to steer and the left shoulder buttons to accelerate and brake, the right stick and shoulder buttons carrying out the functions of the gun. It's bloody confusing, though - the game would almost certainly be unplayable. With a digital controller, it's simply impossible. No, your idea is only feasible if you've a wheel AND a gun, and that's just too small a percentage of the PSX faithful to make the idea cost effective. Excellent try, though.



PEARLS OF WISDOM...

• Your new look? Looks new, dunnit?
JD Humphries, Leicester

EPM: Yes, but do you LIKE it?

• In Issue 9 my big brother won a prize in the Post Tast competition, but you spelled his name wrong.
Francis Traynor, Glasgow

EPM: Well, you got 'taste' wrong too.

• If I bought the Scorpion light gun, how would I know if I had the old or new type?
Mark Hellewell, Barnsley

EPM: The new one superseded the old before the UK version went into production, so unless you go for an import version (and why would you?), it's the new one.

• Congratulations, Res Evil 2, on a spine-chilling, teeth-chattering, bone-shattering, knee-knocking, heart-pounding, eye-popping, hair-raising, blood-curdling, brain-numbing game.
Nikki Thame, Bristol

EPM: Congratulations on getting all those hyphens in the right places.

That's all for this issue, but we'll be back next month with another crop of merry missives. Want to see your name immortalised in the hallowed pages of EPM? Get writing, but bear two things in mind; first, letters that list the writer's entire games collection and ask, 'what do I buy next?' go straight in the bin. That's what the entire magazine's about - read the reviews. Secondly, tips requests should go to the Tips Clinic, not Exchange. Got that? Good - get writing, to:

Exchange
extreme PlayStation Magazine
22 Strand Street
Poole
Dorset
BH15 1SB

stuff

More great peripherals, and a few to give away. This month we've a couple of mega memory monsters, a cheat card and a mouse, as well as a wonderful space-saving device. Let's get going...

DUAL FORCE STEERING WHEEL

BY: GAMESTER

PRICE: £69.99

This is the first steering wheel to be truly Dual Shock compatible, ie. to rumble in response to Dual Shock coding and not by reinterpreting the in-game sound effects. It's extremely well built, using strong components and balanced springs.



VERDICT: 8.5 OUT OF 10

For once a wheel actually feels like a real wheel, and not a toy. It's firm and responsive, and cool in analogue mode. The rumble works extremely well, so if that's your bag, this is the only steering wheel for you.

CHEAT MASTER TEKKEN 3

BY: BLAZE

PRICE: £12.99

This is no mere memory card. Instead it has pre-installed game saves for all Tekken games as well as many other top beat-'em-ups. These saves come from the completed game and give access to hidden characters and play modes.

VERDICT: 7.5 OUT OF 10



What's the point of buying a game and effectively paying someone else to play it for you? Still, the choice is yours...

4MB MEMORY CARD

BY: BLAZE



PRICE: £19.99

This 4MB memory card uses no data compression, making it more reliable than the mega memory monsters. Of course, the storage capacity makes it more expensive too.

VERDICT: 7 OUT OF 10

It's quality... you get what you pay for...

8 PAGE MEMORY CARD

BY: WILD THINGS

PRICE: £17.99



It's a memory card - eight pages, 120 game save blocks.

VERDICT: 8.5 OUT OF 10

Eighteen quid might sound a lot for a memory card, but bearing in mind it's got eight megs of compressed memory against a standard card's one meg, it's a barg.

SPACE STATION

BY: LOGIC 3 **PRICE: £19.99**

Stores your PlayStation and controllers, keeping the wires and clutter out of the way. Comes with a free CD rack designed to hold PlayStation CDs.

VERDICT: 9 OUT OF 10



Logic 3 are wise to make a space saver that holds only two controllers and the PSX - had they offered drawers for light guns, mouse and other such items not everyone has, the Space Station would cause more clutter than it saved. It's strong, attractive and very well made. Not everyone wants a space saving device like this, but if you're after one, this is the one to get.

PS SPEED PAD

BY: LOGIC 3 **PRICE: £7.99**

This is an entry-level joypad, designed for the economy end of the market. Has a Turbo function which can be slaved to any button and a Slow Mode too.

VERDICT: 8.5 OUT OF 10



It feels a little small in the hands at first (perhaps it's designed for children), but you soon get used to this. The pad generally worked very well, though the diagonals are easier to achieve than the vertical and horizontal directions. Again, you get used to this, and it's actually an advantage for some games. A sub-£8 pad with this many functions is an absolute barg.

COMPETITION

WIN SOME COOL LOGIC 3 GEAR!

To celebrate the launch of their Space Station, Logic 3 have teamed up with extreme PlayStation to give you the chance to win a Space Station, two Speed Pads and two memory cards. There's a Speed Pad and a memory card for five runners up. What do you have to do to win this pulsating prize? Crawl over broken glass with your flies undone? No; just answer this simple question:

• What's the name of the Russian space station that underwent emergency repairs last year?

Answers on a postcard to: Lost in Space Competition, extreme PlayStation Magazine, Quay Magazine Publishing, 22 Strand Street, Poole, Dorset BH15 1SB

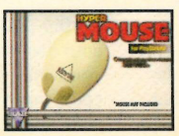
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HYPER MOUSE

BY: BLAZE **PRICE: £12.99**

A mouse is ideal for a ripping good game of Red Alert, and a huge boon for graphic adventures. Also, they work much better than a standard controller on light gun games, so if you've only one gun and want to play with a mate in a two-player blast, a mouse is the next best thing.

VERDICT: 8 OUT OF 10



At last - a mouse at a decent price. It even comes with its own mouse mat, though this is pathetically small. Not that we should moan, The mouse itself is neat, ergonomic and responsive. Cool.

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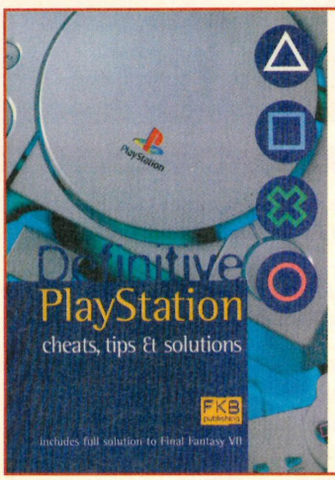
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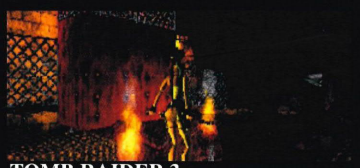
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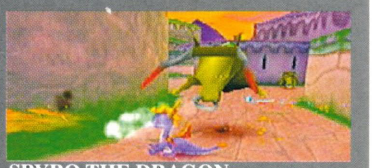
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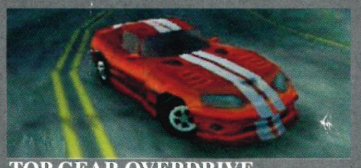

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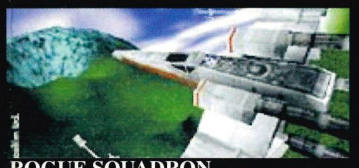

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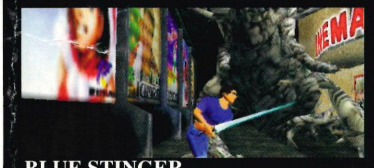

SOUTH PARK

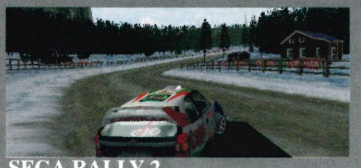


WIPEOUT 64

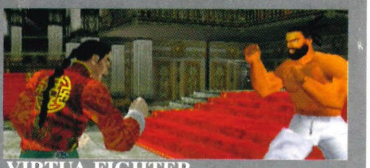

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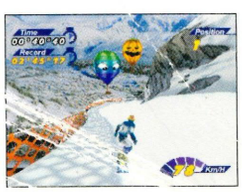
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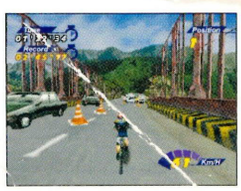
THE FASTEST WAY DOWN IS TO RUSHDOWN.

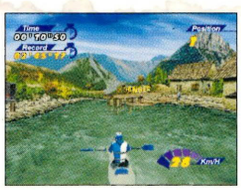
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to the extreme
RUSHDOWN

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