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extreme PlayStation MAGAZINE

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ISSUE 12 December '98



TOMB RAIDER III

FULL REVIEW!

Big, beautiful and perfectly formed

FINAL FANTASY VIII

Latest news

TOP 50

What are the best 50 PSX games of all time? We count down the essential selection...

REVIEWED
TOMB RAIDER III
TOCA 2
B-MOVIE
TEST DRIVE 5
STREAK
SMALL SOLDIERS
ODT
ACTUA GOLF
POOL SHARK
CONSTRUCTOR
BRIAN LARA CRICKET
PSYBADEK
FIFA 99
ACTUA SOCCER 3
DODGEM ARENA
RUSHDOWN
ZERO DIVIDE 2
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COLONY WARS: VENGEANCE
VR BASEBALL 99

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PlayStation



BEST SPECIAL EFFECTS

"THE MOST SPECTACULAR LOOKING GAME WE'VE EVER PLAYED."

90%

EXTREME PLAYSTATION

HEART OF DARKNESS

PLAY YOUR PART IN IT

THE EPIC ADVENTURE GAME THAT ECLIPSES ALL OTHERS

ocean

PC CD ROM

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www.heartofdarkness.com



BEST SCRIPT

You play Andy. Your teacher hates you.
You're petrified of the dark.
Worse still, your best mate and faithful dog
Whisky is snatched away by the
Forces of Darkness. Nightmare.



BEST CASTING

Tooled up with a plasma gun, you embark
on a brave rescue mission climbing, twisting,
swinging and blasting your way through
8 huge 3-D Studio rendered worlds infested
with monsters, phantoms and the
Master of Darkness. You're not alone though.
You've the Amigos to guide you.



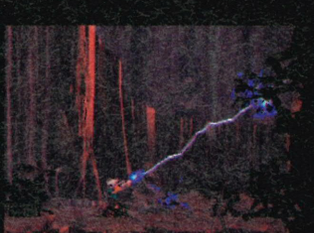
BEST ANIMATION

PLAY YOUR PART IN THE EPIC ADVENTURE GAME THAT ECLIPSES ALL OTHERS.



BEST GAMEPLAY

An epic adventure six years in the making,
Heart of Darkness seamlessly blends over 30
minutes of breathtaking movie animation
with some of the most challenging
gameplay ever seen on the PlayStation.
Immerse yourself into your role.
Enter the Heart of Darkness.



BEST SPECIAL EFFECTS

HEART OF DARKNESS

PLAY YOUR PART IN IT

ocean

PlayStation

PC CD ROM

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cont

Editorial

Welcome to another dazzling issue of extreme PlayStation Magazine.
This month we review the most long-awaited game since Gran Turismo - Tomb Raider III is finally ready, and what a scorcher it is too. Bigger, bolder and better than before, this really is Lara at her incredible best.
We also have the excellent Colony Wars: Vengeance, TOCA 2 and Test Drive 5, though there are also some appauling Christmas cash-ins too - how the hell did Rushdown get past the testers? And what were Psygnosis thinking when they released Psybadek? It just goes to show it's best to read our reviews before splashing out on a game.

Ian Osborne
Editor

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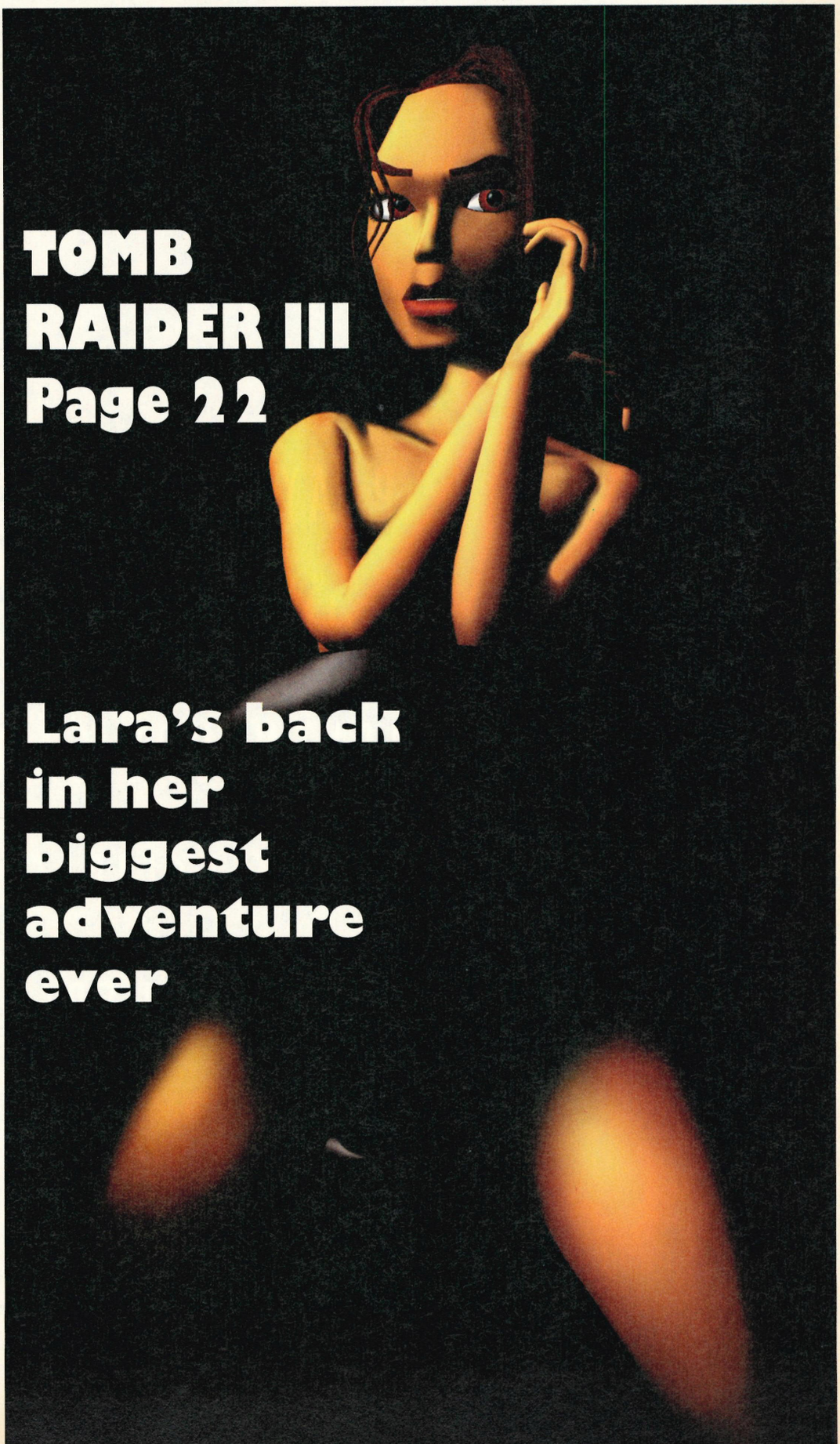
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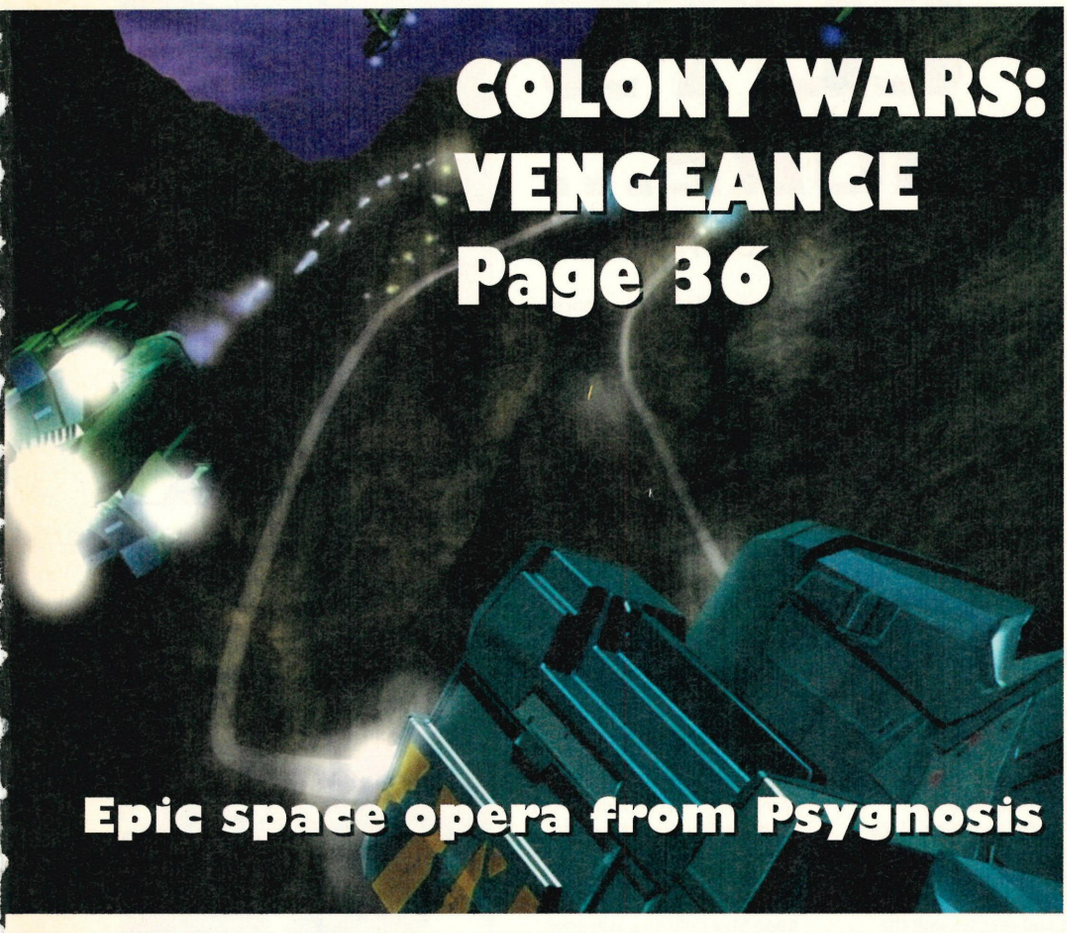
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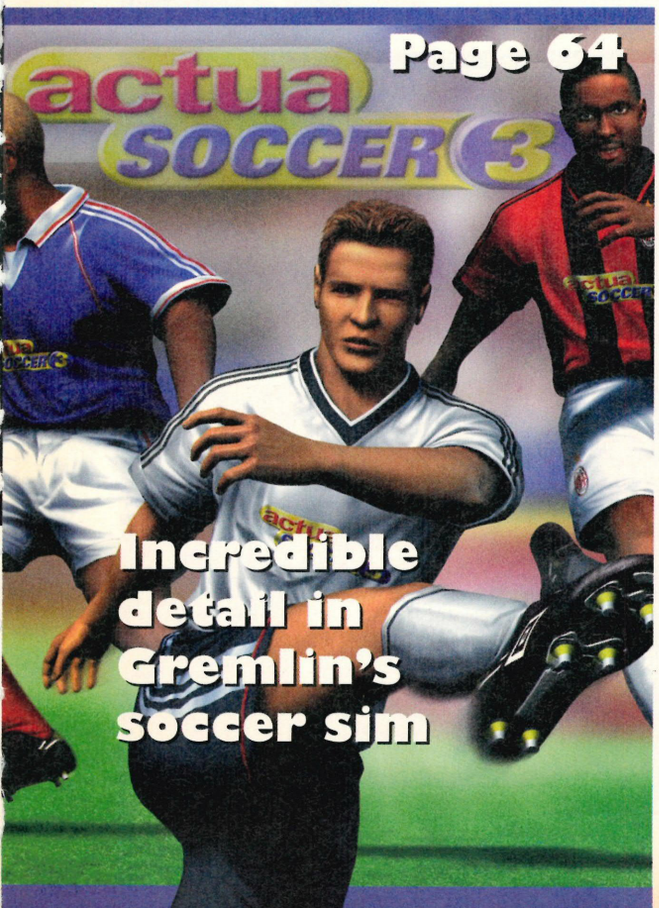


TOMB RAIDER III
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Lara's back in her biggest adventure ever

ents





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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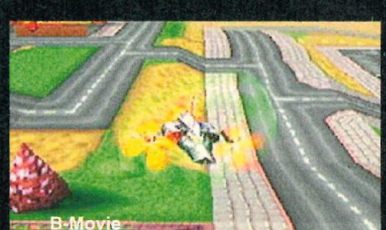
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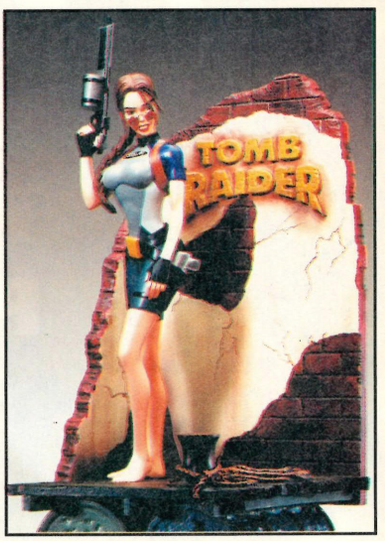


signals

All the news and more...

LARA CUTS A FINE FIGURE...

Lara Croft action figures soon to hit the shelves



Following the launch of the spectacular Tomb Raider III, Playmates Toys are to release two 9-inch action figures featuring Lara Croft. The first, in the shops soon, has Lara dressed in her scuba diving kit. The second will be released in March, 1999, and sees her wearing her traditional green sleeveless T-shirt and brown shorts.

The figures are more than just toys. Each comes stamped with its own individual serialised number for collectors, and also offers a never-before-released Tomb Raider III code.

"This awesome beauty is the most recognised action adventure game character in PlayStation history", said Playmates' Jan Floyd. "It looks set to topple the Teletubbies at the top of the toy charts this Christmas".

The Lara figures will sell for around £16.99 each, but we have five of them to give away! To stand a chance of winning one, just answer this simple question:

• If Lara and Action Man could now get it on, what would their kids be like?

Answers on a postcard to: That Figures Competition, extreme PlayStation, 22 Strand Street, Poole, Dorset BH15 1SB. The funniest answers win, but entries that arrive after 24th December will be recycled as firelighters.

STAR CONTROL 4 IN THE CAN



Alas, Accolade's impressive-looking Star Control 4 has been put on hold indefinitely, and there's no firm news on when (or even 'if') it will be released. The game, previewed in Issue Ten, is a space-based shoot-'em-up in which alien alliances battle for supremacy, the action taking place over a series of missions demanding brains as well as brawn.

"After reviewing the latest version of the game and reassessing the market, we decided to put the project on hold", said Erica Krishnamurthy, Accolade's corporate communications director. "We plan to re-evaluate the core design and produce a better game for our consumers".

Although it was early days, the game engine we at EPM saw looked quite promising. Let's hope Star Control 4 will soon appear in a revamped form.



GAMESTER PRICE PLUNGE



Gamester are the latest third-party peripherals manufacturer to follow Sony's lead and drop the price of their products. Both their digital and analogue range of joypads enjoy a price cut, as does their 1Mb Memory Card.

The Gamester PSX 1 joypads, available in grey, black, blue and red, are down from £11.99 to just £7.99. The Gamester PSX Analogue Joypad is down from £17.99 to £14.99, and the 1Mb Memory Card from £11.99 to £6.99.

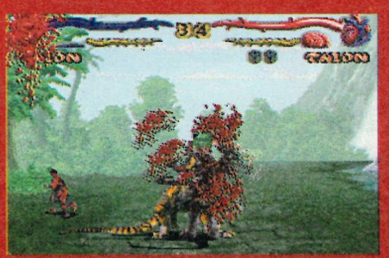
"The extremely competitive pricing structure does not compromise on quality", says Gamester spokesperson Richard Eddy. "The joypads and memory card are manufactured to exacting standards and undergo extensive testing to ensure they can withstand years of use".

CLASSIC MOMENTS IN VIDEOGAME VIOLENCE

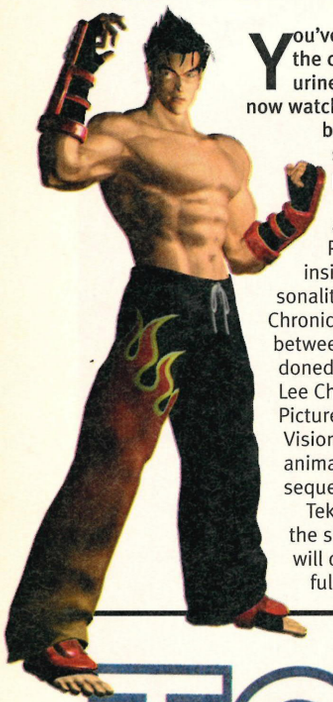


Not everyone rated Primal Rage as a beat-'em-up, but few would deny it offered some of the most gory, blood-sodden fatalities since Mortal Kombat. Being enormous great dinosaur-type monsters, the feuding protagonists here could literally rip each other to shreds. Sauron even feeds off his fallen foe, as seen here.

If this isn't controversial enough, another character (Chaos) celebrates a win by literally pissing on his defeated enemy. He actually urinates over the stricken fighter.



TEKKEN
THE FIGHT TO THE SILVER SCREEN



You've played the game, you've read the comics, you've bought the figurines, you've scrutinised the tips, now watch the film. AD Vision are to bring Tekken to the small screen with their Anime interpretation of the game.

Featuring all the main characters, Tekken: The Motion Picture offers 'explosive insights' into the plots and personalities featured in the game. Chronicling the bitter family feud between Heihachi Mishima, his abandoned son Kazuya and adopted heir Lee Chaolan, Tekken: The Motion Picture boasts (according to AD Vision) 'some of the most stunning animated action and combat sequences to date'.

Tekken: The Motion Picture hits the shelves on 7th December and will cost £12.99. We'll bring you a full review next issue.

POST TASTE

Our monthly round-up of terrific and terrible compo postcards...



We've an interesting contrast in this month's best and worst postcards used for competition entries. The best card came from Daniel Ricketts of Skegness for this saucy seaside number. Let's face it - they're crude, course, stereotypical and desperately unsubtle, but we all love 'em. Like seaside rock and kiss-me-quick hats, saucy postcards are part of British holiday culture; there's a bit of Benny Hill in all of us.

Warren Quinn should've left his seaside postcard behind when he packed for home. A boring beach scene with so little character it could have been taken anywhere - yawn.

Daniel wins a pack of Lara Croft playing cards for giving us a laugh, and Warren gets two JVC badges for his crappy effort. If you're entering any of this month's competitions, have a think about the card you use. If it's outstandingly good or appallingly crap, you could find fame in the Post Taste column, and win an embarrassingly bad prize.

TOCA 2 TOURING CARS™
CODEMASTERS ONLINE...

For those with regular Internet access, or at least a local cybercafe, Codemasters have unveiled two new websites covering their games, TOCA 2 and Music.

The TOCA 2 website (www.toca2.com) includes a hall of fame, displaying the fastest times achieved in Time Trial mode. Come up with a particularly fast time and you're given a code. Log on to the TOCA 3 site and you can enter it and, if fast enough, join the hall of fame. Prizes will be awarded for the best times achieved.



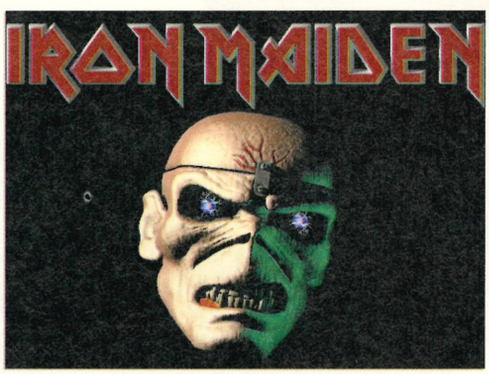
The second codies site is for their sequencer utility Music, reviewed last issue. The site, accessed through www.codemasters.com, offers four different Music tracks to download Video files are also available.

Also on the Internet front, Sony have reserved the domain names PlayStation 2 and PlayStation 2000. Could this be their next game system, or just a ploy to stop amateurs using the names? Alas, they're not saying...

CAR CRASHES AND CACOPHONY

Top heavy metal band Iron Maiden are licensing their hits The Trooper, Aces High, Be Quick and Man on the Edge for use in the PC version of Carmageddon 2. Whether they make it to the PlayStation version has yet to be decided, and no release date for the game has been set.

Maiden fans should also watch out for Ed Hunter, a light gun game based on the music, lyrics and imagery of Iron Maiden.



CHILD'S PLAY...



This month sees the release of a four-game compilation, the profits of which will be divided between children's charities. A joint project from Gremlin, Eidos, Psygnosis and Fox Interactive, 4-PlayStation consists of Actua Soccer Club Edition, Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2, Overboard and Independence Day. The package is distributed by Acclaim.

The quality of the games range from dire to excellent, but at £39.99 it isn't exactly expensive. Expect a full review next issue.

LARA ©

Core Design unveil a clothing and merchandise collection inspired by Lara Croft...

Further to last month's news item, Core Design's Lara © range of streetwear has now been unveiled. Moving away from the blatant tie-in, the Lara © range offers subtle logos and stylish outfits, manufactured exclusively for Core by Animal Promotions Ltd.

The clothing, featuring women's and men's T-shirts, polo shirts, wallets, watches and more, are designed in black, white and grey with rubberised or embossed logos. They're not cheap (£17.99 for a T-shirt, £39.99 for a fleece), but the quality is high.

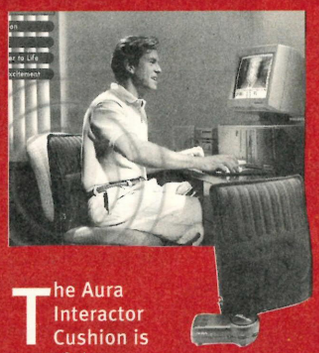
The Lara © catalogue also boasts the Diffusion range, featuring items and collectibles based much more strongly on Lara herself. There's a Tomb Raider III t-shirt, a life-size Lara cut-out, various posters, a mouse mat, a figurine and a watch. Again they're not cheap (the figure is £34.99), but again it's all quality stuff. For more information, call the ordering line on 01525 381808.

Lara Croft has also been granted Millennium Product status by the Design Council after Tony Blair challenged businesses to demonstrate that Britain is the creative powerhouse of the world.

The news was announced by Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Mandelson at the CBI Conference in Birmingham on Monday, 2nd November. After his speech, Mandelson then moved to the Millennium Product stand, run by the Design Council, to present an award to a small selection of hand-picked recipients. Core Design was among those to receive an award. Maybe it just might be worth going to see the Millennium Dome after all...



GADGETS



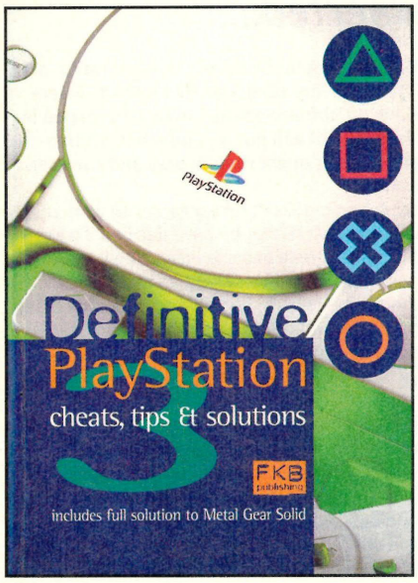
The Aura Interactor Cushion is one of those items you just have to own because it's there, waiting and erm; vibrating. The Aura Cushion couldn't be much more of a desirable gadget if it tried, or perhaps it really is trying? Maybe it's something along the lines of a comfortable, sturdy cushion that offers full back support and a massage you couldn't get anywhere else? Actually no, I think that it's more of a musical statement; no a music accessory to add bass, depth and feeling to your sounds regardless of whether it's musical or not.

The Interactor Cushion is compatible with practically everything that uses audio in your home. It plugs into a TV audio set-up, Hi-fi, personal CD player, a personal computer (games and audio) and, of course, you guessed it, your PlayStation (games and audio).

The Interactor Cushion can be compared to new products like the Dual Shock control pads in the way it vibrates in time with the actions of the game, but the marked difference is that the Aura has its own fully-adjustable amplified bass speaker inside the cushion, which helps to bring action, adventure, music and home cinema to life. You can hear and experience every single sound, rumble, bass line and explosion as it was truly meant to be. For me this goes a long way to heighten the experience, whether it's East Enders on the TV, Gran Tursimo on the PlayStation or your all-time favourite piece of music. Thanks to the Aura's complete adjustability, you can tone down the vibration or bring out the bass as much or little as you like to provide the most user-friendly and social units of its kind on the market.

The Interactor Cushion usually costs £99, but if you're interested in getting your hands on one a lot cheaper, simply turn to Page 13 and check out our exclusive reader offer.

PLAYSTATION BROUGHT TO BOOK



FKB Publishing have released two new books of PlayStation tips. The first is entitled Definitive PlayStation Cheats, Tips & Solutions Volume 3, and features 240 pages packed with hints and tips for all the latest games, including a full solution for Metal Gear Solid. The second book, The Complete PlayStation Cheats, Tips & Solutions, is even larger and holds even more PSX hints and tips.

Definitive PlayStation Cheats, Tips & Solutions Volume 3 costs £9.99, with The Complete PlayStation Cheats, Tips & Solutions costing a mere £12.99. Both are available from Virgin Megastores, HMV, Game, Electronics Boutique, WH Smiths and all good computer stores.

WIN! SIX PLATINUM GAMES

To celebrate the release of the two books, FKB Publishing have donated six brand-new Platinum games, namely Tomb Raider, Croc, TOCA, Time Crisis, Mickey's Wild Adventure and Hercules. To stand a chance of winning one, just answer this simple question:

• How many copies does a game have to sell before it's allowed a Platinum release?

Answers on a postcard (preferably an entertaining one) to:

**Platinum Pickings,
extreme PlayStation
Magazine,
Quay Magazine Publishing,
22 Strand Street,
Poole,
Dorset BH15 1SB**

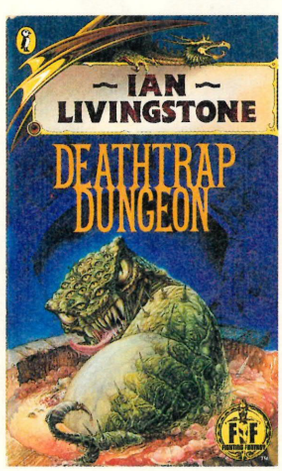


Make sure your entries arrive by 24th December, and if you already have copies of some of the games on offer, let us know. If you don't and you win a title you already own, well; you were warned.

FIGHTING FANTASY FIGHTS AGAIN

Eidos are planning another game based on their chairman Ian Livingstone's solo role-playing Fighting Fantasy Gamebooks. The game, which would be the follow-up to the acclaimed Deathtrap Dungeon (based on Livingstone's book of the same name, pictured here), but would offer a greater degree of Dungeons & Dragons-style interaction at the expense of pure fighting, bringing the game closer to the style original books.

The follow-up is also to be named after a Fighting Fantasy Gamebook. The title has not yet been decided, but the early offering Citadel of Chaos is believed to be his preferred choice.



TRIUMPH AND AGONY

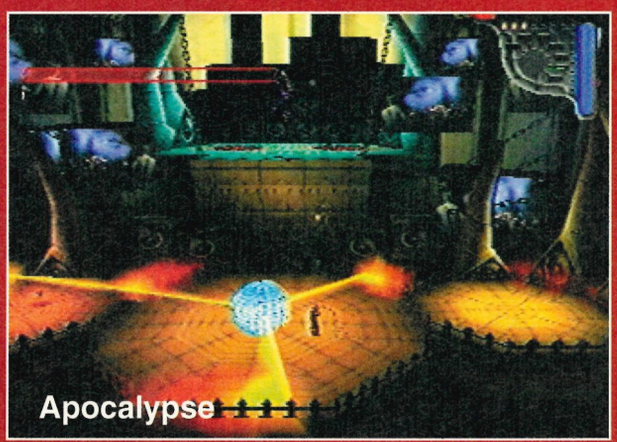
Lone Soldier / Apocalypse (3D Shoot-'em-ups)

Every month we take a genre by the scruff of the neck and look at an excellent example thereoff with a pile of puss that should never have been released. This month it's the turn of 3D shoot-'em-ups.

One of the key considerations in programming a 3D blaster is how the player aims his gun. Do you use crosshairs? If so, how do you aim and move at the same time? Maybe, if you're facing the right way, the program can automatically target a nearby foe, but this raises problems of its own. Overplay it and the player's input has too little affect on the game - too little and targeting foes becomes awkward. Apocalypse got the balance right - Lone Soldier didn't even try.

Okay, Lone Soldier's a game from the dawn of time, but there's no excuse for this crap. You can only run in the eight digital directions (think of the four compass points, then add the diagonals), but by standing still (and making yourself a ridiculously-easy target) you can rotate and fire at will. Targeting your foes is such a pain in the arse it would be easier to run past them, but you have to kill a certain percentage to complete a level. Cheesy or what?





Conversely, Apocalypse lets you run and shoot wherever you like, the CPU offering just enough assistance when aiming to take the tedium out of lining up your shots but not so much that you feel you're getting an unfair advantage.

Apocalypse keeps the skill in the game. Lone Soldier forgot the game.

expected

Insider info on forthcoming games...

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts

DEVELOPER SquareSoft

RELEASED TBA

It's time to expect the expected....

Final Fantasy VIII

Everybody is no doubt tapping their feet in expectation of the inevitable. After having such a golden history, where its ancestors have dumbfounded the public and reaped in the rewards, Final Fantasy VIII will not remain a hidden treasure for much longer. It is our quest to find, play and conquer... only we're not sure when!

It's a well kept secret, and it doesn't take a genius to work out why it's all hush-hush. The powers-that-be have decided if we're left dangling on a short string, we'll become increasingly impatient until we get to the point where we'll be setting up camp outside our nearest PlayStation game-selling shop awaiting opening time.

We can only promise you what SquareSoft has promised us, that it will be bigger, better and have no problem in taking up the challenge of reaching further greatness that its predecessor left in its wake.

Number Eight's storyline has also purposefully been left unclear to keep us guessing. All that we know is that Squall attends a military school Known as 'Garden', which houses children from as young as six years old up to the age of 19. If any of the pupils fail an exam in their later years, they face expulsion.

Just one of the skills that the students are taught at school, in addition to combat skills, is magic. This is a hard skill to master in the world of Final Fantasy VIII, so only graduates of the school are trained enough to be able to use it. Those students who excel join the elite forces called 'SeeD'.

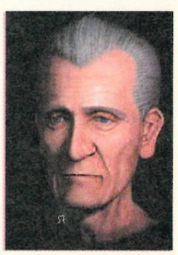








THE MOVIE...



It was only a matter of time until this happened. Square have now officially announced the computer-rendered film will be released in 2001. America and Japan will be the first to experience its wonders. Luckily for us, the film will be made for those who are able to speak English, as the mouth movements are animated for English voices. So it looks as though the Japanese are going to have to cope with dubbing.

Directed by Square USA President, Hironubu Sakaguchi and distributed by Columbia Pictures the movie will use the latest in CG animation technology to produce a new form of entertainment, bringing together computer games and animation. Set in 2065, the film continues the game's idea of an 'ultimate fantasy story about life and death' that forms the basis of the popular role-playing series.

The release of the game probably brings more excitement than the movie does for the moment, but fans may not be able to resist the temptation of watching it on the big screen. As soon as a date for the release of the game is announced, you'll be the first to know.









Squall attempts to join the group, which draws similarities with Cloud and the First Class ranking he had in the SOLDIER organisation from Final Fantasy VII.

Heroes, Heroes...

All of this, of course, sounds remarkably familiar as it is not unlike the Final Fantasy VII storyline which centred on Cloud's dream to join SOLDIER. The game itself involves two quests, two heroes and two worlds. At some stage in the game these two quests cross (one with Squall and the other with Laguna).

To be able to wow its audience with something new, Final Fantasy VIII includes a few changes to the battle system. One of them involves 'drawing' magic from enemies. In addition to the standard battle commands, this new option allows your character to steal an enemy's magic and focus it back towards your opponent or store it if you want to save it for later in the game.

Squall now fights with a weapon known as a gunblade, which is a cross between a sword and a gun. His weapon increases the force of an attack, but only if your timing is precise.

What is known as the Guardian Force will be the Summon Monsters of FFVIII. Again, no one knows exactly how this works, but what monsters you do summon are able to gain experience and the more experience they acquire, the stronger they get. The characters don't use materia or anything like it, for using the Guardian Force, instead you breed the monsters and then call upon them for battle. When your monster is Summoned, it absorbs damage and carries out other useful tasks.

This new addition to the series also features fully textured characters which over takes Final Fantasy VII in the quality stakes. This makes the characters look a lot more realistic and a lot more detailed, so fans are guaranteed to be happy about their new image. Not only this, but the characters have better movement and the backgrounds haven't lost their brilliance either.



We would really like to be able to tell you when it's going to be released. The best we can do is tell you that shops in Japan will be putting it on the shelves this Winter so all that's left for us to do is to cross our fingers and hope that it won't be long after that till we manage to get our hands on it.

BEWARE OF THE SPIDER...

One of the bosses you fight is a giant Robo-Spider - unfortunately, you can't just pull its legs off one by one.

















PEOPLE POWER...

Here's an opportunity to get to know the characters personally...



SQUALL Leonhart
Age: 17
Height: 5'10"
Weapon: Gunblade

Poker-faced and short-spoken, Squall sometimes becomes quite outspoken. His name is supposed to have the meaning of a passing shower, though whether that works or not we're not sure! He's a bit of a loner and according to Square has 'little sense of comradeship for the people around him'.



LAGUNA Loire
Age: 27
Height: 5'11"
Weapon: Unknown

Laguna loves to love and respects his duties. An optimistic and vigorous man who relishes the confidence that others have in him. He's a former soldier who apparently works as a journalist. Apart from that, he remains a man of mystery.



RINOA Heartilly
Age: 17
Height: 5' 4"
Weapon: Blaster Edge

Rinoa is a happy girl with a good spirit and a tender heart. She's very honest, so has no problem with saying what's on her mind. She can be a bit shy so can on occasion have confused feelings. Her weapon looks like a boomerang which can do a severe amount of damage.



ZELL Dincht
Age: 17
Height: 5'6"
Weapon: Glove

Zell entered the Garden when he was only 13 so he could train to be a great soldier. He's an honest kinda guy and very straight forward. He can lose his temper quite often and is a quick, lethal fighter- a master of martial arts.



SEIFER Almasy
Age: 18
Height: 6' 1"
Weapon: Gunblade

Another man of mystery, Seifer is said to be the leader of Squad B. He's talented but known at the same time to be problematic because of his short-tempered attitude.



EDEA
Age: Unknown
Height: Unknown
Weapon: Also Unkown

Out of all the females in the world Edea was chosen to inherit the previous witch's magical power. She is hailed by the people the reason why is either because she's very charismatic or able to brainwash people.

Sounds like a Latin American guerrilla movement, dun'it?

Libero Grande

PUBLISHER Sony CEE

DEVELOPER Namco

RELEASED December '98













This is a football sim with a difference. Whether this is a good thing or a bad thing is another matter entirely, but it's certainly a game with a difference. And the difference is? Libero Grande gives you control of a single player, not the entire team. Spooky!

Your guy is a right-midfielder, but you can run around and play in whatever position you like - hence the title, which translates as 'great freedom'. With the rest of the team computer-controlled, you have to work together with your fellow players rather than switching between them as the ball is passed. This is described as 'a first in the field of contemporary computer games'.

As you get used to your role you must work out strategies and plays, adopting a number of different roles. You can set up chances for your team-mates, or run into position and collect a telling pass, belting the ball into the back of the net and claiming the glory for yourself.

Footballing Features...

The PlayStation version of Libero Grande is converted from Namco's System 12 arcade board, but includes special PlayStation-only features too. Offering 32 world teams and an initial selection of 20 characters, you need to practice like a pro if you're to master the trick plays, special moves and techniques - there are over 100 moves in all.

Game modes include the inevitable Arcade Mode, where one or two players play in co-operative matches against the computer (ie. on the same team), taking on a series of computer-controlled sides. In International Cup Mode you play a World Cup-style league-then-knockout tournament, or just play a friendly in Exhibition Mode. World League is exactly what it implies, and the Player Challenge is a series of tests of skill.

Libero Grande is fully Dual Shock compatible, and allows you to save your players to a memory card. It's certainly an original interpretation of console football, but will it translate into successful playability? Watch this space...

It's wrasslin' time (again)...

WCW/NWO Thunder

PUBLISHER THQ

DEVELOPER THQ

RELEASED TBA

In theory, NWO is a breakaway organisation which is the sworn enemy of WCW. In practice, of course, it's just another angle - all the wrestlers in the NWO (which exists only on paper) work for the WCW, but their on-going feud makes for some blistering television.

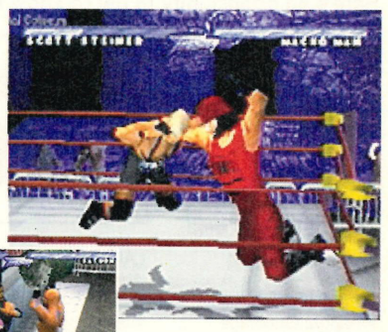
WCW/NWO Thunder is the sequel to THQ's WCW Nitro, also inspired by Ted Turner's feuding organisations. The new game makes several advances over the first offering, though. There's an all-new steel cage match, where the protagonists battle it out inside an, erm; steel cage. There's also a four-man battle royal mode, which can include one or two human players.

Over 60 wrestlers are available, as well as several hidden wrestlers. The roster has been completely updated, though by the time the game hits the shelves, a few featured bone-benders will have departed. The official WCW/NWO theme music is included, as well as commentary from Tony Schiavone and Mike Teany.

NWO For Life...

The game's authenticity doesn't end there. There are real arenas such as the Ice Palace, Cow Palace and Nassau Coliseum (anyone heard of 'em?), true-to-life wrestler entrances (that's a great reason for not picking Alex Wright) and 32 new wrestler rants. Each fighter has complete statistics offered and, using the Might Editor, you can redistribute points across the wrestlers' various abilities. If age can be redistributed too, Hulk Hogan will be unbeatable.

Add to all this the reactive crowd, finishing moves and weapons (!), and we could have the making of a great wrestling sim...







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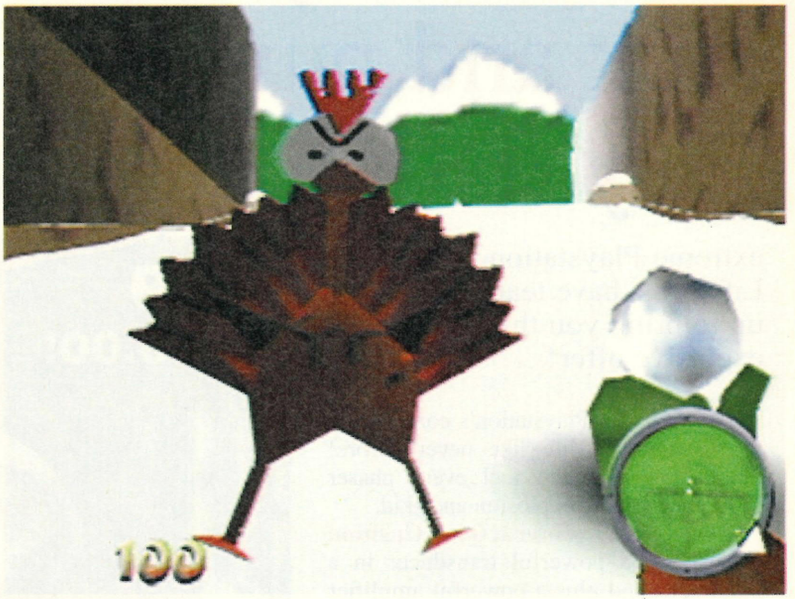
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Oh my God, they've killed Kenny (again)...

South Park



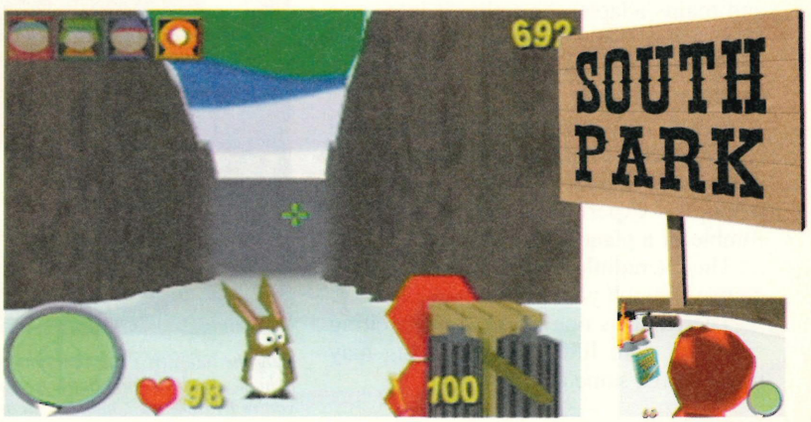
PUBLISHER Acclaim

DEVELOPER Acclaim

RELEASED Early '99

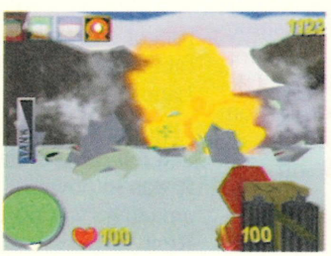


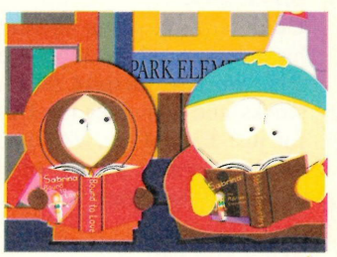
Here's those screenshots we promised you way back in Issue Eight of EPM, when we first revealed the imminent release of the cartoons conversion to PSX. Unfortunately there is no more info on South Park at present, but I'm sure you'll agree the game's really starting to take shape! Watch out for loads more info on this in the coming months 'you big, fat, stupid asshole' (Please use a blunt American nasal voice for best effect).











PUBLISHER Acclaim

DEVELOPER Taito

RELEASED Early '99

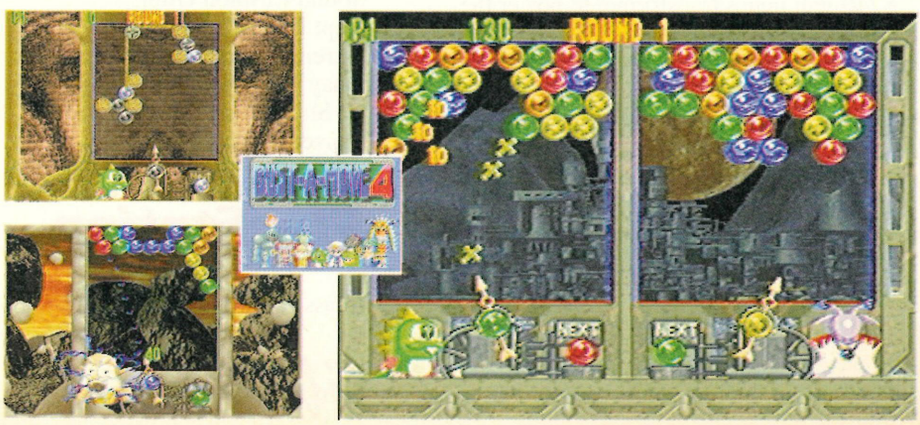
More bubble-bursting ahoy!

Bust-A-Move 4

It seems we just can't get enough of that ball-bursting action as Taito bring forth, um... the fourth instalment of that crazy game you can't live without; Bust-A-Move 4.

There isn't a great deal to say about Bub and Bob's latest outing other than a few key features that (thankfully) look like a lot more than just the addition of new characters and new backdrops. There's an all-new story game added to spice up the gameplay. You can choose your character out of a possible ten and take part in the progressive story that is actually looking pretty good so far (though the translation is a bit off on the demo we played).

There are loads on new puzzle elements, different game options and versus modes in the offing, sit tight until next month for a full review and run down of what you can expect from the full version.





PUBLISHER Konami

DEVELOPER Konami

RELEASED Early '99

Beavis and Butthead Do Hollywood

Hmm, hmm, huh, huh, Hmm, Hmm...

It's about time Beavis and Butthead made an appearance on the PlayStation. They've appeared in numerous PC software packages and were reasonably successful in the 16-bit market with their sideways-scrolling laugh-'em-up. It goes to prove that even after the dubious duo can come back from the dead and perform again for their adoring fans.

The plot takes place in Hollywood where Beavis and Butthead have just finished filming their latest motion picture, but find that their pay cheques has been sent to their home address leaving them totally skint (ahh). In an attempt to score some money to pay for their flights home (Personally, I'd complain to the film company), they sign up to a really dodgy agency promising them work in exchange for tickets. I'm sure you can guess the rest.

This is in actual fact the first time that this dodgy double act have been rendered in gorgeous 3D for a computer game, and the first time you can make them both talk their way in and out of situations throughout the entire game.

'Butt munch, huh, huh, hmm, hmm!' And we laughed...

PUBLISHER EA Sports

DEVELOPER EA Sports

RELEASED Early '99

Tiger Woods '99

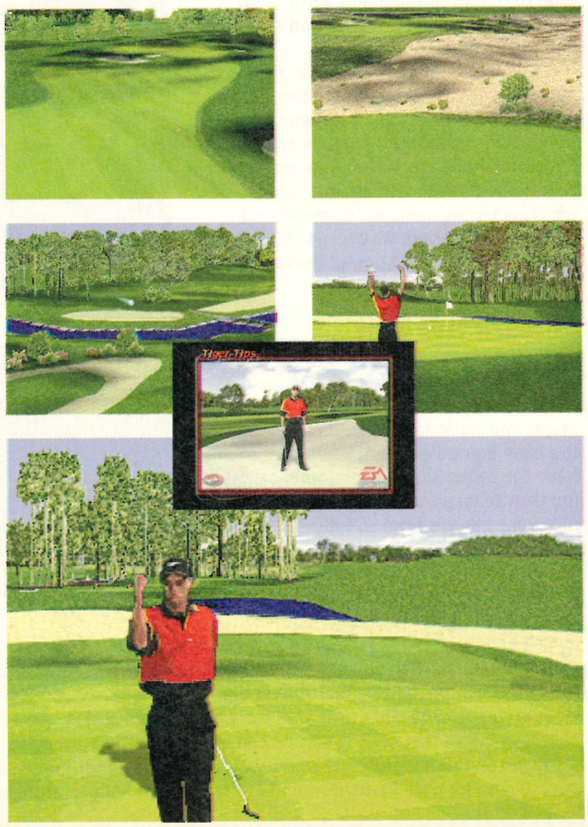
I'm Tiger Woods...

Golf fans will jump for joy now that they can play around (no, a round) with Tiger Woods himself thanks to EA Sports latest golf sim.

As Tiger yourself, you can take on or play as eight of the world's best golfers including Mark O'Meara ('98 Masters Champion), Brad Faxon and Davis Love III ('97 PGA Champion). Tiger himself is incredibly recreated using the latest in digital capture technology to make sure every aspect of his game and personality is as close to the real thing as possible. You'll see his trademark victory jump, his fist-pumping antics when he holes a beauty on the green and you can chip onto the green using the three-wood as only he does.

At present it is unclear exactly how many courses will feature in EA's fully licensed game but we know that it includes: TPC at Summerlin, TPC at Las Colinas, TPC at Southwind, TPC at Sawgrass and TPC of Scottsdale. Something of a golfer's dream, I think you'll agree!

For those of you that really are golf crazy, you can improve your game virtually and physically with Tiger Woods '99 in practice modes modelled on real world-class practice facilities. This includes a driving range, chipping green, putting green and helpful tips from the top thanks to Tiger himself. Watch this space for new information as it comes our way, but for now just check out the graphics and admire the views!





Sensible Soccer 2000

PUBLISHER
GT Interactive

DEVELOPER
Sensible Software

RELEASED
First Quarter '99

Come on ref?

Only ever seen before in 16-bit format, Sensible Soccer is to make its debut on the PlayStation (it was only a matter of time). Football has always been a popular choice of sport sim - we never get tired of deliberately causing severe pain to our opponents and being right lads, drinking cans of Stella and shouting verbal abuse at the TV screen.



The 2000 version offers three arcade modes, both single- and two-player. Also on offer are three major European competitions, eight major euro leagues and Sensible Challenge, where you get to play a 15-game tournament against teams which gradually become more difficult to run into the ground. As well as these, there's also four DIY competitions (Friendly, League, Cup and Tournament).



On the Ball...

As for the teams, take your pick from all - yes all - of the major European clubs and all of the major international teams. If only the best is good enough, you also have the opportunity of customising your team so you can hand-pick your players from 16 fully-editable teams.



So what are your options? If three minutes' playing time isn't long enough, you can change the length of your game to last up to 15 minutes and if you don't want the comments of your opponents, than you can turn them off and the in-game commentary on. All the teams can be made equal so you don't have to worry about being completely slaughtered on your first turn onto the pitch. SS 2000 also gives you the option to coach, or 'tactically advise', so you can boss each of your players around.

This is one that's probably worth waiting for. It's not out until after Christmas and, of course, we'll be reviewing it in the not-too-distant future to see if it lives up to its name.

PUBLISHER
Konami

DEVELOPER
Konami

RELEASED
Early '99

Silent Hill

Want to be in the movies?

Let's hope you're not afraid of the dark, because Silent Hill certainly makes it difficult for you to sleep. Compared to Resident Evil 2, this game is like being in a horror movie, or even inside your worst nightmare.

You are a distraught father. After waking up in the wreckage of your car after an accident, you find your four-year-old daughter has mysteriously gone missing. The closest town to you is Silent Hill, and this is where your search for her begins.

The first thing you notice about this game is the graphics, which truly are movie-like. Sitting on the edge of your seat, you encounter many ugly-looking creatures and monsters, which you can only kill if you collect weapons.

Mysterious Messages

To find out what you have do to find your daughter, you must find the clues and read the messages which are scattered around the town. Whenever you see the shadow of a small child, follow it. There are also cut scenes which show you information about what's going on and also do a good job of frightening you with close-ups of gorged dead bodies.

The game is played in darkness, which adds to its eeriness, but you can collect a flashlight to light your way and maps to guide you to the most likely of places where your daughter might be. You are also playing the game in real-time, which adds to the affect of being in a movie yourself.

Silent Hill will definitely present a challenge when it comes out next year. Its sound and horror movie effects just add to the suspense. We'll be reviewing it properly as soon as we can, and can pretty-much guarantee it will be one of the scariest games of 1999.

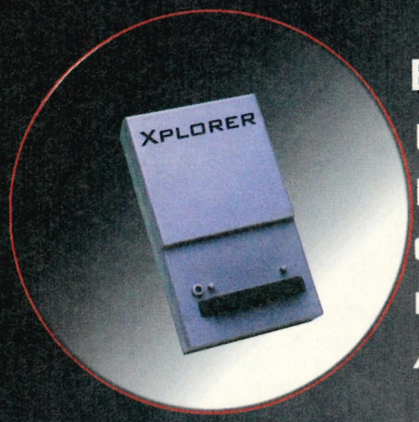












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INFOGRAMES UNITED KINGDOM

Infogrames have some great games in the pipeline - EPM decided to take a look...

Since buying respected software house Ocean Software, Infogrames Entertainment have gone from strength to strength. As well as turning over literally millions of pounds every year it owns rights to licences such as Warner Brothers, Looney Tunes and The Smurfs, creating a solid brand name in children's cartoon-style games. They've more than one string to their bow, though. Infogrames also own the rights to Paramount's Mission Impossible, Ronaldo and the Brazilian national football team. They're making no small name for themselves in the driving sim market too, with the V-Rally series and the forthcoming Eutechnyx-developed titles outlined here.
They've got some great-looking products lined up for Christmas and the New Year, so it's time EPM took a look at them...

KKND Krossfire

DEVELOPER Melbourne House **RELEASED** March '99



KKND KROSSFIRE IS...

....A Command & Conquer-style strategy game where three armies battle to conquer the universe.

Some people don't know the meaning of living in harmony. The Evolved think that they own their planet; they mother it, mutate on it and nurture killer beasts in it, whereas the Survivors consider themselves the proprietors as they have the technological superiority. And the Series 9 robots have come to the decision that no humanoid will ever own the planet. Is it the end of the world as we know it?

Designed specifically for the PlayStation, KKND Krossfire is a real time strategy game that features a fast arcade-style, multi-player battles with two human and one CPU player and very weird-looking beings with huge scorpions for friends.

In the fight for supremacy you can take your pick from 50 single or multiplayer missions that offer you fast-paced action. For each mission you are given a briefing, using the FAMOUS™ facial motion capture system and whilst in battle, chortle at the humorous on-screen text.

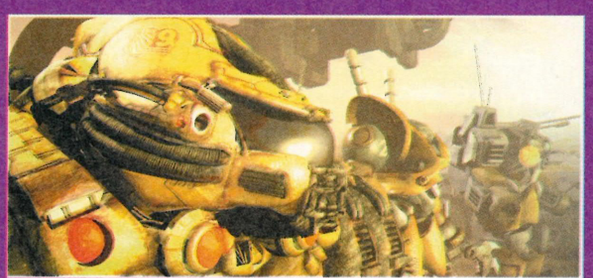
With stacks of air, land and amphibious units for each team and an abundance of resources, the game allows you to quickly build up your army for action-packed games. It also gives you the option of a two-player split-screen mode with both co-operative and competitive play.

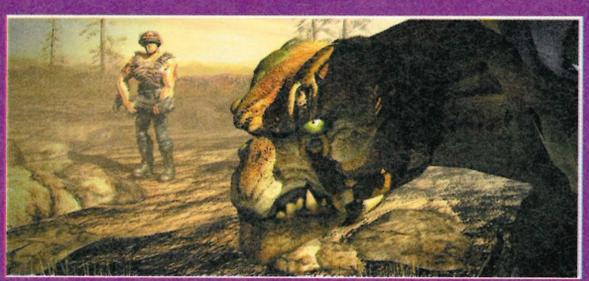


This game will have to be seen to be believed, though it does boast some originality in its storyline. If you like to play strategy games, this could be one to look out for on the shop shelf, but hold your horses though - nothing should be bought unless it gets a good review from us here at EPM.











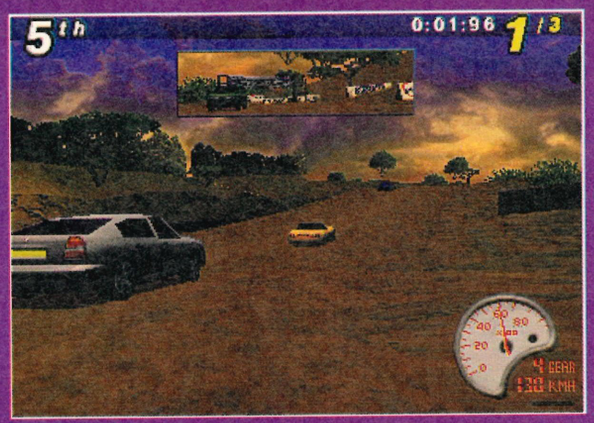
Max Power Racing

DEVELOPER Eutechnyx **RELEASED** January '99

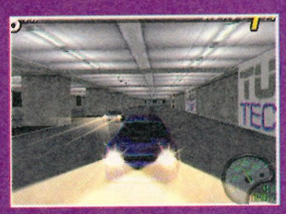
MAX POWER RACING IS...

...A next-generation racing game boasting cutting-edge gaming technology. Offering a interactive environment with various routes and courses, it claims to give the ultimate driving experience.















Sit comfortably in your bucket seats and strap yourself firmly in, as you're about to collide with one of the most realistic car games you've ever played on the PlayStation. With multiple gaming modes such as Arcade for a quick burn around the track, Time Trial to test your speed and Championship Mode for a long term challenge, Max Power Racing creates a most realistic racing game and offers hours of driving entertainment. Choose from any of the world's most desirable cars, including the Toyota MR2, Peugeot 306 GTi-6 and the Max Power Car and compete in races covering ten international settings.

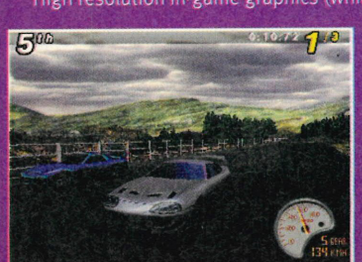
There are over 30 tracks to complete, spanning five different continents. The courses, including Peru, Rome and Monaco, feature realistic night-time driving and other lighting effects. As you conquer each course you unlock new levels and new cars, but driving becomes a little difficult as full collision damage simulation affects your handling, performance and speed.

If you want to customise the car to suit your own driving style, you can alter your acceleration, steering and braking power along with other options. However, you have to remember that if you adjust one aspect of your car's performance it has an effect on others. It's not as simple as setting acceleration to the maximum!

Each individual racing model was developed in conjunction with each official manufacturer such as Mitsubishi, Peugeot, Skoda and Toyota plus some unseen prototypes.

High resolution in-game graphics (which was only seen during replay mode in Gran Turismo), widescreen TV support and a hi-res letterbox mode all add to its realism, as do the various weather conditions like fog and mist (of variable depth), snow, rain, lightning and more.

It's a shame that we have to wait until after Christmas for this one. Max Power Racing will surely offer us something different than your average driving game. The graphics promise to be incredible, and the number of options available give you a different game to play each time you plug in your PlayStation.





Asterix

DEVELOPER Infogrames **RELEASED** February '99



ASTERIX IS...

....An action/strategy game featuring the popular cartoon hero returning in his ultimate action-packed adventure in a 3D gaming environment.

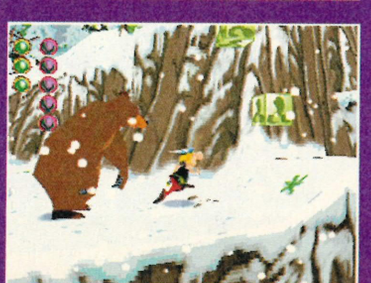
Asterix takes elements of both platform and strategy genres and turns them into interactive, traditional platform fun. Just one of the sub-games included is the popular 'throw the Roman' where Asterix and his famous sidekick Obelix take a trip around the world in search for special ingredients to put into Getafix's recent batch of magical brew.

The game features intelligent AI in both the adventuring and strategy sections, with nine different locations to explore such as the French Alps, Underwater, Forest and the infamous Pirate City with three different modes of difficulty.

Again, we'll be able to tell you much more in future issues. Asterix is aimed at quite a young audience, but like all the other cartoon-based games in the Infogrames collection, there's always the option of acting like a big kid for while.







Bugs Bunny: Lost in Time

DEVELOPER Behaviour International **RELEASED** April '99



BUGS BUNNY: LOST IN TIME IS...

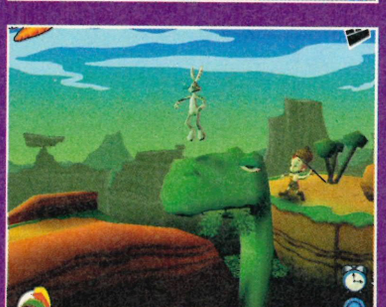
...A 3D platform/puzzle game which offers the perfect mixture of fast-paced action and slapstick humour.



You're on your own with this one as it's only a one-player game, although you do get to play Bugs himself. Infogrames say this is aimed at kids between the ages of eight and 16, but we say that we're all children at heart and you'll probably be able to enjoy it if you're a fully-fledged adult.

Bugs is literally lost in time in this game, as he accidentally discovers a time machine and decides to take a step back in time. You are immediately propelled through five eras and must find your way back to the present day - sound easy?





The game features true 3D real-time environments with a 360 degree camera rotation as well as 12 of Warner Brothers' principal characters in multiple universes. Also, if you're an avid watcher of Children's ITV, you'll recognise the original voice-overs of the Looney Tunes characters.

This would have made a good Christmas pressie for a little brother or sister, but unfortunately we'll have to wait until April next year before we get a good look at it

Puma Street Soccer

PUMA STREET SOCCER IS...

.....A football game with a difference. It's set to be fast and frantic, with famous stars having a kick-about in the street.

DEVELOPER PixelStorm

RELEASED March '99










Puma Street Soccer promises to put the fun back into football and take the game itself back to its roots. Making use of Puma's most well known stars from Deschamps, Chiesa and Stoichkov to Asprila, Matthaus and the temperamental Maradonna, you battle it out in a four-a-side match which is said to give some of the best gameplay ever seen (though only time will tell).

The game features 32 different teams from all over the world who offer very fast physical gameplay with over 20 different moves. Each of the 180 players boast their own individual characteristics such as speed, power, skill agility, intelligence, marking abilities, endurance and behaviour.

You wouldn't normally see people playing football in an airport, would you? But as well as this rather extraordinary venue, there are also four others, namely port, parking lot, your usual city street and one other which is yet to be revealed. A total roaming camera follows the action and a PAS system is used to enhance movement and play.

This looks to be a promising one for next year as a refreshing change from your average football game. Soccer fans can look forward to hand-picking their favourite players and testing their skills in a different environment, away from the pitch. Seeing as it's street soccer, there may not even be a referee, in which case it may be more than the ball you get to kick around.






Le Mans

DEVELOPER Eutechnyx

RELEASED Early '99



LE MANS IS...

A racing game based on the Le Mans 24-hour endurance race. It's by Eutechnyx, creators of Total Drivin' and the forthcoming Max Power Racing.

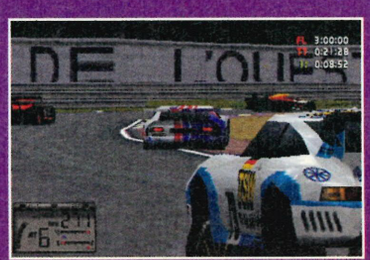
Infogrames has scooped the rights to produce a game licensed from the Le Mans 24-hour race. As what is acclaimed to be THE most grandest and challenging race, Le Mans is a mighty powerful communications platform for both sponsors and car-makers with approximately 200,000 spectators attending the race itself. And if that's not enough, there are numerous television broadcasts to well over 83 countries all over the world including the UK, Germany, France and the United States.

The game itself is expected to be released early next year on both the PlayStation and the PC. You can only hope that all the glamour and excitement that surrounds the race itself will reflect in the game when it reaches the shop shelves.

The developer who has the massive task of recreating the world-renowned race is Newcastle-based Eutechnyx, who are understandably delighted. "We're very proud to be associated with the legendary Le Mans, and are aware of the importance of this product to the millions of fans around the world" says PR Manager Kev Shaw.

Also according to Infogrames, the programming involved in the game will be marked as some of the most advanced ever to be seen on the PlayStation, which it will need to be if it is to do justice to the high performance and sheer beauty of the cars involved.

Next year can't arrive soon enough here in the EPM office, and we'll all wait with baited breath to see if Le Mans comes up to our extremely high standards. You expect a lot from a racing game, but where such a prestigious event as this race is involved, we're expecting the earth to move.



THERE'S MORE TO COME...

As well as these very promising games, Infogrames have a few more titles in the pipeline. These are a long way off and we've not much information on them, but rest assured we'll give you the low-down on them as soon as there's something to tell.

Towards the middle of next year, look out for The Smurfs, a 3D platformer set across four worlds and 20 levels. The game will be typically cartoony, and obviously designed for the younger gamer. Strike Force Harrier should appeal to flight fans, and if footie management's your thing, look out for Player Manager '99. Last but not least, there's V-Rally 2, the sequel to the acclaimed driving game reviewed on Platinum in EPM Issue Eight. It looks like 1999 is going to be a very busy year for Infogrames...

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Eidos	Core Design	Adventure	November '98	UK	£44.99	1	Memory Card Dual Shock Analogue

With Christmas nearly here, there's lots of stuff that we're all looking forward to. Another James Bond re-run, figs of Holy overhead, Santa preparing his sleigh and, of course, you can't forget the all important reason we celebrate when December comes...

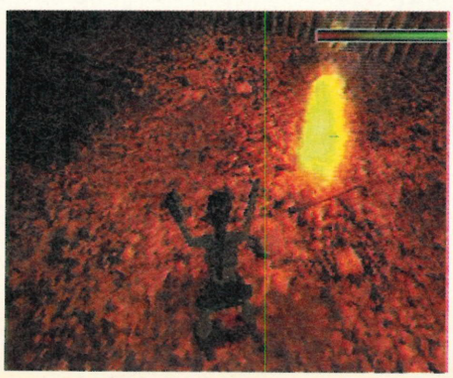
Tomb Raider III

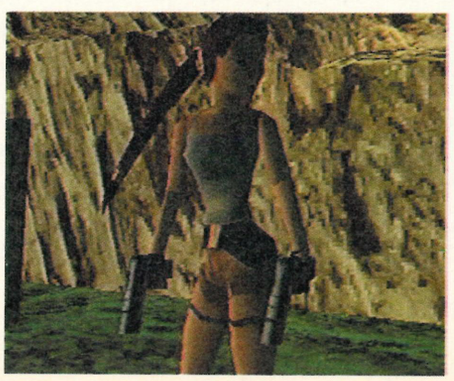
THINGS CAN ONLY GET BETTER...

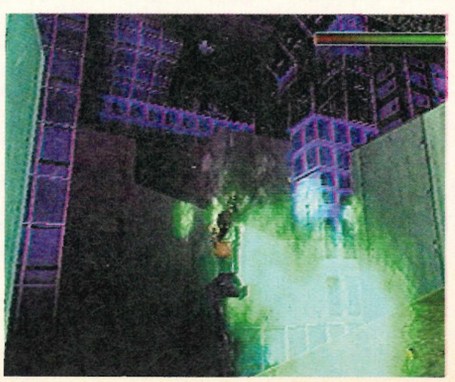
Way back in Issue One of EPM, Tomb Raider II was blessed with the fantastic score of 98%, which I'm sure you'll agree it was worthy of at the time. Unless Core Design have really let themselves and us down (yeah right), it's quite likely that Tomb Raider III is going to deserve a higher score. It would be wrong and stupid for us to rate it at 100% when there is obviously going to be better games within the next 12 months. The fact is that a whole year of technical advances, programming and design ideas have passed under the bridge, and TR II must have a new score given to reflect the changing times. We sat down in the office for what seemed like hours deliberating and arguing as to what the new score should be. The eventual result was a healthy score of 94%, which had to take into account the possible score of TR III and all the other top titles that we've seen through the year.
Ahh technology... It's a changing world.



Lara seems to have escaped from the Rushdown review on page 68 - pity you can't shoot the buggers in that game too.







THE STORY SO FAR...

You can't review TR III without revealing the amazing story behind the game, so here we go...

Millions of years ago, a meteor survived the plunge through the Earth's atmosphere, impacting in the then-warm climates of Antarctica. The first people to discover this land were a tribe of Polynesians. Despite the now-freezing conditions, there was an abnormal abundance of life and the tribe settled, worshipping the meteorite crater for the power it appeared to hold. Generations later, though, catastrophic events forced them to flee in terror...

Today the same area is being excavated by the research company RX Tech, who are picking up unusual readings from the meteorite's impact zone. It is in this zone they uncover the body of a sailor from Charles Darwin's voyage on The Beagle. A few of the sailors had, it seems, briefly explored the crater's interior...

Following a story from a journal belonging to one of the sailors, the research company started to take a particular interest in not only the crater area but other parts of the globe where the sailors subsequently travelled to - and died.

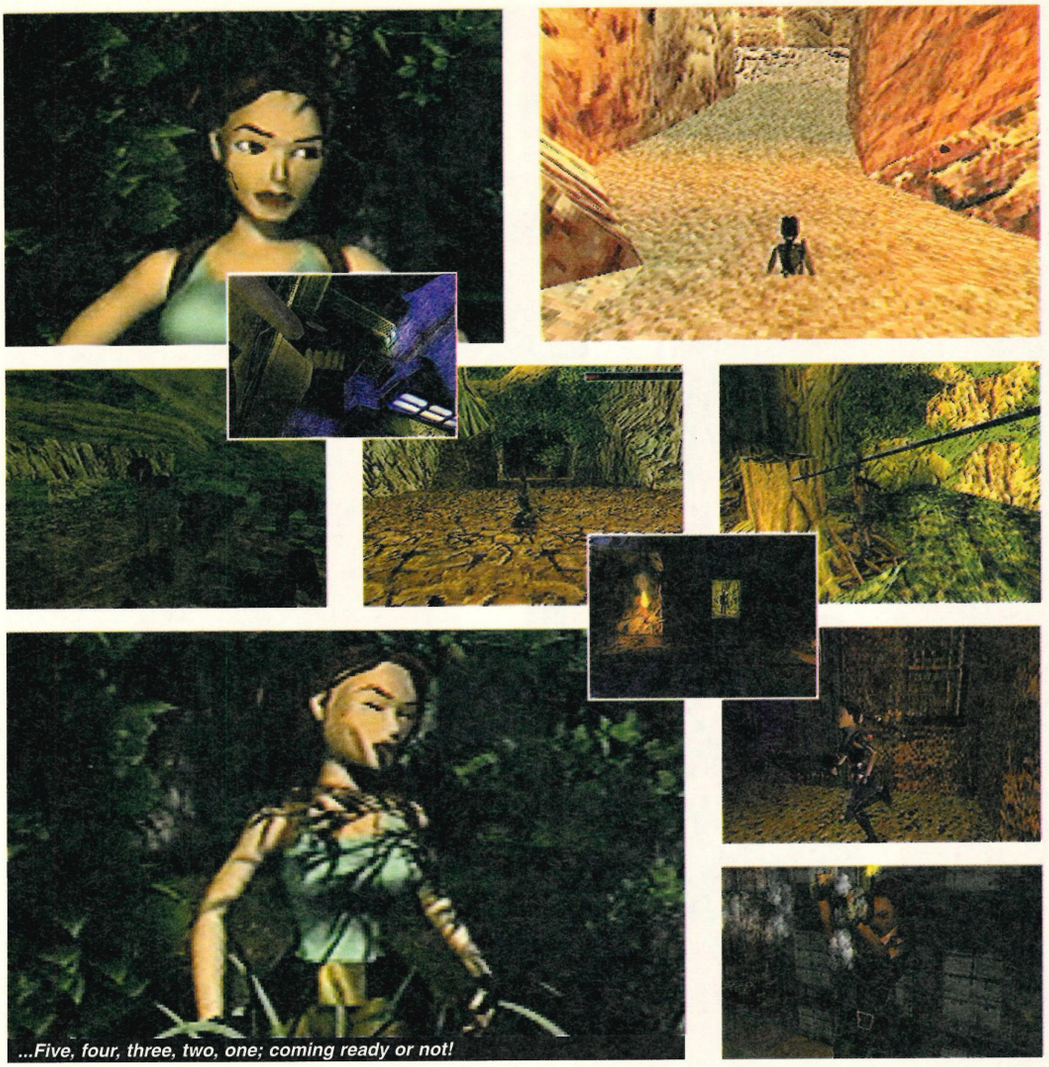
One of these places is India, where Lara is currently searching for the legendary Infada artefact. Unaware of its true history, she only knows that in local beliefs it was supposed to hold great powers and has been revered by tribes there throughout the years. Soon she will discover a lot more...











...Five, four, three, two, one; coming ready or not!

Lara's back in her biggest, boldest and most beautiful adventure yet. I just want to know when her and Indiana Jones are going to get together and, well... I digress.

It's two years since Lara first appeared on our screens, stealing everybody's hearts and their precious time as she began her reign over the videogame industry. Indeed, she's the biggest videogame icon of all time. You wouldn't catch Sonic on the cover of FHM now, would you?

Right, now I've got the pro-Lara campaign out of the way I would like to stress that I will not continue this review in the same vein and will concentrate on the game's contours, and not those of Lara in her new outfits. I'm sure you've a pretty good idea that it's going to be a good game, so how good and why is more important than the contents of Lara's Lycra gear, and I hope you agree.

One of the first amazing aspects of TR III is the fact that the game was made using a whole new team. The idea for the change is basically rooted in Core's concern that the game might become too samey or tired the third time around. This is, of course, not to say that the game concept has changed immeasurably; quite the opposite, in fact. This game returns to the grass-roots of the original and takes it to new heights, exploring deeper than the first and second game combined to create a product best described as what it says on the box; 'an adventure game'. This is indeed an 'all new' Tomb Raider. It's not about getting Lara into tighter tops or Spandex, it's about exploring every possible aspect of an adventure game and exploiting each one to the max in ways that are better experienced than explained. In the same vein as a cleverly directed motion picture, you experience emotions like anxiety, tension and fear almost on cue to build up the atmosphere until you want to scream when Lara falls foul in a spike pit or breathe a sigh of relief when you escape a boulder's path.

This game returns to the grass roots of the original...

What's New, Pussycat?

There are loads of little subtle additions and improvements to TR III which, when combined, work to create a whole new 'awe' factor that the game produces in abundance. This is not to say TR III is nothing more, but there are a few bigger additions which are more worthy of a mention and open doors to whole new puzzle possibilities that would never have been possible on Lara's previous adventures. Once you've played the first few levels, you find yourself manoeuvring around like Lara is an extension of yourself; or something. You certainly wonder how on earth you lived without them before.

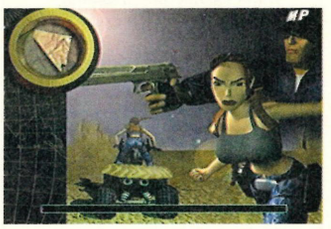
On her travels Lara comes into contact with different vehicles to help her progress through the game. Each has different controls and mechanics to portray realism and vary the gameplay nicely (when are we going to see Lara Croft Racing?). The first is the Quad Bike, upon which you can quickly cross rough terrain, do wicked handbrake turns and jump huge gaps with a run-up or by revving up with the handbrake on. You later encounter the Boat, which controls similarly to the boat on the Venice stage of TR II. Next is the Kayak (well, a canoe for most), the Underwater Propulsion Unit which also fires harpoons while you speed through











the water and finally the Mine Cart (I'm sure you can picture the scene).

Lara can now crouch down on all fours and crawl under ledges. From this position she can crawl in any direction and even lower herself down to platforms below. She can also sprint for a short space of time to boost her speed, and also do a rolling jump at the end. This can help to create space between you and your enemies, but is best put to use in some of the puzzle elements to really make the hairs on the back of your neck stand on end when there's a fast moving boulder practically up your arse!

Next up is her rather nifty ability to barge her way through some of the weaker doors and backgrounds through the levels. Watching her kicking a door down is pretty cool (though wandering around for ages trying to interact with everything on the level when you're lost isn't quite as cool). Another interesting addition is the way some water areas have strong underwater currents. On the first level there's a pool of water you must cross to reach a switch on the other side. Attempting to swim to the other side just gets you pulled away unable to surface to grab a breath, finding yourself in a dark cave at the end after being half-eaten alive by a school of nasty piranhas.

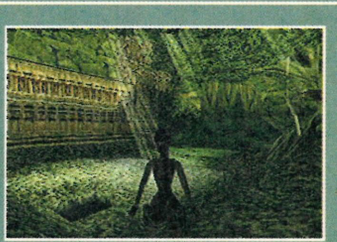
You wouldn't get anywhere in Tomb Raider without a save function, and that's another thing that's changed in TR III. The Blue Crystals

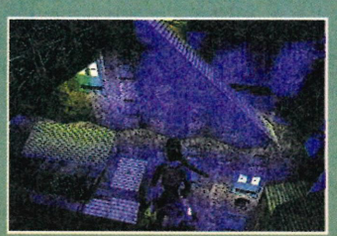
DESIGNS FOR LIFE...

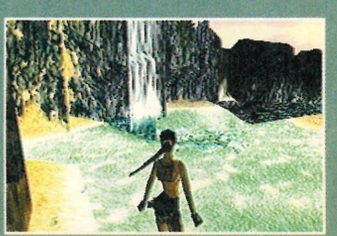
For me, the most exciting aspect of Lara's latest adventure is the changed approach to the level design. One criticism I had of TR II was the amount of action that was implemented compared to the original. There was too much running around in circles shooting at too many human opponents as opposed to the whole point of the game; adventure. TR III has rectified this, and you truly feel the difference when you're playing. The tension of the original is back and the feeling of pure enormity when you search around the seemingly-endless levels is fantastic. The game reeks of professionalism and deserves all the hype it has been receiving.These are the characters that you are going to encounter and they're right buggers to drop...

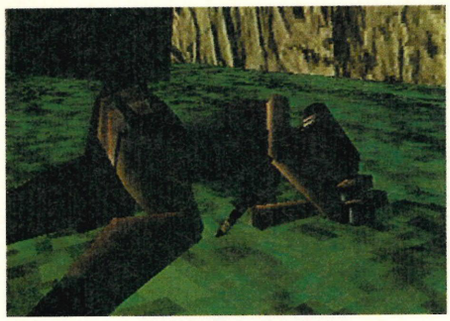
Another excellent addition in TR III is the way you can choose which area you wish to visit next. After completing the levels that make up the India section of the game, you then go onto a new screen that allows you to choose your next destination area by from a possible choice of three: London, South Pacific and Nevada. These areas can be played in any order you choose by rotating the 3D image of the planet round to each area which is available. Once they are all complete, you're taken to Antarctica where the final levels of the game are played.



















are still in there, but now when you discover one it goes directly into your inventory for you to save your game whenever you choose. Of course, if you run out of Crystals early on in a level, you may well find yourself in for a long haul until you find the next, so strategic use of the these priceless articles is most important.

Time Flies...

There are so many other things that make TR III the best adventure game on any platform, but there just isn't enough space in the mag to cover them all. I want to tell you about the little Monkeys you encounter in India that pick up Health Packs that are on the floor and run off with them, later dropping them in a totally different area of the level (that you haven't even seen yet). There's also the way Core have mixed the gameplay with in-engine cut-sequences and rendered sequences to create the story that unfolds throughout the game. This way you really feel that you're part of the action even though you're watching something that's beyond your control. It's this depth that draws you in and doesn't let you go, even when it's four in the morning and the milkman is at your door. If you can get through the first couple of levels of TR III and can understand how the game works, you'll be there until the gritty end and you love every minute of it (yes, even the minutes spent being crushed by the same boulder and skewered by those flicking spikes again).

Every rose has it's thorns, though, and Lara is an English rose with no exception. You occasionally tire of playing through a section five or six times (especially when it takes ten minutes to get back to the bit you're stuck on), and the underwater swimming is a bit of a drag when precision is the key, but the sheer size and outstanding quality of the adventure that awaits gives you the same feeling that you might of had when you watched an Indiana Jones film for the first time.

An instant classic that Core Design, Eidos and the rest of Great Britain can be proud of. Let's not beat about the bush; TR III is better than winning the World Cup.

Russell Barnes

SECOND OPINION

Great to see Core Design didn't rest on their laurels and release a mildly-tweaked version of TR II for the third offering. They could have - anything with Lara on it sells, but by investing a little time and effort in the product, they've kept it fresh and exciting.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	10
LIFESPAN	10

96%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Codemasters	Codemasters	Racing	27th November	UK	£44.99	1-4	Memory Card Steering Wheel	Analogue / NeGcon Dual Shock / MadCatz

Can the best possibly get better? Well Codemasters have given it a try with the sequel to one of the greatest racing games of all time. This game has more cars, more tracks, is faster and even includes driving ace Nigel Mansell. What more could a speed freak want?

TOCA 2: TOURING CARS









Any PlayStation owner will tell you there are two racing games you should never be without. One is Sony's own Gran Turismo, with its phenomenal number of cars and options, and the other is TOCA from Codemasters.

When you play a game like those mentioned above, it's hard to think it could be improved in any way - but Codemasters has never been a company to rest on its laurels, or the cash-in value of a sequel. And here it is - TOCA 2: Touring Cars. Time to trade in that original.

New and Improved

Don't think for one second that this is just a rehash of the old game. The programmers and developers have started again from the bottom-up. Every car featured in the game has been totally remodelled and, for probably the first time in a videogame, rivals have transparent windows allowing you to see the interior of the cars and the driver being knocked from pillar to post. As you race along each track, you get real-time lighting effects which really add to the authenticity - at

TAKE 'EM FOR A SPIN...

With this many tracks to choose from, your driving skills will be tested to the max:

THRUXTON
Location: Hampshire
Length: 2.36 miles



TEST TRACK SHORT
Location: Bolton
Length: 0.37 miles



SNETTERTON
Location: Norfolk
Length: 1.96 miles



SILVERSTONE INTERNATIONAL
Location: Northants
Length: 2.26 miles



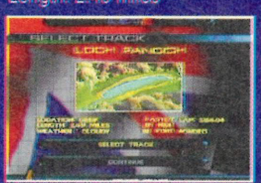
OULTON PARK INTERNATIONAL
Location: Cheshire
Length: 1.66 miles



OULTON PARK FOSTERS
Location: Cheshire
Length: 1.66 miles



LOCH RANOCH
Location: Orof
Length: 2.49 miles



KNOCKHILL
Location: Fife
Length: 1.30 miles



DOWNTOWN USA
Location: USA
Length: 2.15 miles



DONNINGTON NATIONAL
Location: Derby
Length: 1.76 miles



DONNINGTON GRAND PRIX
Location: Derby
Length: 2.51 miles



CROFT
Location: Carlington
Length: 2.13 miles



BRANDS HATCH
Location: Kent
Length: 1.20 miles



KASTL. BAVARIA
Location: Germany
Length: 2.15 miles



ALPINE CLIMB
Location: French Alps
Length: 1.56 miles



VIEW TO A THRILL...

There are six viewpoints to choose from in TOCA 2, covering all tastes and distances from the car. You can cycle through all the front viewpoints while you're racing, or you can look behind. In addition to these views you can also look from side to side while you're sat in the car to check if another vehicle is coming up along side you. It isn't advisable to stay in this view for too long though, as you'll probably drive straight into a wall.



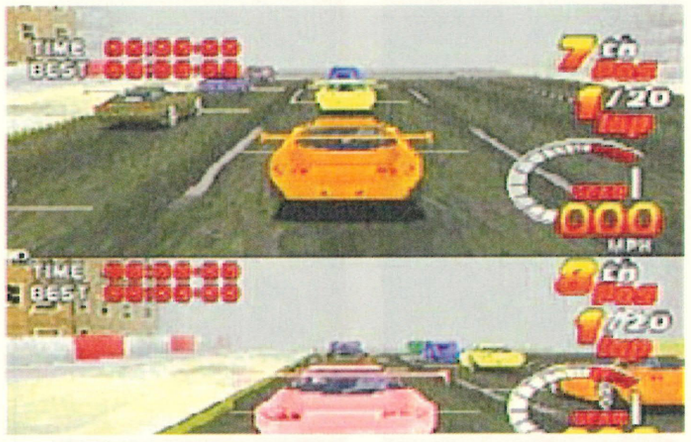
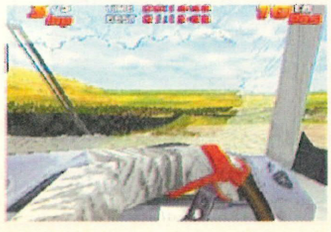










HALL OF FAME...

A unique feature of Codemasters' latest racing game stunna is a Hall of Fame built into the game which runs in conjunction with their web site. If you get a really fast lap while ripping around the tracks in TOCA 2, the game gives you a code. Write this down and then enter it into the official TOCA 2 web site and you could earn yourself a place on the Hall of Fame if you're fast enough.
Not only will you have the glory of being immortalised on the Internet, but there are also prizes up for grabs for the best times. The official Codemasters TOCA 2 web site can be found at: www.TOCA2.com



One of the most realistic driving games ever created...



night-time the game looks spectacular, with all the headlights shining. Then add to this the weather effects of rain, fog and wind plus pit stops and car set-up options and you've got one of the most realistic driving games ever created.

Adding again to the realism, there are particle effects where raindrops land on the windscreen, flies splat to their doom and mud flies up from the road. There's even a flock of pigeons that are happily sitting on the track - they soon fly off when the cars come screaming by. The windscreens themselves can smash, leaving a gaping hole to look out of, and the entire car can be damaged just as in real life. Wings drop off, bonnets crumple; in fact you can continue to drive until your wheels drop off.

Multiple Modes

There's a variety of play modes to choose from: Full Championship, Arcade Style Challenge, Time Trial, Single Race, Support Car Championship and Multi-Player Link-Up. Two players can play split screen or link-up, or with two PlayStations and a split screen you can have four racers at once. All this can be played with multiple difficulty levels, giving amateurs and experts the chance to race like they never have before.

Of course, having a memory card handy is essential when playing











Leave my windscreen alone, I haven't got any change...







through the Full Championship or Support Car Championship modes as playing all the way through to the end takes you ages.

If it's official stuff you're looking for, TOCA 2 has it by the boot-load. All of the official 1998 BTCC cars, teams and tracks are packed into this game, including favourites like Silverstone, Brands Hatch, Thruxton and Donnington Park. There are then nine additional international tracks over the standard TOCA tracks and seven extra sports cars including the Jaguar XJ220, TVR Speed 12, Ford Fiesta and Formula Ford.

Ultra Realism

The catchword with TOCA 2: Touring Cars has got to be 'realism'. The developers have really gone to town to create the most realistic touring car racing game on any console, ever. The way the windscreen pops out when you smash the car into a wall, the way the bodywork is slowly wrecked, the changeable weather, and there's even the horn that sounds when you drive into the pits to warn the mechanics - all true to life. Add to this a brilliant in-car viewpoint where you get the correct dashboard for the car you're driving, and the fact that you can look left and right out of the windows, and you've got a fantastic game.

I just can't put TOCA 2 down - it's got me well and truly hooked. Thoroughly recommended to all speed freaks.

Doug Williams

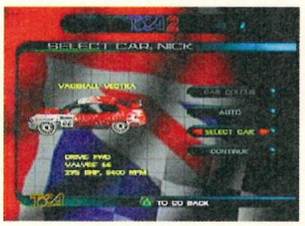
LET'S TALK CARS...

There's a multitude of cars on offer in Codemasters TOCA 2. Some of them are the real deal Touring Cars and others are special additions to spice things up...

VOLVO S40
Drive: FWD • Valves: 20 • BHP: 290



VAUXHALL VECTRA
Drive: FWD • Valves: 16 • BHP: 295



NISSAN PRIMERA
Drive: FWD • Valves: 16 • BHP: 297



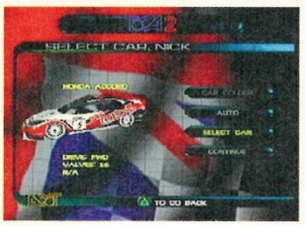
FORD MONDEO
Drive: FWD • Valves: 24 • BHP: 295



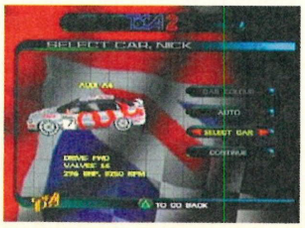
RENAULT LAGUNA
Drive: FWD • Valves: 16 • BHP: 296



HONDA ACCORD
Drive: FWD • Valves: 16 • BHP: N/A



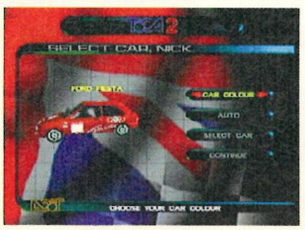
AUDI A4
Drive: FWD • Valves: 16 • BHP: 296



PEUGEOT 406
Drive: FWD • Valves: 20 • BHP: 300



FORD FIESTA
Drive: FRONT • Valves: N/A • BHP: N/A



SECOND OPINION

I think Doug has been a little hard on TOCA 2. It has more than improved on the original, and has a lot to offer racing fans. Perhaps a score bordering on 92% would have been more suitable, but hey, that's just me.

Russell Barnes

THE SCORE

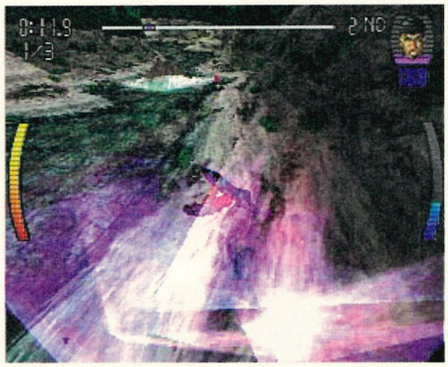
GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	9
LIFESPAN	8

89%

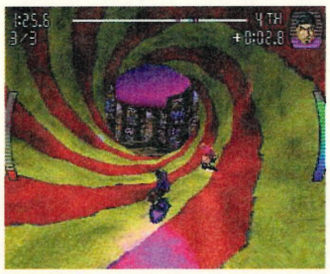
PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
GT Interactive	Single Trac	Racing	27th November	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card	Dual Shock

If someone told you they were giving up skateboarding and taking up streaking, you'd drag them away to the loony bin. Who'd have thought that running around with no clothes on would become an extreme sport? It's a fine art though - all will be explained...

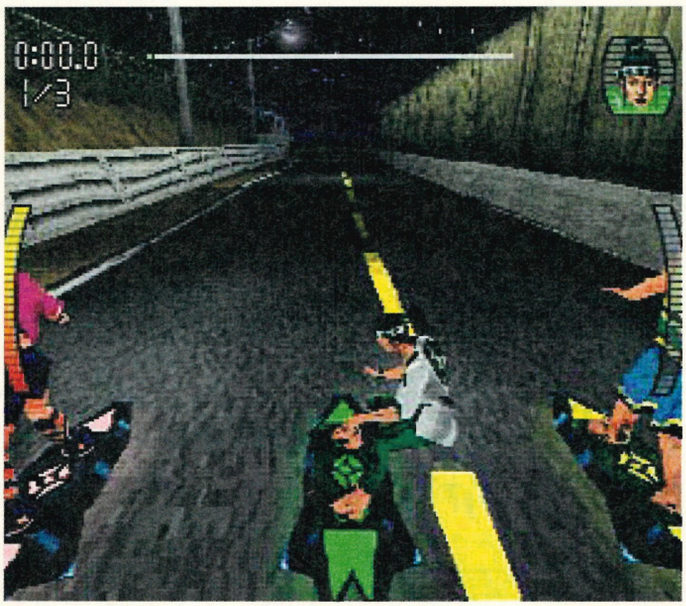








Streak



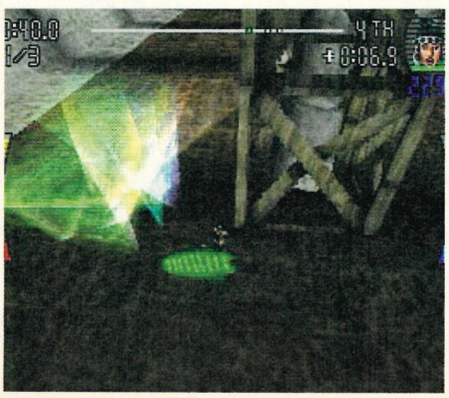
Well okay, so this game has nothing to do with your dangly bits - maybe that will be in the sequel. Streaking is, in fact, the art of racing around on a GEMBlade. This is a cross between a snowboard and a hoverboard. They hover effortlessly above the ground and, when raced, send out streaks of colour behind them - hence the name.

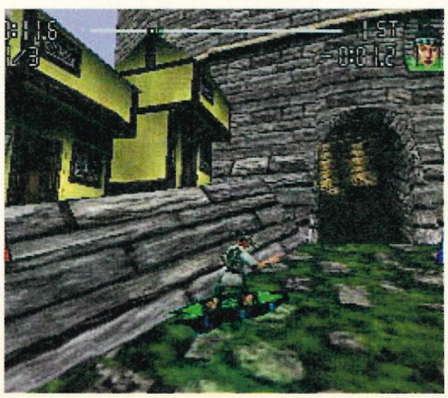
Because of the unique properties of the GEMBlade, courses can be set virtually anywhere. Their hovering abilities mean many places normally out of bounds for racing are prime targets for the band of streakers. Graveyards, castle ramparts, rivers and a deserted carnival all make excellent courses - it doesn't matter what obstacles are in the way, the GEMBlades simply skirt over the top.

It's Not About Taking Your Clothes Off...

Becoming a streaker isn't an easy task. It's a very select group organised by a guy called Skid, and he doesn't take too kindly to newcomers. To become a streaker you must first of all be a loner, an outcast from society. This kind of person is less likely to get streaking into trouble if something goes wrong and they don't survive a race. They must be athletic; snowboarders and skateboarders are perfect candi-

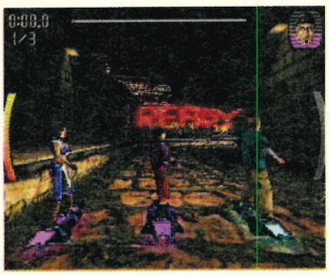
To become a streaker you must first of all be a loner...



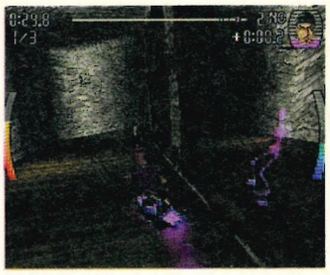




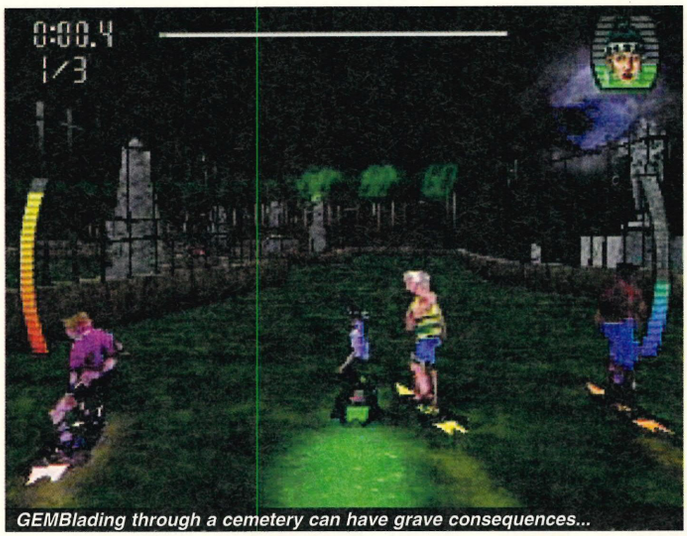
x-rated



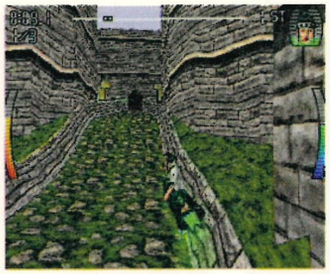








GEMBlading through a cemetery can have grave consequences...









THE STREAKERS...

There are ten streakers to be had in Streak, and they're all society dropouts of one type or another with bizarre nicknames. Choose the freak you fancy most.



CAT
Name: Catherine Arogan
Age: 19
Streak: Pink
Cat is here streaking because of the love of her brother, Pierce. She is excellent at gymnastics and has feline agility.



EDGE
Name: Eddie Conner
Age: 20
Streak: Cyan
A college student with a hankering for snowboarding, Edge would spend all his time doing extreme sports if he didn't have to go to lectures.



FATALE
Name: Faye Whitestone
Age: 25
Streak: Magenta
This young lady was recently discharged from her job as a special ops agent. Now all she can do is turn to streaking.



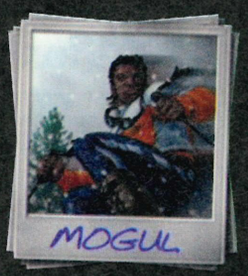
GROOVES
Name: Gary Shores
Age: 27
Streak: Yellow
One of the oldest streakers, Grooves always appears relaxed and in control - he's one of the greatest there is.



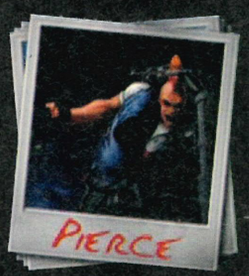
HAVOC
Name: Halan 'Hal' Kawaalowa
Age: 22
Streak: Orange
As an ASU running back, Havoc could never control his temper. Now he must learn to control a GEMBlade instead.



JADE
Names: Mutsue Hiroyama, Jae Mi Hui
Age: 22
Streak: Green
Strangely, family disgrace forced this girl to fake her own death. She can now live again with a new name.



MOGUL
Name: Morgan Goodrush
Age: 25
Streak: Blue
A big fan of high-speed downhill skiing, Mogul has always dreamed of Olympic glory. Now get races GEMBlades instead.



PIERCE
Name: Phillip Arogan
Age: 23
Streak: Red
We've already met his sister. Pierce was driven to the streets by the death of his father - he now only has his sister for company.



SIERRA
Name: Susan Nathaniel
Age: 26
Streak: Mint
This girl has only ever found peace in the mountains and is a know loner. She now thrives in the streaking community.



WHEELS
Name: Warren Davis
Age: 17
Streak: Purple
Wheels turned to skateboarding as an escape from the poverty of the streets, but GEMBlading is ever better.

STREAKING SPOTS...

The unique handling of the GEMBlades means that they can be raced almost anywhere. These 12 tracks test your skills to the max.



AERY KEEP
Type: Loop *Location:* Celtic Castle
A strong stone fortress, this location was once a celebration of Celtic power. It's high walls and deep, dank dungeons now make it an ideal streaking course.

AGUA ESCONDITO
Type: Loop *Location:* Lost Jungle River and Village
Deep in the Amazon jungle, a hidden river makes up the majority of this course. Natives line the track - this streaking is a true phenomenon to them.

BARNUM'S ALLEY
Type: Loop *Location:* Deserted Carnival Midway
Set inside a deserted carnival, the Tunnel of Love and Funhouse make ideal streaking courses with plenty of obstacles to overcome.

DARKLITH FALLS
Type: Loop *Location:* Forbidden Sandstone Temple and Grounds
A mysterious sandstone temple is the location for this course. With huge skull-shaped stone guardians, sparkling diamonds and rope bridges, this is a challenge.

EISWALD SPITZE
Type: Loop *Location:* European Ski Resort
The threat of avalanche makes this course really thrilling. It combines the fresh snow of the mountain peaks with an icy bobsled run.

FRONT LINE
Type: Loop *Location:* Bombed City and Train Station
A battle in a train station has devastated the surrounding area leaving twisted wreckage all around - perfect terrain for GEMBlading.

MAINLINE
Type: Suicide *Location:* Underground Pipes and Sewage Pool
Deep underground in the sewage pipes and tunnels is an unlikely place for a race, but these streakers aren't fussy.

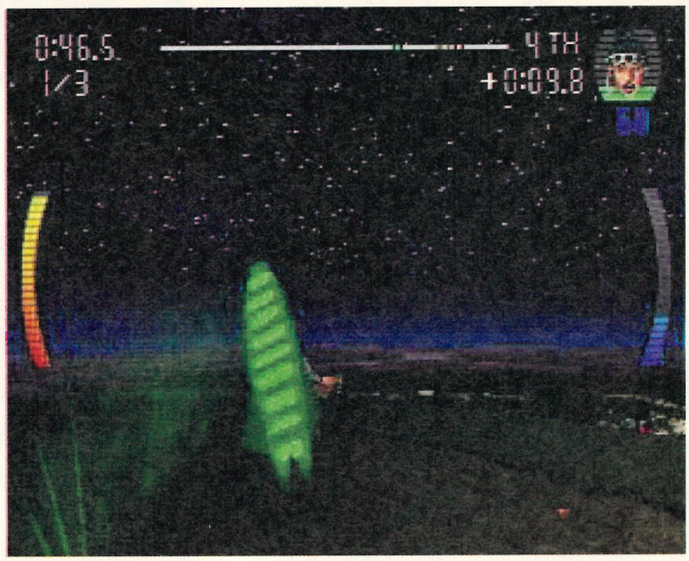
MATSURI
Type: Loop *Location:* Japanese Mountain City
Set in the Far East, the streakers aren't interested in spiritual enlightenment - they just want to catch some big air.

REARDEN FORGE
Type: Suicide *Location:* Industrial Factory and Mining Complex
The glowing toxic liquids, gushing steam and roaring fires make this course spectacular - streaking over the metal walkways is a joy.

SKYVIEW HIGHWAY
Type: Suicide *Location:* Mountainside Highway
High up on a mountainside with the city lights twinkling down below, this course takes place on an unfinished stretch of road.

ST. MORTE'S
Type: Suicide *Location:* Louisiana Graveyard
With a large moon looking down on the graveyard, the streakers race each other over the tombstones of long-dead Louisiana citizens - they have no respect.

WINDWAY PARK
Type: Loop *Location:* City Park
This Chicago city park has a skateboard section and is a perfect training course for beginners. High-flying stunts are simple using this terrain.



Each streaker can perform an unlimited number of stunts...

dates to take up streaking. They must also be a thrill seeker and be willing to maintain the secrecy of the extreme sport. Skid gives all streakers a nickname and assigns them a stream colour. Each racer has their own racing stance, handling strategy and speed.

Each streaker can perform an unlimited number of stunts on their GEMBlade because they're based on physics rather than simple button-based moves. It's impossible to give a list of potential stunt moves, as this depends on the player's abilities. Streakers can roll, twist and turn in a wide variety of angles. The only limit is the player's imagination. Add to this a Grab button that allows streakers to grab the GEMBlade in the direction they are leaning and you've got one unique form of racing.

Bands of Colour

There are two modes to streaking: Race and Stunt. In Race mode you can choose from two options. In a Championship Race you receive points depending on your placement on each circuit which are added together to decide the winner. In a Rally, the time you take on each course is taken into account. The streaker with the lowest time at the end wins.

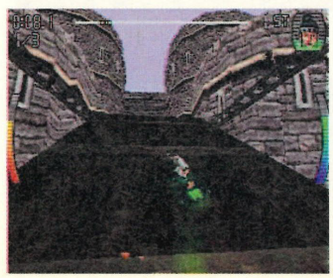
Stunt Mode has two options. The Stunt Goal game sets a point goal to achieve and the first streaker to reach this magical number wins. Then to win a Timed Stunt game the player must score the most stunt points in the time limit.

I must admit I wasn't expecting much of Streak. The way the game is described on the box, it doesn't sound like anything out of the ordinary, but play it and I think you'll agree this is something special. The detail in each track is out of this world. Some of them really left me speechless. The waterfalls, the carnival, the Celtic castle - they're all really cool to look at and give you plenty of opportunities to do some great stunts.

The soundtrack that accompanies the action is great too. Each music track is linked in with the location you're racing over and this really adds to the frantic racing atmosphere.

Don't just think you've seen games like this before. Streak is different. Take it for a spin and see for yourself.

Doug Williams



SECOND OPINION

The stunts in this game are incredible. Basing them on real-life physics rather than pre-programmed button combinations is a master stroke, adding versatility and realism. Another winner from SingleTrac, the people behind Twisted Metal and Rogue Trip...

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	9
GAMEPLAY	9
LIFESPAN	9

94%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Electronic Arts	Pitbull Syndicate	Driving	November '98	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card Analogue Dual Shock

Test Drive 5

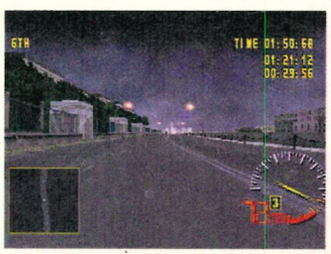
The ever-young Test Drive series returns with the fifth instalment of highway mayhem, but can it compete with the high quality of racing games now offered on the PlayStation? Maybe it can...

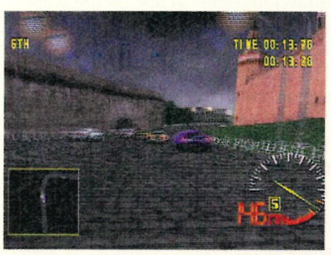
Test Drive made it's debut on the 16-bit computers of old, the Commodore Amiga and Atari ST (remember those?). All had earlier versions of this game available, though they weren't exactly classics. 'Dodgy scrolling', 'poor animation' and 'frustrating gameplay' were all phrases that would accompany a review for those older incarnations. Well, now we're talking 32-bit PlayStations and things have changed, and changed for the better, I'm glad to say, with high-quality graphics and animation coupled with more tracks and more challenge. Test Drive is now firmly in the 90s, and it appears it's here to stay with this, the best version of the series I've ever played.

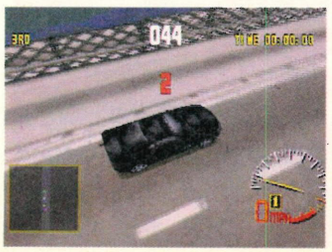
Graphically Test Drive 5 is really good, the scrolling and animation of the road is smooth, the objects fly by at a break neck speed and there is pretty-much no slow-down at all. In addition to this, the cars are well drawn, looking detailed and really bringing the action to life. The front end of the game is full of well presented options that are easily accessed and excellent digitised pics of all the cars that help to set the scene. It must also be noted that even when you're racing at top speeds, there is hardly any noticeable pop-up in the distance, unless you really look for it, and when you're doing 180mph you just haven't got time to be this picky. In terms of visuals, Test Drive 5 is knocking on the door of games like Colin McCrae and Gran Turismo, which is high praise indeed.

Musically, Test Drive 5 is full of American guitar rock, with five real-life bands included for your aural pleasure. I must admit, to my ears it's all complete crap. Anyone how has played one of EA's other racing games (for example, Road Rash 3D) will know what I mean - a loud, almost incoherent squall of guitar noise, heavy drums and singing that sounds like a pub band on a bad night. This kind of soundtrack is all very well for the American

The best version of the series I've ever played...











TOP GEAR...

Choosing yourself a car to burn up the road with is your first task in Test Drive 5, so here, for your viewing pleasure, are the best cars you have to choice from when you start to play the game, along with a bit of information on each. And yes, we know more cars can be uncovered the longer you play, but we've got to give you some reason to buy and play the damn thing on your own...

1998 DODGE VIPER
The Viper is powerful and has a top speed of 186mph. It can also accelerate from 0-60 in 4.4 seconds, making it a great all-round car.



1997 CHEVROLET CAMARO Z28 SS LT4
This beast has a 4.8 0-60 time, and a top speed in excess of 170mph. Its size also means it can hold the road well.



1998 SALEEN MUSTANG S351
This supercharged monster is powerful and has good acceleration for a big car. Not as good as the Viper, but still hot.



1998 CHEVROLET CORVETTE
The classic American car and a powerful one as well, the Corvette has a top speed of over 178mph and the acceleration to go with it.



1998 NISSAN SKYLINE
This Japanese beast has a high body weight but its four-wheel drive twin turbo engine makes it fast and very easy to control.



1998 TVR CERBERA
The TVR is one of the fastest cars in the game with a top speed of 185mph. It can also go from 0-60 in around 4.2 seconds. However, its light handling can cause problems.



1998 ASTON MARTIN V8 VANTAGE
The Aston Martin Vantage is a true English classic. Its V8 engine gives it amazing power and a top speed that can crack 186mph.



1998 JAGUAR XKR
The Jag's top speed is 178mph and its supercharged V8 engine takes it from 0-60 in under five seconds. Road holding is a little suspect, but in the hands of an expert it's deadly.

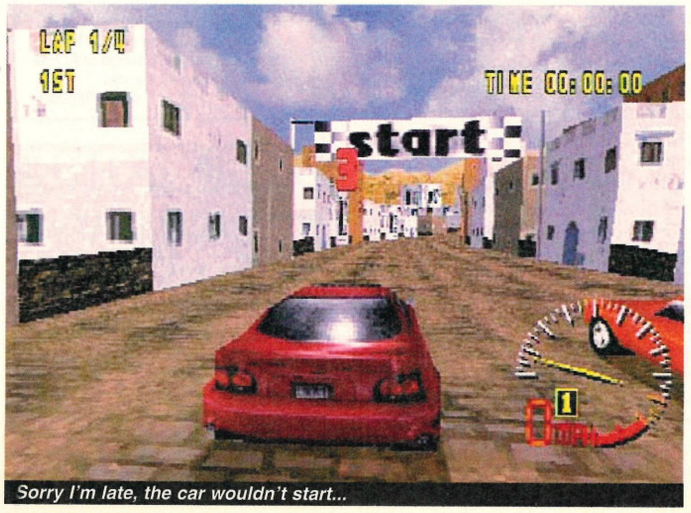


market, but it's just wasted on us Europeans (or at least those of us with musical taste). I mean, have you ever heard of a band called Pitchshifter, much less enjoyed their music? What I want to know is who the hell are they and, more to the point, what are they doing spoiling a good racing game? The only good thing I can think to say about the music is you have a volume control which allows you to turn down the crap, and turn up sound effects. To be honest, I would urge you to use this facility as soon as you turn the game on. The spot effects are quite good, albeit the usual thing you'd expect from a racing game, with lots of tyre screeching, engine revving and the like which all adds atmosphere to the proceeding.

Car Trouble...

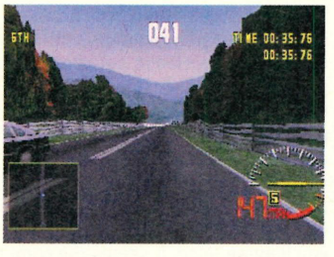
However, there's one thing I must mention about Test Drive 5 that seems to be a step backward, and it's to do with the selection of basic cars available. The bottom line is they are all American rubbish. On the whole, the majority of the cars are either current American cars like the Dodge Viper or older American muscle cars, like the Dodge Charger, which is probably better known as the Dukes of Hazard car. Yeah, you do have the odd English rose like the Jaguar XKR and Aston Martin Vantage, plus the odd Japanese sports car like the Nissan Skyline thrown in, but this doesn't change the fact that the vehicles are predominantly of American decent. This gets bit better the more you play, as new cars can be uncovered, but they still seem to be mostly American. Now while I admit this offers something a little different, I must say I find it all a bit of a let-down. Where are the Ferraris, the Porsches and the Lamborginis we saw in the previous Test Drive games? Come on, be honest - wouldn't you rather race along in a brand new Porsche 911 Turbo or a Ferrari convertible then a Corvette? I know I would.

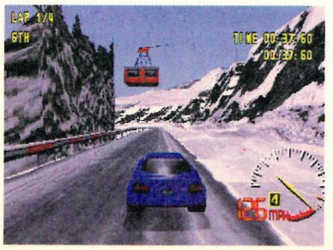
Gameplay-wise, Test Drive is a mixed bag. There are features I really like. Things like the option to have either Arcade or Simulation mode is certainly a great idea, and gives you the option to treat the game like an Outrun-style blast or a Formula 1 thinking man's racer. Another excellent feature is the way the rain falls. Most games are content with a layer of rain falling and this never changes, no matter what speed you're doing. Not so in Test Drive 5; if you're standing still, the rain drops down straight. Start to

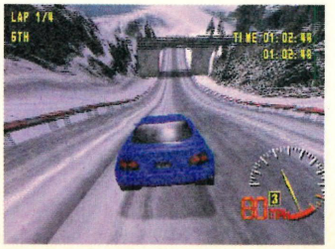


Sorry I'm late, the car wouldn't start...

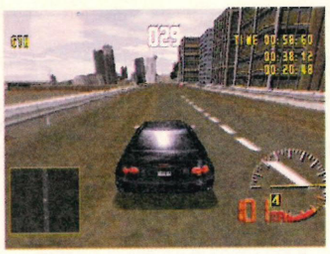






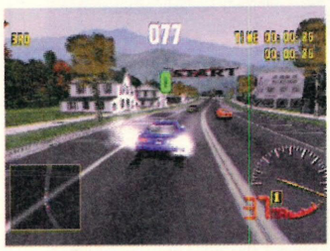


















The high speed kerb-crawling championships got off to a flying start.

accelerate and the rain begins to drive into your windscreen. Also, it hits the screen and leave, blobs of water, just like it would it real life. This is only small thing, but it's really nice to see programmers putting this much attention to detail into a game. On the other side of the coin, features that tend to annoy are also present, like the way the police cars only ever seem to pull YOU over, while letting you opponents (who are going equally as fast) fly by into the distance - a tad unfair, I think you'll agree. Also, it seems the computer-controlled cars can simply push their way past you, which then means you go smashing into the wall of the track while they fly past unscathed. Because this happens from behind, you can do nothing about it and it's extremely frustrating to lose the lead of a race at crucial times through no real fault of your own. I found this distracts from the skill of driving and as such is extremely annoying. But don't get me wrong, these minor niggles don't change the fact that Test Drive 5 is a fun game to play.

Ace Racing?

Overall, I'd say Test Drive 5 has been heavily influenced by the benchmark racing game on the PlayStation, the mighty Gran Turismo, and on this fact I doubt many would argue. The cars have the same look and feel about them, with high resolution rendering and smooth animation being the order of the day. You've got the same sort of lighting effects that Gran Turismo used so well on things like the cars headlights and on the roadside street lamps etc, with lens flair also liberally used. Also, to its credit, Test Drive 5 also adds its own unique features to the proceedings with lots of American cars that help to give the game an identity of its own, though more European ones wouldn't go amiss. Also, the way the races are structured is a little different, with non-race cars using the same section of road while not being involved in the race, making for some great action. I must admit weaving between lanes and cars is certainly great fun, and is something only Test Drive offers the player.

The basic fact is that when you get down to it, Test Drive 5 is the slightly older, fatter, balder brother of the ultimately superior Gran Turismo. It's trying its damnedest to be Armani-wearing high-flyer, but at the end of the day it hasn't quite got the bus fare. However, having said this, if you own GT and you want another great racing game that offers something a little different, Test Drive 5 is certainly well worth a look.

Alan King

SECOND OPINION

As a fan of Test Drive 4, I was keen to have a go at this one and I have to say I was impressed. It has a lot to offer, with cool graphics and an abundance of courses. Avoiding on-coming cars is difficult, but crashing dramatically has always been easy for me.

Claire Webster

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	6
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	8

80%

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PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Psygnosis	Psygnosis	Shoot-'em-up / Adventure	13th November	UK	£39.99	1	Memory Card Analogue	Dual Shock

Is this game a colossus or cop-out? Is it a sci-fi epic in the Star Trek mould, or the gaming equivalent of an Ed Wood B-movie? Is it an essential purchase or not worth the disc it's recorded on? Read on, as we explore Colony Wars: Vengeance...

Colony Wars: Vengeance

First a gag me old mucker Jon told me: what's the difference between love, true love and showing off? Spitting, swallowing and gargling. Similarly, what's the difference between Wing Commander, Colony Wars and CW: Vengeance? The first takes you for a ride, the second's a fun roller coaster and the third is close to the ride. It's that good, is Colony Wars: Vengeance.

Back in Issue 10, this veritable tome reported that Psygnosis claimed CWV would be the 'epic space adventure to end them all, and we're not about to argue with the big boys'. Well, I've never been one to duck out of an argument if I feel passionately in the underdog's cause, and so it comes as no surprise that I think this statement unfortunate. I truly hope this is not the space adventure to end them all, because I'd like to see the next version of Colony Wars arrive before this millennium's over. I'll tell you why later.

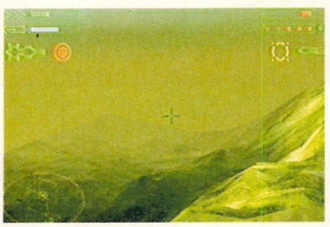
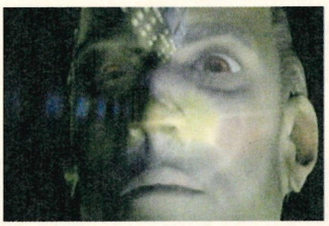
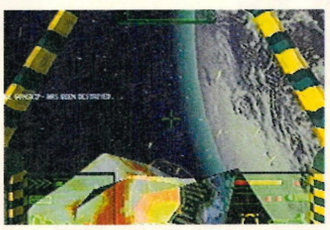
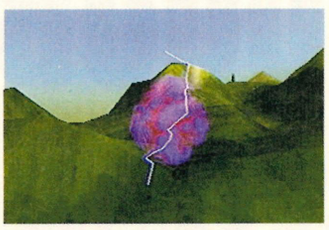
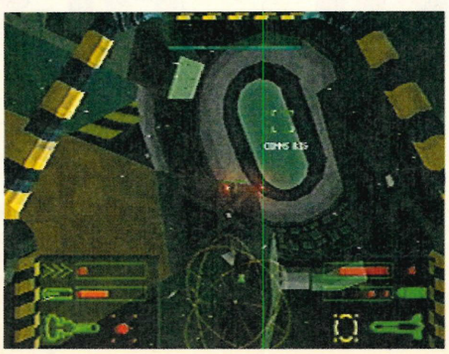
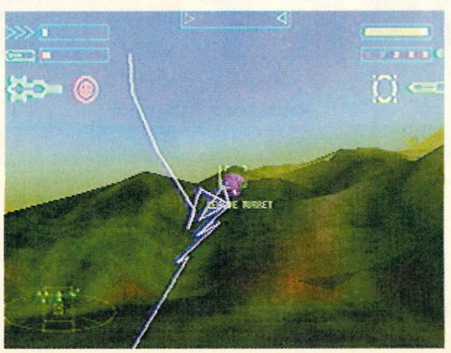
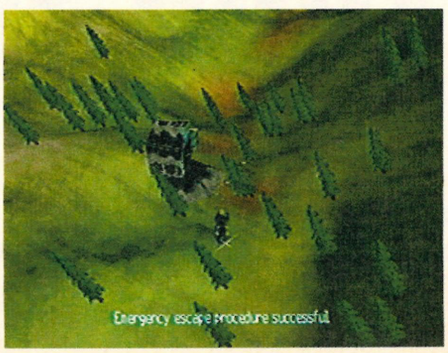
First, let's talk about CWV. The Epic Space Adventure To End Them All Until The Next One, That Is (hereafter referred to as TESATETAUTNOTI) picks up 100 years after Colony Wars, and continues the same blindingly-deep storyline from the point of view of hotshot rookie Mertens.

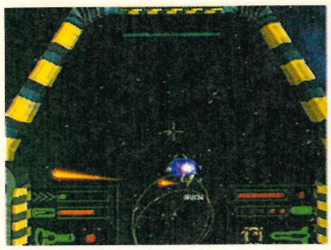
Land and Light

Those familiar with the original, may or may not be surprised at finding the navy are now the heroes of the piece, Mertens included, and just to complete the tables-turned theme, you're battling to reopen the very same warphole so many brave comrades gave their lives to close all that time ago in the first Colony Wars game.

Anyway, TESATETAUTNOTI (or CWV, for short) is a beautifully-constructed space opera of an adventure with enough scope to allow players to branch and reach one of the six different endings available. The success with which you progress through the 19 episodes (or acts) of the game is portrayed by the emotional state of your hero Mertens in the cut movie clips which are dropped in between the action. These cut scenes, by the way, are remarkable for their clarity. They're near Star Wars-quality movie scenes as much as they are computer-rendered filmic clips. As well as being dropped right in among the League's fleet in deep space, the action also switches to terrestrial-based scenarios. Moving into the first one of these is akin to someone walking in and turning the lights on just as you're about to complete a three hour session in a darkened room in front of the TV.

These missions can come as a bit of a shock at first, because all of a sudden there's some light on the screen, other than the purple and red sparks of laser fire which illuminate the all-too-quickly cut short future existence of your tribe's rivals in the deep space dogfights. Anyways, once you've got used to the fact that there's earth and what





It's a sparkling testament to what can be achieved...

looks suspiciously like sunshine in TESATETAUTNOTI, the hover-and-blast, search-and-destroy missions seem a little flat after the deep space action.

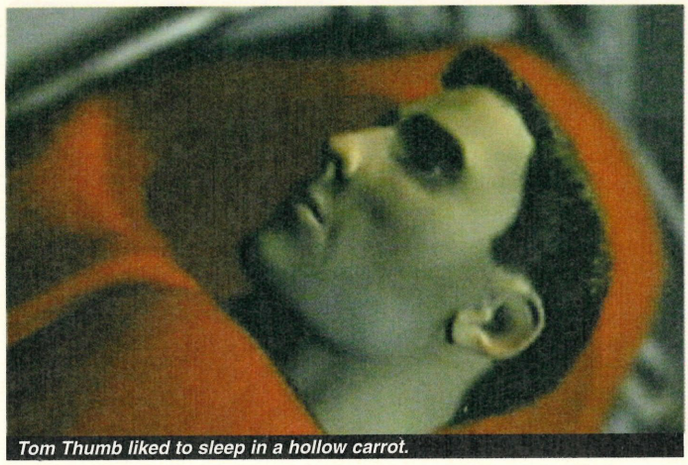
They're needed in much the same ways that the low comedy scenes in Shakespeare plays are included to give the cast and directors time to nip off stage for a quick cup of tea and change of clothes before the balcony scene, so are the land operations in TESATETAUTNOTI needed to give your eyes are rest from all that blackness, increase the variety and generally keep the pace smoothly moving forward as you battle to reopen that all-important warphole.

Starting off is as simple as it can be, and the whole learning curve to TESATETAUTNOTI is really quite gradual. Actually, I was beginning to think it was quite easy until it dawned on me that there was probably more to CWV than met the eye at first glance. It may have been something to do with the sudden jump in as you suddenly realise you can't simply remove target A from the vestiges of space and must instead try and think of an alternative strategy (brains? When I was in the army, they said don't think son, leave it to the horses, they've got bigger heads). After about an hour's play (the first hour of which passed remarkably quickly, always a good sign), I began to think the learning curve wasn't that gradual. Nothing like badly failing to complete a mission to bring you back down to earth, is there? Thankfully, the escape pod works okay so the game isn't over just yet, although the path on offer has just taken an unfortunate lurch to the left, and after some speedy jail time, trial and execution at the hands of the tribe of nasties awaits. Soon, you begin to realise the feeling about it being easy was simply a false sense of security.

Fringe Benefits

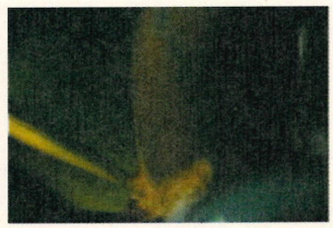
When you first start TESATETAUTNOTI, you are armed with a pretty basic little starfighter, because as you progress bigger, better, faster craft became available and more blasting fun can be had. Actual control of these craft doesn't seem to vary much, and is simply effective whilst allowing enough scope for you to pull off neat little flips and strafe opponents. The dogfighting actually feels like dogfighting.

Actually, when you think about this, it's probably just as well the different craft don't feel that much different. Could you imagine starting a race in a souped-up mini, pulling into the pits and jumping in a Porsche 911? The extra power may just be enough to send you crashing round the bend next time around. Indeed, your space hangar is eventually dunroamin' central for four fine ships of various degrees of firepower and nimbleness.



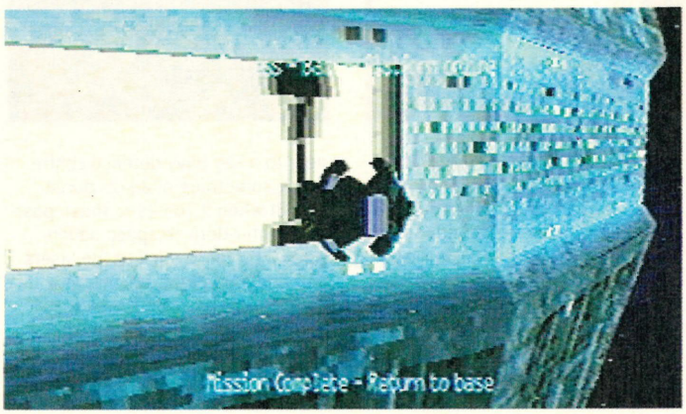
Tom Thumb liked to sleep in a hollow carrot.











DEATH SEQUENCE...

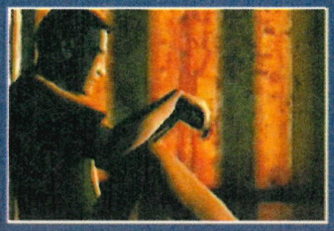
When it all goes a bit Pete Tong, this is the fate that awaits you. Nasty.

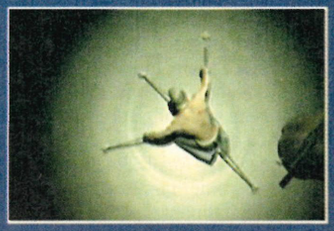






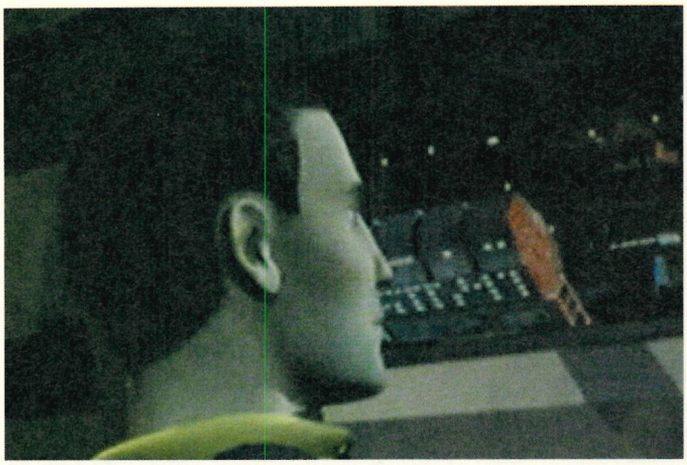


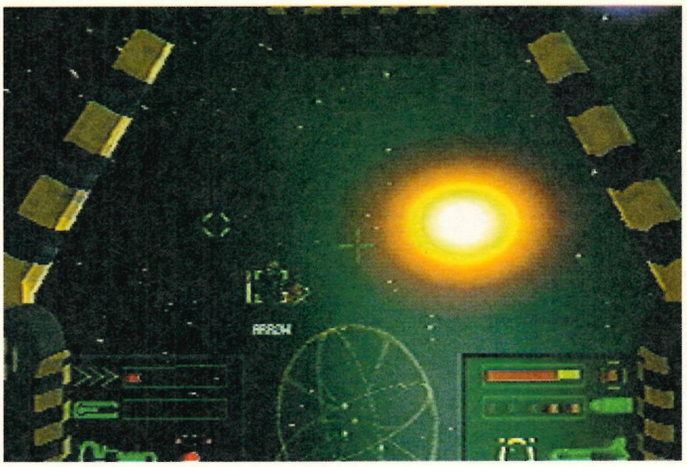


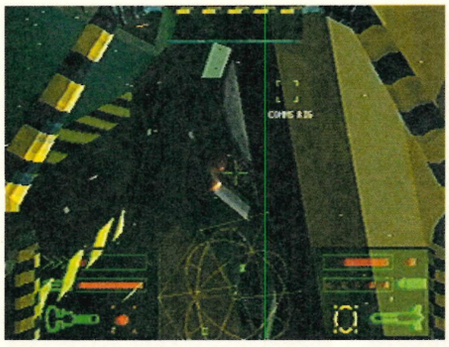


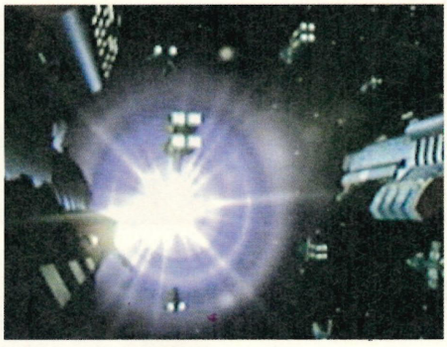




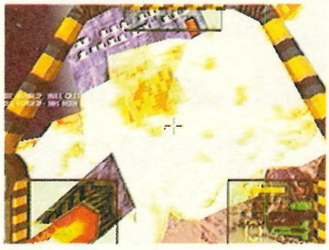














Weapons (it's 'big guns' time) are another story altogether. There's a choice of 22 in all, of which five different primaries and secondaries can be loaded on board. After each act, and there's more than one mission to an act, there's the chance to save your progress to a memory card (one block per save).

As you complete missions successfully you're given the chance to tweak the set-up of your ships, increasing the power of your shields, engine, afterburner and gyros (handling) to make your life in the navy all that more likely to be long-lived and healthy, if not a little exciting in your day-to-day operations. Well, not everyone gets to be a space ace in their day job, do they?

If you get in real trouble in TESATETAUTNOTI, you can always hit the boost option and fire up your engines to get you out of trouble, although this shuts down your weapons temporarily. A true case of running away to live to fight another day - although it's not that much of a guarantee.

The actual weapons available include shield-damaging lasers, full-on hull-blasting lasers, missiles, mining lasers, drilling tools and a grapple for removing bits of space flotsam and jetsam like the odd nuclear reactor all set to explode near to a key navy defence centre. Being something of a jazz purist myself when it comes to these post-Tie-Fighter-derived space adventures, I prefer to stick to the lasers and really dogfight, unless, of course, time restraints meant resorting to more powerful tools like missiles, plasma cannons, a rather bizarre particle cannon and so on. But they're for those who prefer an easy life, really.

Do Pass Go, Do Collect...

Some of the better moments of TESATETAUTNOTI are the graphical and sound FX, all the little polished touches. The first time an enemy pilot does a death scream in your lug-hole (I was wearing headphones) is near to being One Of Those Gaming Moments. Flying close up into enemy battle cruisers is also impressive; those things really fill the screen. The close in-depthness of it all, really makes for a full-on in-yer-face graphical treat of explosions and lights feast, not to mention said sad clown of a tribe pilot screaming his death throes in your ear.

So, what we have here in TESATETAUTNOTI is a grand, clever component of a space odyssey with little wrong with it at all other than the nagging feeling that it owes rather more than it should do to sundry Star Wars movies and computer games, but really you have to be a bit of a Start Wars freak to really be bothered by all the references. It's a top game, indeed. But TESATETAUTNOTI is not really TESATETA because it is too laid back in places and too intense in others, and with the secondary planet base sequences now included, you wonder just what else can be thrown in on top.

Now, those of you possess an N64 may be thinking down this road lies Shadows Of The Empire much of a muchness, a Star Wars game where too many genres were bashed together at the expense of the quality of each. But, surely, those mistakes have been learned and by the time the guys and girls and Psygnosis have the next Colony Wars title in production (and this game is good enough to demand another instalment) ways of introducing yet more variety can be introduced.

Off the top of my head, I remember Psygnosis is the outfit that gave the world Lifeforce Tenka: A moderate Doom-style shoot-'em-up, which for all its faults as a game boasted a nifty 3D game engine, elements of which could be given a Colony Wars makeover and sliced in to give it yet another gameplay twist and shout. Good and bad luck comes in threes, so they say, and I'm already eagerly looking forward to the fulfilling of Colony Wars' potential as a gaming series in what should be entitled Colony Wars: This Time We're Really, Really Serious or something like that. Anyway, Instalment two, TESATETAUTNOTI, or CWV is definitely one of the games to have in your collection.

At the end of the day, TESATETAUTNOTI is a sparkling testament to what can be achieved by a developer other than LucasArts in the creation of a Star Warsesque gaming franchise. And that's what Colony Wars is rapidly becoming. Sign up for the navy and see the world (blown apart).

Ian Lynch



SECOND OPINION

This is it; Colony Wars: Vengeance has everything needed to become a classic of our day. With six possible endings and hundreds of hours spent getting there, it has everything the budding Buck Rogers could want - except the irritating tin can companion.

Russell Barnes

THE SCORE

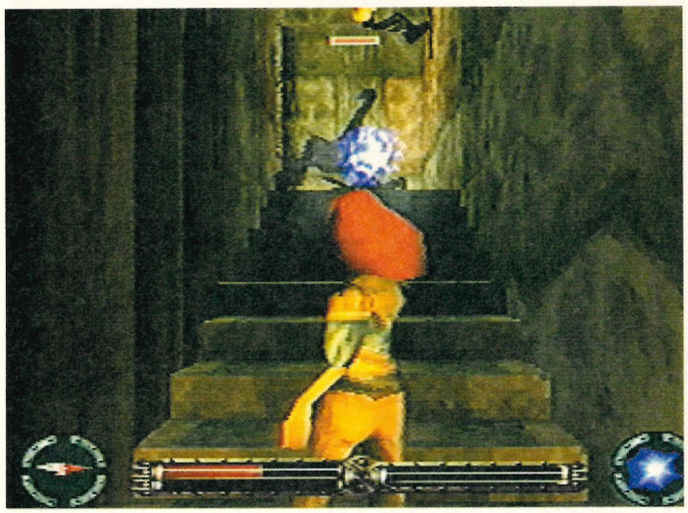
GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	9

90%











Julia's try-out for the Olympic synchronised swimming team was not a spectacular success...

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Psygnosis	FDI French Studio	3D Adventure	Out Now	UK	£39.99	1	Memory Card Analogue	Dual Shock

Beat Lara Croft Or Die Trying, eh? Can this action adventure-cum-blaster from Psygnosis really Out-Do Tomb Raider? Let's take a look and find out...



O.D.T.







Hmmm, it's a French game from a French developer (published through those loveable scousers at Psygnosis) and it shows. Well, the Liverpool football team recently tried mixing a French director with a Liverpool old boy (bye, bye Roy Evans) and that wasn't much of a success either.

To start, ODT is nothing but lots of wandering around...

So, ODT (Or Die Trying) is certainly well named, I died a lot and found it a bit trying in places, but there's enough in Or Die Trying to shrug off the resultant frustration and have another crack at it.

To start off with, ODT is nothing but lots of wandering around in deep dark dank places soaking in the serious 'atmosphere' of it all. Adding to the overall sense of gloom and doom is a dense backdrop layout which is difficult to get to grips with and can be a little harder to negotiate than is strictly necessary. Ledges aren't always as solid as they seem to be, and if you play ODT you'll soon realise what I'm talking about.

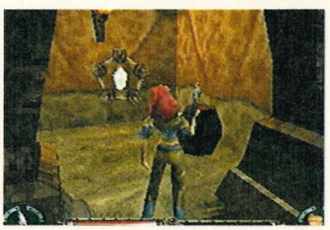
Anyway, to the plot my friends - there's these four adventurers (three of them Hardy Boys, one more of a Nancy Drew-lookalike) with this mystical, magical green pearl of awesome powers, and they're trying to get said pearl all the way back to their home planet when, owing to a bit of a cock-up in the planning department they have to cut across uncharted territory to save a bit of time when, horror of horrors, they run into a mysterious storm which, natch, brings them crashing down into said dark, dank, dreary area of Knightsbridge (all right, I made that last bit up) and lo and behold off you go adventuring.













The four characters you can chose from are weapons expert Corporal Ike Hawkins (32), Cartographer Julia Hawkins (25), Chief Engineer Maxx Havock (a very old-looking 29) and Arch Bishop Solaar (41), although you do meet some of the other crew in your wanderings. They usually give you a brief bit of pithy advice/information, wish you well and tell you to get on with it, leaving you to merrily undergo the stuff of nightmares that whoever the French people behind this game have managed to come up with.

Point of order Mr Chairman - I hope your mothers are proud of you boys, producing nightmarish worlds like this. In fact, I fear the consequences of being locked in a room with this game for any length of time, let alone what it would be like to work on it for a year. I don't know, it'll be cars mowing down innocent pedestrians next (when is Carmageddon coming out, anyway?)

Initially, the task at hand is to collect the dozens of gas cylinders scattered around all over the shop to push your air ship back into the sky. And there's also the problem of gathering up all the fragments of green pearl container and oh, much much more.

But don't give up just yet! Once you've drifted around the first couple of levels picking up ammo and energy and run into the bad guys proper rather than the pre-trial odd vampire bat which has overdosed on steroids, it's target-tastic time Skeletor-style, don't cha know, and it starts to become a tad more interesting than playing with your toys to B*witched re-runs on Top of the Pops.

Oh, Dog Tired?

One control to master is when you're the target, use the Dodge/Use key as one of the four main pad buttons. Thus deployed, one simply rolls along, laser gun at the ready, flip to the side and cartwheel to the back before letting those monsters see the blinding light of a laser beam (or whatever weapon's to hand). Indeed, at times ODT can even make Lara Croft look a tad sluggish. Mind you, ODT is not in the same class as the raven-haired vixen from Derby, and that's probably just as well.

There's also an RPG element. Oh well, never mind...

Anyway, each of the four is more than adept at removing themselves out of the way of the line of fire, or spectacularly moving their newly-made skeleton-led and bred friends into it to ensure that said friendship never gets beyond the three-second duration, which is also the average time it takes your average French gendarme to whip out his night-stick out if you knock off his cap, by the way.

As the game develops you're also faced with a few out-of-this-world delights, and without giving too much away, one involving a gun turret in particular makes Tourett's Syndrome look as inoffensive and sweet as Felicity Kendall's bottom.

The mix is powerful if not a little pungent in places, and it certainly trips along nicely enough with a blast to the right and a karate kick in the chops to the left. The big, bad monsters are suitably big, bad and monstrous and there's really not much to be knocked there.

Oi! Drop That!

There's also an RPG element. Oh well, never mind. Well, actually it's more the fact that spells and other elements of magic can be gathered up and used in your one way of life tour of spooky castle number 363. They're not much cop, mind, but they at least add a slice of variety to the whole shebang by mixing up locations and effect for each of the characters, so it's always a little different when you adopt the next of the foursome you've so far left retired from action. Anyway, the spells do enough damage to draw

OUTSTANDING INTRO...

Here are a few stills from the intro sequence. Nice, aren't they?









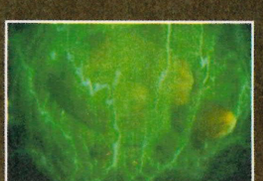












COLOURFUL CHARACTERS...

Here are the names, ages and occupations of the four characters you can play in O.D.T...



Corporal Ike Hawkins, 32, Soldier



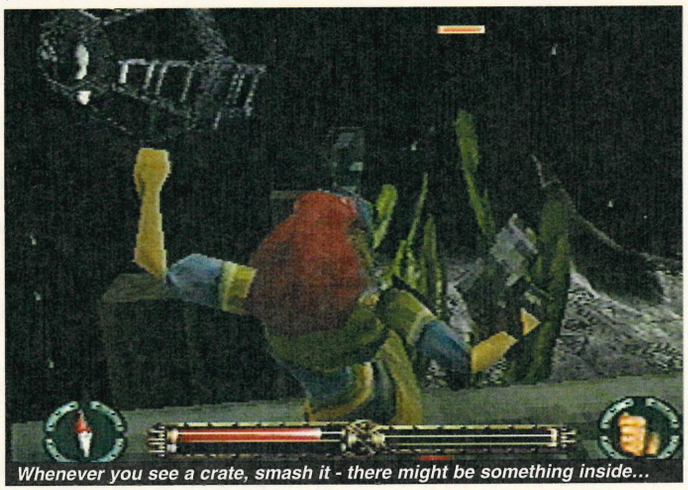
Julia Chase, 25, Cartographer



Maxx Havock, 29, Chief Engineer



Solaar, 41, Archbishop



Whenever you see a crate, smash it - there might be something inside...













out dirty chuckles from the depths of your soul, so they're obviously worth their place in the game!

So much for gameplay. The graphics in this particular bag of tricks are smooth enough without being outstanding. There's the odd glitch where cosying up to a wall allows you to see what's on the other side. Also, the choice of colours black, brown, grey, more black, a smudge more brown, battleship grey, aircraft carrier grey and military grey, and yet more black and tan makes for a smorgasbord of misty sludge which occasionally makes identifying where you should be placing your character's feet a little difficult. Actually, the mist effects are quite nice really and at least the lights flaring from your gun stand out against the backdrops of misery.

Audio-wise, ODT is clear enough, with FX that make you go, 'coo, they got that bit right anyway', and a suitably apt and spooky soundtrack which grows on you the further you get into the game. Barrington Pheloung (wrote the theme for Inspector Morse and the soundtrack to Broken Sword), however, they ain't.

Although there's a lot to be said backing this particular French game (and why not?), it all gets a bit much at the end of the day. As was said at the start of this particular review, the game is dark, dank and depressing on the eyes and whilst certainly spooky, the desolate wandering around alone in the dark can get a little tiresome whilst waiting for the next dollop of action to land in your laps. Indeed, you can't help feeling that it's all a bit overdone, this dark, depressing, atmospheric stuff - it's laid on thicker than a tart's make-up, and games simply weren't meant to be trowel-overlaid.

Over, Done, Terminated

The balance and variety of a Tomb Raider is missing. In fact, ODT perhaps owes more to the Loaded school of video games design than is desirable. Admittedly, it's hard to justify this along any other lines than it's all a bit too much and the four character thing is vaguely the same and really it isn't much like Loaded too play at all, more like a more spaced-out, evolved cross between Resident Evil and Tomb Raider (but not as good as that sounds). But, in concept and construction, there's a definitely a case for making the connection between ODT and Loaded. Formulaic, you see.

ODT is not the easiest game to rate. There are many elements that will appeal to a number of gamers, and if French action-adventures are your cup of cafe au lait, you'll lap it up like a three-year-old kitten next to a spilt pint of milk. If you're partial to a bit of adventuring you definitely be interested in pursuing ODT and finding out for yourself all its little quirks and surprise, though whether you want to do this to the tune of forty quid's worth of investment, of course, is another matter altogether.

Anyway, for the rest of us, ODT is an enjoyable game to play, and definitely one for a weekend rental if you've nowt better planned, but with Lara Croft setting an ever-more difficult benchmark for her rivals to strive towards and Metal Gear Solid on the horizon, ODT doesn't quite cut it.

Developer FDI obviously has talent, and with perhaps more imaginative storyboarding and a greater degree of flexibility, they possibly have the potential to produce a 'must have' game, but ODT isn't it. Put in terms even a Marseilles onion seller could understand, ODT simply is nowhere near the quality necessary to give those riding the Lara Croft gravy train any sleepless nights, or even indigestible lumps of gristle. Unless they were susceptible to horror films in the first place.

Ian Lynch

SECOND OPINION

This one gets better as you progress. If you can make it past the initial tedium, you find ODT is actually a rather playable 3D arcade adventure. The characters are interesting enough, and the game certainly doesn't lack character. Pity about the slow start,...

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	8

82%







PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Electronic Arts	DreamWorks Interactive	3D Shooting	November '98	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card Analogue Dual Shock

One of Autumn's blockbuster hits has already made it into a PlayStation conversion. That was quick! Small Soldiers takes the action figures from DreamWorks' great movie and puts them in a 3D shoot-'em-up environment, but is this game just too run-of-the-mill?

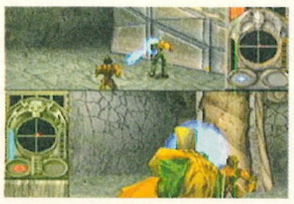
Small Soldiers

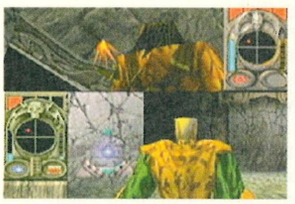
COMMANDOS Vs GORGONITES...

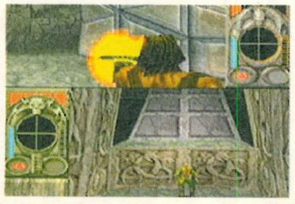
It's only in the two-player game that you get to play one of the Commando Elite. With a split-screen set-up, two players fight against each other, one as Archer the Gorgonite leader and the other as Chip Hazard, the leader of the Commandos. This split-screen shoot-out is played over special levels with ramps, ledges, power-ups and little helper characters as well as plenty of hiding places. Each section of the screen is equipped with its own radar display, so you can always tell where the opposition is hiding. This also makes it quite difficult to ambush the other character, as they know you're there!

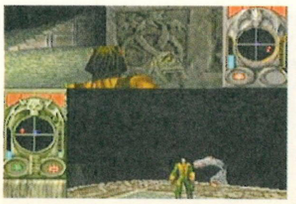
The two-player mode is the most fun you will get out of Small Soldiers. Although it's flawed, chasing each other around with a big pile of super-weapons is amusing for a while.











Now here's an interesting thing - faced with the task of creating a videogame of DreamWorks' brilliant Small Soldiers film, Electronic Arts and DreamWorks Interactive had a number of choices to make. Should they follow the plot of the film closely? Use stills or footage direct from the movie? Retain the action figure looks of the characters? Well, they seem to have thrown out most of the content of the film in favour of a 3D shooting game set in the mystical Gorgon Dimension. In other words, this game has as much to do with the movie as I have to do with flying to the moon!

The first big mistake the game's developers have made is - wait for it - in the main game you don't even get to play as one of the Small Soldier Commandos! It's the name of the game, for Gawd's sake! When you select a one-player game you must battle through the multiple levels as Archer, leader of the spiritual Gorgonites. There's no choice; you have to use this strange creature and fight AGAINST the Commandos.

The next mistake - the movie is all about these action figures coming alive in the real world, surrounded by people and objects that dwarf them, but the game is set in a distant realm where all the surroundings are the correct height for the characters! Surely this takes away another major hook from the film - the cool movie characters become nothing more than extras in another PlayStation adventure.

As Archer, the player can run around, jump, cling on to ledges Tomb Raider-style and fire the plethora of weapons lying around the place. He must outwit the Commando Elite that are hot on his trail by setting traps and deploying the Gorgonite troops to reach the mission objectives. The 3D levels are pretty large, and contain all the usual bits and pieces we've come to expect from this kind of adventure game: doors that need keys, secret tunnels, stairs to climb and damsels in distress to rescue. There are 20 weapons to find in all, including mines, traps, bombs and some really weird stuff that defies explanation.

Soldiering On...

I can't say I enjoyed playing Small Soldiers very much. After watching the movie, I was really looking forward to this videogame spin-off, but the developers have ruined it by creating something completely different to the movie script. You get the feeling that Electronic Arts had a game already created but were missing a few graphics for the lead characters - when Small Soldiers came along, it gave them the perfect opportunity to use the game engine that was gathering dust.

I know it sounds odd, but the graphics on all the Small Soldiers' characters just seem too realistic too. The idea is that these are action figures, with a plastic feel,

...THE BAD AND THE UGLY!

If you choose a one-player game, you can only play as Archer, leader of the Gorgonites. Fortunately, in a two-player battle Chip Hazard, the Commando's leader comes into play too. Here's a look as these two arch-enemies...

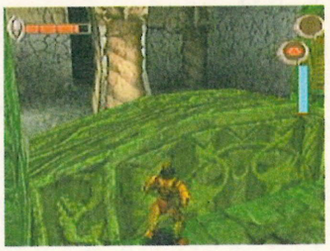


CHIP HAZARD
He's tough, he's strong and he leads the Commando Elite army into battle. Chip Hazard is the action figure that all kids want for Christmas. In the movie he is voiced by Tommy Lee Jones, famous for many big box office hits including Men in Black, The Fugitive and J.F.K. for which he was nominated for an Oscar.



ARCHER
With a soft voice and kind heart, Archer leads the Gogonites to their homeland of Gorgon. The Commando Elite are their arch-enemy, and when confronted, they prefer to hide than attack. Frank Langella, a veteran of the movie business, provides Archer's voice.





The cool movie characters become nothing more than extras in another PlayStation adventure.

restricted movement and jaws that simply open and close when they speak. The PlayStation versions of Archer and Chip Hazard are really nimble on their feet, agile and can form words perfectly!

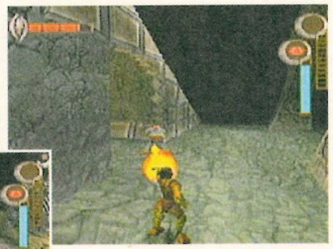
All these moans about not being anything to do with the movie aside, is Small Soldiers the game any good? Well, not really. Each level is very simplistic, with the difficulty being simply staying alive long enough to get to the end. All Archer has to do is pick up power-ups, keys or rescue Gorgonites. He can then open doors or go through warps into the next level, and so on. There's no real brainpower needed, just a quick trigger finger and plenty of luck. Later in the game there are some cool sequences where Archer has to ride on the back of a mechanoid, firing laser cannons willy-nilly, but this amount of fire-power takes away all the fun anyway.

With the nature of the game being to shoot anything on sight, you've also got the problem that you hardly ever get to see the other characters close up. Before you can see the impressive graphics on the Commando Elite soldiers, they're dead and burning on the floor! There's one thing I will praise about Small Soldiers though - the soundtrack. The background music to the levels is absolutely brilliant, setting the scene perfectly. It has sweeping orchestral sounds combined with the breathy chanting of a choir - it really does get the hairs on the back of your neck tingling!

Sadly, I feel this is a real waste of a movie licence that could have been turned into an excellent game with a mixture of action figures and real-life environments. It seems that DreamWorks Interactive must just try harder and stop relying on the name to sell the game!

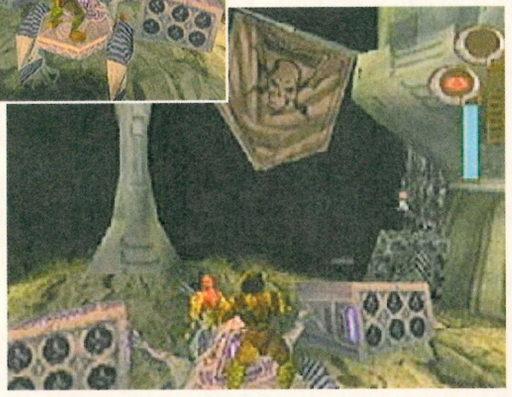
Doug Williams

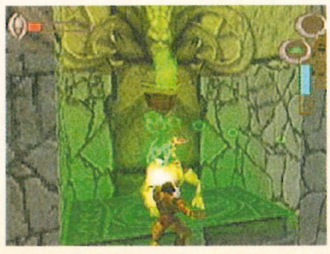


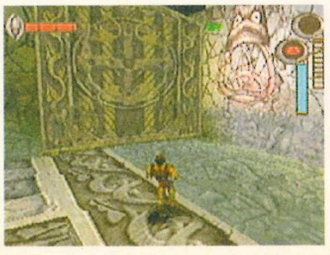


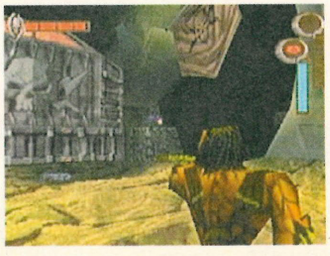


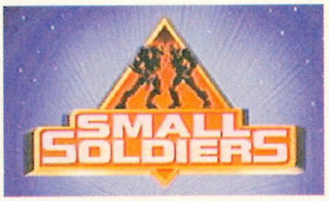












SECOND OPINION

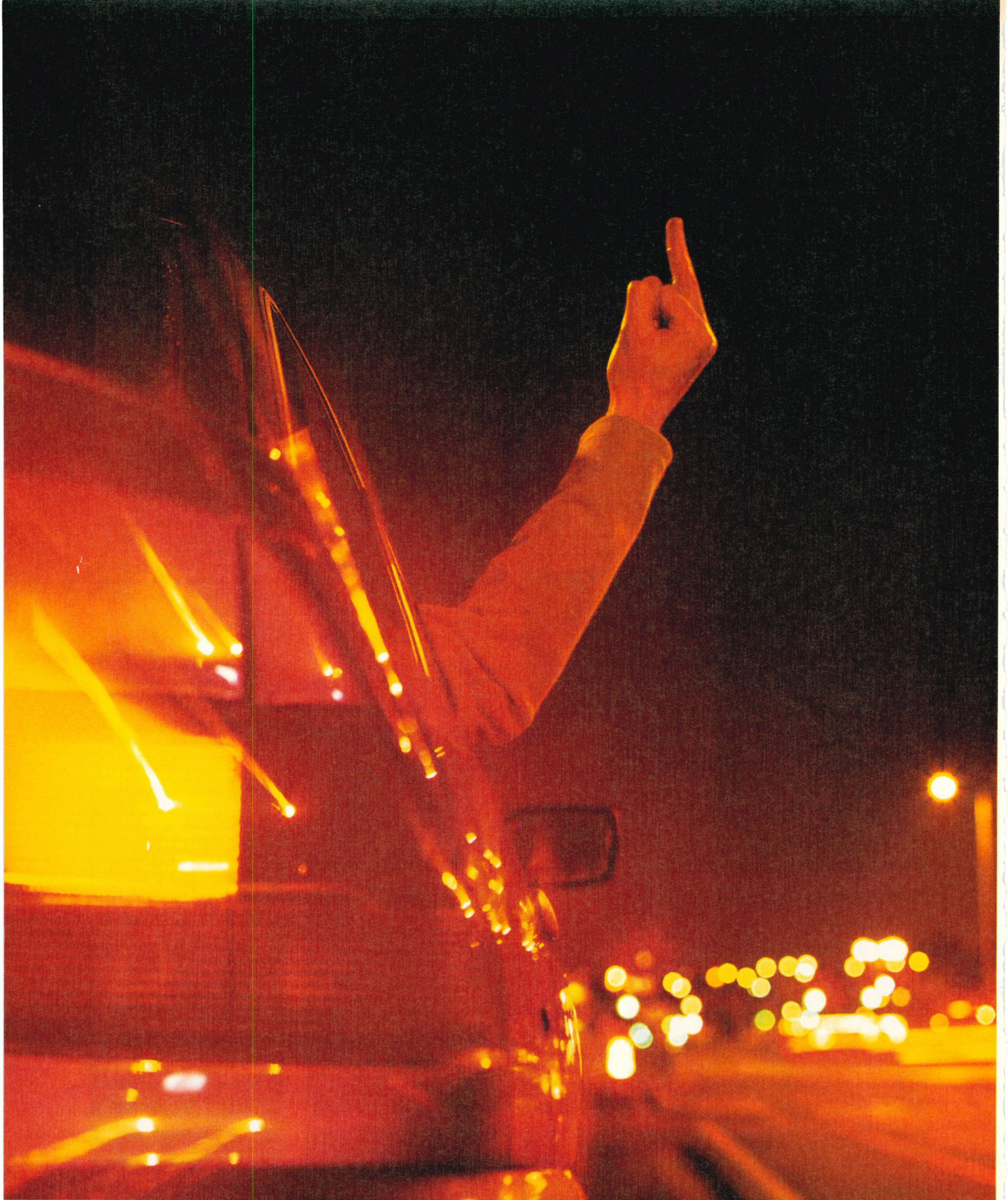
Why didn't DreamWorks look at Micro Machines V3 before they did this? They would've seen how good a game which puts a new perspective on a real-world environment can be. Instead, they wasted the license on a game which had nothing to do with the film.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	9
GAMEPLAY	6
LIFESPAN	5

72%

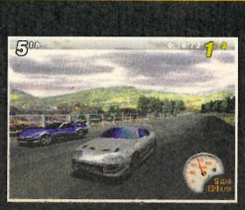


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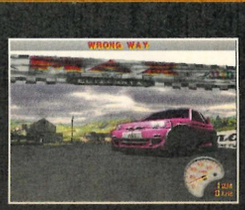
PlayStation

EUTECHNYX











Max Power Racing is the speed junkie's ultimate fantasy. Over thirty genuine production cars to choose from. Engines to tune. 30 different tracks to rip up and a speed limit of whatever the hell you like.

Turn up the ICE, slam your foot to the floor and don't slow down for anything.

MAX POWER RACING

THE ULTIMATE RACING GAME

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
GT Interactive	King of the Jungle	3D Shooting	November '98	UK	£39.99	1	Memory Card Analogue Dual Shock

The Martians have invaded Earth (again) and all hell is breaking loose! The Earth needs brave pilots to fly state-of-the-art ships and stop the deadly alien invasion, bringing back top-secret equipment from the little green men. Are you the sucker for the job?

B-Movie

Sub-titled Invasion from Beyond in America, B-Movie takes its cue from the sci-fi flicks of the Fifties with lots of traditional saucer-shaped alien craft and some good 'Kerpow!' and 'Zzap!' sound effects to keep all trigger-happy shooting fans amused. The Red Planet has sent down an armada of troops to take over our planet, and they out-number our heroes by a phenomenal number, making stopping them a tough challenge for even the most experienced pilots. There's a mind-blowing array of alien spacecraft, and each has unique weaponry and manoeuvrability so you never know what you're going to be facing next!

B-Movie contains over 30 missions of lightning-fast shooting action, running at an impressive 60 frames per second-that's twice as fast as many PlayStation games. Your basic role, as one of the freedom fighters, is to shoot down the alien scum before they can knock you out of the sky. That's the simplistic instructions, but there's much more to the game than that. When an alien ship has been put out of action, you can drag it back to base where it's taken apart piece by piece. This reverse engineering helps you as the military study the alien technology and fit your ship with new improved weaponry to use against the aliens.

Save Me

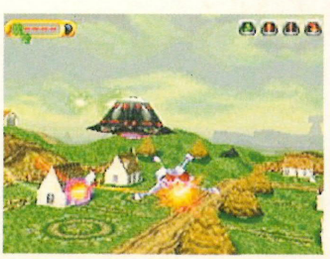
There are also scientists on the rampage around each level. These can be sucked up with a specially converted vacuum cleaner-style attachment. Deposit these nutty professors back at base and they take a good long look at your weaponry, upgrading your existing weapons.

All this is played out in the skies over some of the most spectacular scenery ever seen on a PlayStation. All the scenery is destructible too! Buildings, bridges, trucks, tanks - they can all be blown to smithereens by a stray bullet. And there are plenty of stray bullets around when the action really starts to hot up. Aliens can attack you from all sides, and guns can also fire from down below so you must constantly be on your guard and ready with a well-placed missile.

King of the Jungle (great name for a development house, by the

It runs twice as fast as many PlayStation games...















With human beings as ugly as this, who needs bug-eyed aliens anyway?









way) has really done some amazing things with the PlayStation in this game. Many titles are created using Sony's own graphics and sound libraries, but King of the Jungle threw those straight into the bin before they started B-Movie. Sony's routines just weren't fast enough for what they wanted to achieve with the game. They set to work creating their own routines, so what you get in the game is totally unique - something many games couldn't boast about. The explosions, lighting effects and particle routines are simply amazing! When the action gets frantic and things are bursting and firing left, right and centre, the look and feel of the game is brilliant.

There is a strategic element to B-Movie as well as all the trappings of a mindless shoot-'em-up. Each mission has unique objectives to reach. In one you must rescue civilians from the slimy grip of the Martians, and another you must set up ground-to-air defences to ward off the constant attack. The game also rewards you for humanitarian gameplaying instead of mindless blasting, and has a good replay value. If you manage to grab some scientists and a few pieces of alien technology, the difference this can make to your game is immense. Because of this, you can complete all the missions and miss much of the technology hidden away in the game. You have to play over again to see if you can do things differently, and find new weapons. Then there are secret weapons and areas to discover too.

Turn Up The Strategy

If there's one thing I'll say for GT Interactive and King of the Jungle's B-Movie, it's that you won't find a more frantic blast. The feeling of speed you get while zipping along the detailed terrains and dodging alien bullets is great, and when the lasers really do start to fly - the game really comes alive! The level of detail they have managed to pack into each mission is great. You really feel like you could land outside some of the houses and buildings you're flying over and walk inside - there's none of the false feeling you get with many PlayStation games these days.

Adding the strategy element and the ability of being able to reverse engineer alien technology is a pure stroke of genius. This takes the game from the run-of-the-mill shoot-'em-up level to a whole new ballpark.

If you want a game that's going to test your reflexes and keep your trigger finger tapping like a madman, B-Movie certainly delivers the goods.

Doug Williams

STARTING TRIO...

At the start of the game, before you have captured any scientists or discovered the secrets of the Martian's spacecraft, you get to choose from three willing pilots and their ships...

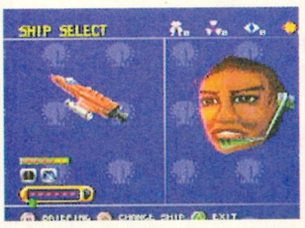
WHIPLASH
Pilot: Clark Cable
Age: 41
Born: Plumstead, England
This ship gets its name from the most frequent injury suffered by those who pilot it. It can go from 0 to 200 mph and back in three seconds. Luckily (or is that 'unluckily') Clark Cable has a spinal chord made from pure titanium after breaking his back in a go-karting event, so he can take the speed of the Whiplash on the chin.

SILVERFISH
Pilot: Irwin Stryker
Age: 28
Born: Denver, Colorado
Irwin Stryker has stolen this ship from the Russians. He started out life as a vacuum cleaner salesman, but moved on to join the US Air Force. This ship is perfect for beginners, as it is highly manoeuvrable and durable - perfect for front-line UN fleet duties.

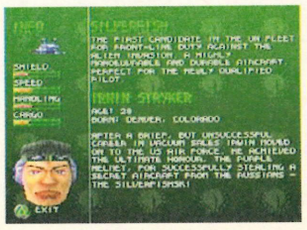
RED DEVIL
Pilot: Dominique Dallas
Age: 18
Born: Houston, Texas
If you need a ship that's going to get you straight into the faces of the UFOs, do the business, and get straight back out again, the Red Devil is the one for you. It's fast and responsive, with tight turns and excellent acceleration. Young Dominique Dallas pilots it. She gave up her dream of acting in Hollywood to become a pilot.

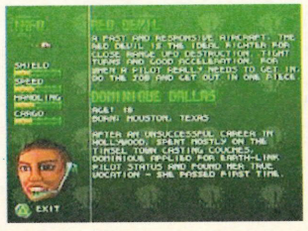












SECOND OPINION

This is one fast, strategic shoot-'em-up. It shows just what can be achieved when a software house take a good, hard look at our little grey box and make sure they get the most from it. This is a true thinking person's blaster without being anal retentive.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

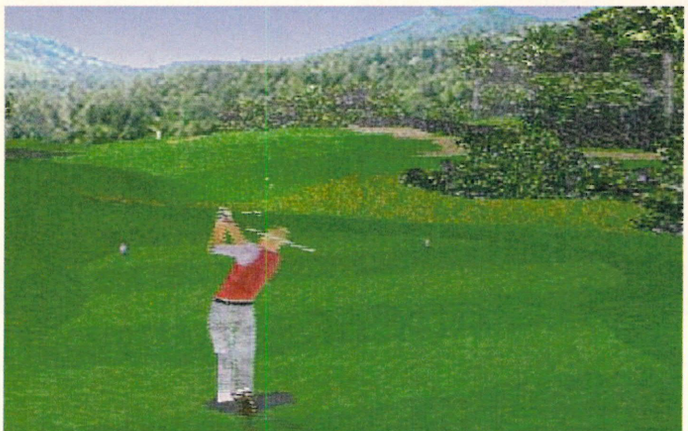
GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	7

76%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Gremlin Interactive	DMA Design	Sports Sim	November '98	UK	£39.99	1-4	Memory Card	Multi Tap

Golf; what a wonderful game it is. Skill, power and lots of grass. Golf has always converted to the video screen rather well, and with the release of Actua Golf 3, Gremlin hope to take the genre to a new level...

Actua Golf 3



Why do all golfers wear such bloody stupid clothes? If it isn't tank tops, it's Rupert Bear trousers...

The first thing to look at with any golf sim is the game physics; this aspect of the game is by far the most important feature. Things like the way the ball rolls along the green and fairway, the distance it travels after you've hit it and the way the ball is effected by the lie you have are extremely important. This is what makes or breaks a game, if this is good, graphical flaws can be forgiven to a point. Unfortunately Actua Golf 3's game physics are piss-poor at the best of times. For example, you can seemingly hit the ball perfectly out of the rough with a lofted club like a pitching wedge, only to see your ball travel a few yards forward. This leaves you still in the rough, a shot down and rather annoyed to say the least. Now I must admit I'm no Nick Faldo, but I have played golf on a number of occasions and this simply doesn't happen in real life. If you hit a full-powered pitching wedge the least you can expect is to get out of the rough, but in Actua Golf 3 it can take anything up to three or even four shots to just get yourself back on the fairway, and I could do better than that in real life, for God's sake.

It's All Gone Pete Tong...

Another thing I don't like is the power meter and the way it works. You press the button once and the bars start to move up, you then press it again to set the power after which the meter falls back down again. Now you must press the button for a third time to gain accuracy, and it's at this point that things go Pete Tong. There seems to be no consistency to the speed at which the meter falls back down, and this makes hitting the accuracy line almost impossible. The amount of variation from club to club is so great I found myself missing the line by huge amounts almost every time. Now this wouldn't be so bad if the draw and fade applied by not hitting the accuracy line dead-on was minimal, but in Actua Golf it's quite the opposite. If you miss the damn line by so much as a couple of millimetres, the ball can fly off at all manner of angles, and this then puts you in the rough which is, as I've already said, a complete nightmare. Yes, there must be a certain level of draw and fade or the whole point of having an accuracy line would be taken away, but for me this is just too sensitive, particularly when you consider the inconsistency of the speed at which the meter moves. This is just plain annoying and really put me off playing the game, as it detracts from the skill element and focuses on luck far too heavily, which is not what golf is about.

In The Club...

Another real problem I have with Actua Golf 3 is the loading times. They're completely hopeless. You have to wait for the course to be loaded in, which is fair enough, but this process can take anything up.

PAR FOR THE COURSE...

Actua Golf 3 features six courses to test your ability. Each is set in a different country and has its own look, par limit and difficulty level. Check out our essential guide to all of 'em...



Penistone Golf Club, England
Par: 70 strokes
Difficulty: Medium
The Penistone club is set in the English countryside and is full of lush grass and lots of trees. The par count is 70, so it's no easy course. To win here you have to be a fairly decent player on good form.



St Anger Marsh Golf Course, Sweden
Par: 75 strokes
Difficulty: Hard
This second course is set in Sweden and has a high stroke limit of 75, and while this may be the highest of all the courses featured in Actua Golf 3, it doesn't disguise the fact that this course is still a tough one.



Lazy Sun Golf Course, USA
Par: 72 strokes
Difficulty: Medium
This course is set in the sunny surroundings of the USA, and is typical of most of the golf courses you find in the States. The rough is very tough and makes placement off the tee very important. For this reason your driving skills are tested to the maximum here.



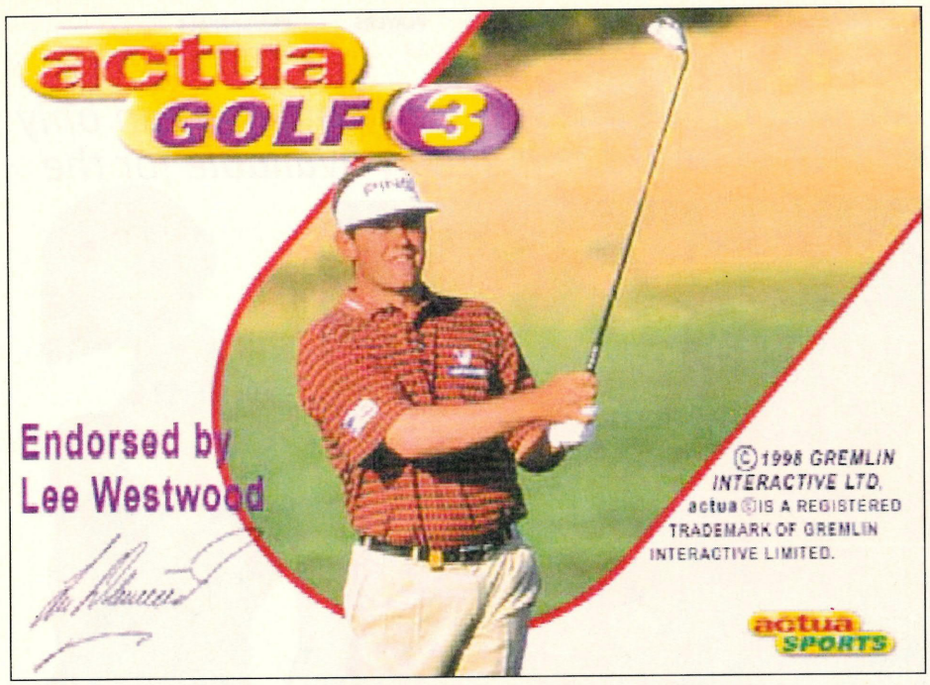
Cantabria Golf Course, Spain
Par: 73 strokes
Difficulty: Medium
The Spanish course is quite average in terms of difficulty, and with a par limit of 72 you can have a good run at scoring some low rounds here; just beware of the many bunkers that litter the side of the fairway. As with the USA course, your driving skills are paramount.



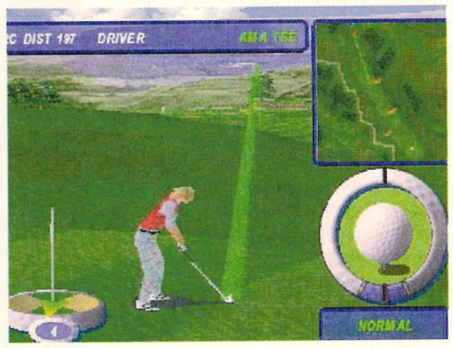
Kill-Kenny Golf Course, Ireland
Par: 72 strokes
Difficulty: Easy
The Irish course is set at the Kill-Kenny club (I wonder if that was the work of a programming South Park fan at Gremlin?) and is one of the easier courses in the game. While it still has its fair share of tricky holes, you're given plenty of attacking chances.



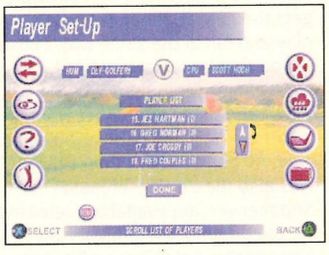
Three Palms Golf Club, Hawaii
Par: 70 strokes
Difficulty: Hard
This course is set in Hawaii and is probably the toughest of all the courses featured; well we thought it was. The thing that makes this course difficult is the water hazards - steer clear of them or you're playing three off the tee, which puts you in trouble straight away.











to 20 seconds. To add insult to injury, every few holes thereafter the game pauses (again) to load in the next set of holes. I found this to be rather annoying at the best of times and waiting between holes for around 15 seconds drains any excitement and enthusiasm you may have for the game (which to be honest isn't much from the outset) within the first hour of play.

Graphically, Actua Golf isn't too bad. The players are constructed from polygons and are quite well animated, which is a nice touch. The courses themselves are nicely drawn and look quite good, although they all look rather similar, but that's just the nature of the sport, I guess.

Sound is the one stand-out feature of the game. As you'd expect, you get the usual tweeting birds, and the bounce of the ball and thwack of club hitting it are all present and correct. The commentary that accompanies the proceedings is excellent, supplied by that great golfing double act Peter Alliss and Alex Hay. This feature adds to the realism and atmosphere no end. This pair come out with all manner of anecdotes and comments on the stage of the game, how good the last shot was and other general chit-chat you'd expect; well, if you watch the golf on the telly you would anyway.

The final nail in the coffin has to be the the menu system...

However, the final nail in the coffin of Actual Golf 3 has to be the menu system that accompanies the front end of the game - it's got to be one of the most confusing and frustrating ever. You have literally ten options to choose from, each can be accessed on the same screen (and moving between these requires a small loading pause), but you just find yourself getting lost within seconds. Why the hell a nice and easy menu system couldn't have been used I'll never know, it would have made the entire process much easier to endure, and may have instilled a little inspiration to play the damn game. I found once I had managed to get through the minefield of options and badly laid-out sub-options, the last thing on my mind was a bloody game of golf.

To be fair, Actua Golf does have a large number of variables you can tinker with, ranging from a selection of six courses (plus a special Gremlin course) to real-life golfers, although how accurate the on-screen interpretations of a golf is must be questioned. For example, there's a Japanese player who has blonde hair and white skin, and surely that can't be right. In addition to those options, you've got quite a few different styles of golf to choose from, including Matchplay, Practice, Stroke Play and even Skins options, and this gives the proceedings some variation.

I really wanted to enjoy Actua Golf 3, as to be honest I like nothing more than a good game of golf (however sad that makes me sound) and it's a genre of game that the PlayStation is sadly lacking. Unfortunately, Actua Golf 3 fails to hit the mark in all the important areas, and this is a real shame. If you want a golf game, go for Hot Shots Golf - it's more realistic in terms of playability, it's a more skilful game and it's much more fun.

Alan King

SECOND OPINION

It's a crying shame, but Alan has really hit a hole in one. Actua Golf 3 has taken a prime opportunity to take the throne as the king of golf sims and flushed it down the nearest club house bog. Oi, Actua - no!

Russell Barnes

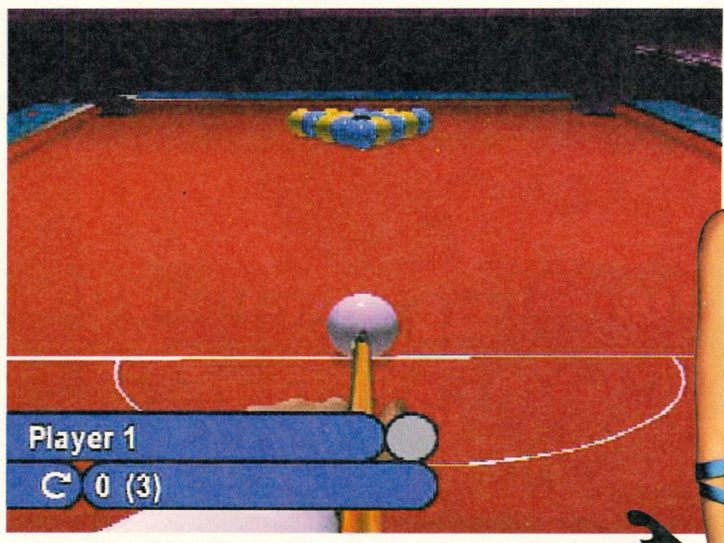
THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	4
GAMEPLAY	4
LIFESPAN	5

49%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Gremlin Interactive	DMA Design	Sports Sim	27th November	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card	Analogue

A few balls, a long thin rod and a nice flat surface to play on can only mean one thing... No, not that. A pool sim is finally available for the PlayStation.





Pool Shark

Pool sims aren't something the PlayStation has many of, so when one comes along it's cause for a bit of excitement in the office; us lads like nothing more than a good old pool competition to get the competitive spirit going. Gremlin's latest offering is a timely break from the usual sports games and beat-'em-ups; Pool Shark brings everyone's favourite pub sport (well, second fave after drinking) to everyone's favourite console. Grab that cue and let's take a closer look...

Videogame pool sims have been around for as long as consoles themselves, but for some reason, no matter how advanced the hardware gets the games all seem to look, play and fail in the same way. Those of you that have been around videogames for longer than the PlayStation may remember what is still the best game of electronic pool ever, Archer McLean's Pool (there was also the equally-brilliant Snooker version available), released for the Commodore Amiga. Now I know that is going back a bit, but it's a simple fact - the game was amazing. Since those days hardware has advanced so much you could be forgiven for expecting the pool sim to have at least taken a few steps forward and made good old Archer's effort obsolete by now. However, judging by Gremlin's Pool Shark, the genre has, if anything, been travelling backward at a rate of knots.

Load of Balls...

Let's get this straight from the very start; Pool Shark is one of the worst games I've seen on the Sony PlayStation in a long while - to be honest, it's enough to send me running back to my old Amiga.

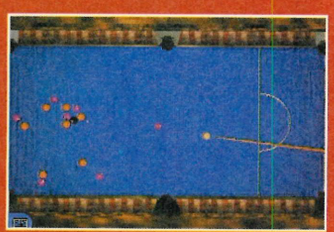
Before I tell you why this game's so bad, lets take a look at a few of the things Pool Shark does have to offer, which shouldn't take too long anyway. Pool Shark has a full 3D maths routine and physics system - that means the balls on the table react in a realistic way. For example, as well as rolling balls into the pockets, you can chip 'em off the table too. In addition to this, Pool Shark features ten 3D polygon pool rooms that provide a realistic environment for the action, although if you think they're realistic you really should get out of your bedroom more often, 'cause they look nothing like pool halls I've been to.

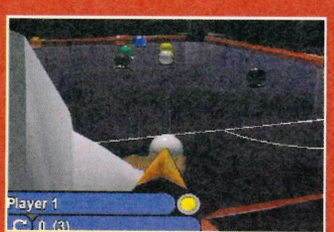
Other features include 18 (badly) animated opponents who all have there own artificial intelligence with personalities and skill levels. You've got 30 different tables to choose from, and even 14 sets of rules. However, actually playing the game long enough to experience and appreciate these features is nigh-on impossible; it's just too dull.

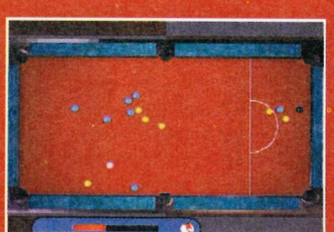
Graphically, the screenshots pretty much tell their own story. Just look at them, for God's sake; hardly anything to shout about, even for a pool sim. For a start, the balls aren't really round, they look as if they've been cut out of wood and the programmers forgot to smooth the edges off. The so-called 3D environments you find yourself playing in are badly animated,

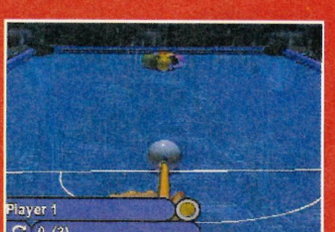
TABLE TROUBLE...

One of the best things about Pool Shark (see - there are one or two features that aren't crap) is the selection of different pool tables available. In all, there are 30 different types, ranging from the classic English eight-ball tables right the way through to futuristic transparent ones and even triangular-shaped monstrosities. Not all the tables are available from the start, but the more games you win and the longer you play the more tables you uncover, which at least offers you some incentive to play the game a little more.



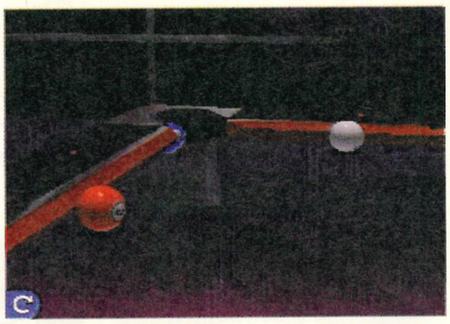


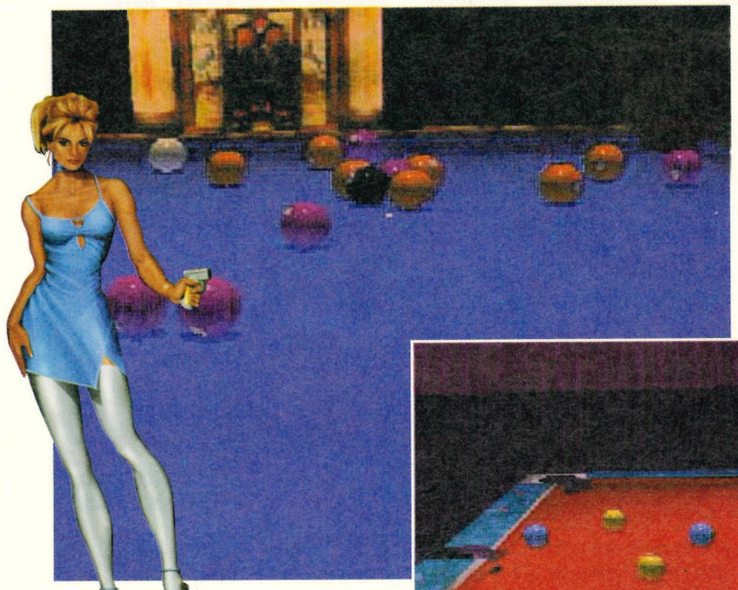


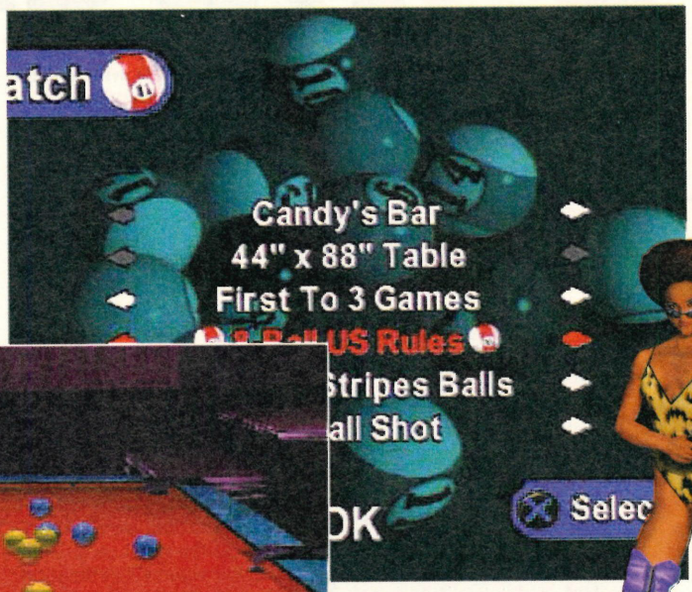


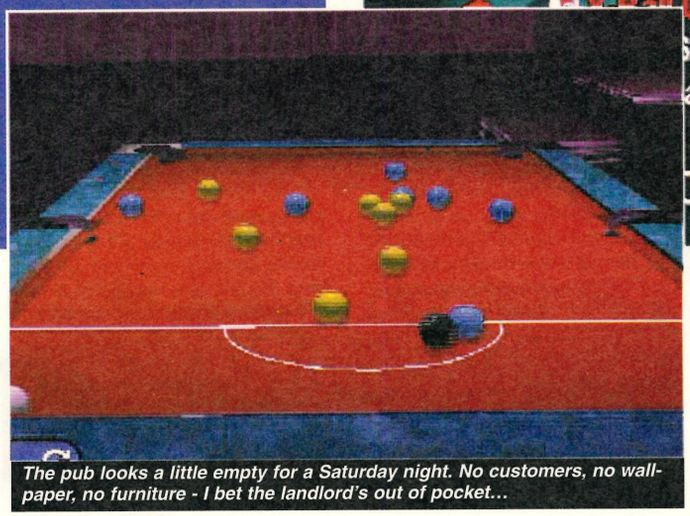


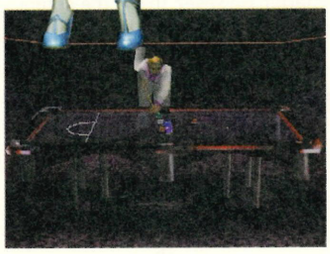


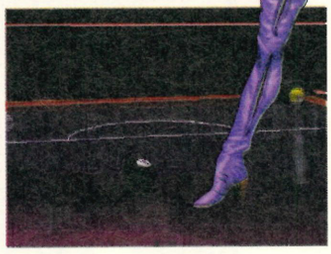












The pub looks a little empty for a Saturday night. No customers, no wallpaper, no furniture - I bet the landlord's out of pocket...

'Hopeless' is the word that best describes Pool Shark...

dull looking, very samey and basically well below the PlayStation's capabilities. It's possible to view the table from any angle, and even from above, which does help greatly when setting up shots. However the animation of the 3D movements is jerky and the cueing arm that accompanies each shot is nothing short of pathetic. At best, it serves as something to have a laugh at, but at worst it proves to be a real hazard as it tends block your view of the shot you're desperately trying to line-up. Poor graphics in this situation could be overlooked, but when they start to interfere with the gameplay (or what precious little gameplay Pool Shark has to offer) you've got to wonder what the hell the programmers and their playtesters have been on.

Now if anything, the sound is actually worse than the graphics, which I know must be hard to believe, but sadly it's true. A selection of guitar-heavy rock tracks accompany the 'action', but unfortunately they seem to played by a tone-deaf guitarist. The only 'plus' point to this problem is, thankfully you can switch it off. The spot effect of the balls clunking together is pretty much what you'd expect, and to be fair they're as good as you could hope for. However, the grunts that come from your opponent when they pot a ball, make a good shot or miss altogether are nothing short of sad. I mean, this is a CD-based machine, so why the hell do they players sound as though they have a mouth-full of food when they speak?

Right on Cue...

You might be able to overlook some of these niggling problems if the gameplay was half decent, but once again Pool Shark is a let-down. The opponents tend to fall into one of two categories; crap, or shit-hot. The early opponents you brush aside with ease, then all of a sudden you find yourself getting seven-balled, which proves very frustrating indeed. Another thing that bugs me is the loading times. How the hell can it take 20 seconds to get from the option menu to the game, and vice-versa? The final nail in the coffin is the list of in-game options, or rather lack of them. You can adjust the volume of the music or replay the last shot. Whatever happened to things like different camera views, the ability to use aiming lines, information on the best break, stats on the game, etc? 'Hopeless' is the word that best describes Pool Shark, I'm afraid.

The bottom line with Pool Shark is simply this; the graphics are well below the standard we've come to expect from the PlayStation, and even when you take into account this is a pool sim, which are hardly the most visually exciting games around, they're still crap. The spot effects, music and general audio quality is, if anything, worse than the graphics and the playability will have you either switching your PlayStation off or (more than likely) nodding off within about 10 minutes of starting. If you spend £40 on this game, you'll honestly be in tears for at least a week; you might as well just throw your cash away.

Alan King

SECOND OPINION

Perhaps Alan was a little hard on Pool Shark, or maybe it's just because I'm a bit of a Pool fan, but I think the game deserved a slightly higher rating as far as lifespan goes. Being a two player game, you can easily while away evenings challenging friends.

Russell

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	4
SOUND	3
GAMEPLAY	5
LIFESPAN	4

45%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Acclaim	System 3	Strategy	Out Now	UK	£39.99	1	Memory Card	Mouse

Right mate that'll be £400, or we send the boys around to do some 'redecorating' if ya' know what I mean... Welcome to Constructor.

Constructor



Fancy stepping into the world of property, dealing with tenants, the council, dept collectors, the police and even the mob? Well Constructor lets you do just that.

You take control of a construction company and oversee everything from top to bottom. It's down to you to decide how best to treat your workforce, which properties to build, how to decorate them, how much the rent will cost, who the tenants are (I find students pay well but have problems paying on time, if you know what I mean) and other day-to-day decisions. In addition to this, you've gotta' consider the larger picture also, with inspections fom the council being a yearly worry. Also the police are interested in the safety of your houses, and even the local mobsters may take an interest in your business if you start to make serious cash.

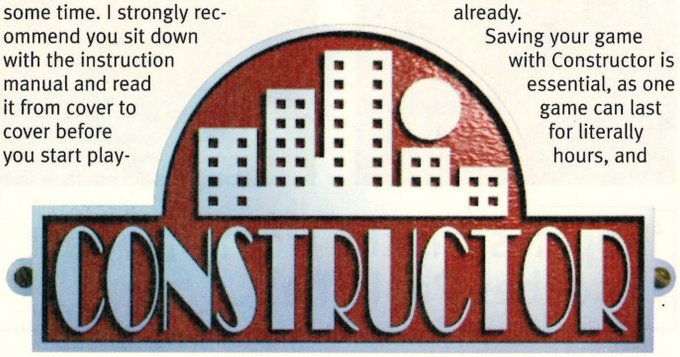
Bricks and Mortar...

First thing that strikes you about Constructor are the graphics. At the title screen, you're greeted by an excellent hi-res pic and a nicely animated, well drawn introduction sequence that sets the scene for what's to come. Constructor is a highly polished piece of software thoughout, with some of the nicest touches



I've seen in ages. The main playing area is nicely set out and easy to follow, although getting to grips with the glut of icons that represent the options and actions can take some time. I strongly recommend you sit down with the instruction manual and read it from cover to cover before you start playing, as trying to pick things up as you go is something of a non-starter. However, this is the nature of the game, and gamers who like this style of game will know this already.

Saving your game with Constructor is essential, as one game can last for literally hours, and



COMPACT AND BIJOU...

Getting your foot on the ladder, so to speak, is the first real challenge; you must start off by building yourself a small building, then decorating it before you can move some tenants in, and then finally reap some benefits. Check out our guide to starting a small business:



First off, find yourself a suitable plot of land. At this stage you're better off buying a block near to the base, as this means your workers have less distance to travel and you can keep a close eye on things as they progress through this crucial early stage.

With the land bought, it's time to build



a house. You only have a few to choose from to begin with, so this is really a matter of personal choice rather than a major business decision.

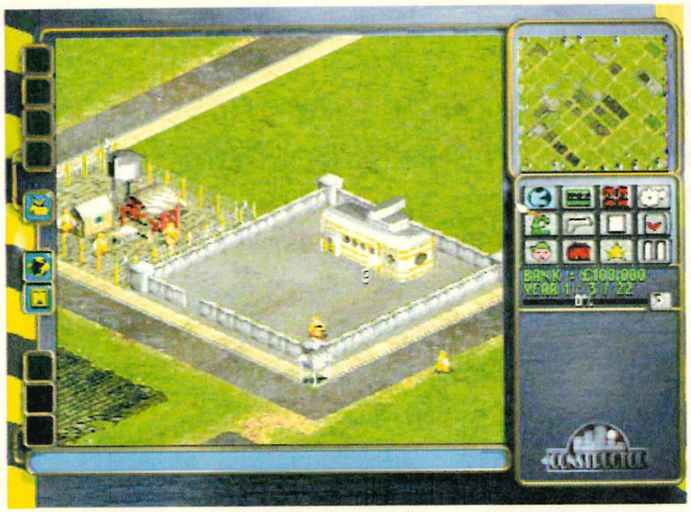
With your first building up and running, it's time to call in the decorators. It's not good trying to rent out a house with no kitchen or bathroom; the tenants start complaining in minutes. Go through each room in turn and click on each one to send in the workers.



Now it's time to choose a couple of tenants. You have two to choose from, but to be honest it makes no difference at this stage as the price you're charging isn't exactly top of the range.



With the tenants safely in the house, keep a close eye on the state of the building and the happiness of you new paying friends. The trick is to make as much money while keeping everyone happy, which as you progress you find out in time. But we'll leave that little adventure for you to find out on your own.





Spend a little time and you're handsomely rewarded...



nothing is worse than losing your empire just as it begins to rake in the cash. To save a single game of Constructor requires 15 blocks of a PlayStation memory card, and yes, that does mean the you use the entire card for this single game. Because of this fact, a yellow 'Constructor' memory card is included in the box. Hats off to Acclaim for this one, as buying a brand-new memory card (at around £10) would have simply made the game to expensive, but this way you are ready to start playing right away.

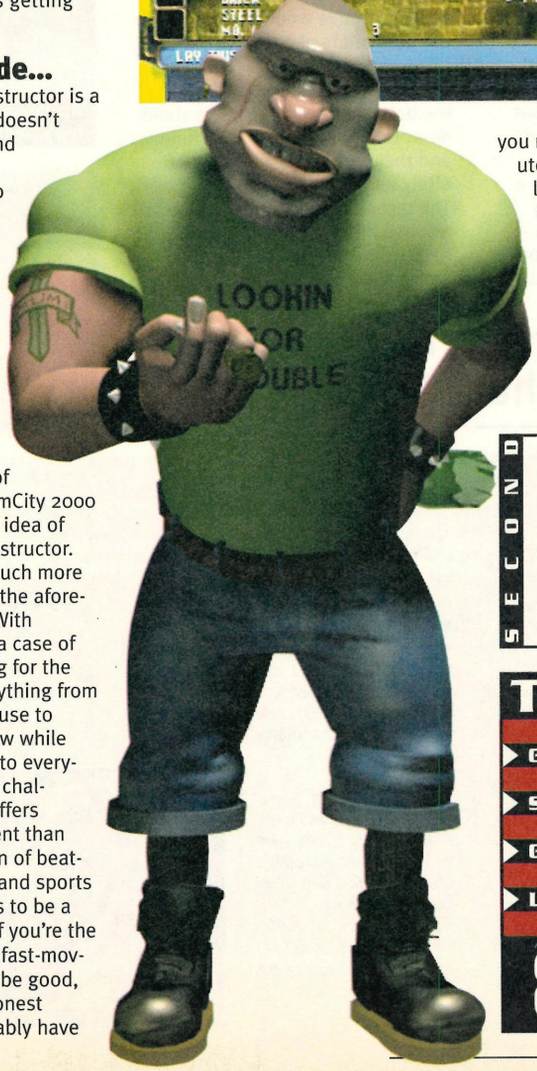
Controlling this style of game is always a bit of a grey area, as to fully appreciate the game you need a mouse, something that most PlayStation owners still don't have. Yes, you can get by and play the game with the regular joypad, but to be honest this is totally unacceptable and makes the entire process slow and cumbersome. This game was designed for a mouse, and this is obvious. You need a PlayStation mouse to really gain full control of the proceedings - using the joypad method you're at a constant disadvantage as among other things, you have to wait for the cursor to scroll across the screen and this can be frustrating when you're racing against fellow constructors. However, with the correct peripheral inserted into your PlayStation, these problems simply disappear and you can begin to play the game as it was so obviously meant to be played; it just case of pointing and clicking. In know this criticism may seem like a minor problem and me being picky, but believe me it gets really annoying after only a few minutes' play. Anyone who has played other PlayStation games with a similar control style will know exactly what I mean. The Command & Conquer series, for example, has this same problem - the bottom line is that getting yourself a mouse is as essential as getting the game itself.



Time and Tide...

It must be said that Constructor is a slow moving game that doesn't immediately jump out and scream 'play me', but if you spend a little time to get to grips with the controls and the way things work you are handsomely rewarded. Nothing is more satisfying that starting a small business and watching it grow into a huge empire, and this is the thing that makes Constructor so good. If you've played the likes of SimCity or the sequel SimCity 2000 before, you have a good idea of what to expect from Constructor. however, this title has much more depth and humour than the aforementioned PC classics. With Constructor it's not just a case of building and then hoping for the best as you control everything from the decoration of the house to what's in the garden. Now while this depth won't appeal to everyone, to those who like a challenge and a game that offers something a little different than the usual PlayStation run of beat-'em-ups, driving games and sports sims, Constructor proves to be a real breath of fresh air. If you're the sort of gamer who need fast-moving action for a game to be good, then forget it as to be honest Constructor would probably have you nodding off within a few minutes of turning it on. However if, like me, you enjoy something that requires a little more thought that just bashing away at your PlayStation joypad now and then, you could do a lot worse than take a look at Constructor, just be sure you buy yourself a mouse at the same time.

Alan King



SECOND OPINION

This game has more depth than a barnacle on the hull of the Titanic. Tighter than a duck's ringpiece (and that's water-tight), smarter than Einstein's cleverer brother and bigger than Bill Gates' bank balance, Constructor is ideal for strategy management fans.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	8

82%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Codemasters	Codemasters	Sports Sim	November '98	UK	£44.99	1-4	Memory Card Analogue	Dual Shock

It's been labelled the game of the century as Brian Lara Cricket comes onto the field for its second innings. Will it hit the opposition for six or be out for a golden duck? Read on...

Brian Lara Cricket

As one of the most long-awaited games this year, Brian Lara Cricket is said (by its publishers) to be the world's best-selling video gameplay brand on the PlayStation and PC. The game was first bought out for the Sega Mega Drive in May of 1995, and after being such a success with ten weeks at the top of the chart, the challenge was undertaken to better its sales and popularity.

Now I'm no Des Lynam or Sue Barker, but I shall give this game the commentary that it deserves. I personally, have never had the fortune (or misfortune) to go to a cricket match and I certainly don't profess to be a cricket boffin. But as far as this game is concerned, you don't have to be a regular Graham Gooch to be able to hit a six or bowl a golden duck!

Perhaps THE greatest thing about the game is the 3D motion-captured action and its televisual qualities. With inclusions such as the listing of the team players, commentary from Geoff Boycott and Jonathan Agnew and lots of different camera angles, watching and playing the game is just like seeing it on the BBC... cor!

Skinning Up

Of course, the reason why it's so lifelike is down to the power of the PlayStation. With your average run-of-the-mill Mega Drive, you don't have the facility of motion capture which, if you're wondering, allows the particulars of each shot to be displayed to its fullest. Therefore when the 'six hit' option is used, the batsman really opens his shoulders. The players move with fluidity and their reactions are most definitely on the ball.

The technique Codemasters used to achieve this kind of realism is called hard-skinning, where the players are wire-frame models so there are



Apparently, the bright red gobstopper is Lords - he must have a very big mouth...





Playing the game is just like seeing it on the BBC...

CONQUER EACH CUP...

Imran Khan takes his run up, looks at you straight in the eye and bowls a fast one that flies towards your left side. Thinking quickly, you adjust your position and whack the ball towards the boundary. Now that the friendly with Pakistan's over which tournament can you go for next?

WORLD CUP
This tournament involves nine test-playing nations and 3 teams from the 'not too good' nation pool. You can adjust the amount of overs and the location of the tournament. This cup has two stages. Firstly, there are two groups of six teams with each team playing the other once. Whoever is in the top four at the end goes through to the knockout stage.

WORLD SERIES
Based in Australia, between two and five teams take part, one being the host nation. Again, the number of overs can be changed and each team plays each other twice. The top two teams get to the final, and the winner is chosen over the best of three matches.

CLASSIC MATCH
Take part in history for a while. Only one classic match is available the first time you play, which must be won if you want the password that takes you through to the next match. The better you get, the more difficult the matches become.

TEST SEASON
Go on a strenuous year-long journey all over the world, playing several countries. You can take control of a team for between one and seven of these years, and climb the rankings table if you can.

KNOCKOUT
A straight knockout tournament with eight teams. It is possible to change both the number of overs and the game's location.

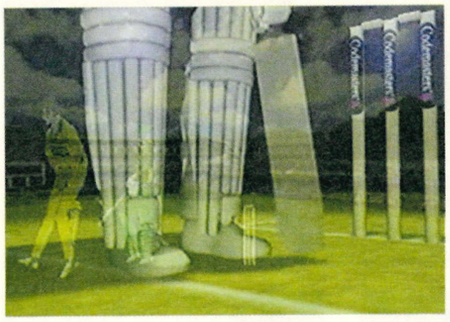
TEST SERIES
A competition between two of the test-playing nations. Watch out for the weather during play. The number of matches you play is up to you, and can be between one and six.

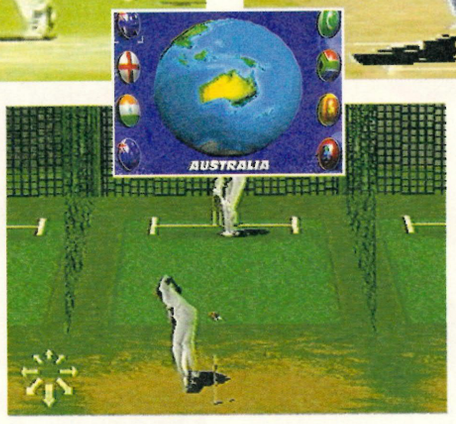




















no gaps between limbs while they're moving. The in-match commentary is on a play-back system designed to handle hours of speech and detailed comments without too much repetition. Oh, and I must not forget the cartoon-like duck which waddles playfully across the screen when you're either out with the first ball or for no runs, (see, I do know something about the game).

But let's get down to the nitty-gritty, shall we? It's all very well for me to baffle you with my infinite knowledge and wisdom about the background of the game and how Codemasters managed to make it look so darn good. Amazing us with mere graphical representations may not be enough for us to willingly dip into our pockets and fork out £45 at WH Smith's cash till, though.

Now I have to admit, that I am not really a great fan of sport sims. I think the reason for that may just be that I don't enjoy playing football very much and I'm genuinely not too talented at keeping up with Tim Henman on the tennis court. Though like I have already said, this game is very easy to get to grips with and quite enjoyable at that.

Take your pick from playing in a world cup competition, a test series, knock-out or world series tournaments in various match conditions such as normal, hot, average (rainy) or sunny. Then choose from the 240 real-name international cricket stars from around the world, with all their own individual real-life strengths - could you ask for any more? Of course you can. There are 46 accurately modelled stadiums in which you can play anything from a short ten-over slog up to a full five-day test. And if you think you're good enough, there's a Multi Tap option where up to four players can compete simultaneously as one team or on opposite sides in challenge matches.

The controls are intuitive with no fiddly manoeuvres and plentiful amounts of moves available to make it seem as though you are in control. Slow motion action replays show exactly how you missed (or didn't miss) the ball, from any camera angle you desire. Never before has sitting in your living room with two game pads and a PlayStation game been so like being at Lord's facing the West Indies in the pouring rain.

If you're playing the game for the first time and have won the toss and chosen to bowl, you will undoubtedly notice that fielding is a lot more difficult than it looks when the computer does it for you automatically. It is hard to find the ball, and even harder to pick it up off the ground and while you are firking around fielding, your opponent is raking in the runs. Be careful not to run your team-mate out when you're batting, and if you're not sure whether you made it back to the stumps in time, look out for the red and green light indicators at the top left hand side of the screen - a realistic device which is a recent recruit to the game itself.

A Piece of History...

Last but very much not least is Classic Matches, which is a unique alternative to the usual 'great old teams' selection that this genre normally includes. In this option you can enter a famous cricket match from history at its most crucial point and are challenged to equal or better the real-life results. So if you can match Brian Lara's 501 not out in one innings from 1994, which by the way is the highest amount of runs in a test match - ever, good luck to you - and drop us a line to tell us so.

I have to tell you, this game is very addictive. Once you have practised your batting and bowling before starting a real match, the game just goes from easy to easier. After a while you can purely concentrate on beating your opponents with fancy moves which unfortunately I can't list because I know very little about the real game - will underarm and over-arm do?

In conclusion, it pains me to say that the only draw back to this game is that it does get a little repetitive after a while and you have to take your time to master all the moves which can get a little frustrating. However there is so much about the game that says to me that this will no doubt overshadow its predecessor and others of its kind. Codemasters tried something unique and got away with it. A lot of research and thought clearly went into its development; surely now the mammoth task has been set to try and outrank it sometime in the near future. Maybe if you're all good boys and girls before the festive season, Santa will bring you this one for Christmas.

Claire Webster

SECOND OPINION

If you're a cricket fan, this one will hit you for six.
The graphics are excellent, the playability cool and the overall presentation spot-on.
This one will last much longer than Brian Lara's captaincy...

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	7

90%

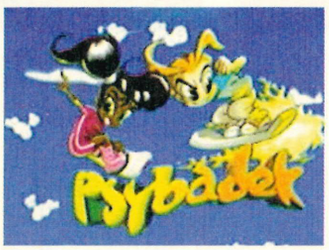


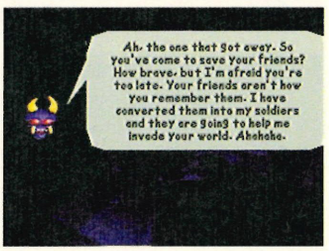












PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Psygnosis	Psygnosis	3D Platform	November '98	UK	£39.99	1	Memory Card	Analogue

What's this then? It's new, different, not a sequel, but it's Psygnosis? We think it's an Anime-inspired hoverboard 3D platformer, or something...

Psybadek

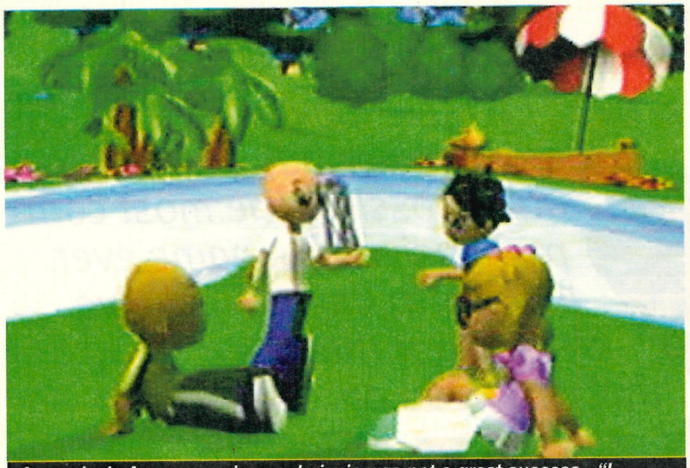
It's a tough one to call, this. By first impressions of the introduction sequence, the game looks like it's aimed at the younger generation of gamesplayers; it's in trouble if it's not. It has cute Anime-style characters, colourful backdrops and fun Back to the Future-style hoverboards that zip around the screen like there's no tomorrow.

From here the storyline progresses to the next scene, with a rather large blue monster jumping down from a cloud laughing menacingly. It attacks the kids and starts sending them all through trans-dimentional wibbly-wobbly holes (along with their pet cat and dog). Now it's up to the two main characters, Xako and Mia, to hoverboard to the rescue and save their friends from the evil clutches of The blue monster (yawn).

Sadly, after snoozing through the first five levels, this flimsy story unfolds into nothing more than 'quick, we don't like it here' text box in-between levels on a loading screen. Admittedly it's not the introduction sequence or storyline that makes a good game because other factors like gameplay and challenge make up for that, or they damn-well should anyway. It's a real shame that in Psybadek's case there really aren't that many redeeming features about the game whatsoever, even for the younger generation of gamesplayers who I can only assume (or hope) this game was made for. Psygnosis has been very brave. They have mixed a couple of fixed genres, specifically the 3D platform genre and the thrills-and-spills snow/skateboarding action to try and generate something of a new experience. The level layout is of the same mould as a couple of other 3D platformers like Gex 3D: Enter the Gecko in that you begin playing in a 3D environment that links up all the different level entrances like a virtual crossroads. From here you're directed to the next level warp hole that you must use to be taken to the next level. Psybadek has tried to keep the action varied with different goals and requirements for pretty-much each level. There are four different worlds to explore in all, and they're themed with different enemies to face and power-ups to collect. In fact, on paper Psybadek looks like an accomplished piece of software. 'Original', 'fashionable' and 'superb 3D' are just a few of the key words used in Psygnosis' press release to describe the game, not to mention phrases like 'character driven', 'lifestyle and attitude', 'unique hoverdek action' and best of all, 'mass market momentum'. Having read the press jargon prior to booting up the game and had time to consider that it is a Psygnosis title, I was whipped up to a lather in anticipation.

Hoverbored?

I was duly disappointed to find myself stuck in the middle of a childish, shabby, and masterfully mediocre title that really hasn't held my attention through the time I've taken to write this review. The 'lifestyle and attitude' hasn't shown up and the 'character driven' point really just means you can choose



Amnesiac's Anonymous' annual picnic was not a great success - "I thought you were supposed to bring the hamper"...



between two characters (though there's not even a two-player game offered). The same goes for the 'superb 3D environment' which is nothing more than snowboarding through ugly pop-up and glitchy graphical mistakes. As a result the 'totally original treatment' to the platform genre slant on the proceedings is one of its few redeeming features, and it really can't make up for what can only be described as a weak title from Psygnosis.

The general idea behind the game is to rescue your friends from the clutches of an evil monster that has kidnapped them from their local skate park by hoverdeking your way down lots of slopes collecting small blue star collectibles and avoiding the odd obstacle and the odd enemy in the form of penguins, for example, in the Ice World. Occasionally you're challenged to a race down a course or required to shoot enemies in a shooting gallery, but why? There is no motivation, no explanation as to why you're bothering in the first place and certainly no wish to carry on to see what is probably a non-descript end sequence that probably culminates with the kids all skating around the park again as if nothing happened in the first place.

Sound Sonics

The game's strongest feature, which I'm not going to deny, is the soundtrack. It's funky and it would even be fair to say that it has attitude. However, manners may well maketh the man, but music certainly doesn't maketh a good video game. Fair enough, platform games are normally a safe bet to get bums on seats, and skating is currently hitting a peak in the fashion stakes (well snowboarding anyway), but this doesn't mean you can make a 3D platform skating game and come up with a great title. We all know the Psygnosis are more than capable of making award-winning, ground-breaking games, but it seems that Psybadek was make by PR for PR in an attempt to cash in on two popular genres. Like the phrase 'pro-active', it means nothing to me and accomplishes nothing at the same time. It's a bad game made on a flimsy foundation that will not fool many players.

The game actually offers quite a tough challenge, which in any other circumstances would help push up the games credibility, but in this case it's stopping the younger generation playing the game that only they are going to be interested in. If that's not a shot in the foot, I don't what is.

It's one to miss out on, this, not worth your time and definitely not worth the money. There are many better games that deserve your attention this Christmas.

Russell Barnes

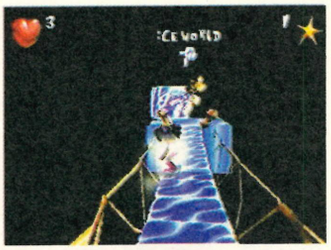
There is no motivation, no explaination as to why...

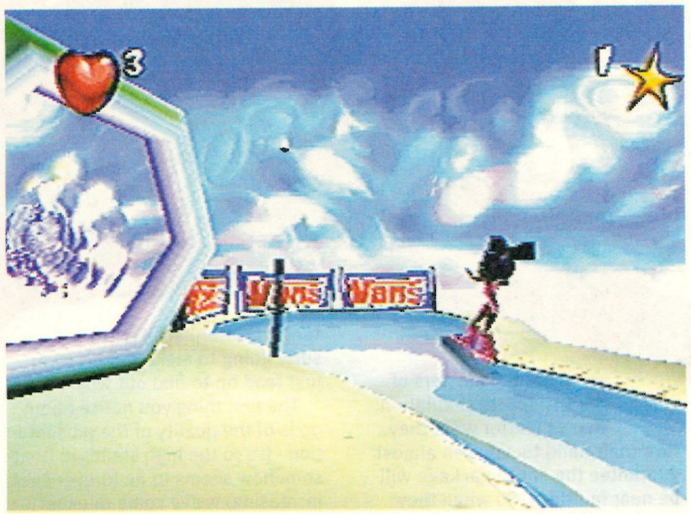
















SECOND OPINION

A definite triumph of style over substance, this. The graphics are colourful and snappy, but where's the game? In attempting to combine too disparate styles Psygnosis have produced a Jack-of-all-trades that's not even competent in one.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	6
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	5
LIFESPAN	4

46%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Electronic Arts	Electronic Arts	Sports Sim	November '98	UK	£39.99	1-8	Memory Card Multi Tap	Analogue Dual Shock



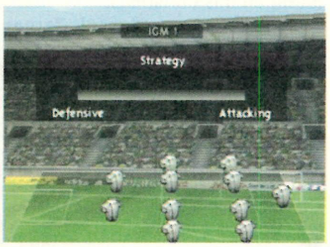
Now the world cup is over, EA have moved back to the domestic football scene with quite possible the most comprehensive FIFA game ever. Is it worth buying if you've already got the 98 version, though? Read on...

FIFA '99

EA are the masters of the sports simulation. No matter what they turn their hand to, you can almost guarantee the entire package will be near faultless. So when they team up with and the governing body of football, FIFA, and add an official licence from the Premiership into the mix you just know they're going to come up with something really special, and with FIFA '99 they must have surly created the definitive football game on any console. This may be one of the most competitive genres on the PlayStation, but with this latest footie masterpiece EA are surly going to make it their own; just read on to find out why.

The first thing you notice about 99 is of the quality of the presentation - it's to the high standard (that somehow seems to be forever ever increasing) we've come to expect from the guys at EA. The front end of the game is a series of menus that gives you access to the multitude of options, variables and statistics contented within the game. Although saying this, I must admit I found the deluge of icons that represent the options, while being very nice to look at, somewhat confusing at times with even the simple task of choosing a league to play in and a team to control can take a while to figure out. I would have preferred a simple list of options, with sub-menus, but this problem may just be a case of my brain getting to old; who knows? Other than this minor niggle, FIFA 99 is faultless. You've got options that cover just about everything you could ever want, or need. There are eight camera angles, a radar of the pitch to keep an eye on where your players are (perfect for long-range passes), you can choose to have players displayed with either their shirt number or name and whether or not you want action replays of the goals scored. In addition, you can adjust the difficulty settings that range from the simple Amateur mode to the extremely tough World Class, you can select that type of weather you want from Random, Clear, Rain and even Snow. You can also choose whether or not you wish the player to suffer from fatigue, which is great when you want a more arcade-style match. There's even an option to change the speed of the game. As I said, everything you could ever need, or possibly want to change is there to change. You gotta' hand it to EA; when it comes to options these guys have got it sorted.







Footballing Frolics

Another feature that really stands out in FIFA 99 is the sheer number of footballing leagues from around the world that have been included. Of course the English Premiership js there, in all its glory, but you've also got the Italian Seria A, the German Bundasliga, the Spanish National League, the Brazilian League, the America Major League of Soccer...

This kind of depth is truly amazing...

A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN...

As we've said, all of the major (and some not so major) footballing leagues from around the world are included in FIFA 99, so here's out short guide to the three best leagues in the world:

THE ENGLISH PREMIERSHIP

It's the best league in the world, and it's British. This is where you'll find all the major clubs like Manchester United (spit) to Liverpool, Arsenal and Tottenham, all with authentic kits and players.



THE ITALIAN SERIA 'A'

The Italian league is full of some of the biggest names in European football; giants like Juventus, AC Milan, Inter Milan, Parma and Lazio are all found here, complete with up-to-date team listings, real logos and strips. What more could you ask for?



THE GERMAN BUNDASLIGA

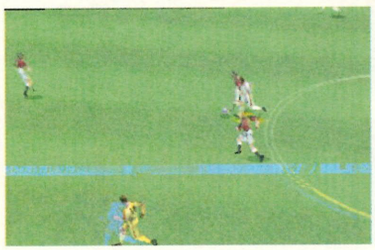
The German Bundasliga league may not be quite as high profile as the Italian or English leagues, but that doesn't mean there isn't quality here. For example if you think you're up to it check out teams like Dynamo Kiev for a real test of your footballing skills.



HITTING THE NET...

The most important part of football, putting the ball in the back of the net, can seem a daunting task when you start to play the game, so here (for your viewing pleasure) we present the extreme PlayStation guide to scoring:

The midfield player gains possession in the middle of the park and looks downfield; he then makes a long sweeping ball to the winger who is racing down the touchline.



The winger collects the ball and then dashes to the line - here he floats in a cross that is measured to fall at the feet of the on-coming attack in the penalty area.



The striker controls the ball then slots it past the helpless keeper with a powerful shot into the top of the net. See? This scoring lark's easy when ya' know how.









Using your skill and judgement, mark an 'X' where you think the centre of the ball is...

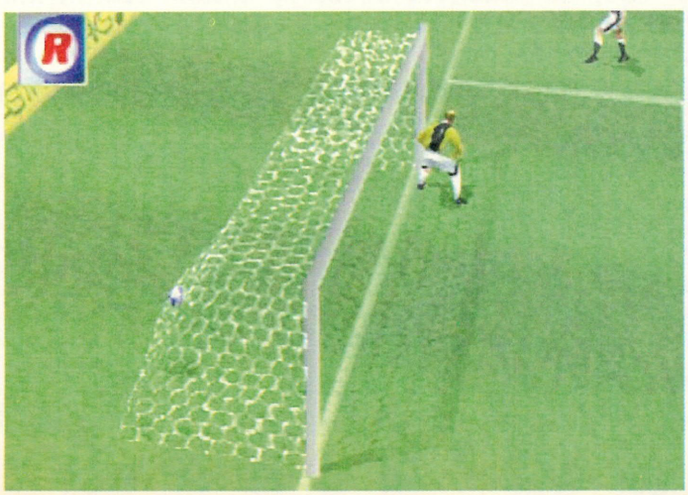
in fact the list goes on and on. This variety gives you literally hundreds of teams to choose from, and a new challenge is never far away. Also, for each country you've got a complete list of real teams and up-to-date player listings. So this means if you fave English team is Liverpool (as mine is) you can control the likes of Owen, Fowler and McManaman in a matter of minutes.

This kind of depth is truly amazing. To have the entire English Premiership at you fingertips is one thing, but to have every team and every player for all of the major footballing leagues (and some not so major) in the world at your disposal is just mind-blowing.

In terms of playablity, FIFA 99 is pretty much the same as the games that have gone before it, that is to say it's excellent. Anyone who has played a FIFA game on the PlayStation before will have no problems getting to grips with the on-field controls. However, as with all games, starting to play is easy, mastering the game is another matter altogether.

Graphically FIFA is also good. The players have all been motion-captured so they look so lifelike it can be spooky at times, and it's not just in the way they run or jump around the pitch either. Little details like remonstrating with the referee after a foul has been committed or the celebrations after a goal all look so life-like it's truly amazing to watch. The scrolling is smooth and with finely detailed stadiums giving the entire match an amazing feel of atmosphere you could be forgiven for thinking you were actually there.

Musically things are also kept to the high standard you'd expect. The game is introduced and team announcements are made by the nice guy of football, Gary Linker, before he hands over to the legendary John Motson who provide continues commentary through out the match. However this commentary tends to be a little annoying after a while, as some phrases tend to be heavily over-used. For example, you just try counting how many times the words 'there' and 'then' are used through out the course of a match - I can guarantee you'll lose count (and probably your patience) before the final whistle. Sound effects are the standard fair you expect from a sports game, and include the crowd chanting, screaming and booing as the action unfolds in front of them. Despite the small problem with the commentary it must be said that in terms of graphics and sound, FIFA 99 is one of the most polished games you're likely to see on the PlayStation, which is high praise indeed.



Titillating Teamwork...

Another nice feature to be included in FIFA 99 is the sheer amount of human players you can have battling it out against each other. If you've got enough joypads, and enough friends, you can actually have you and seven of your mates all playing a match at once. Yes, that's eight players, all playing at the same time. This is really where the game comes into its own, as while playing against the CPU is fun, nothing beats having a few friends around, opening a few cans of lager and starting a massive cup competition. In the extreme PlayStation office hardly a day goes by without someone making a footballing challenge, which results in the office grinding to a halt while we all sort out just who is the king of the video game football world - again.

Basically the bottom line is this; FIFA 99 one of the best football game I have ever played, and speaking as someone who has played all the classics from Match Day right the way through to'ISS Pro, that is some accolade. The graphics are excellent, the sound is (for the most part) good, there's pretty much every single option you could ever want or need, you've got more real leagues, real teams and real players to select than ever before and it's all presented with EA's usual style and class. Yeah, as I've said, there are a few little niggles here and there, but for the most part this game represents the best footballing experience you're likely to have outside of a football ground. Excellent stuff EA; I just wonder how the hell you'll top this next year.

Alan King

SECOND OPINION

This is certainly one of the deepest soccer sims ever. If you're after a realistic tournament featuring genuine teams and players, FIFA '99 is the one for you. This is certainly the greatest of an already acclaimed series. Nice one, EA.

Claire Webster

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	9
LIFESPAN	9

92%

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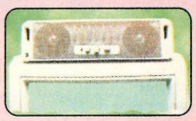
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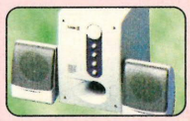
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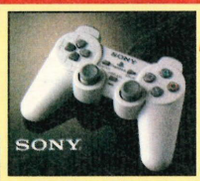
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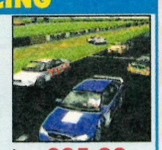


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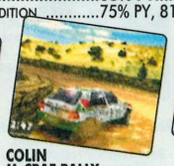


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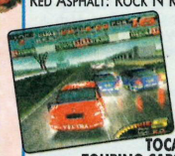


COLIN McCRAE RALLY

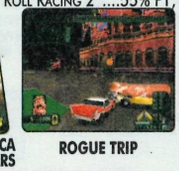


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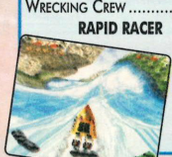


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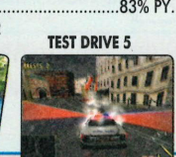


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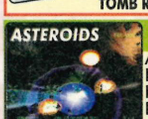


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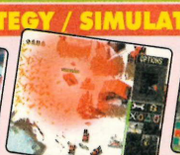


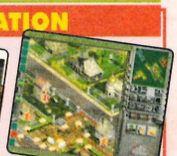
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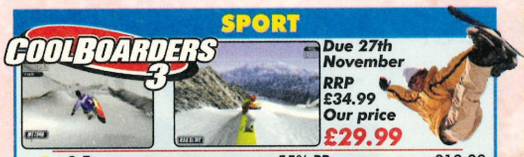
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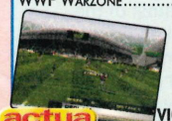
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Int'l Superstar Soccer Pro '98	**92% PY, 94% PP**	**£31.99**

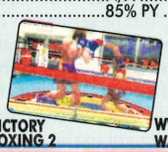
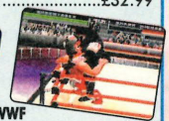



BRIAN LARA CRICKET

FIFA '99

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
Libero Grande	Due 11th December	£29.99
Michael Owen's World League Soccer	**Due 13th Nov**	**£32.99**
Nagano Winter Olympics '98	83% PY	£20.99
NBA Live '98	87% PP	£24.99
NBA Live '99	Due 20th November	£32.99
NFL Blitz	N/A	£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	£24.99
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Powermove Pro Wrestling	N/A	£19.99
Premier Manager '98	**89% PY, 92% PP**	**£28.99**
Premier Manager + Mouse & Mouse Mat		**£36.99**
Premier Manager '98 & Actua Golf 2		**£39.99**
Pro Pinball Timeshock	89% PP	£22.99
Rushdown	N/A	£32.99
Sensible Soccer Club Edition	Due 11th December	£32.99
Snow Racer	85% PP	£24.99
Tiger Woods Golf '99	Due 24th December	£32.99
True Pinball	85% PY	£17.99
Total NBA '98	92% PY, 85% PP	£29.99
Victory Boxing	90% PY	£21.99
Victory Boxing 2	90% PY	£32.99
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WCW Thunder	Due December	£30.99
World Cup '98	**86% PY, 90% PP**	**£17.99**
WWF In Your House	N/A	£19.99
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VICTORY BOXING 2

WWF WARZONE


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Die Hard Trilogy & Erazor Gun	N/A	£28.99
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Point Blank	**90% PY, 92% PP**	**£29.99**
Point Blank & Guncon	**90% PY, 92% PP**	**£49.99**
Time Crisis	**90% PY, 93% PP**	**£18.99**

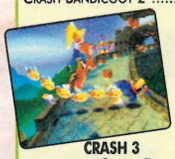
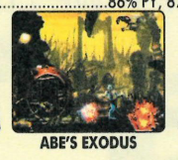
3D SHOOTERS



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	**Out now**	**£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
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Duke Nukem 3D	**90% PY, 91% PP**	**£19.99**
Duke Nukem Time To Kill	**87% PY**	**£32.99**
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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

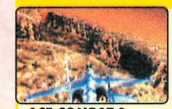
Agent Armstrong	75% PP	£24.99
Baby Universe	22% PY	£25.99
Blasto	N/A	£29.99
Bomberman World	85% PY, 83% PP	£29.99
Crash Bandicoot	84% PY, 86% PP	£18.99
Crash Bandicoot 2	86% PY, 87% PP	£29.99


CRASH 3

ABE'S EXODUS

SPYRO

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Frogger	69% PY, 88% PP	£24.99
Gex 3D	92% PY	£24.99
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Lucky Luke	79% PP	£29.99
Megaman X3	N/A	£24.99
Megaman 8	82% PY	£26.99
Mickey's Wild Adventure	79% PY	£18.99
Mr Domino	72% PY, 70% PP	£32.99
Oddworld Abe's Exodus	**Due 13th 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
Psybadek	N/A	£34.99
Rayman	87% PY	£17.99
Rascal	77% PY	£34.99
Skull Monkeys	83% PY	£24.99
Spyro The Dragon	**88% PY, 88% PP**	**£34.99**
T'ai Fu	Due 8th January '99	£30.99
Tombi	79% PP	£29.99
Trash It	55% PY, 57% PP	£29.99
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FLYING


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NUCLEAR STRIKE

THUNDERHAWK 2

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RETRO / COMPILATION / MISCELLANEOUS


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BUST A GROOVE

FLUID

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Atari Greatest Hits 2	**Out now**	**£27.99**
Fluid	78% PY, 84% PP	£26.99
Midway Greatest Hits 2	N/A	
Includes Moon Patrol, Splat, Spy Hunter, Joust 2, etc		**£24.99**
Music	Due 20th November	£29.99
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	£18.99
R-Types	Out now	£28.99
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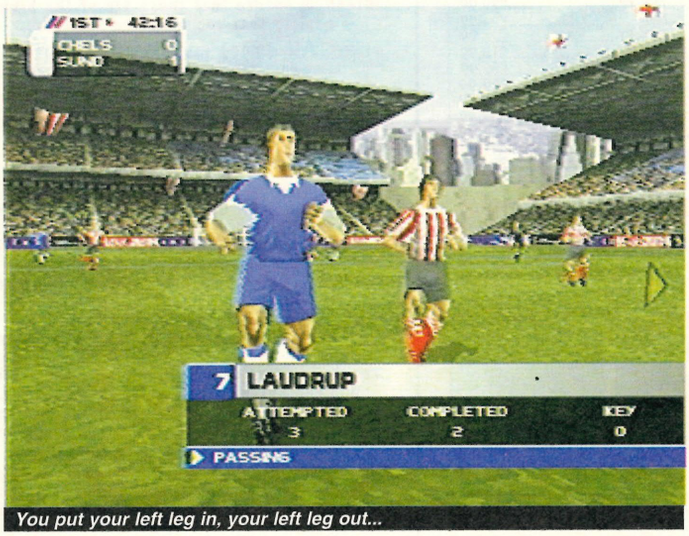
QUALITY SERVICE

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Gremlin Interactive	Gremlin Interactive	Sports Sim	December '98	UK	£34.99	1-8	Memory Card Analogue	Dual Shock Multi Tap

Another day, another football game, another sequel - Actua Soccer 3 isn't exactly original, but does it score where it counts - in quality? Let's lace up the boots and see if we can score...

Actua Soccer 3





You put your left leg in, your left leg out...



I'm pissed off - one of the clan Lynch got the job of putting together all the football footage for the intro of Actua Soccer 3, and it wasn't me. The credits show that duty went to one Matthew Lynch. Indeed, I wouldn't be surprised if he'd picked Mantovani as the soundtrack, the spod.

Still, I'm supposed to be past sulking these days. Any road, once you've been put well and truly in the mood by the hypnotic three minutes of telling of football's history, complete with vaguely-familiar classical soundtrack, it's time to wake the kraken that is Actua Soccer 3.

Sitting there watching the initial demo, as the vaguely-familiar soundtrack turns into Robbie Williams' 'Let Me Entertain You' (crystal-clear quality, by the way), the sharpness of the motion-captured scene doesn't so much take your breath away as, because it's so close to TV quality, leave you with a slightly uncomfortable feeling that you've slipped through the looking glass and had an 11:30 Diet Coke break with the Queen of Hearts followed by lunch with the Mad Hatter and not an Alice in sight to take your place.

I mean, Actua Soccer 3 is so precise that the stadium is part of the Whole Game Picture, not a backdrop. You look like you're playing AT Old Trafford, or the Nou Camp, or Wembley, or wherever instead of it lurking somewhere off in the distance. Freaky, but kinda cool. Players move like players, the referee is an inconsistent w*****, the ball zips along the surface, rain looks like rain, snow looks like snow and grass looks like grass (however you say it). Whether it's greener for the other side depends on what kind of day the referee is having, but you probably know that if you're into your footy.

The Science Bit

Attention to detail is the byword for Actua 3. I'll roll through the stats, just to make sure you're informed. Over 450 teams (including Sunderland - by far the greatest team the world has ever seen), plus an assortment of customisable ones, league competitions from around the world, over 10,000 players, allegedly individually researched and rated. I wonder about that; as a Sunderland fan I was a mite surprised to find our star youth team player in our star midfielder's role, especially as the star midfielder was listed at centre back, but never mind - most of the other team line-ups looked pretty-much as you'd find them on a matchday programme. I might add that all this welter of details doesn't actually get in the way of the game, if you want to bypass all those carefully-compiled stats and play England Vs Brazil, it's simple to do so.

Back to the stats -30 stadiums, 500 polygons in each character, practice matches on a tree-lined practice ground with no opposition but a goalie (a bizarre experience) and Sky TV-style presentation including those funny lines Andy Gray draws on the screen during

ACTION REPLAY...

Acrua Soccer 3 has a great replay facility. It's just like Sky TV!



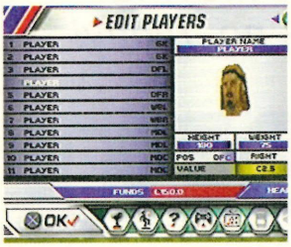




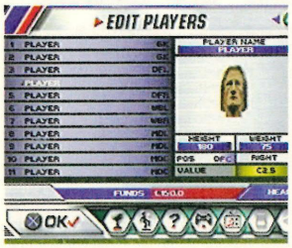


HEROES...

1. Alexi Lalas
Guitar-playing US centre back and USA '94 hero.



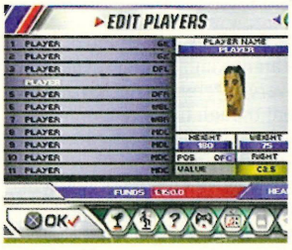
2. Colin Hendry
Deep and moody Scottish brave-hearted defender.



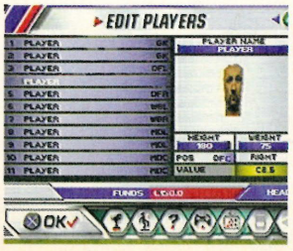
3. Taribo West
Dreadlocked Nigerian - this Inter Milan stalwart is a striker's nightmare.

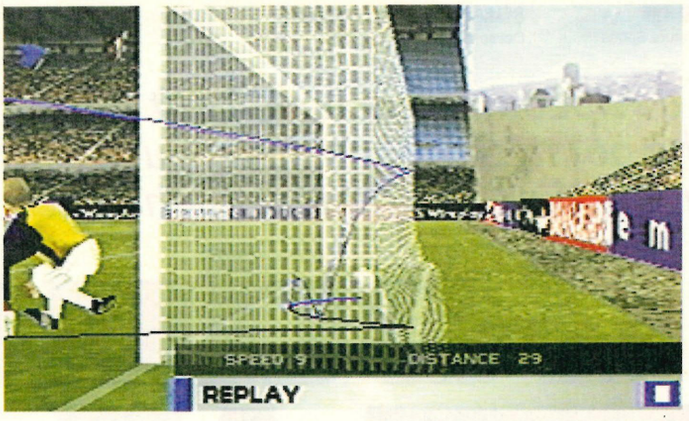


4. Marcello Salas
Chilean striker who scored a spectacular goal against England in the World Cup warm-ups.



5. Lucien Bartez
Eccentric French goalkeeper who makes David James look consistent.





Actua 3's a great game, there's no doubt about it...

replays mapping the path of the ball. In Actua 3, however, it doesn't actually tell you what speed it was going in mph (or if does, it's well off the mark), but rather uses its own, rather arbitrary scale (erm, why?). In fact, I'm going to stick my neck out and say this is the one fault in Actua 3's presentation - apart from calling football 'soccer' in the first place, the stupid yankophiles. So, erm, that's two faults then. Oh, never mind.

Nit-Picking Criticisms

There's not many football games where the computer team AI on Amateur setting defeats me five on the trot. Mind you, I did then win three in a row, so that's a relief. Anyway, the point of this prattle is the learning curve of the new control system embedded in Actua 3 is spot-on. It takes a while to learn, but once you do, controlling your computerised army of 11 becomes instinctive. By my eighth game, I was whizzing the ball around like the pitch was a pinball table and my players were mere flippers to propel the ball ever goalwards. Well, I managed it at least the once anyway, after that it became a little more difficult to reproduce the same prowess, and using the triangle button's 'weight of pass' feature to drop the ball into the on-going stride of my strikers became more of a favoured option. Still, I could have patiently worked the ball over to the wingers, used the 'kick ahead and chase' option and crossed the ball over to my striker for a one-time diving header or volley, and often did. Another tactic is to place neat one-twos in midfield before releasing a through-pass inside the full-backs for one striker to go wide, collect the ball, pass to the other and strike for goal. Occasionally, I even just whacked the ball up field to the big Number Nine in the hope he'd stick a head on it and divert it into the path of an on-rushing midfielder. In Actua 3, you're spoiled for choice of ways to score.

You may get the impression there's a variety of options available to you with the ball at one of your elegantly motion-captured players feet. You'd be right. The gameplay in Actua Soccer 3 boasts plenty of variety when you've control of the ball - no problems there. Like more than a few sports games, however, it sacrifices a little defensive power to allow for greater offensive showboating. Actually winning the ball back off the opposition is a lot harder than it ought to be, in my ever-so-humble opinion. Also, the speed of play and speed of thought necessary to play slickly on the default Medium level may be a tad difficult for mere mortals (or perhaps I'm getting too old for all this, at the ripe old age of 27). To perform well in Actua 3, you must have a plan and know exactly what you're doing; you can't simply react to what's happening in front of you because you find the opposition (and the ball) has passed you by. This again makes it easier to go forward in possession rather than track back and try and win it off the other side. The action is just a bit too quick for comfort and only gets quicker when you up the skill level. Actua 3's a great game, no doubt about it, but some punters might prefer the more samba-based pace of International Superstar Soccer Pro '98, or the directness of the FIFA series to the 120bpm football of Actua 3 at it's most hectic. Much as I can recognise all the qualities Actua 3 has to offer, I'm not sure it's better than ISS Pro '98.

Things seen and heard in the game? Well, there's a commentary by the BBC team of Barry Davies and Martin O' Neill, which is both accurate and imaginatively unrepetititve.

In one match, I swear I heard a PA announcer say the hot dogs were now on sale (or something like that); there was definitely a PA announcer saying something, and you can never really make out what they're saying anyway, can you? The graphics are superb in all departments, the motion-capture is neat and tidy, the ball whizzes through









the air and the goal replays are from all the angles you'd find on Sky TV and much, much more depth than you would probably care to imagine, down to the extent of changing the players heights, weights, head(!), value and abilities.

I wouldn't say 'go out and buy Actua 3'; I'd say get someone else to buy it for ya. In fact, when a loved one asks you want for Christmas, you tell them 'Actua Soccer 3, because I'm worth it'.

Ian Lynch

SECOND OPINION

A great footy experience only really let down by the ball's speed in the air. As soon as it's lofted from the goalmouth by the keeper, it seems to go into turbo mode like it's going to break the atmosphere and then suddenly dips down, back into play. Weird.

Russell Barnes

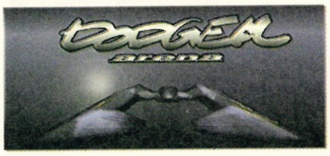
THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	9

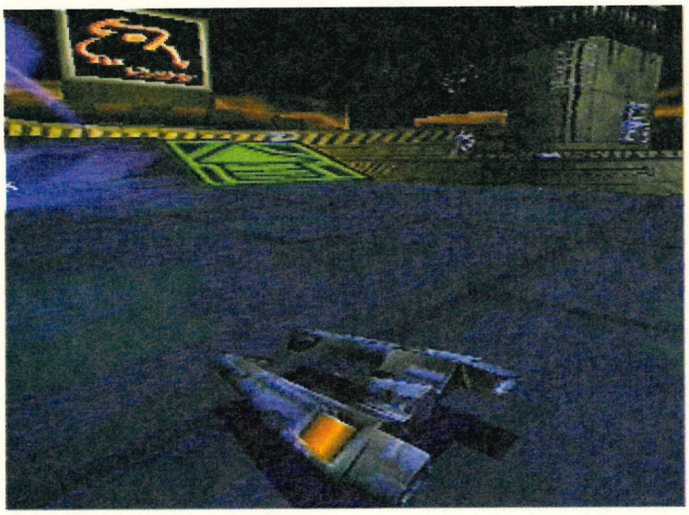
91%

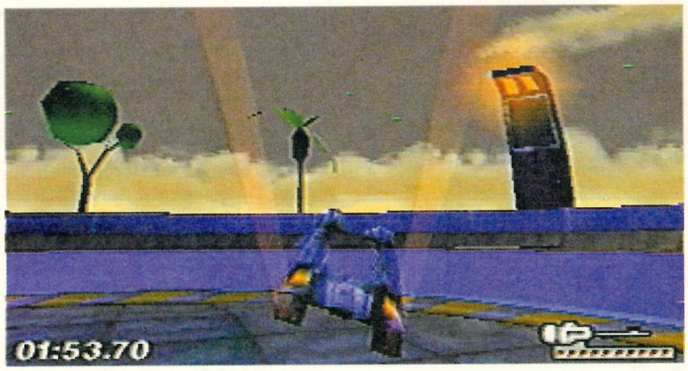
PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Black Friar	Black Friar	Future Sports	December '98	UK	£39.99	1-4	Memory Card Analogue	Dual Shock

Okay, so you're in a WipEoutesque hovercraft that whizzes around a futuristic arena. The point? Shoot as many pucks into the moving goal as possible in the time. We think it might catch on - no, really!



Dodgem Arena

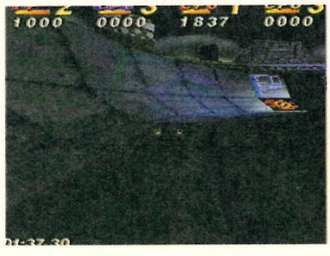












Picture the scene; there you are in the cockpit of your WipEout-style hovercraft pitted against three opponent crafts (or Dodgems) in a hockey-style competition. It's Round One and there's the puck generator in the distance, having just dispensed the four game pucks for this stage. Get your ass over there and scoop a puck into the front of your Dodgem and check the pitch for the current position of the goal (it looks just like the puck generator, but it moves clockwise around the outside of the arena). Make your way towards the goal, avoiding the scrambling competitors and shoot the puck right into the goal. That's one thousand points to you, but you've got a long way to go yet. The puck you've just scored with now gets regenerated in the Puck Generator and is recycled back into the game. Sounds weird, but it actually plays reasonably well when you get going.

As far as presentation goes, Dodgem Arena is only second to well... WipEout (sorry, but there you are - I'm not fixated or anything). The rendered introduction looks like it's come from the same school of futuristic arts, and the soundtrack is very jungle, break-beat and big beat, though it doesn't have the big names in the score list like The Prodigy, FSOL or Fluke. The Options and Start screens are very well presented, with gorgeous renders of the Arenas available to you as well as animated sequences showing you around each one. There are three arenas immediately available, each very different in design and content though the object remains the same regardless of the level.

After choosing the Arena you want to play on and the Dodgem of the your choice, the action begins and you're put straight into to the fray. The camera position shows all

Dodgem Arena is surprisingly playable and addictive...

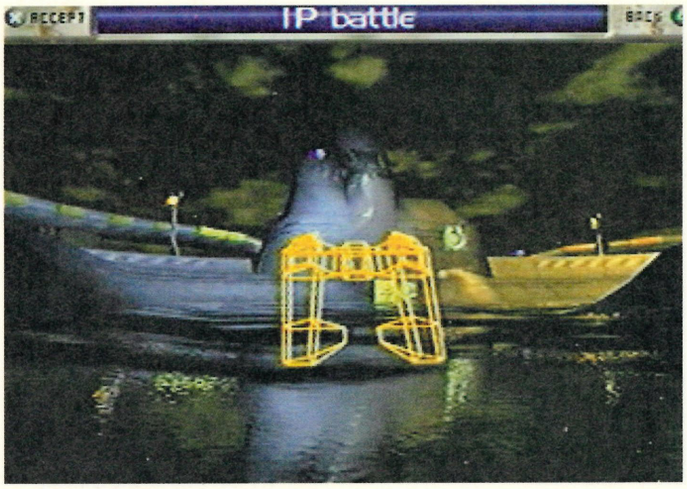
BEND ME, SHAPE ME...

Still not reasonably impressed? Stick around because I'm just getting to the good bit. I really like the game, though admittedly I didn't have to put my hard-earned readies on the line to get my copy. Quite the opposite in fact, so why will you and your friends like it? Easy; forget about One-Player mode for a minute and listen carefully, but wait while I take a deep breath. Right, there is a Two-Player Battle split-screen, Two-Player Team split screen, Two-Player Head-to-Head split-screen, Two-Player Head-to-Head link-up, Two-Player Battle link-up, Two-Player Team link-up, Four-Player Battle link-up and last but by no means least, Four-Player Team link-up. Now if you can't have even a little bit of fun playing with all these multi-player options, you're either dead or you're one of those people who couldn't organise a piss-up in a brewery.









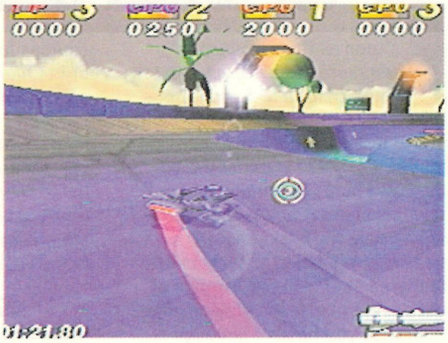












four Dodgems shooting out of the start box after the countdown and then pans round smoothly to show a rear, overhead view of your craft. From the outset of the first few minutes of wandering around the Arena, apparently out of control (due to the sheer speed of the responsive controls), you slowly get the hang of the method and find the Jump control and Strafe-Roll to the left and right.

It's a GOAL!

By the time you've got the hang of the controls you find you've already lost the first round due to the short but taxing time limit given to the game. Like Basketball or fast games of that nature, you soon learn this game can be won and lost in the dying seconds, which you soon appreciate as one of the most addictive parts of the game (though a variable time limit would have made a good addition for beginners).

Once you've made your way to the Puck Generator and it's ejected all four of the pucks for this round, you pick the nearest one up and hunt around for the goal; you can't loiter or fanny around though, as your competitors have the means, and the will, to nick the puck from right under your nose and claim the points for themselves. As the winner of the round is the player with the most points when the time runs out, it's imperative you score as much as possible. There are various weapons and defences you can use against your opponents that also gain you points and the advantage, though you gain many more for scoring.

Once you have won your first round in the first arena, instead of being whisked away to the next venue you stay where you are for a total of four rounds against the same players. This may sound repetitive (which at first it is), but you soon realise for the four rounds you must play at each venue the puck number falls until there is only one puck between four players for the final round. This means that every weapon and filthy, dirty, rotten tactic is employed by your opponents to make sure they have the puck that's going to win the game. The artificial intelligence of the computer players is such that if you should score, they go and hang around the Puck Generator waiting for it to be dispersed back into the playing area so they can immediately have the advantage. Very clever, simple, ultimately addictive and fun, which of course is the name of the game.

Minor Moans...

Overall, Dodgem Arena is a surprisingly playable and addictive game. Only very few flaws show through its cool and hip exterior. There are only basically a total of six weapons which admittedly can be upgraded, but I think that Black Friar have missed an opportunity to really go to town with some pretty fantastic weapons and ideas which have sadly been missed. A few secrets wouldn't have gone amiss here either.

There are seven Dodgems, each with their own statistical advantages and disadvantages that do show when you use them, but perhaps a few secret Dodgems would keep the elite players playing that little longer. The same could also be said for the arenas, though there are 11, which is not a bad total when you think about it.

Nit-picking aside, Dodgem Arena will please sports fans and speed freaks alike, while also catering for the few of us that do enjoy a bit of link-up action now and then.

Russell Barnes

SECOND OPINION

Remember we asked for new game genres in the Exchange section? Black Friar seem to have read this themselves - who would've thought of combining a driving game with a sports sim? It's WipEout meets FIFA, and a jolly fine game too...

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	8

85%





The banner got it right - 'ANAL+'...

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Infogrames	Canal+ Multimedia	Sports Sim	Out Now	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card	Analogue

Rushdown or just rushed out? We take to the mountains, slopes and rivers to find the truth about Infogrames 'extreme sports' game...

Rushdown

As soon as the introduction sequence kicks off, you can tell you're in for a fast and furious ride. The graphics depict three deadly and fast events, down mountains on dirt, snow and water accompanied by a hard and furious (not to mention cheesy) Jungle tune pumping away in the background. It's quite well produced and mixes the rendered stuff with real footage of each event to give it a life-like edge.

In case you haven't already guessed, the three events for you to take part in are Mountain Biking, Snowboarding and, for the first time in a PlayStation game, Kayaking. From the 'off' you can choose between only three game-playing options, being Championship, Arcade and Two-Player Split Screen. In Arcade Mode you compete against the clock and in Championship you compete against one other computer-controlled foe. For each of the three events there five courses from around the world. In Arcade you can go through all of these five courses for an event of your choice, or in Championship you must do each event on each course before you move onto the next country. It may sound that there are plenty of courses for your gaming pleasure, but it only takes two or three minutes to complete each track, which left me feeling cheated due to the lack of real substance to the game.

Snowbored?

As far as getting into the game is concerned, I really don't know where to start. There are so many aggravating problems and imperfections within I think it's unlikely anyone ever will really get into the game. Though the graphics are smooth and the backdrops are nice, there are only very few animations for each of the riders in the three events, for example. Check out the screenshots and you've practically seen all the frames of animation for the cardboard snowboarder, and that's no joke. Regardless of the fact that your mountain bike, snowboard, or kayak doesn't even look like it's touching the ground, snow or water, the control method is another big drawback in the game. It's obvious you're on 'rails' within the path of the level, so that you can't leave the course you're on. That fact is forgivable, but the fact that that you can hardly steer your way through this slim playing area renders that game practically unplayable. When you're accelerating, for example, you can't steer at all so you're limited to going in a straight line. You can turn using the shoulder buttons, but to do that you have to stop accelerating altogether, which I've never seen in a game of this nature before and is quite ridiculous.

The whole point of this game, which is also illustrated in the intro, is the speed and exhilaration of 'extreme sports'. Unfortunately this is one of the slowest, jerkiest and downright poor games I've had to play throughout this issue (and many others). Why make a game for a speed junkie that has the mechanics and shortfalls of a Robin Reliant? It's beyond me, that's for sure.

If you're looking for a fast, adrenaline-pumped sports game this Winter, don't buy Rushdown for the simple fact that it's slow, annoying and anything but sporting.

Russell Barnes

One of the slowest, jerkiest and downright poor games around...











SECOND OPINION

Three sports in one, but none of them are any good. The controls are some of the most ridiculous I've ever seen - you're hardly in control at all, and although the graphics are good, the animations are a disaster - the vehicles float an inch or two in the air.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

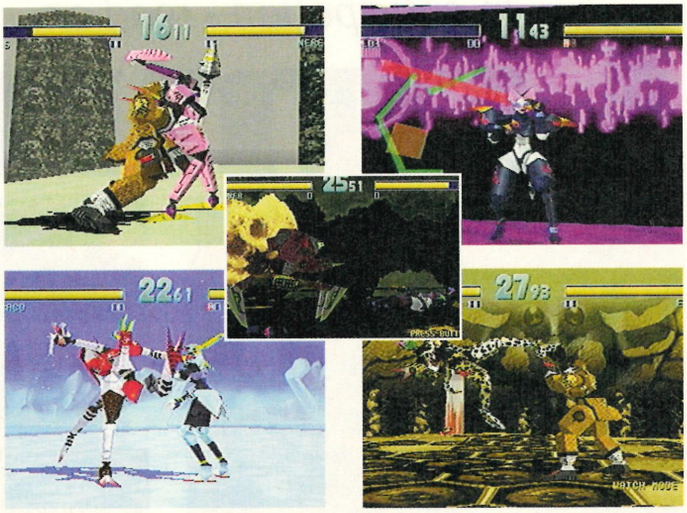
GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	6
GAMEPLAY	3
LIFESPAN	4

34%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
SCEE	Zoom	Beat-'em-up	Out Now	UK	£34.99	1-2	Memory Card	Analogue

Get strewn around the ring by a disjointed polygon... Or alternatively merely throw it back onto the shelf it came from!

Zero Divide 2



There are many ways to spend an evening; in front of the TV, down the local public house or if you're really desperate, you might play Zero Divide 2, but you'd have to be virtually crying out for entertainment!

Maybe I'm being a little too harsh, too picky perhaps. At first glance, you'd think it was a game that reappeared from the dark ages, but if you blank out the dire backgrounds and less-than-impressive animation, there really is a half-decent game in there - somewhere.

If you're interested, you can watch the background story to the game. Although then you find out that whoever's telling the sordid tale, you can't understand a single word he's saying. The graphics which accompany the story are better than those you find while playing the game; a little back to front, you might say.

One good feature is the option of being able to train before you go into the ring. Choose from any of the 18 scenes and then pick any robot you like, whether it be Cancer the Crab, Drayco the Dragon or Tau the Scorpion - who, by the way, does this really disgusting stroking of his poisonous tail when he wins. An added bonus is that you have unlimited time to practise your special moves and get used to your character before starting properly.

Bad Battering

Other good points? There aren't many. Ring-Out is one of the few, where if you are punched, kicked or thrown towards the edge, you can grab on for dear life and try to clamber back into the ring - not forgetting that your opponent can do it too! And if you decide to be Wild 3, you can have the pleasure of shooting the enemy when he's down with your megaton oozy nine millimetre, which I thought was a good enough reason to at least try the game. Once you manage to get past how amateur the game looks, you do begin to enjoy it - but not so much that you can't put it down. What makes it different to other beat-'em-ups is firstly you're able to damage the other player when you hit them, and the more damage you inflict the better as pieces of armour begin to fall away to expose live wires and circuitry. Something else Tau tends to do, incidentally, is to have a spasm attack once you've killed him - not a redeeming quality!

Something to look out for are the female characters, IO and Pixel. IO is a feline (every man's dream?), with quite fluid movement and some painful-looking special moves. You would think that she'd be no match for the big guys like Drayco and Cancer, but she's nimble on her paws.

Pixel is a nurse, as far as I can tell, and again quite graceful, as we expect the women to be. Though she's a bit off-putting with her square-edged outfit and rabbit-eared hair.

As for the men (if you can call them that), they're all the same; big, strong but slow to move around the ring and to react, as are Cancer and Tau, who use their numerous pairs of legs to manoeuvre and attack the enemy.

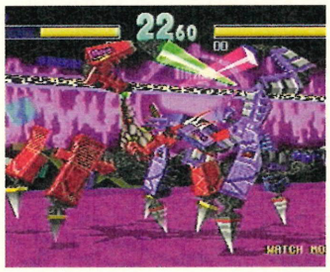
During development, Zoom should have thought more about what they could add to its gameplay rather than what to take away. To make a beat-'em-up more unique takes more than what they've tried to do here - merely giving us robotic polygons with a few added extras isn't going to get shoppers to the shelves.

You can guess my verdict - not very interesting to look at or to play. Personally I would stick with the Tekkens and leave Zero Divide 2 where it belongs - on the shelf.

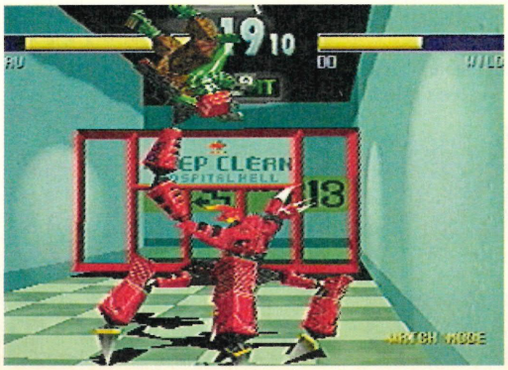
Claire Webster

Stick to the Tekkens and leave Zero Divide 2 where it belongs...











SECOND OPINION

How can you get excited about such uninspiring characters? The way-out creature-type robots are ridiculous, the humanoid ones merely crap. If you're wondering why this one's already on the shelves, it's because we weren't sent a review copy - I wonder why?

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	6
GAMEPLAY	6
LIFESPAN	3

52%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Psygnosis	DMA Design	Puzzle	Out Now	UK	£19.99	1	Memory Card Analogue	Dual Shock Mouse

They're back, they do the can-can and they've still got green hair, but can the Lemmings still excite in 1998? Don't throw yourself off a cliff in anticipation - read on...

Lemmings

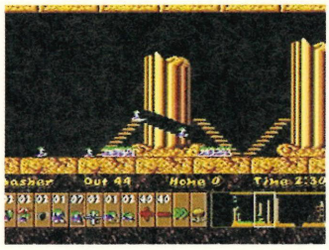




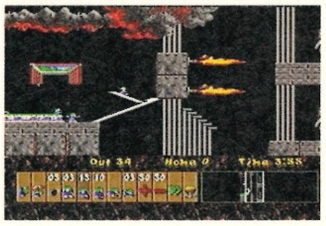


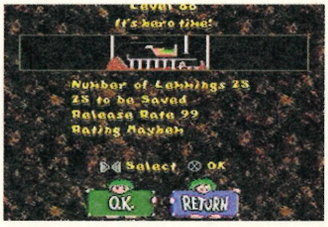












Well, the Lemmings are back in a bargain two-game pack featuring the original game plus Oh No! More Lemmings, which means 209 bloody levels to wade through if you're feeling particularly masochistic. Actually that's a bit harsh. Lemmings, for non-veteran gamers, was a classic PC and Amiga title which genuinely deserved all the plaudits it received at the time and expanded developer DMA Designs' reputation and bank balance a hell of a lot.

I'll say this for this PlayStation version; at £19.99 it's both better value and slightly more fun than the ill-conceived (if reasonably executed) full-priced 3D Lemmings was when that was unleashed upon unsuspecting PlayStation owners just after the console's arrival on Planet Gamer.

The basic premise is to safely guide hordes of cutesy-wutesy green-thatched critters through a series of obstacles through to the goal at the other end, by building blocks, mining, digging and sacrificing the odd unlucky blue-bedressed creature for the sake of the common good. All good character-building stuff and lashings of jolly good fun.

For those of you who know the feeling of being haunted by the game, you'll be glad to hear that, arguably, the control in this PlayStation compilation is even easier thanks to clever use of the joypad's shoulder buttons to move the screen from invisible playing area to visible area (the levels are landscape-based).

And that's yer lot.

The sound; oh the audio, oh those bloody tunes made me want to rip out my PlayStation's sound chip and feed it to the fishes. Either that or have my listening flaps surgically removed. And it all looks a bit hard on the eyes.

This is a cut-price release - fans of retro gaming will snap it up...

The £19.99 factor

Of course, this is a cut-price release, and fans of retro gaming (you propeller-heads, you) will snap it up just to have it in their collection and be able to drag it out for the odd puzzle. It may also simply be worth having it at hand for one of those days where you sit around and find out there's nothing on TV, you've watched every video you have (twice) in the last week and have no more money to go on the piss. It's a case of Now For Something Completely Different, but one more re-run of The Life of Brian will leave you foaming at the mouth. Well, then there's this Lemmings game, ain't there?

The other plus point about Lemmings is it's a guaranteed kid-quietner. At £19.99, it thus becomes something of a bargain. Indeed, playing Lemmings is something of a phase we all go through and whilst you're in the middle of this phase it's one of those games that hook you ridiculously. But when you're small, blue be-smocked and suffering from a green hair day and you have to line up against Lara Croft, Crash Bandicoot and Croc, you're going to suffer by comparison.

Lemmings may be a half-price offering these days, but is still substantially less than a half pint offering whilst still being kinda of fun if you still think girls look pretty in pink, if you know what I mean, 'arry.

Ian Lynch



SECOND OPINION

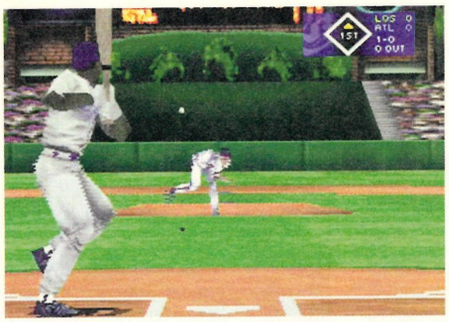
Cobblers, Lynchie - Lemmings is a classic game, and the gameplay has lost nothing over the years. So what if the graphics are 16-bit? So's the price. In Issue Eight's puzzle feature I said Psygnosis should do exactly this, and I stand by it now - ignore him and buy this game.

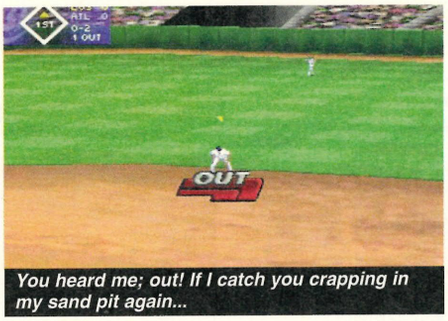
Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

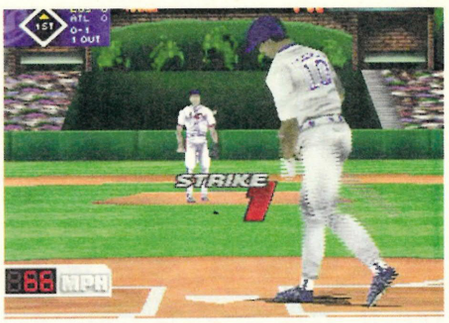
GRAPHICS	3
SOUND	1
GAMEPLAY	6
LIFESPAN	6

59%





You heard me; out! If I catch you crapping in my sand pit again...



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

Home runs, strike-outs, pitchers and steals; do these phrases mean anything to you? Well they soon will if Interplay have their way, as VR Baseball '99 is coming to a PlayStation near you!

VR Baseball '99

Baseball is the most popular spectator sport in the 'good old' US of A, but for some reason it's never really taken off in Europe. Most of us simply dismiss it all as a complicated version of rounders, or a bastardised version of cricket (and both objections are true to a point), but to many Americans, Baseball is the only sport worth watching. The guys at Interplay are once again trying to educate us with the release of VR Baseball '99; the game comes complete with Major League Baseball Association licence, which gives you all the official teams and players. So will this be the game to convert us to baseball maniacs? I really can't see it happening, but lets take a better look anyway.

The first thing you notice about VR Baseball is the graphics; they have to be among the most primitive I've seen in PlayStation game for a good while, although the dire Pool Shark, also reviewed this month, gives it a fair run for its money, to be honest. The players are badly drawn and look as though they have been cut out of wood with a rusty saw, but unfortunately there was no sandpaper around to finish them off properly. Animation-wise things are slightly better, but when you compare VR Baseball to other sports games, most notably any of EA's latest offerings, you can really see the quality gap opening up like a Barry Bonds grand slam homer! Sound is also really poor, with the odd spot effect throw in here and there but little else to even cause a stir, and the American national anthem that proceeds each game is nothing short of dire. It sounds like someone has deliberately set out to take the piss!

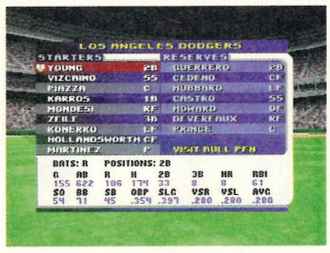
Strike Three...

If you can forgive the cosmetic problems and focus on the game itself, VR Baseball isn't all that bad. All the real-life teams are included so if you follow the baseball on Sky TV (so that's probably about 10 people, 15 at the outside!) you can choose your fave team and also have the chance to control the actual players. In addition to this, the tactical elements of Baseball can also play a large part, with visits to the bullpen and the mound all part of keeping your team on the winning track. Although as I've said, the problem is that all this stuff mean absolutely nothing to most of us Brits, and is therefore wasted.

Baseball games are always something of a grey area in Europe, for the simple reason that 95% of the gameplaying public haven't got a bloody clue how the sport works, let alone who the game's stars are and what they look like. Yeah, the Major League Licence means you've got the Ronaldos and Shearers of the baseball world at your fingertips, but if you haven't got a clue what their strengths are, or even what they look like, what's the damn point? This major problem means that any baseball game is up against it right from the start, and this then focuses your attention on the gameplay, which is something that seems to have been forgotten altogether by the programmers. VR Baseball '99 sounds bad, looks worse and the playability is pretty much non-existent which, I'm afraid, puts it well and truly in Shit Street as far as being recommended goes. There are much better baseball games available for the PlayStation, and if you do fancy a game of America's favourite sport I'd strongly recommend you to check them out first!

Alan King





Focus on the game itself and VR Baseball '99 isn't all that bad...

SECOND OPINION

Baseball games are a grey area in Europe as Alan rightly points out. Combine this with the fact that it's not much cop anyway, it's safe to say that VR Baseball '99 isn't going to reach many final draughts on the Christmas list front.

Russell Barnes

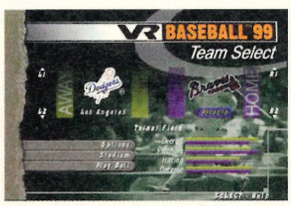
THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	4
SOUND	4
GAMEPLAY	4
LIFESPAN	5

45%

TEAM TALK...

So you haven't played a baseball game before and you don't know you Atlanta Braves from your Pittsburgh Pirates? Well check out our short guide to the best and worst the MLB has to offer! Now when ya' mates come around make sure, by accident of course, you get a shit-hot team and they just get, well a shit team really! Are we good to you or what!



TEAMS FOR YOU:
Atlanta Braves
NY Yankees
Seattle Mariners
Pittsburgh Pirates
Texas Rangers



TEAMS FOR YA' MATES:
Minnesota Twins
NY Cubs
LA Dodgers
Baltimore Orioles

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Sony CEE	Disney	2D Platform	Out Now	UK	£19.99	1	Memory Card

Disney's Action Game Featuring Hercules

Well, it's a daft title for starters...





As I'm sure you're already aware, this game is based very closely on Disney's masterpiece that tells the story of a muscle-clad young man who must overcome many obstacles that stands between him and a rather nifty 'God-hood' up on Mount Olympus.

When the game begins you're treated to actual film footage of the cartoon to introduce all the characters, and the plot behind the film/game ahead. The game itself is rather old school in that it's 2D platform game which isn't solely side scrolling, but is cute to the extreme. This, however, doesn't make it a bad game as Disney have done a cracking job (what else would you expect?) of making Herc and the rest of the characters come alive with some excellent animations and hilarious voice clips.

As far as gameplay's concerned, Hercules has no shortage of varied challenges but it must be stressed the game is designed for the younger end of the PlayStation market. It would probably be fair to say the age group would be from five to around about 12 or 13 on this one. It has more than enough to keep them coming back for more, and it has a save function using the memory card for those that really want to progress through the levels.

It can't be denied Disney's Action Game Featuring Hercules has a nonsense of a long name, but for the bargain, knock-down price of £19.99 it's great for the kids at Christmas and great for the relatives' old wallet. Give it a go, you won't be disappointed.

Russell Barnes

SECOND OPINION

It wouldn't win any awards for depth and complexity, but what the hell - it's for the kids. As a title for the younger gamer it works very well. The animation on the main character is great in a cartoony sort of way, and the difficulty level is perfect for its target.

Ian Osborne

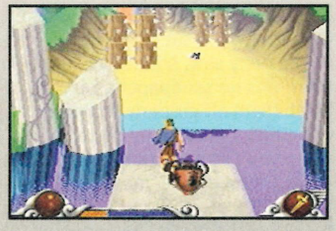
THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	6

73%



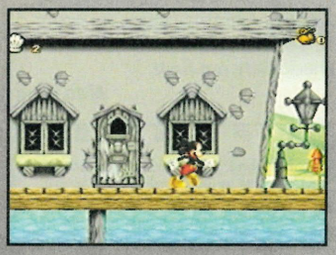


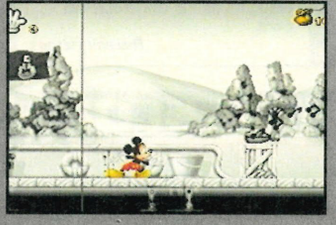


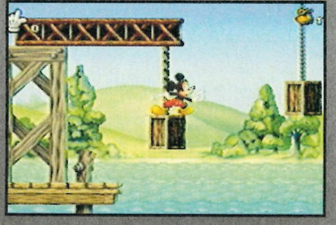
PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Sony CEE	Disney	2D Platform	Out Now	UK	£19.99	1	None

Mickey's Wild Adventure

More fun-filled frolics with Disney's main mouse...





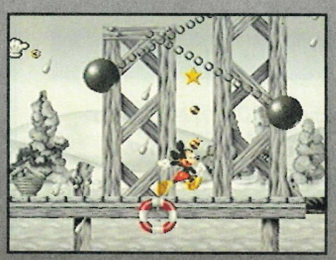


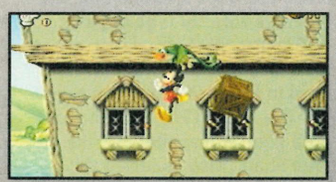
I remember this one back in its Mega Drive days, and it's unfortunate because this is basically exactly the same. All that's happened is the code has been ported onto the PlayStation and nothing else - no graphical upgrades, no extended or added missions, just Mickey as he was several years ago.

This is something of a shame, but being another Disney product it is still playable and it has just the sort of cartoon capery about it that the kids adore. Each level takes place as sort of a playable version of one of Mickey's silver screen escapades, and kicks off with Mickey's first every appearance in the black-and-white short film Steam Boat Willie from way back in 1928. It has much the same pros and cons as Hercules, except Mickey's Wild Adventure isn't compatible with a memory card and lacks even passwords, so there's no way that you can save your progress. This means if you've any intention of completing the game, you must do so in one sitting or not at all, but I very much doubt the young ones that play will really be all that bothered.

Unlike Hercules, there is little to offer an older gamesplayer as most of the levels are incredibly short and only require you to cross a few screens to complete a level by jumping and throwing projectiles, as you would expect from a side-scrolling platform game. Perhaps it's not quite as polished as some of Disney's other titles, but it's still harmless fun nevertheless, and little Tommy will be pleased to see this one on Christmas Day (as I'm sure will Disney)...

Russell Barnes





SECOND OPINION

This game, again for the kids, would score higher if it had been converted from the Mega Drive instead of just porting it. There's no excuse for it not recognising a memory card. The structure of the game's good, though, with each level a Mickey film.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	6
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	5

69%

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Filling in the following short questionnaire will help us make sure extreme PlayStation continues getting better by giving you, the reader, the chance to tell us what you want in a PlayStation magazine. The entries, which must be received before 15th January 1999, will be drawn randomly out of a very large hat - please be totally honest with your answers, as your chance of winning will in no way, be affected by them.

ABOUT YOU

1. Name

_____

2. Age _____ **years**

3. Male or Female _____

4. Address _____

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_____

5. What is your occupation?

- ☐ At school
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Employed full-time
- ☐ Employed part-time
- ☐ Self Employed
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Retired

6. What is your annual income before tax?

- ☐ Under £5,000
- ☐ £5,000 - £9,999
- ☐ £10,000 - £14,999
- ☐ £15,000 - £19,999
- ☐ £20,000 - £24,999
- ☐ £25,000 - £29,999
- ☐ £30,000 - £34,999
- ☐ £35,000 or over

7. Please rate the following genres of games in order of preference (1=worst, 12=best):

- ☐ Driving
- ☐ Sim Games
- ☐ Sports
- ☐ Doom-style shooter
- ☐ Shoot-'em-up
- ☐ Adventure
- ☐ 3D Action Adventure
- ☐ RPG
- ☐ Puzzler
- ☐ Beat-'em-up
- ☐ Strategy Game
- ☐ Platformer

THE MAGAZINE

8. Is this the first issue of EPM you have bought (Yes or No)? _____

9. How often do you, or do you intend to buy extreme PlayStation?

- ☐ Every month
- ☐ Every other month
- ☐ Once every few months
- ☐ Never again

10. Which of the following aspects of the magazine do you most like? (Tick as many as you wish)

- ☐ The price £2.95
- ☐ The cover
- ☐ The free gift
- ☐ Editorial style
- ☐ Design
- ☐ Signals
- ☐ Expected
- ☐ X-Rated
- ☐ X-Rated Platinum
- ☐ X-Rated Import
- ☐ Feature
- ☐ Tips & Cheats
- ☐ Exchange
- ☐ Stuff

11. If you don't buy the magazine every month, what changes to the magazine would make you want to buy it more frequently?

_____

_____

11. Which other PlayStation mags do you buy and how often?	Every month	Every other month	Once every few months
PlayStation Plus	☐	☐	☐
The Official PlayStation Magazine	☐	☐	☐
PlayStation Power	☐	☐	☐
Essential PlayStation	☐	☐	☐
The Official PlayStation Tips Magazine	☐	☐	☐
PlayStation Pro	☐	☐	☐
PlayStation Zone	☐	☐	☐
Play	☐	☐	☐
PowerStation	☐	☐	☐
Total PlayStation	☐	☐	☐
Station	☐	☐	☐
PlayStation Solutions	☐	☐	☐

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- Assault Rig
- Auto Destruct
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- Ballblazer Champion
- Bio Freaks
- Bloody Roar
- Bomberman World
- Bubble Bobble
- Bubsy 3D
- Bushido Blade 1 & 2
- Bust a Move 1, 2 & 3
- C
- Cardinal Syn
- Carnage Heart
- Cheesy
- Circuit Breakers
- Colin McRae Rally
- Colony Wars
- Command & Conquer 'Red Alert' & 'Retaliation'
- Contra Legacy of War
- Cool Boarders 1 & 2
- Courier Crisis
- Crash Bandicoot 1 & 2
- Crime Killer
- Critical Depth
- Criticom
- Croc
- Crusader: No Remorse
- D
- D
- Dark Forces
- Darklight Conflict
- Dead Ball Zone
- Dead or Alive
- Death Trap Dungeon
- Descent
- Descent Maximum
- Destruction Derby 1 & 2
- Diablo
- Die Hard 1, 2 & 3
- Disruptor
- Doom
- Duke Nukem: Time to Kill
- Duke Nukem: Total Meltdown
- Dynasty Warriors
- E
- Excalibur 2555AD
- F
- Fade to Black
- Felony 11-79
- FIFA '96, '97 & '98
- Fighting Force
- Final Doom
- Final Fantasy VII
- Firo & Klawd
- Formula 1
- Formula 1 '97
- Formula Karts
- Forsaken
- Frogger
- G
- G-Police
- Gex & Gex 3D
- Ghost in the Shell
- Gran Turismo
- Grand Theft Auto
- Gunship 2000
- H
- Hercules
- Hexen
- I
- Impact Racing
- In The Hunt
- Indy 500
- Int. Track & Field
- J
- Jeremy McGrath Super '98
- Jersey Devil
- Jet Rider
- Jonah Lomu
- Jumping Flash 1 & 2
- K
- King of Fighters '95, '96 & '97
- Klonoa
- Krazy Ivan
- Kula World
- L
- Lemmings 3D
- Loaded
- Lone Soldier
- Lucky Luke
- M
- Machine Hunter
- Madden '97, '98 & '99
- Magic Carpet
- Magic: The Gathering
- Marvel Super Heroes
- Mass Destruction
- MDK
- Mech Warrior 2
- Metal Gear Solid
- Micro Machines V3
- Monopoly
- Monster Trucks
- Mortal Kombat: 3, 4, Sub Zero & Trilogy
- Moto Racer 1 & 2
- Motor Head
- Motor Toon Grand Prix 1 & 2
- N
- N20
- Nagano Winter Olympics '98
- Nanotek Warrior
- Nascar Racing 1, '98 & '99
- NBA Hangtime
- NBA Jam Extreme
- NBA Live '96, '97 & '98
- NBA Shootout '96, '97 & '98
- NBA Zone 2 & '98
- Need for Speed 1, 2 & 3
- NFL '97 & '98
- NFL Gameday '97, '98 & '99
- NHL Face Off & '98
- Nightmare Creatures
- Nuclear Strike
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- Pandemonium 1 & 2
- Panzer Bandits
- Parappa the Rapper
- Pitfall & Pitfall 3D
- Porsche Challenge
- Poy Poy
- Pro Pinball
- Project Overkill
- Psychic Force
- R
- Rage Racer
- Rally Cross
- Rapid Racer
- Rascal
- Ray Racers
- Ray Storm
- Rayman
- Reboot
- Resident Evil 1, 2 & Director's Cut
- Return Fire
- Ridge Racer
- Ridge Racer Rev
- Rise of the Robot 2
- Riven: The Sequel to Myst
- Road Rash & 3D
- Rosco McQueen
- S
- San Francisco Rush
- Shadowmaster
- Shell Shock
- Sim City 2000
- Skull Monkeys
- Soul Blade
- Soviet Strike
- Spawn
- Speed Racer
- Speedster
- Spice World
- Spider
- Spot Goes to Hollywood
- Spyro the Dragon
- Star Fighter
- Star Gladiator
- Steel Harbinger
- Steel Reign
- Street Fighter Alpha 1, 2 & Ex Plus
- Street Racer
- Suikoden
- Super Puzzle Fighter 2
- Swagman
- T
- Tekken 1, 2 & 3
- Tempest X3
- Tennis Arena
- Test Drive 4 & 5
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- Tetris Plus
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- The Lost World
- Theme Hospital
- Theme Park
- Three Lions
- Tiger Shark
- Time Commander
- Time Crisis
- Tobal Number 1 & 2
- TOCA
- Tokyo Highway Battle
- Tomb Raider 1 & 2
- Tommi Makinen Rally
- Toshinden 1, 2 & 3
- Total Driving
- Total Eclipse Turbo
- Total NBA '97 & '99
- Treasures of the Deep
- Triple Play '97, '98 & '99
- Tunnel B1
- Twisted Metal 1, 2 & 3
- V
- V-Rally
- V-Tennis
- Victory Boxing
- Vigilante 8
- VR Baseball '97
- VR Powerboat Racing
- Vs
- W
- War Craft 2
- War Games
- War Gods
- Warhammer: Dark Omen
- Warhawk
- WCW Vs The World
- Wing Over
- Wipeout & 2097
- World Cup '98
- World League Soccer '98
- Worms 1 & 2
- WWF In Your House
- WWF War Zone
- WWF Wrestlemania
- X
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Our Finest Fifty

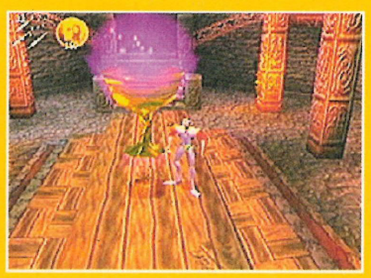
Still looking for a PSX game this Christmas? Check out our all-time PlayStation top 50 and choose wisely...

Picture the scene - your rich aunt wants to buy you a PlayStation game for Christmas, but you can't think what to ask for. There are just so many - how do you separate the good from the bad? That's where Our Finest Fifty comes in; a list of the greatest games old and new ever to hit the PlayStation.

Before reading on, bear two things in mind. Firstly, the game's relative positions in our top 50 aren't based on the scores they got when first reviewed. Standards change with time, and sometimes a game which scored 95% a year ago might not be as good as a game which got 90% last month. Standards change, and games have to be judged by the standards of their day. Secondly, the chart reflects the current EPM team's opinions - of course, not everyone will agree with our choices, complaining their favourite game was left out or a title they hated is included. Finally, where a game spawns several sequels, we only included the best in the series. Why clog the chart with endless variations on the same game when there's so much exciting and original material out there?

Enough talk - let's look at the games...

50 MediEvil



Sexy graphics or what? Technically it's the state of the art, but it packs a punch in the gameplay stakes too.

Each of the game's 22 fully-interactive 3D levels offer complete freedom of movement - no invisible rails to be found here. It's not limited to combat either - there are some really snazzy puzzles on offer too, as well as excellent cosmetic touches like finding sheet music for the skeletal organ player. All in all, MedEvil is a brilliantly-executed game, packed with much detail and innovation.

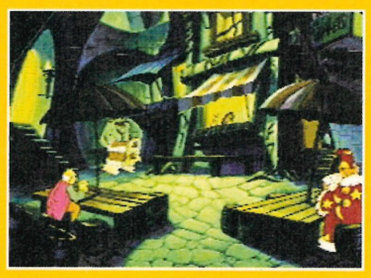
49 Soviet Strike



This is the most cerebral of the already very strategic Strike series. It only has five levels, but they're huge, with numerous mission objectives

Avoiding the pitfalls encountered by the hideous Urban Strike, Soviet Strike is tough. It also concentrates on the main vehicle (the helicopter) instead of introducing other craft . This is a good thing - the game engine was written with a helicopter in mind, and planes, tanks and the like never really felt right. Instead, Soviet Strike goes back to basics, updating the Strike formula for the PSX and producing a damned fine shooter.

48 Discworld 2: Missing, Presumed...!?



We've yet to see THE definitive PlayStation point-and-click adventure, but Discworld 2 comes as close as any game yet released. A wild and wacky cartoon offering based on the novels of Terry Pratchett, the game's Pythonesque humour and warped logic keeps you chuckling for hours.

The game's been unfairly criticised as having forced, obscure puzzles, but if you can appreciate the game's humour, its logic makes perfect sense - far more so than Broken Sword 2, where your actions often only make sense retrospectively.

47 Destruction Derby 2



DD2 has aged well in as much as the graphics still hold up pretty well to today's standards. Several different single-player game types are on offer, allowing you to race around numerous courses in a bid to come first or cause as much damage as possible to your opponents' cars. As you crash around the different circuits your steering goes, bonnet crumples, wings dent and so on until you can no longer move.

If you haven't taken Destruction Derby 2 out for a test drive, do so today - you'll get a pleasant surprise.

46 Worms

If you think this one's a hoot on your own, try playing it with a few friends. It's an unbelievable laugh!

Each player, human or computer, controls a team of four worms. Taking it in turns, you must use the range or weapons at your disposal to blast the squit out of your opponents' invertebrate troops.

The weapons all have their advantages and disadvantages, so picking the right one is a real test of strategy.

Technically the game wouldn't tax a Mega Drive, but sheer genius of design gets it into the lower reaches of the top 50. It's a welcome addition to anyone's collection, especially at Platinum prices.



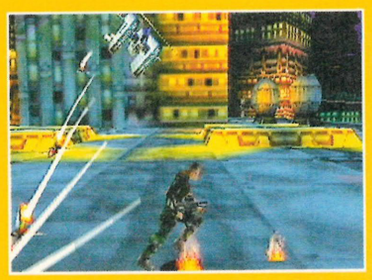
45 Breath of Fire III



The third game in the Breath of Fire series is its first PSX incarnation. It's not without its flaws, but is still a great RPG.

Technically, the game offers few advances over the SNES originals. There's no recorded speech or cut scenes and you still view the rather 16-bit world through a fixed-position 3D perspective, though by holding a shoulder button you can temporarily move the camera (great for hidden objects puzzles). This lack of technical wizardry has allowed for a huge world and an intricate storyline with cool sub-plots, which makes BOF III an RPG to be reckoned with.

44 Apocalypse



This 3D shoot-'em-up features Bruce Willis as the main character. Although single-minded, changes of pace and tactics stop it becoming boring. Sometimes the action is viewed behind the main character Tomb Raider-style, sometimes from the side as Willis negotiates a platform section and when surrounded by malevolent beasts, the camera switches to an overhead perspective for some Smash TV-style action. There are neat touches on offer too. For example, every now and then you pass a video screen blasting out alternative rock, using videos licensed for use in the game.

43 Rage Racer



The finest hour for the Ridge Racer series came in the form of Rage Racer. It has all the original arcade attributes: speed, fluidity and ease of play as well as an excellent soundtrack that brought me back for more just in itself. To give the game a little more substance and depth you have more tracks and track routes to take as well as the ability to upgrade and change the set up of your cars. It was something of a Gran Turismo in its time. Obviously it doesn't compare to the big GT head to head, but it's still a damn fine game.

42 Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo



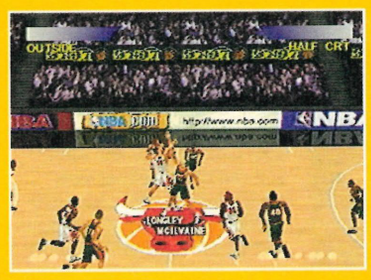
Dr Mario with a Street Fighter theme? Sounds like a recipe for a rip-off. Appearances are deceptive, though - Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo is really cool. Coloured gems fall in pairs. These can be moved or rotated as they fall, the aim being to match similar colours and make them disappear. Successful chains make extra gems fall on your computer- or human-controlled foe's side of the playing area. The Street Fighter characters duking it out in the middle of the screen are an irrelevance, but who cares? The game succeeds on its merits.

41 Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain



The graphics are distinctly 16-bit, but so what? You can't have rendered backgrounds, multi-polygonal characters and pixel-perfect light shading in an RPG - their worlds are to memory-intensive. What Blood Omen: LoK does have over most RPGs, though, are some excellent cut sequences and chilling voice-overs. Taking the role of a vampire seeking revenge over those who murdered him, LoK takes you through an epic gothic horror tale, with exciting dungeons to explore and characters who are (for once) more than cardboard cut-outs who only exist to react to the player.

40 Total NBA '97



Great attention to detail. The court looks genuinely wooden, and even offers reflections of the moving players on the shiny surface. The motion-captured animation is clear and the action fluid, even when eight human players compete using two Multi Taps. There are genuine tactics involved here, using the players' individual strengths to your advantage. Start a move with your best passer, don't let your rebounds man take the initial shot and if you're shooting from outside the three-point zone, make sure you're using a specialist in long-distance shots.

39 Blast Radius

This is as good as space dogfighting gets. It's basically Colony Wars with the strategy sections removed and the shoot-'em-up blasting beefed up to the max.

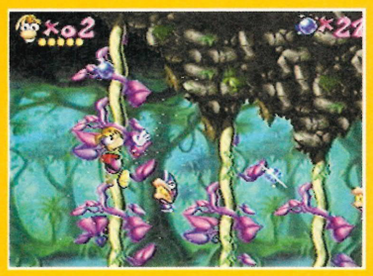
There's a great Elite-style radar for finding your foes, and when giving chase, their artificial intelligence offers some great seat-of-your-pants action. They weave around like a seagull on steroids, making it really hard to get on their tail and give chase. For once you feel like you're chasing a real craft with a real pilot instead of a computer-controlled drone that's little more than a mobile target.

Blast Radius is the closest you can get to the real thing without joining NASA.



our finest fifty

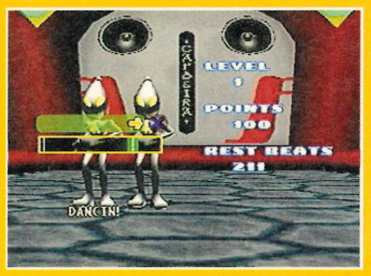
38 Rayman



As far as 2D platform games go, Rayman is the ultimate. It has wonderful graphics that are sharp and busy and a lead character with all the moves and abilities you would want from the genre. The first half of the game is not too taxing to complete - it's the second half that really grips you round the throat. The final few levels are some of the toughest we've ever encountered, but not once did we want to give up.

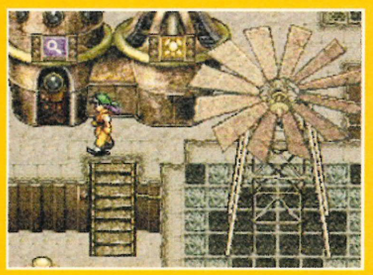
If you're not into 3D platform games Rayman is probably what you're looking for. Check it out on Platinum, it shouldn't be missed.

37 Bust-A-Groove



A simple concept employed to deliver something special. The basic idea is to carry out button combinations in time with the music you want to your dancer to move to. String together combos of the button combinations to make your dancer do better and more complex dance steps and actions. You must dance against a series of competitors and try and hold the attention of the intelligent camera for the longest to be the winner. Amazing music, amazing dancing, amazing animations (really lifelike). Essential party and versus game.

36 Suikoden



Another RPG with fearsomely dated visuals but a spectacular plot. Along the way you recruit up to 108 characters. Not all are available in battle - some stay behind in your ever-expanding castle, carrying out tasks like cooking meals, storing equipment and running an inn. You can also find incidental items such as tins of paint (for one of the characters to use on a mural), sound and window settings (to adjust the text box frames or in-game music) and Old Book volumes to offer background on the world. Suikoden's unrivalled sense of progress mean you can't put it down.

35 Gex 3D: Enter The Gecko



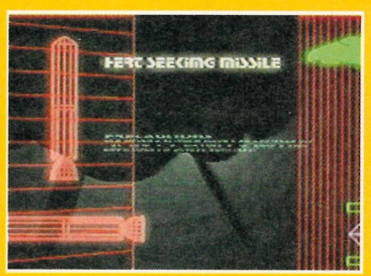
Top notch 3D action all round from Gex's original creators, Crystal Dynamics. Originally a character in a 2D platform game on the 3DO, Gex has come along way to the PlayStation in by far his greatest outing yet. The game takes half a step away from the platform genre and allows players to adventure around each of the levels completing multiple tasks and objectives on the way. It has witty humour thanks to the vocal talents of the brilliant Leslie Phillips and smooth solid graphics. Spyro the Dragon would certainly be our first choice in this genre, but Gex 3D comes a fair second.

34 WarGames



Imagine a Strike game where you have control over several land- and air-based craft, taking direct control of one and instructing the others to do your bidding. Like Red Alert, you can control either side, each offering 15 missions with multiple objectives. Charging in and blasting everything works for the first few goals, but after that you must think more tactically. The artificial intelligence avoids allowing large parts of the game would play itself while you sat back and watched. Instead you have to keep your eye on your forces at all times, which is exactly how it should be.

33 R-Types



Resurrected from the void of time, this is the father of all 2D scrolling shooters. In one form or another, R-Type has made an appearance on most mainstream computer gaming platforms. The PlayStation version is true to the original arcade version, but offers both R-Type and R-Type 2 on one CD, with a nice introduction sequence thrown in for good measure. For 2D side-scrolling shooters, there's nothing to match the might of the ageing R-Types; but then again they just don't make them like they used to.

32 Street Fighter Ex+Alpha

Capcom's first venture into the realms of polygon-based characters, as opposed to sprites, isn't true 3D. Instead it features 2D battles and a 3D camera - 2.5D, if you will.

The game won't disappoint Street Fighter fans. All the main characters are there, as are all the expected special moves, sneaky tactics and combos which made the 2D versions so playable. The graphics aren't without the occasional glitch, but overall the new game engine works well. It's certainly better than Street Fighter the Movie, a terrible update and an insult to the Street Fighter brand.

A fine update to a classic series.



31 Formula 1 '97



Formula 1 '97 removed the spectacular bugs which cursed the first Formula 1 game. It's not without its faults (the opponents still stick to the racing line like they were on a Scalextric), but its lush, cinematic graphics and exciting Murray Walker/Martin Brundle commentary make it the closest yet to the real thing. It's certainly better than Formula 1 '98, which suffers from lack of graphical detail and dodgy crash physics.

For sheer speed and adrenaline, you can't beat Formula 1 '97. It's only a few flaws away from a top ten position.

30 Time Crisis



Once the king of the light gun game, Time Crisis has since been overtaken by Point Blank, but is still a mighty fine outing.

Time Crisis' unique feature is you can duck behind objects or hide in doorways, invulnerable (but also impotent) until you choose to step into the firing line and exchange shots with the legion of baddies on offer, including some impressive hardware at the end of each stage. A little more variety might have carried it into the top 20, but even so it's a great game - especially at Platinum prices.

29 Exhumed



The heart of Exhumed is in puzzle-based exploration. As you make your way, you find items which increase your abilities, allowing you to jump further, fly, swim and climb. This opens new areas, previously inaccessible areas can now be reached. As it isn't broken down into bite-sized levels, this works really well. The monsters you meet in Exhumed aren't quite up to Doom's standard, but they're pretty good all the same. The game's original approach to the Doom style and its excellence of execution make it a shamefully-underrated classic. If you can find it, give it a go.

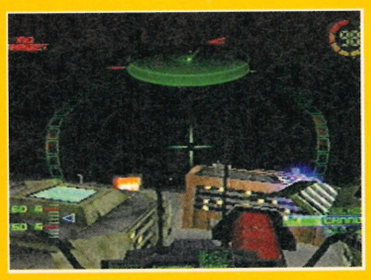
28 Syndicate Wars



Controlling four agents, you must complete a series of missions including rescuing prisoners, kidnapping key enemy personnel and stealing your rival's equipment. Oh, and killing. Lots of it.

You have loads of weapons at your disposal and the chance to develop new ones, and lots of strategies to work out as you plough through the game's many levels. It takes more than brute force to beat Syndicate Wars. This isn't a game that's easy to pick up and play, but invest a little effort into it and it will keep you playing into the wee small hours.

27 G-Police



Is this the ultimate mix of strategy and action? You fly a rotorless helicopter through a brilliantly-drawn cyberpunk cityscape, taking on rival corporations. Mastering your craft is a task in itself, and master it you must - each and every mission is varied and exciting, with lots to do and plenty to do it with. No wonder it comes on two CDs.

Your craft is armed with some neat kit. As well as the expected weapons, there's also a waypoint indicator and radar scanner which, for once, actually achieve their goals. Strategic use of resources is also demanded.

26 WipeOut 2097



This is a race game with a difference. The 'cars' are actually futuristic hovercrafts, speeding down twisty tracks collecting weapons and blasting foes as they go. The 'hovercraft' (or F5000s, if you prefer) have handling physics that's wildly different from normal car racers. Although responsive, they can't turn sharply at speed - you need to anticipate the bends and use your air brakes to drag the nose round. Even Formula 1/Gran Turismo experts take time picking it up. WipEout 2097 is a huge improvement on its brilliant-but-dowdy predecessor, and a 'must' for race fans - especially at £20.

25 Grand Theft Auto

Difficult to describe this one. It's certainly not one for the kiddies (cert 18) due to the rather explicit contents and references to all things bad.

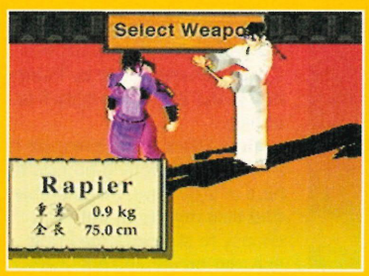
You can steel cars, shoot people, be a cop killer, bomb buildings, smuggle drugs, assassinate big cheeses and generally anything else you can think of in your quest to become a big time villain.

Originality is where GTA picks up big brownie points for me. There is a big challenge waiting for you and there are some nice cars to steal and sell along the way; probably not a good idea to take it too seriously, though, or you could end up in the slammer!



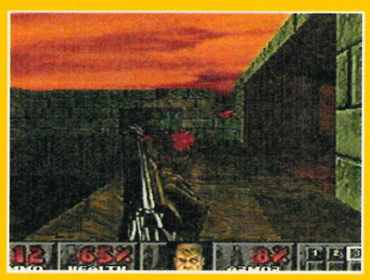
our finest fifty

24 Bushido Blade



No energy bars here - instead you get realistic injuries. If your leg's cut, you limp. Take a stab to the chest and you're dead - straight away. This doesn't mean the battles are short - with so much to lose, you can't afford to take a blow to deliver one of your own. Instead you bide your time, picking your spot and striking only when you're sure. You must also fight with honour - break the code of Bushido and you're thrown out of the game in disgrace. If this wasn't original enough, Bushido Blade also offers a link-up mode and own-eye perspective battles. This is a real thinking man's beat-'em-up.

23 Doom



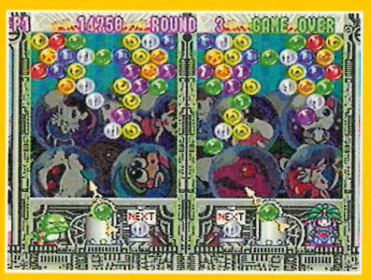
By today's standards, the graphics are poor - groundbreaking in their day, but lacking in detail now. The game engine's also limited - you can't crouch, jump, look up and down or climb a step you'd manage easily in the real world. So why is it in the top 50? Sheer design genius, that's why. There's a right way and a wrong way to tackle each level. Even straightforward monster fights require subtle tactics - each creature has its own strengths and weaknesses, as do your weapons. Look for ways to turn situations to your advantage. There are plenty of levels to get your teeth into too.

22 World Cup '98



With the France '98 licence and all the official stadiums, World Cup '98 allows you to play an exact replica of this Summer's tournament. The scrolling is a little rough, but the graphics and animations are faster than last night's curry. It's easy to pick up and play, and the exhaustive menu system allows you to adjust almost any factor to your individual requirements. The commentators even name the players as they receive the ball. As a game, World Cup '98 has since been overtaken by Actua Soccer 3 and ISS Pro '98, but if you want to re-live this year's tournament, look no further.

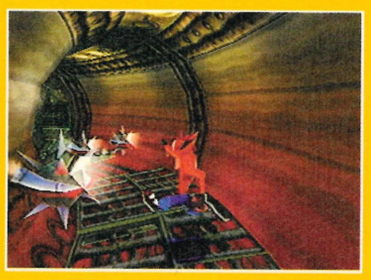
21 Bust-A-Move 3DX



Aiming a harpoon gun at the base of the screen, you fire coloured bubbles at the ceiling, where they stick. Some bubbles are already there - the aim of the game is to destroy them by connecting similarly-coloured bubbles. Successful chains inflict more spheres on your opponent.

Bust-a-Move 3DX is easy to pick up, but underneath is a range or subtle tactics which demand patience, skill and forethought. It has a level editor too, so you need never get bored. A great game which, looking back, seems a little under-rated at 86% (Issue Four).

20 Crash Bandicoot 2



The cutest platformer around, Crash Bandicoot 2 features solid, cartoony graphics with no clipping or glitching whatsoever. The characters are brilliantly animated with some excellent humour, such as Crash's little dance when he completes a level or the way he swells when stung by a bee. It's a little easy, the player being able to accumulate a huge number of lives, but as it's aimed at the younger end of the market, this is no bad thing. For sheer gameplay, it can hardly be faulted.

19 Micro Machines V3



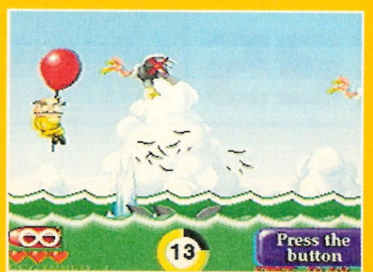
This is no ordinary racing game. Licensed from those tiny toys, the vehicles are so small the race tracks they compete on are ordinary household environments. As a kid, did you ever chalk a track onto the garage floor and race your toy cars on it? Now you can do it again, on the PSX. Using the Supersprint-style rotate-and-accelerate controls, Micro Machines V3 has you competing on snooker tables, patios, school desks and the breakfast table. The sheer character and playability of MM V3, along with the variety of craft (buggies, sports cars, tanks, etc) make it a true classic.

18 Point Blank

It's far too easy to become a Point Blank addict; there really should be a warning on the box about it. It's so good, in fact, it doesn't need fancy graphics and bells and whistles to make our top 50.

The shooting is accurate and the game's varied - the objectives are mostly simple as they should be so you can basically test your reflexes and gun totting prowess to the max. Try it with a friend (two guns can be used) for the ultimate adrenaline match up and an excellent party game.

If you like to shoot against the clock, or a friend come and get it.



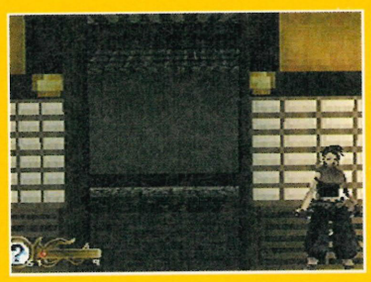
17 Soul Blade



This one comes from the same stable as Tekken, but takes a very different approach. Instead of assaulting people with fist and foot, Soul Blade introduces all sorts of deadly weapons such as swords, sai, an axe, a hammer and nunchuku (renamed for the UK release).

Soul Blade emphasises speed and tactical fighting rather than knowledge of the game's huge range of special moves. The enormous characters animate brilliantly when pulling off their attacks, and you can't help wincing when they get cut. A great game, and a fine companion for the Tekkens.

16 Tenchu: Stealth Assassins



The inlay screams, 'Live by honour, kill by stealth'. It's true too - you won't get far by walking up to your foe and slashing away until he falls. Instead you must creep around hiding in shadows, stalking your opponents unseen and taking them out with some spectacular one-move fatalities achieved when you deliver your blow without being spotted. Tenchu's Tomb Raider-style controls take a little getting used to, but persevere and you're in for one of the best 3D games ever. Ideal for those who like their games a little cerebral (and pleasingly gory).

15 Colin McRae Rally



This is one ultra-realistic rally sim. Unlike V-Rally and Tommi Mäkinen, Colin McRae Rally reproduces the real sport. Each rally is divided into bite-sized stages, which must be completed in as short a time as possible.

There are no other cars to overtake - it's just you against the clock. Don't assume it's boring, though. Keeping the car on slippery, narrow mud tracks is a task in itself, taxing your driving skills to the max. Good job McRae's real-life co-driver Nicky Grist is on hand to offer advice about the road ahead...

14 Abe's Oddysee



This one's a platform game with distinct puzzle overtones and more than a little Flashback/Heart of Darkness thrown in for good measure. As Abe, you must rescue your Mudokon friends by getting them to follow you. First you must find them, exploring your world and solving puzzles using your unique abilities such as possessing another character or even talking to them using the new conversation feature known as Gamespeak. Add to this the sparkling graphics and wonderful animation and you've a real Platinum-priced winner on your hands.

13 MotorHead



If you're looking for an arcade driving experience (as opposed to Gran Turismo's simulation-like execution) look no further than Gremlin's MotorHead. It's bloody hard - you have to work your nuts off to get anywhere near the leaders, but it's well worth the effort. The game engine runs faster than one of Lemmy's riffs and its physics are realistic and consistent. It might not have the depth of TOCA or Gran Turismo, but for sheer arcade adrenaline rush, it can't be beaten.

12 Colony Wars: Vengeance

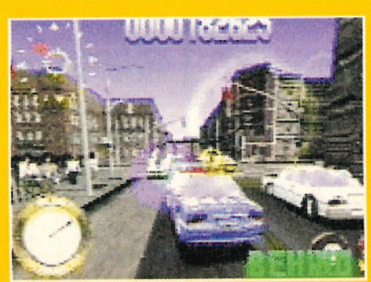


This game, reviewed this very issue, is huge. It's a veritable space opera of 19 episodes, each introduced by a cut scene of near-movie quality. The dogfights are fast and exciting, with great graphics and sound, and there are six different endings for you to find.

If you're into pure arcade blasting action, go for Blast Radius. If you like a strong storyline and adventure-like overall strategy, though, Colony Wars Vengeance is for you. This is the game the Wing Commander titles should've been...

11 Die Hard Trilogy

Fox Interactive worked really hard to prove that movie licence tie-ins aren't all a pile of cash-in shit. For your money (20 quid now it's on Platinum) you get three top games that would all sit very well as stand-alone products in their own right. Each of the three games are loosly based on each of the three Die Hard films utilising the best bits of each to create the games. First there's the adventure through the Nakatomi Plaza. The shoot-out at the airport in Die Harder is portrayed in a Time Crisis style. Finally, you can speed around the streets of New York in a fast, action-packed driving game in search of bombs featured in Die Hard: With a Vengeance.



10 Smash Court Tennis



A real gem as far as sheer playability and clever game design goes. Fans of the SNES Super Tennis game will be pleased in the respect that Smash Court reproduces the same magic. This brilliant game stands amidst a deceptive cuteness using little super deformed characters that smash their way around a colourful tennis court with cute backdrops and scenes. Its genius playing mechanics make it the best game of its genre by a country mile, there's plenty on offer here with different tournaments, events and even the ability to build up a tennis court all of your own as you progress!

09 Spyro The Dragon



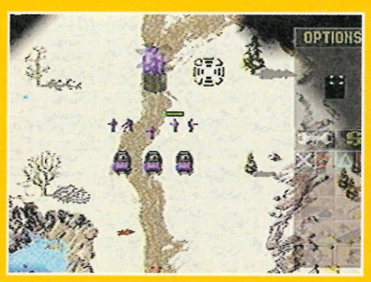
Pure Sony magic, this. The smoothest 3D graphics and animations in a 3D platform adventure you'll see for a while, and by God, it's cute! Don't be put off by the bold primary colours and fluffy sheep and the like, because there's a serious challenge waiting to be blown wide open. There is quite a lot of dialogue cut sequences that piece together the witty storyline as you progress, and the acting is actually very well done with some brilliant character portrayals. Polished fun for all the family; just what the PlayStation needs to prove it's capable of much more than the N64.

08 Duke Nukem: Time To Kill



His dry wit and rudeness is set to maximum for his latest adventure, which sees time-travelling alien invaders ruining Duke's day in this fantastic 3D third-person perspective adventure. The smooth 3D graphics are very good, as are Duke's moves and the puzzles you encounter along the way. DN: TTK isn't Tomb Raider, unfortunately, but that's probably more down to his chest size than quality of game, so if you like TR and want something fresh and well produced, you know where to go.

07 C&C: Red Alert



Red Alert has it all. Exciting, atmospheric FMV sequences, scores of individual, objective-based missions, cool real-time combat and a host of weapons to create. A wargame/management sim hybrid, you must mine the mineral tiberium, spending the money on improving your base by building barracks, weapons factories, guard towers and the like as well as churning out more war machines with which to trash your foe, who's doing exactly the same. Red Alert features mouse compatibility and a link-up mode, making it undisputed king of the strategy games.

06 ISS Pro '98



International Superstar Soccer Pro '98 has earned its position as the highest-ranking PlayStation football game for several worthy reasons. Player animations are fast and fluid and there are no crappy 'soft spots' on the pitch that you can score from every time (though that isn't to say that fluke goals and long shots aren't possible). Every aspect of the game is within your control, including the line up, player editing, formations and even tactics like offside trap you can employ in game at the touch of a button. Easy to get into, hard to put down.

05 Tekken 3



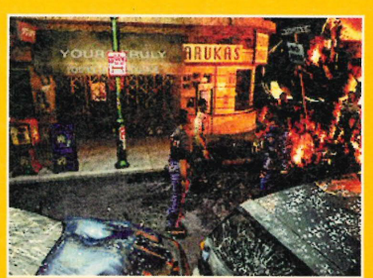
Tekken 3 is the definitive fighting game. Each of the characters has his own fighting style that is reflected wonderfully in their control and motion-captured animations, not to mention their various strengths and weaknesses. The game manages to captivate beginners and real experts at the same time, offering excellent tutorials and enough depth, options and fiddly bits to keep a gamesplayer playing well into the new millennium. If you like fighting games, you're probably already playing it; if you don't, it doesn't really matter. Own it or hand back your PlayStation - you don't deserve it!

04 Resident Evil 2

On offer at Number Four is THE spine-chiller horror movie cum-game from Capcom. The use of cinematic backdrops, camera angles and story twists and turns help to create what can only be described using the infamous phrase 'Interactive movie'.

Every aspect of the game has been meticulously designed to the highest possible standard to have you on the edge of your seat for the duration of the proceedings. There's logical puzzles, B-movie acting, amazing animations, shocking gore and much more; but not for the faint-hearted.

Resident Evil 2's Romero movie-like gore shocked the censors, but still delights PSX owners.



03 Tomb Raider III





Lara's third adventure into the unknown has blown up quite a storm in the office, and gained a great review this issue (Page 22). Core Design have really pulled all the stops out to ensure that Tomb Raider III is the biggest, boldest and most exciting 3D adventure game to grace the PlayStation this year. Lara herself is sporting more than a few more tarty costumes this time, having new moves and animations added to her already bursting repertoire. The graphics, sound and level design have all been tweaked and changed to make sure Lara stays firmly ahead of the rest as well as level sizes which double that of her previous adventures.

If you want total control and freedom of movement within a videogame environment, Lara and Tomb Raider III is for you. It's just like starring in an Indiana Jones flick, really. Lose yourself in the plot, and not just in Lara's eyes.

02 Gran Turismo





The graphics on this one are nothing short of awesome. Using an innovative new Performance Analyser routine which assesses the way the PSX being used by the software, the game gets the maximum from our little grey machine. The result? Some of the best graphics ever seen (the replays look like TV footage), virtually no pop-up or clipping and realistic object scaling with next to no pixelation until you're right on top of them.

The driving physics are also top-notch. Let off the power mid-corner and your back end slides. Slam the brakes and attempt to slide around a corner and you spin. This is all true to life; the game lives up to its subtitle, 'The Real Driving Simulator'.

With over 300 cars (honest) and scores of variables to tweak on each, you won't get bored in a hurry. This is indeed the ultimate simulation-style racer on the PlayStation.

01 Final Fantasy VII

And they said console RPGs would never take off in the UK. They were wrong. Final Fantasy VII sold by the bucketload, and even today, a year after its release, our Tips Clinic receives several enquiries a month about the game (check out the solution in extreme Solutions Volume 1 in Issue Nine and the secrets guide in the second volume, free with Issue Eleven - it's all there).

The game is huge, and I mean HUGE! There's over 60 hours' playing time in there, and that assumes you do everything correctly first time round, making no mistakes which is unlikely, unless you're one of those strange creatures who play a game with the solution book open throughout. What's the point of buying a game and getting someone else to play it for you? Solutions are for when you stuck.

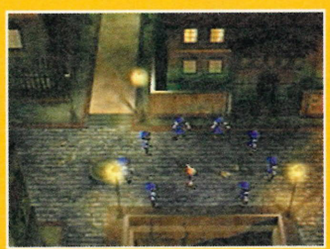
Still, we digress. With most RPGs, the price of such a massive game is dodgy visuals and technical underachievement. Not so here. The game comes on three discs, allowing for beautifully-rendered backdrops, carefully-animated characters and sound that could stand alone as an audio CD. And the plot - wow! The characters are so strong each and every one of them has a personality of its own. The main storyline (which we won't spoil for you) is strong, as are the countless sub-plots, but you also enjoy some really cool sub-games. Stuck? Go to the amusement park and try out the attractions while you think. Need some money? Try Chocobo breeding, eventually producing a top racing bird. Squaresoft have really created a whole world to be enjoyed here, not just a game to be played.

The combat is suitably terrific too. The attacks, which can be physical or magical, are turn -based. The fastest combatants strike first, recovery time depending on what sort of an attack was used. Use a light strike and your character recovers to strike again almost immediately, but the heaviest blows leave him unable to take his turn again for some time. Watch out for Limit Breaks too, real hard attacks achieved when a character loses his temper.

The magic hasn't been neglected either. Spells are showcased with a blinding graphical sequence. All the usual fire, ice and lightning spells are there (alas, the game isn't entirely cliché-free), but also traditional fairytale offerings such as shrinking your enemy Tom Thumb-style or even turning them into frogs.

Final Fantasy VII is, without a doubt, the greatest game on the PSX. Something for everyone? Maybe not - some people simply do not like RPGs, however good they are, though FF VII wins the genre scores of new friends - its detractors are few and far between. Most play the game for months, and when they've completed it, go back for more. Now where is that last secret?







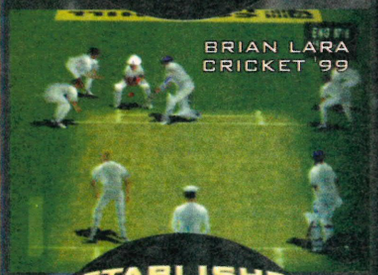




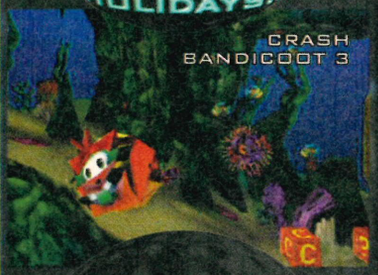
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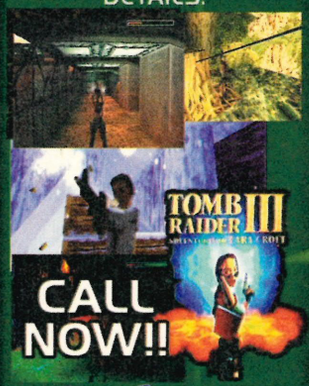
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Department 1

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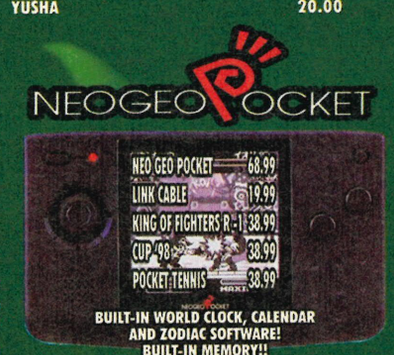
EXCHANGE

SOFTWARE-2ND HAND cont.

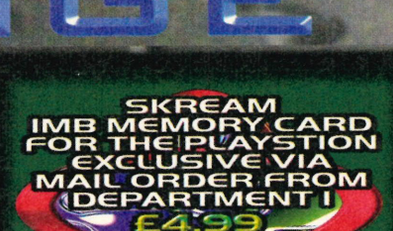
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ONE POSITION:

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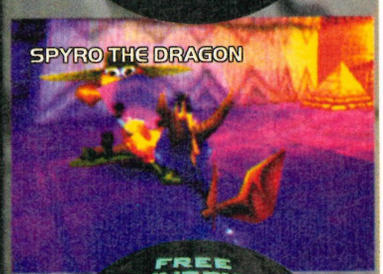
Please apply in writing to:
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Or fax: 0171 - 692 1206

REFERENCES ESSENTIAL. TRAINING WILL BE GIVEN.





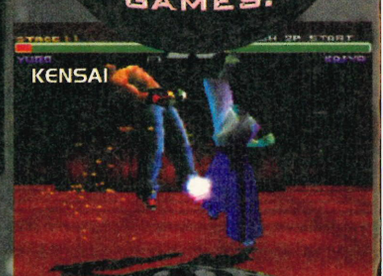
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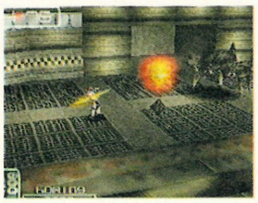
tips & cheats

Cheats for top new games like Tenchu, Assault and Duke Nukem: TTK; nobody takes their cheats as seriously as EPM...

ASSAULT



There are several cheat codes available in Assault which are accessed by typing the relevant key combination (listed below) on the 'Assault - press Start' screen within a three-second period. Once a cheat has been activated successfully, the screen flashes white with a 'whoosh' sound effect and the cheat name is displayed at the top of the screen.





Goodies:
▲, ■, ●, ←, ■, ▲, ■, ●, ←, ■
Once activated, an additional entry appears in the options menu at the end of the list. This option allows you to skip levels, set 'infinite all' whereby the player gets all weapons with infinite ammo, and view all the FMV sequences used in the game. This cheat is awarded to the player if the game is successfully completed on PSYCHO difficulty.

Nakomi:
↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ←, →, ←, →, ✕, ●
This cheat flattens the mesh all of the 3D characters with the exception of the boss character. This cheat is awarded to the player if the game is successfully completed on COMMANDO difficulty.

Big Head Players:
■, ●, ●, ■, ↑, ■, ●, ●, ■, ▲
This cheat scales up the size of the character's head. This cheat is awarded to the player if the game is successfully completed on SQUADIE difficulty.

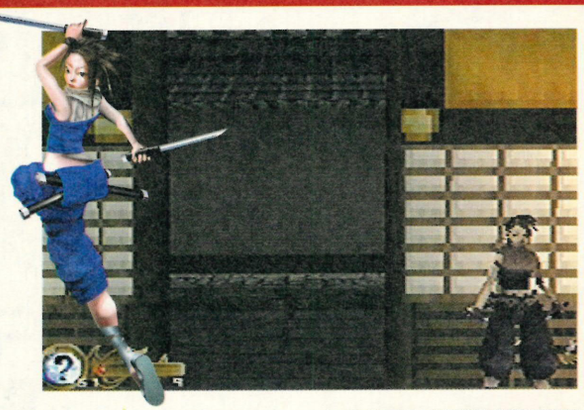
Big Head Aliens:
■, ●, ●, ■, ↑, ■, ●, ●, ■, ✕
This cheat scales up the size of the heads of aliens, with the exception of the 'boss' characters and spitters.

Speed Run:
✕, ■, ▲, ●, ✕, ■, ▲, ●, L2, R2
This increases the speed with which the player's character runs in game and is activated using the ● button. If the player is currently holding an item in the inventory, the item is used and then the run speed is increased.

Retro:
←, ←, ←, ←, ←, ←, ←, ←, ←, ←
This code activates a sepia colour scheme. This cheat is awarded to the player if the game is successfully completed on ROOKIE difficulty.

TENCHU: STEALTH ASSASSINS

Item Capacity to 99:
On the Items Screen, enter ■, ■, ▲, ▲, ●, ●, ↑, ↓



Restore Health:
With the game paused, press ■, ■, ▲, ▲, →, →, ↑, ←

Bigger Items Inventory:
On Items Screen, enter ■, ■, ▲, ▲, →, →, ↑, →

Unlock Hidden Items:
■, ■, ▲, ▲, →, →, ↑, ←

Access All Levels:
On the Mission Select screen, hold R1 and press ■, ■, ▲, ▲, →, →, ↑, →

Enemy Layout:
Hold L2 and press ■, ■, ▲, ▲, →, →, ↑, ←

Jap Voiceover:
■, ■, ▲, ▲, →, →, ↑, ↓



ACTUA SOCCER

Gremlin Showbiz XI team:
Press R2+L2+Select+↖ at the title screen. The Gremlin Dream Team is available.

Superstar player:
Hold Select+↖ at the title screen. A superstar player named Crossi is available.

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

DIAGNOSED AND CURED

The following problems have been solved by The Tips Clinic:

Brian Williams of Cheshire wanted LONE SOLDIER tips. These came from Carl White of Harlow, Essex...

God Mode:
Pause and press ↑, ←, ●, ▲, ↑, ←

All Weapons + Ammo:
Pause and press →, ↓, ●, ▲, ↑, →

Level Skip:
Pause and press ↓, →, ●, ▲, ↓, →

Carl White also helped Andy Gorman with his IN THE HUNT cheats...

Extra Continues:
After your last ship is destroyed press and hold ▲+Select, and hit Start for five more continues.

More Lives:
Just before your last ship falls, press Start on Controller Two for more lives.

Congratulations Carl - you've won this month's selection of surprise goodies, courtesy of Blaze.

Mr A McIlhargey of Glasgow wants cheats for COMMAND & CONQUER RED ALERT: RETALIATION. Consider it done...

Ant Missions:
Complete the game once. Set the difficulty level to 'Hard', select 'Campaigns', and go to England to access the ant missions.

Ant Missions Secrets:
Use the Game Shark building modifier codes along with the vehicles and infantry menu codes while in the ant missions:

Mad Tank:
Queen Ant
Demolition Truck:
Warrior Ant
Chrono Tank:
Larva
Mechanic:
Larva
Shock Trooper:
Two Larvae

Invincibility:
On the Tool Bar, press Cancel when the pointer is over ■, ✕, ●, ✕, ▲, ▲.

Full Map:
On the Tool Bar, press Cancel when the pointer is over ▲, ▲, ✕, ●, ▲, ■.



ACTUA SOCCER 2

Gremlin 11 Team:
Press ←, →, ■, ●, ↑, ↓, ■, ● at the title screen. A message appears to confirm correct code entry.

Invisible Players:
Press ■, ●, ↓, ●, ↑, →, ■, ← at the title screen. A message appears to confirm correct code entry.

Large Players:
Press ↑, ↓, ↓, →, ■, ■, ●, ● at the title screen. A message appears to confirm correct code entry.

Small Players:
Press ●, ↓, ↓, ■, ↑, ↑, ←, → at the title screen. A message appears to confirm correct code entry.

Play With Beach Ball:
Press ←, →, ←, ↑, ←, →, ■, ■ at the title screen. A message appears to confirm correct code entry.

Super Furry Animal Mode:
Press ←, ←, ■, →, →, ●, ↑, ↓ at the title screen. A message appears to confirm correct code entry.

Ghostball Mode:
Press ■, ■, ←, ←, →, →, ●, ● at the title screen. A message appears to confirm correct code entry.

No Floodlights:
Press ←, ←, ←, ●, →, →, →, ■ at the title screen. A message appears to confirm correct code entry.

Monochrome Mode:
Press ↑, ↓, ↑, ■, ●, ↑, ↓, ↑ at the title screen. A message appears to confirm correct code entry.

ARCADE'S GREATEST HITS: THE ATARI COLLECTION VOLUME 1

Tempest - Level skip:
Press Select on the demonstration and high score screens. Use the Game Options menu to enable demonstration mode. In the game, press L1 or R1 to change levels.

ARCADE'S GREATEST HITS: THE ATARI COLLECTION VOLUME 2

Gauntlet - Extra health:
Do not press any buttons or the D-Pad when the game begins or when restarting a level after losing a life. Instead, tap Credit rapidly to gain more health.

BATMAN FOREVER: THE ARCADE GAME

Fight as Villains:
Hold ✖+●+L2 on Controller 2. You can play the game as a villain with Batman's moves.

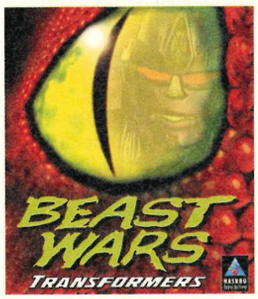
BIOFREAKS



Fight Clonus Opponent:
Hold Select while selecting an opponent at the character selection screen to fight against the Clonus version of that character.

Alternate View:
Hold L2+R2 and press → during a match. Hold L2+R2 and press ↓ for normal view.

BEAST WARS: TRANSFORMERS



Weapon Power-Up:
Pause the game, then hold L2 and quickly press ↑, ↓, ←, →, ▲, ✖, ■. Release L2, then immediately press Start to resume the game.

Level Skip:
Pause the game, then hold L2 and quickly press ↑, ↓, ←, →, ▲, ✖, ✖, ▲, →, ←, ↓, ↑. Release L2, then immediately press Start to resume the game.

Hidden Characters:
Hold R1+R2+L1+L2 and press ●, ✖, ▲, ●, ●, ✖, ■ at the options screen.

CAT THE RIPPER

Hidden Level for Chris:
Take the 'PeRoPePo Candy' from Room 109 in the hotel.

BLASTO



View Babes:
Complete the game after saving all the babes. A new 'View Babes' options is available when the next game is started.

Alternate Appearance:
Quickly press ↑, ↑, ↓, ✖, ▲, ● at the main menu.

BUST-A-GROOVE



Dance Preview:
Complete the game under Easy difficulty level.

Play as Capoeira:
Complete the game under Normal difficulty level.

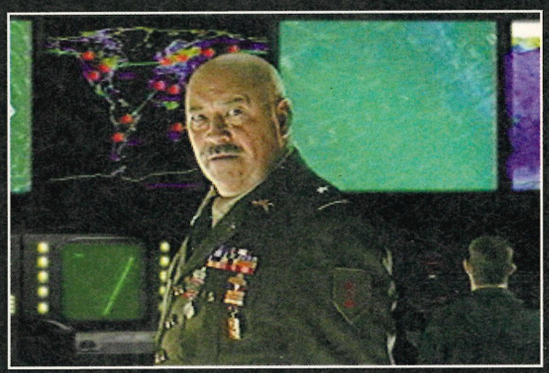
Play as Robo-Z:
Complete the game under Hard difficulty level.

Play as Burger Dog:
Complete the game under difficulty levels. Select Hamm as a character and complete the game under Normal difficulty level again.

Play as Columbo:
Complete the game under the Normal and Hard difficulty levels. Select Shorty as a character and complete the game under the Normal difficulty level again.

Play as Alternate Character:
Highlight a character, then hold Select and press ●.

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Parabomb:
On the Tool Bar, press Cancel when the pointer is over ✖, ✖, ✖, ●, ▲, ■.

Chronoshift:
On the Tool Bar, press Cancel when the pointer is over ■, ●, ▲, ✖, ●, ●.

Money is People:
On the Tool Bar, press Cancel when the pointer is over ■, ✖, ■, ✖, ■, ✖.

Money:
On the Tool Bar, press Cancel when the pointer is over ✖, ✖, ■, ●, ●, ●.

Instant Victory:
On the Tool Bar, press Cancel when the pointer is over ●, ●, ▲, ✖, ✖, ■.

Instant Loss:
On the Tool Bar, press Cancel when the pointer is over ●, ✖, ●, ■, ■, ✖.



Nuclear Attack:
On the Tool Bar, press Cancel when the pointer is over ●, ✖, ●, ●, ✖, ■.

Civilians Have Names:
On the Tool Bar, press Cancel when the pointer is over ■, ■, ●, ●, ▲, ▲.

Roy Seedhouse of Dagenham, Essex, wants cheats for RESIDENT EVIL. Check out our Platinum solutions book free with this very issue. As for your enquiry about DUKE NUKEM: TOTAL MELTDOWN...

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

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

Andrew Kitney, Lancs, asked for a cheat for ABE'S ODDYSEE, and Wayne Robinson of Grimsby sent a bright green Abe cheat which arrived in the same post. Uncanny! Here it is, as well as a couple more...

Bright Green Abe:
Use the Invisibility power, and while Abe is re-appearing, possess an enemy. Abe turns bright green.

Level Select:
On the main menu, hold R1 and press ↓, →, ←, →, ■, ●, ■, ▲, ●, ■, →, ←

View FMV:
On the main menu, hold R1 and press ↑, ←, →, ■, ●, ▲, ■, →, ←, ↑, →

"Can you send me cheats for KLONOA and PITFALL 3D", asks B Connor of Preston. "I enclose an SAE". Don't do that - we can offer you cheats on this page, but we can't send personal replies. We haven't got the time. For a full solutions, check out last issue's extreme Solutions Volume 2 (for Pitfall 3D) and Issue Nine's extreme Solutions Volume 1 (Klonoa).

KLONOA

Balue's Tower (Extra Vision)
Bonus Level:
Save all 72 Phantomilians.

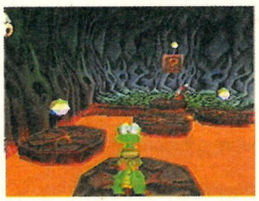
Music Test:
Complete the Balue's Tower bonus game. A music test

tips & cheats

Level Skip:
Complete the game once with any character. Begin game play in Single Player mode and press L2+Select when a song begins to jump to the next level.

Winning Pose Close-Up:
Hold ● after winning a stage.

CROC: LEGEND OF THE GOBBOS





Level Select:
Enter ULDLRLDULRRDRRU as a password.

Super Password:
Enter LLLLDRRLLDRDLUR as a password to start at the final level of hidden island 5-B with all secrets.

Sound Test:
Press Select at the 'Audio Options' screen.

Escape From Falls:
Pause the game as Croc yells while falling. Press Select and choose the 'Quit' option. Then, select the 'No' option. Press ↓ at the 'Quit Game' screen so neither the 'Continue' or 'Quit' options are selected. Press ✖ and restart the current level without losing a life.

Passwords:
Island: Password
2: RDLURRURLRURLUD
3: LURURDDUDUULULD
4: RDDURLURDUURLUD
5: ULDLRLDULRRDRRU

DEAD OR ALIVE

Control Victory View:
Press ↑, ↓, ←, or → during the winning post to change the camera angle. Press R1 or L1 to zoom in and out.

Additional Costumes:
Set all options to the default settings and complete tournament mode. One additional costume is unlocked each time the game is completed.

Fight as Raidou:
Unlock all costumes for all characters. Select Costume 14 (for female characters) or 5 (for male characters) and complete the game under the Normal difficulty level and default settings.

Fight as Ayane:
Complete the game using the Raidou on Normal difficulty level and default settings.

Replay End of Round:
Hold ■+● and press ▲ after a round ends, but before the victory pose begins. Continue to hold ■+● and press ▲ to replay the end of round.

Fighting Order:
Complete the game using any character or accumulate three hours of game time. The new option appears under the Extra Config menu.

Safety Zone Size:
Complete Time Attack Mode under the normal difficulty level in under five minutes or accumulate six hours of game time. The new option appears under the Extra Config menu.

Danger Damage:
Complete the game using all ten characters with the default settings, or defeat all ten characters in survival mode, or accumulate nine hours of game time. The new option appears under the Extra Config menu.

Danger Bounce:
Complete Kumite mode with at least an 80% victory record, or accumulate twelve hours of game time. The new option appears under the Extra Config menu.

System Voice:
For the Wakana sub-option, successfully complete the game using any character. For the Sakura sub-option, play Kasumi over one hundred times, or accumulate fifteen hours of game time. The new option appears under the Extra Config menu.

Extra Voices:
Complete Training Mode by executing all moves after enabling the Command List option. The new option appears under the Extra Config menu.

CG Gallery:
Unlock each of Ayane's costumes.

Character Voice option:
Complete Training Mode by executing all moves after enabling the Command List option.

Hidden graphics:
Insert the game disc into a PC compatible CD-ROM drive and look in the Omake directory to find several pictures in .BMP format.

THE FIFTH ELEMENT



Cheat mode:
Press L1, L2, R2, R1, Select at the main menu. Level selection, unlimited lives, weapons, items, and all FMV sequences may now be accessed.

FUTURE COP: LAPD



Machine gun ammunition:
Pause the game and highlight the "Sound FX Volume" selection on the options screen. Press ■, ●, Select, ✖, Select, ✖, ●, ■, select the Quit option, then select Yes to confirm. The screen jumps to confirm correct code entry.

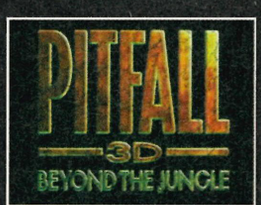
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option will appear on the level selection screen.

Blow Leaves:
Press L2 and R2 at the title screen to blow the leaves off the screen.

Level Select:
Complete the game and return to the title screen. Select the Continue option, then select Vision Clear.

PITFALL 3D



Enter these as passwords:
Play Original Pitfall:
CRANESBABY
Extra Life:
GIVEMELIFE
View FMV:
PLAYMOVIES
View Credits:
CREDITS
Flying Mode:
ZEROGHARRY
Invisibility:
2DHARRY
Big Head Mode:
BIGHEADHARY
Show Comic Book Scenes:
PITFALLCOMIC
99 Lives:
STEVECRANEME
Disable Comments:
STOPTALKING
Demo Game:
VIGILANTE

Level Codes:
City of Shenrak:
METROPOLIS
Underground Caverns:
DEEPDARK
Moku Temple:
TEMPLEME
Gladiator:
GEEHEISBIG
Blister Fields:
HOTROCKS
Desert Into Volcano:
GOINGDOWN
Blazing Flood:



WOWTHATSHOT
Kryll Thular:
BIGWORMGUY
Cell Blocks:
JAILBREAK
Life Extraction:
THUNDERDOMES
Dark Vale:
MAGICGARDEN
Crystal Matrix:
SPOOKYMESASE
The Scourge:
BESTFORLAST

Mark Perry of Halesowen read our MORTAL KOMBAT 4 book (free with Issue Ten) and wants to know what a Stage Fatality is. Well, it's a special fatality which can only be achieved in certain



locations. In Goro's Lair, the victim is battered onto overhead spikes, and in the Prison Stage, knocked into the rotating fan you see in the background. Stage Fatalities are not possible in any other arena.

Caroline (who doesn't seem to have a surname) from Hitchin needs help with BROKEN SWORD.

To get through the Ireland section, talk to Maguire, MacDevitts and Ron the Poacher. Wait until Ron leaves a snare on the table - steal it when he sneezes. Talk to Sean, and then offer Pat a beer. Take the towel from under his elbow, than ask Sean about the dig. Talk to MacGuire again, then to Sean about the gem and the package. As MacGuire comes in, go outside and flick the switch by

Machine gun power-up:
Pause the game and highlight the "Sound FX Volume" selection on the options screen. Press ●, ●, ●, ✕, ✕, ✕, ●, Select, select the Quit option, then select Yes to confirm. The screen jumps to confirm correct code entry.

Shield power-up:
Pause the game and highlight the Sound FX Volume selection on the options screen. Press ■, Select, ●, ✕, select the Quit option, then select Yes to confirm. The screen jumps to confirm correct code entry.

Heavy weapons power-up:
Pause the game and highlight the Sound FX Volume selection on the options screen. Press ■, ■, ■, ●, ✕, ●, ✕, select the Quit option, then select Yes to confirm. The screen jumps to confirm correct code entry.

Special weapons power-up:
Pause game play and highlight the "Sound FX Volume" selection on the options screen. Press ■, ●, ■, Select, ●, ✕, ■, ●, select the Quit option, then select Yes to confirm. The screen jumps to confirm correct code entry.

Jump power-up:
Pause the game and highlight the Sound FX Volume selection on the options screen. Press ●, ●, ●, ●, ■, ✕, Select, ■, ✕, Select, ●, select the Quit option, then select Yes to confirm. The screen jumps to confirm correct code entry.

200 bonus points:
Pause the game and highlight the Sound FX Volume selection on the options screen. Press ●, ■, ●, ✕, Select, ■, ✕, select the Quit option, then select Yes to confirm. The screen jumps to confirm correct code entry.

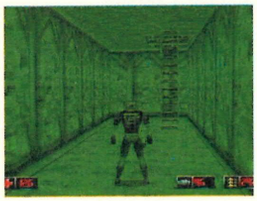
All bonus weapons:
Enter SYMRGOBRRL as a password.

All missions completed, all bonus weapons:
Enter DYPYFASRHR or DYSIFASRHY as a password.

100 more torrit guns:
Begin a multi-player game. Return to land and switch to regular mode. Press ●, ✕, ✕, ●, ●, ✕, then hold ■ for approximately ten seconds. Switch to tank mode, return to your base, and purchase three helicopters. Intentionally lose a life to find 100 torrit guns around your base.

Level Codes:
1: TAFRGYBLRR
2: CRGRGYBLRY
3: FUMRGYBLRL
4: SICUGYBLLI
5: TAFUGYBLLR
6: CRGUGYBLLY
7: FUMUGYBLLR
8: SIFYGYBISR

DUKE NUKEM: TIME TO KILL



Level select:
Pause the game and press ↓ nine times, ↑, and then exit the current game. Select the Time To Kill option at the bottom of the main menu, press ← or → to select a level, then press ✕ to begin game play.

Invincibility:
Pause the game and press L2, R1, L1, R2, Up, ↓, ↑, ↓, Select, Select.

Temporary Invincibility:
Pause the game and press R1, L2, L1, L2, R1, L1, R1, L2, L1, L2.

Invisibility:
Pause the game and press L1, R1, L1, R1, L1, R1, L1, R1, L1, R1.

Unlimited Ammunition:
Pause the game and press ←, →, ←, →, Select, ←, →, ←, →, Select.

All Weapons:
Pause the game and press L1, L2, ↑, L1, L2, ↓, R1, →, R2, ←.

All Items:
Pause the game and press R1, R1, R1, R1, R1, L2, L2, L2, L2, L2.

All Keys:
Pause the game and press ↑, →, ↑, ←, ↓, ↑, →, ←, →, ↓.

Extra Damage:
Pause the game and press L2, R2, L2, R2, L2, R2, L2, R2, L2, R2.

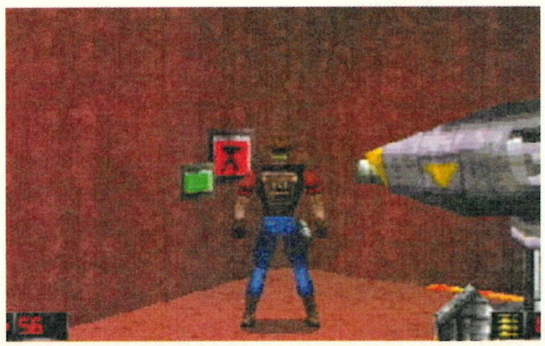
Big Head Duke:
Pause the game and press R1 nine times, then ↑.

Small head Duke:
Pause the game and press R1 nine times, ↓.

Big head opponents:
Pause the game and press R1 nine times, ←.

Game completed:
Hold L2+R2 and press ■, ▲, ●, ●, Start during the game.

Rogue Trip FMV sequence:
Press L1+L2+R1+R2 at the GT Interactive logo during the opening sequence.



GRAN TURISMO

High Res Mode:
Earn an International A Licence, enter the GT League and win all four cups, including the GT World Cup. Alternatively, successfully complete all Arcade Mode tracks on Hard difficulty level.

Bonus FMV Sequence:
Select Arcade Mode, obtain

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the door. Go in and get Mick to give you a drink. Show him the ID then use the snare on the washer's plug.
Unlock the trapdoor in the cellar and open it from outside. Get the gem from below and wet the towel using the tap. Go to the castle gate. Talk to the farmer, climb the haystack and insert the tool in the wall and climb over it. Approach the hatch, and as the goat knocks you over, click on the machinery to the left to trap it. Use the ladder to enter the excavation. Push the statue onto the sand and put the plaster into the imprints. Put the wet towel on the plaster. Use the plastercast in the holes - you find a hidden room.

D Blackham of Doncaster has some SAN FRANCISCO RUSH cheats. Ho-one asked for them, but what the hey?

Truck:
Select a car and hold L1 until the race starts.

Buggy:
Do the same holding R1.

Hidden Car:
Again, select a car, but this time hold R1+L1 until the race starts.

Extra Car:
Select any car and press ↓ on the transmission selection screen to switch between a Low Rider, Bus, Rocket-Engined Car, Taxi and Police Car. The number available depends on the number of keys found.

More Vehicles:
Press ● on the car selection screen. You're offered a Viper, Hippy Van, VW Beetle and McLaren UFO.

Alternate Colours:
Press ■ at the car selection screen.

Reversed Tracks:
Complete the Circuit Mode.

Stunt Mode:
Complete the Tournament Mode for a Stunt Mode on the Golden Gate track.

Andrew Bolton of Stevenage has more DIE HARD TRILOGY cheats for Ollie Potter, who asked last issue. These are for Die Hard 1 - pause the game and hold R2 while entering...

Level Skip:
↓, ●, ←, ■, ↑, ■, ←.
Press Start on Controller Two to access the level skip, → to skip levels.

Gun and Unlimited Ammo:
→, ↑, ↓, ↓, ■, →. You get a fresh gun and unlimited ammo.

Silly Mode:
↓, ●, ●, ↓, ▲, ↓.
Baddies bend over and fire through their legs.

Fat Mode:
→, ■, ■, ↓. Bruce and the hostages have eaten all the pies.

Speedy Speech:
↓, ■, ■, →. Repeat to alter speech speed.

If you're stuck in a PSX game, write to:

The Tips Clinic, extreme PlayStation, 22 Strand St, Poole, Dorset BH15 1SB
Don't forget to tell us EXACTLY where you're stuck (especially in adventures - there's no point telling us you're stuck in City of the Lost Children and expecting us to guess where) and which game you're playing. Finally, DON'T SEND AN SAE! We can't offer personal replies - you're just wasting a stamp.

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

BLAZE

tips & cheats



the bonus tracks, and finish in first place on all tracks with any car. This must be done in A, B, and C-class mode under the normal or higher difficulty setting. A Staff Video option appears in the Bonus Items menu.

Chrysler Copperhead Concept Car:
Get all gold medals in the B-Class licence test. Alternatively, finish in first in the UK vs. US championship.

Toyota TRD3000GT:
Get all gold medals in the A Class licence test.

Nissan Nismo 400 [R]:
Get all gold medals in the International A licence test.

Conserve memory card slots:
Play the game in Arcade Mode, exit, then enter Simulation Mode and save the game. By doing this, the Arcade and Simulation Mode information is saved together, cutting the amount of memory card slots used by half.

Memory Card Battle with One Card:
Enter memory card battle mode. A message appears saying Player One is loading and that no memory card was found for Player Two. Wait until the information has loaded for Player One, then remove the memory card and insert it into the second memory card slot. The game loads data from that location and allows both players to use the same memory card.

HERCULES

Level Codes:
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
Medusa's Lair:
Archer, Pegasus, Archer, Centaur
Cyclops Attack:
Gladiator Helmet, Pegasus, Hercules Silhouette, Archer
Titan Flight:
Soldier, Coin, Coin, Thunder Bolt
Passageway of Eternal Torment:
Medusa, Soldier, Centaur, Pegasus
Vortex of Souls:
Soldier, Lightning Bolt, Soldier, Centaur
End:
Pegasus, Soldier, Centaur, Soldier

IRON AND BLOOD: WARRIORS OF RAVENLOFT

Minion Of Chaos:
Press L1+L2+R1+R2+↑+✖ at the character selection screen to be able to select the Minion.

Avatar Of Order:
Press ←+■, →+● at the character selection screen to be able to select Avatar Of Order.

Lord Of Chaos:
Enter ↑ ↖ ← ↙ ↓, ▲+✖ at the character selection screen to be able to select Lord Of Chaos.

Strahd:
Turn the D-Pad a full circle counter-clockwise starting from ↑ then press R1, R2, L2, L1 at the character selection screen to be able to select Strahd.

Torgo's Secret Moves:
Combo Hi:
↑+●, ●
Combo Med:
●, ●+▲
Combo Low:
↓+●, ✖
Head Butt Charge:
→, →+▲
Dwarven Thrower Hammer:
↑ ↗ → ↘ ↓, ▲
Earth Tremor:
▲+●, ■+✖

Luthor's Secret Moves:
Combo Hi:
↑+●, ✖
Combo Med:
●, ●, ●
Combo Low:
↓+●, ●
+5 Holy Avenger Attack:
→+▲ (This attack can be aimed)
One-Armed Throw:
→+■+✖
Impale Attack:
→, →+▲ (Can be steered)
Aura of Invulnerability:
→+●, →+■
Arcane Power (Heal):
↑ ↗ → ↘ ↓, ▲

Erland's Secret Moves:
Combo Hi:
↑+●, ■, ■
Combo Med:
●, →+●
Combo Low:
↓+●, ↓+▲
Tornado Slash:
→ ↘ ↓ ↙ ←, ●
Flame Arrow:
▲+●, ■+✖
Fireshield:
→+▲, ←+✖
Arrow of Slaying:
Rotate D-Pad full circle clockwise from ↑, ▲
Acquire Artefact (His Background):
▲+●, ■+✖

Darius' Secret Moves:
Combo Hi:
↑+●, ▲, ✖
Combo Med:
●, ▲, ✖
Combo Low:
↓+●, ●, ●
Long Strike:
●+▲, ✖
Spinning Slash Jump:
↑ ↗ → ↘ ↓, ▲
Magic Trident:
→+●, →+●, →+●
Acquire Artefact (On his Background):
▲, ✖

Xenobia's secret moves:
Combo Hi:
↑+●, ■
Combo Med:
●, →+■
Combo Low:
↓+●, ▲
Impale:
→, →+▲ (UNBLOCKABLE)
Double Jump Kick:
↑+▲+●
Toward Dive/Dodge:
→, →+✖
Siren Call:

XPLORER CODES (FOR USE WITH FIRE INTERNATIONAL'S XPLORER CHEAT CARTRIDGE) • FOR MORE CODES, CHECK OUT FIRE'S HELPLINE:

XPLORER
THE ULTIMATE CHEAT CARTRIDGE

ARMOURED CORE

Infinite Money:
8657F52C504F

BOMBERMAN WORLD

Infinite Lives:
36621EA85955
Infinite Time:
365BCED6595A
Have All Crystals:
8E5BCE285962
Continually Drop Bombs:
86621E5C5962
86621E5A5962
Complete All Levels:
865BD3785956
Invincibility:
36621E66596C

BUST-A-MOVE 3DX

Change colour of current ball Press L2 R2:
66522758595E

0006516EEA80
0FFFFFFE841D
000800000000
90007612AC08
5656C968590A
040008AC0800
05ACoC0002AC
100009AC1400
089000000000
050000110000
0000FFFF0825
000000001900
0010140008Ao
050008341400
08A00600083C
6E5108350000
089500900053C
5ED8A5340000
A280FFFE0934
060009150000
000001004220
090009340200
491400000000
08000234FFFD
093406000915
00000000FFFF
422000000934
020049140000
000001000234
0000A2A00400
088C1000098C
00701A400C00
028C00388040
080040030800
058C00000000

CASPER

Infinite Health:
867314DC5A46
Infinite Fools Gold:
865B3EA4594F
Infinite Iron Keys:
865B3E9C594F

COMMAND & CONQUER RED ALERT: RETALIATION

Allies
Infinite Money:
8658F62C504F
Infinite Health:
866505B0195A
866505AE5D57
866505B2755A
8673575859CE
86735756EB59
8673575A755A
86735760509E
8673575E7579
86735764595C
86735762697A
86735766755A
8673576C5970
8673576AF75C
86735770655A
8673576E595C
867357745962
867357725C3A
86735776755A
Infinite Power:
765557DE5956
8658F648504F
No Power Usage:
765557DE5956
8658F64C504F
No Silos Needed:
765557DE5956
8658F628595A

Soviets
Infinite Money:
8658FAF0504F
Infinite Health:
866505B0195A
866505AE5D57
866505B2755A
8673575859CE
86735756EB59
8673575A755A
8673576050E2
8673575E7579
86735764595C
86735762697A
86735766755A
8673576C5970
8673576AF75C
86735770655A
8673576E595C
867357745962
867357725C3A
86735776755A
Infinite Power:
D65557DEC956
8658FA0C504F
No Power Usage:
765557DE5956
8658FA10595A
No Silos Needed:
765557DE5956
8658FAEC595A

Skirmish Mode
Infinite Money:
86582498504F
Infinite Power:
765557DE5956
865824B4504F
No Power Usage:
76665FF8599F
865824B8595A
No Silos Needed:
76665FF8599A
86582494595A

Both Discs
Instant Build:
765557DE5956
8658EFA4595A

↑ ↗ → ↘ ↓ ↙ ← , ■
Acquire Artifact (On her Background):
→, →+▲

Ignatius Max's secret moves:
Combo Hi:
↑+●, ▲
Combo Med:
●, ■, ■
Combo Low:
↓+●, ■
Dagger Throw:
→ ↗ ↑ ↖ ←, ▲
Quick Spin Attack:
→ ↘ ↓ ↙ ←, ■
Dagger Leap:
↑+■+✖
Dagger of Venom:
■+✖, ●+▲, ■+✖ Stealth
Backstab:
→ ↘ ↓ ↙ ←, ✖

LUCKY LUKE

Level Passwords:
Train 1:
Dalton, Dalton, Lucky Luke, Jolly Jumper
Train 2:
Lucky Luke, Lucky Luke, Jolly Jumper, Rantamplan
Pueblos:
Dalton, Jolly Jumper, Lucky Luke, Rantamplan
Mine:
Lucky Luke, Jolly Jumper, Dalton, Rantamplan
Indian desert:
Rantamplan, Rantamplan, Dalton, Jolly Jumper
Saloon:
Dalton, Dalton, Jolly Jumper, Rantamplan
Waterfall 1:
Dalton, Lucky Luke, Lucky Luke, Jolly Jumper
Waterfall 2:
Rantamplan, Dalton, Lucky Luke, Lucky Luke
Wagon Race:
Rantamplan, Dalton, Dalton, Jolly Jumper
Bush wackers:
Jolly Jumper, Dalton, Rantamplan, Rantamplan
Dalton City:
Jolly Jumper, Jolly Jumper, Lucky Luke, Rantamplan

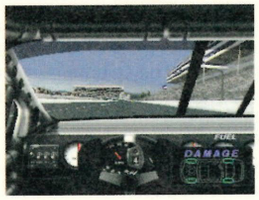
MEDIEVIL

Cheat mode:
Pause the game, then hold L2 and press ↓, ↑, ■, ▲, ▲, ●, ↓, ↑, ■, ▲

Extended cheat mode:
Pause the game, then hold L2 and press ▲, ●, ▲, ●, ●, ▲, ←, ●, ↑, ↓, →, ●, ←, ←, ▲, →, ●, ←, ←, ▲, ●, ↓, ●, ●, →



NASCAR RACING '99



Race as Bobby Allison:
Race in a championship season with at least a 50% race length and finish in the top five on the Charlotte track.

Race as Davey Allison:
Race in a championship season with at least a 50% race length and finish in the top five on the Talladega track.

Race as Alan Kulwicki:
Race in a championship season with at least a 50% race length and finish in the top five on the Bristol track.

Race as Benny Parsons:
Race in a championship season with at least a 50% race length and finish in the top five on the Richmond track.

Race as Cale Yarborough:
Race in a championship season with at least a 50% race length and finish in the top five on the Darlington track.

Race as Richard Petty:
Race in a championship season with at least a 50% race length and finish in the top five on the Martinsville track.

Waving driver:
Select cockpit view, then hold Select until the driver waves.

Dirt Track:
Start a race at Charlotte, and go round the finish line five times. A dirt track appears in the infield area.

NHL '99



Use Alternate Costumes:
Enter 3RD as a password.

Free EA and EA Storm teams:
Enter FREEEA as a password.

View Stanley Cup FMV sequence:
Enter VICTORY as a password

Big Head Mode:
Enter BRAINY as a password.

Big Player Mode:
Enter BIGBIG as a password.

Faster Gameplay:
Enter SPEEDY as a password.

Alternate Scoring Sounds:
Press a symbol button after scoring a goal.

Stadium Approach Sequences:
Enter the first three letters of the required city as a password.

NINJA: SHADOW OF DARKNESS

Have sword:
Press ←, →, →, ↑, ✖, ✖, ■ at the main menu.

POCKET FIGHTER

Fight as Gouki:
Highlight Ryu on the Character Selection Screen and press ←.

Fight as Dan:
Highlight Ken on the Character Selection Screen and press →.

Quick rematch:
Hold L1+L2+R1+R2+Select+Start at the end of a match.

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COOL BOARDERS 2

All Characters:
3659CB98594F
All Boards:
3659CB96594F
Have Trophies For All Races (Time, Trick and Total):
3659CBA0594F
3659CB9E594F
3659CBA4594F
Mirror Mode, Hard Mode:
3659CB9C594F
3659CB9A594F

CRASH BANDICOOT

Infinite Lives:
365D356F5955

DUKE NUKEM: TIME TO KILL

Level Select (Main Screen):
865F313A5959
Infinite Continues:
8661CBA8504F
Infinite Health:
8661C55E9F7A
Infinite Armor:
8661CB649F7A
Infinite Throwing Knives:
8661CBF85959
8661CBF65C37
Infinite Throwing Axes:
8661CBFC5959
8661CBFA5C37
Crossbow:
8661CB005959
Infinite Arrows:
8661CBFE5C37
Desert Eagle:
8661CB045959
Infinite Pistol Ammo:
8661CB025C37
Combat Shotgun:
8661CB085959
Infinite Shotgun Shells:
8661CB065C37
Buffalo Rifle:
8661CB0C5959
Infinite Rifle Ammo:
8661CB0A5C37
Gatling Gun:
8661CB105959
Infinite Gatling Gun Ammo:
8661CB0E5C37
RPG:
8661CB145959
Infinite RPG Ammo:
8661CB125C37
Flame Thrower:
8661CB185959
Infinite Flame Fuel:
8661CB165C37
Energy Weapon:
8661CB1C5959
Infinite Energy Ammo:
8661CB1A5C37
Freezer:
8661CB205959
Infinite Freezer Ammo:
8661CB1E5C37
Infinite Pipe Bombs:
8661CB245959
8661CB225C37
Infinite Holy Hand Grenades:
8661CB285959
8661CB265C37
Infinite Dynamite:
8661CB2C5959
8661CB2A5C37
Jet Pack:
7661CC885959A
8661CC885959
Infinite Jet Pack Energy:
8661CC86B95A
Bio Mask:
8661CC8C5959
Infinite Bio Mask Energy:
8661CC8AB95A
Goggles:
8661CC905959
Infinite Goggle Energy:
8661CC8EB95A
Infinite Medkits:
8661CC985959
8661CC96B95A
Infinite Air:
8661CB627F1A
Subway Sec/Skel Key:
8661CC9C5959
Transport Room ID:
8661CCA05959
Red Energy Crystal:
8661CCB05959
Blue Energy Crystal:
8661CCB45959
Green Energy Crystal:
8661CCB85959
Scrap of Paper:
8661CCBC5959
Old Note:
8661CCC05959
Torn Paper:
8661CCC45959
Invisible Duke:
8661CDCC6506
Double Duke:
8661CDCA6506
Invincible Duke:
8661CDD06506
Super Speed:
8661CDCE6506
All Keys All Levels:
8661CC9C5959
8661CCA05959
8661CCA45959
8661CCA85959
8661CCAC5959
8661CCB05959
8661CCB45959
8661CCB85959
8661CCBC5959
8661CCC05959
8661CCC45959
Unlimited Ammo Items:
8662945C5959
Super Weapons:
Eagle (Desert Eagle Ammo):
8661CB045961
Shotgun (C/Shotgun Ammo):
8661CB085961
Laser Gatlin Gun:
8661CB105961
Infinite Laser G/Gun Ammo:
8661CC625C37
Incendiary RPG:
8661CB145961
Infinite Incend RPG Ammo:
8661CC665C37
HiTemp Flame Thrower:
8661CB185961
Inf HiTemp F/Thrower Fuel:
8661CC5E5C37
Zapper (Energy Weapon Ammo):
8661CB1C5961
Infinite Time (Challenge):
8661D538FD8F

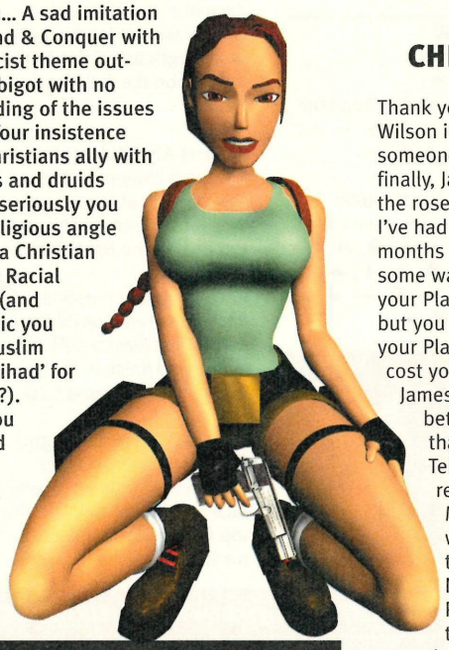
exchange

EPM SAYS...

Caught our Reader's Survey on Page 73 yet? Fill it in and you might win a great prize, but don't stop there. Write to the Exchange letting us know what you think of the mag as well. The 'chipping' debate is hotting up; no doubt this one will go on and on, and we've a few more ideas for new game genres too. Anyone else got anything to add to this? Finally, this month we've offered a round-up on the best 50 games ever. Let's not waste time debating whether (for example) Game 38 really is better than Game 42 - everyone will have their own opinion on this. Instead, what do you, the readers, consider the worst ever PlayStation game? Write and let us know. If you get the coveted Star Letter award, you get a free game of your choice courtesy of Gameplay.

TEST OF FAITH

I have a new idea for a game - Christian Jihad. The game is set in the present and is a Command & Conquer-style game, with Britain as the battleground. It is about trying to defend the Christian way of life, our traditional values, our culture.
The tide is set to turn - the levels of the game would be individual cities. The aim is to strategically take out important locations first. It's a time of brotherhood, with Protestant and Catholic coming together with pagan and druidic groups to fight for their independence from the foreign malignant hordes of Muslims, Hindus and whatever.
At this point I would like to emphasis that if your ain't or ever been of aristocratic families or wealth, then your down trodden anyway, whoever you are. (EPM: If anyone can make sense of this last sentence, you're doing better than us.)
First step - take Parliament and the capital, throw out the minority lobbyists ('minority' - that's a laugh), get in the steamer ships, pile in the human garbage and sail them down the Thames to wherever. When this is complete, clear London and the suburbs of all the bullshit, antichrist religions.
Second stage - find all the Jewish monopoly-owned TV stations, papers and industry and throw them out for bonus points - get independence, everyone else has it.
This may be politically incorrect, but I'm not a Fascist, just a poor white guy who's pissed off with the [racist term deleted] moaning about how downtrodden they are. All poor people, white or black, are downtrodden by the wealthy.
*The Archbishop of C**tingbury*



EPM: Hmm... A sad imitation of Command & Conquer with a nasty, racist theme outlined by a bigot with no understanding of the issues involved. Your insistence that the Christians ally with the pagans and druids show how seriously you take the religious angle - this isn't a Christian Jihad but a Racial Holocaust (and isn't it ironic you chose a Muslim term like 'Jihad' for your game?). Perhaps you can expand on this theme still further. The racist wars could spread throughout the world and the oldest racial group in a particular territory could throw out all other peoples. Back in Britain and all over Western Europe, your white, Christian societies could indulge in some Sim City-style building, desperately trying to accommodate the white-European South Africans, Americans, Australians and many more people who would be thrown out of the countries they occupied by displacing their native populations.
Make no mistake - the threat to your 'traditional values and culture' exists only in your own mind. If everyone was returned to the country of their recent ancestors (and the entire human race originally came from Africa), Western Europe, and especially Britain, would sink. And isn't it a surprise that our brave white warrior didn't sign his letter?

CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK?

Thank you for printing the letter from James Wilson in your last issue. I've been waiting for someone to start the import games debate. Now finally, James, I suggest you wake up and smell the roses - you're talking out of your backside. I've had my PlayStation chipped for about six months now and I certainly don't regret it. In some ways you are correct, James - chipping your PlayStation does invalidate your warranty, but you only get one year's warranty anyway. If your PlayStation is older than that, it's going to cost you to get it repaired, chipped or not.
James also said that import games cost between £60-70. I've never played more than £55 for an import game. I bought Tekken 3 on import second hand for £25. I recently bought an American version of Metal Gear Solid as the PAL version won't be out until April. I'm not waiting that long for the sake of an extra £10-15. Not only that, there are a lot of PlayStation games which will never see the light of day in the UK.
Let's look at Tekken 3. The NTSC version is a lot better than the PAL version. I don't buy import games so I can wave them in front of other people's noses - get real. Release dates in this country are always pushed back a few months and I'm sick of it - so are most PlayStation owners.
Carl Fletcher, Warley, West Midlands

EPM: The PAL version of Tekken 3 is indeed slower (17.5%, to be exact), and yes, this is a problem, but 'a lot better' is a bit of an exaggeration. Interesting points on import games, though - anyone else have an opinion? Anyone thinking of getting their little grey boxes chipped should remember you need to play NTSC games through a SCART television that can run at 60 Hertz as well as the usual 50 - use an RF lead (the one that comes with your PlayStation, and fits in the TV's aerial socket) and your game plays in black and white or the screen rolls.

SLIPPED THROUGH THE .NET?

Thanks for a super mag with good reviews, great news and superb guides, but I have a question about the PlayStation. For a while, PC owners everywhere have been bragging about how their machines are better just because of one thing - the Internet. Why can't us PSX owners have at least something like it? My friend (another PC owner) says that there isn't enough memory, but

STAR LETTER...

I'm prompted to put pen to paper by James Wilson's letter (Issue 11) regarding chipping and import gaming. According to Mr Wilson, chipping is only of real benefit to RPG fans fluent in Japanese - all the rest of us, apparently, do so in order to play the 'big' titles way before everybody else.
This, I believe, is something of a blinkered opinion. Fair enough, imports do give you a head start on PAL-only gamers, but what do you get when your long-awaited British release of Resident Evil 2, Tekken 3 and Metal Gear Solid finally arrives? A heavily-bordered, slowed-down version which, as the recent criticism of the Tekken 3 conversion indicates, is disappointing at the very best.
If you haven't experienced a game at full screen and full speed, you're probably quite happy with your PAL rendition - those who have appreciate the difference it makes.
Mr Wilson then commented on the life expectancy of a chipped machine. My 'Station has been modified for nearly a year, from new (as a replacement for its stolen predecessor) without a single loading or running problem. If the job's done by a competent PC technician, there should be no threat to your PlayStation's welfare. As for the warranty issue, I doubt many machines go wrong within a year anyway (none of mine have) so how critical is your warranty? We're talking about a £100 games console here, not a £10,000 car.
Finally, 'blinded by the hype' of a big title (EPM: James Wilson argued that obsession with the big games coming out on import first led gamers to ignore cool titles already on PAL)? When you get to play your PAL copy of Metal Gear Solid in three or four months' time, tell us what you think about the 'hype' then. I'm playing the US version now, and I know how 'blinded' I am.
Mark Jameson

EPM: James Wilson certainly seems to have stirred up a hornets' nest with his controversial views on chipping and importing (Exchange, Issue 11). Does anyone agree with Mr Wilson, and consider chipping your machine and buying import games a waste of time and money? Most letters so far seem to agree with Mark Jameson and Carl Fletcher, who's letter also appears this month.



all you need is a server and modem, and the PlayStation already has a built-in music player. Why can't they just scrap the built-in player, use the one provided with the free demo disc and stick a server on instead? Even if it's only for multi-player games, it would make the PlayStation a lot, lot better.
Colin Fotheringham, Doncaster.

EPM: The PlayStation just wasn't designed for Internet access. You're right when you say the 'not enough memory' objection is tripe (and even if it were true, the expansion port could be used for expansion packs), but you certainly wouldn't need a 'server' on your PSX - a server is a virtual headquarters net freaks can access, and not something that lets you use the net. Do you mean 'browser', a piece of software used to find your way around the Internet?
Alas, it's unlikely the PlayStation or any other console will ever be used for Internet access in the UK - the phone costs are too expensive for it to catch on, unlike in the USA where local calls (in a 25 mile radius) are free.

ABE'S ATTITUDE

I've been buying your mag since Issue One and I think it's great, but when I read your review of Abe's Exoddus I was very disappointed.
You said the loading times are long. So what? If you can't be patient enough for an excellent game like Abe's Exoddus to load, then what are you guys reviewing games for? I'd definitely say loading times have come a long way since the Spectrum. Plus a puzzle game needs patience. Abe should be praised for its unique gameplay and deep thought. I've read a lot of other mags' reviews and you seem to be the only ones who dislike it. I'd like you to print this as I'm sure a lot of Abe's fans feel the way I do.
Daniel, Manchester

EPM: Yes, loading times have come on a long way since the Spectrum, but they're regressed since the SNES. Okay, this was inevitable because the switch to far-superior CD format, but what Doug was saying is the loading times are just too long. Also, a 75% score implies a good game, but not a great one - he didn't 'dislike' it.

Finally, we're a little confused about your high praise for the game - at the time of writing it's not even on the shelves, though it will be by the time you read this. If you're getting it for Christmas, I hope you enjoy it as much as you expect to - I know not everyone agrees with Doug.



FLIGHT OF FANTASY?

I've just got the new issue of EPM and read the letters page. JD Humphries asked for a two-player flight sim game where one player controls the craft and the other shoots. There actually is such a game - Star Wars Arcade on the 32X. It was highly addictive at the time but soon ran out with the arrival of the PlayStation.
From the same letter, there was another idea - a racing game where you can chuck other cars and vehicles out of the way. Well, it's not identical, but it sounds amazingly similar to Twisted Metal 2: World Tour.
Chris Wallace, Chesham, Bucks

EPM: No, Twisted Metal 2 is more like Vigilante 8, and their ancestor, Battle Cars. You shoot other vehicles, not throw them out of the way. Interesting about Star Wars Arcade, though. The only trouble is, it's on the 32X. Here's a joke for you - what's the difference between the 32X and the Loch Ness Monster? Some people claim to have seen the Loch Ness Monster!

GIMMIE YOUR BEST SHOT...

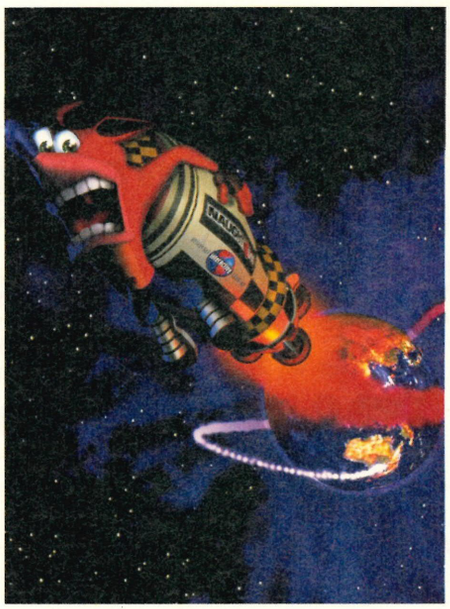
I've been buying PlayStation magazines for a long time now and I've noticed that the pictures or screenshots in quite a few magazines are really poor and make the game look bad. In fact, the only magazine this isn't true for is yours. I think the quality of the screenshots is important as they help people to decide what games to buy. For example, I was looking at Duke Nukem: Time to Kill in your mag, and thought it looked quite good compared to the Duke Nukem game my friend had. But after looking at it in another magazine I was completely put off because the other magazine made it look really bad. In the same magazine I saw Tomb Raider III. I know what it should look like after seeing the other two Tomb Raiders, but it looked terrible here. In your magazine it looked just the way it should, the screenshots showing the game just like it is.
Keep up the good work.

EPM: Thanks - we will.

CRASHED AGAIN?

Jonathan Abbott's letter about Crash Bandicoot 2 in Issue 11 requires further investigation. I don't disagree that it's possible to complete this game in four and a half hours, but only if you miss certain sectors. There are 25 levels, five warp rooms, five hidden warp rooms and three secret levels to complete. In them, you must find 25 crystals, five coloured gems and 32 clear gems. Add to this the six end-of-level monsters and you have a game that takes a good deal more than four and a half hours to complete.
Did Jonathan just breeze through the game the easy way, or did he complete all the tasks? Somehow, I don't think it was the latter. Be honest.
Mike Quennell, Guildford

EPM: You have a point - does anyone else have anything to say about Crash Bandicoot 2?



PEARLS OF WISDOM...

Sizzling snippets from your luscious letters.

• Could you please write back and tell me where to get another Mortal Kombat 4 book.
Carlos something, somewhere

EPM: Alas, your letter was damaged by the floods and most of it was illegible. To get another copy of the book, though, just order another copy of Issue Ten - see page 95 for details.

• Are there any plans for:
1: Grand Theft Auto 2?
EPM: Yes, but no information on it has been offered yet.
2: Tomb Raider IV?
EPM: Not at present - TR III isn't out yet, but the cash cow will not be killed.
3: Men in Black cheats?
EPM: Full solution coming soon.
Mark Perry, Dave Mills & Dave O'Connell

• I Have Gran Turismo, Tomb Raider II and Final Doom; what should I buy next?
Phil Space, Halesowen.

EPM: A subscription to EPM? Read the reviews; buying recommendations are what the entire magazine's about.

And on that note, we bid you adieu. See you next month, when we'll bring you another selection from our postbag. Remember, the writer of the Star Letter wins a free game from those awfully-nice guys at Gameplay. Don't forget to state which game you'd like should you win.

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Reviewed: MotorHead, Tekken 3 (import), Rascal, Alundra, Premier Manager '98, Spawn.
Full solution: Resident Evil 2



Reviewed: Colin McRae Rally, WarGames, Blast Radius, Tombi, Road Rash 3D, Blasto, Batman & Robin.
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SOLD OUT!



Reviewed: Tenchu, Duke Nukem: Time to Kill, Metal Gear Solid, Victory Boxing 2.
FREE: 100-page Mortal Kombat 4 player's guide; includes tips for earlier MK games.



Reviewed: Apocalypse, Abe's Exoddus, Spyro the Dragon, Formula 1 '98, Test Drive 4x4.
FREE: 200-page extreme Solutions book (volume 2) covering 18 games.

Pads galore this month, and a couple of competitions to boot. Answer a couple of simple questions and you could be the proud owner of the excellent Blaze Hyper Mouse or a Wild Things 8-Page Memory Card, both reviewed last issue.

CYBER SHOCK

BY: BLAZE

PRICE: £TBA

Our first preview pad this issue is something of a first. Not only does it look like a prop from Star Trek Voyager, it also has the option for you to switch the control 'knob' between five innovative possibilities. You could have your Tomb Raiding knob, Tekken knob, Spyro knob; the list goes on. We'll give you the full low-down in next month's Stuff, along with our usual array of prizes.



BARRACUDA 2
DUAL VIBRATION

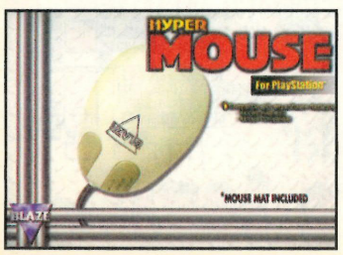
BY: INTERACT **PRICE: £TBA**



The second of our two pad previews comes in the shape of Interact's Barracuda 2. We've been lucky enough to get our mitts around an early version, and things are shaping up quite nicely. One of the great features you should expect to see is a switch on the back of the pad which reverses the function of the twin analogue sticks. This means that you can assign which stick does what to suit your style of play. Keep an eye out for a review next issue.

COMPETITION
SPONSORED BY BLAZE

After grabbing Blaze's top PR exec by the angles and shaking him vigorously , five Blaze Hyper Mouse (reviewed last issue) fell into our hands. If you want the chance to be the next proud owner of this freshly-swiped bounty, just answer the easy question below:

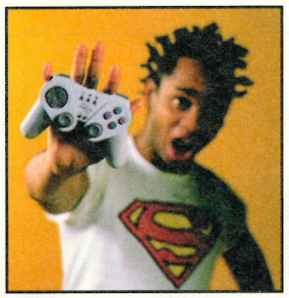


• What mark did the Blaze Hyper Mouse gain in last issue's EPM Stuff page?

Answers on a Postcard to the usual competition address making sure you mark 'Blaze Compo' at the top, entries to arrive by 24th December.

DUAL FORCE
ANALOGUE JOYPAD

BY: GAMESTER **PRICE: £14.99**



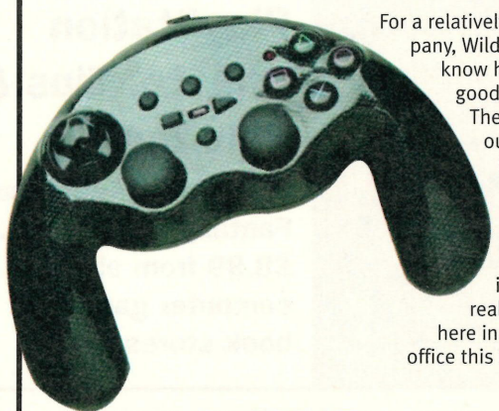
Gamester's latest offering for the PSX peripherals market has all the features that you would expect from a third-party product. It has a reasonably-powerful Duel Shock feature, twin analogue sticks and Auto and Turbo functions. It has quite a large feel to it, but no game buttons are out of reach or badly placed. The only button problem arises when you wish to use the Start and Select buttons for games like Tomb Raider, where you frequently want to go to the inventory screen. They are very small and placed right in-between the analogue sticks, forcing you to avert your eyes from the action to see what you're doing.

VERDICT: 6 OUT OF 10

The directional pad is sadly reminiscent of the old Mega Drive variety, having the whole disc raised from the pad with the four-way pointers raised further. It controls pretty precisely, but leaves your thumb red-raw in games like Tekken and Street Fighter; forgivable, if a little painful. Overall the Duel Force Analogue has everything except comfort at heart; the edges are sheer and it feels like you might cut your hand on its contours.

PRIMAL PAD

BY: WILD THINGS **PRICE: £24.99**



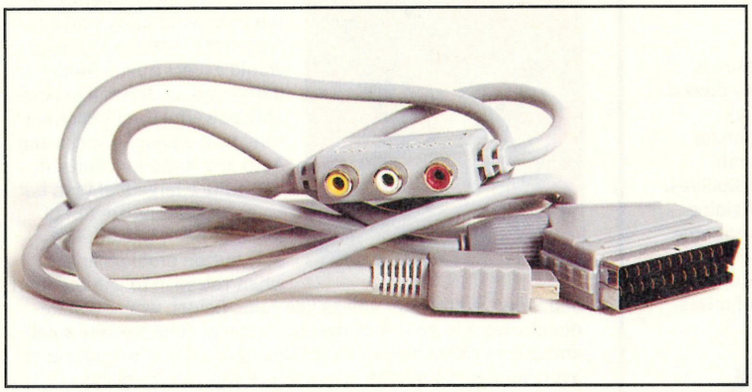
For a relatively young company, Wild Things sure know how to make a good pad or two. Their adventurous new Primal Pad, with its Stealth Bomber-like appearance and cold-as-ice finish, has really hit the spot here in the EPM office this month.

VERDICT: 8.5 OUT OF 10

Though by no means the cheapest pad on offer, its smooth feel and solid appearance (or is that the other way round?), works hard to make up for it. Looks aren't everything, though, and ease of use and the all important comfort factor plays a big role in our reviews. It slides into your hands comfortably and all the buttons are immediately accessible. The shoulder buttons have been moved into a trigger position to accommodate the width of the pad so all the shoulder buttons are always in reach regardless of whether you're playing by the analogue or digital control methods. It's Dual Shocks aren't the pad's strongest feature as they're not as powerful as some of the other third-party offerings we've seen recently, but they work nevertheless. Everything else is there as you'd expect; Slow Motion and Turbo Functions both easily accessible during play. Maybe the looks aren't everyone's cup of tea, but its precise, sturdy and surprisingly lightweight. Top marks for effort and ergonomics, though it may have gained a higher mark if the price was in line with Sony's Official Pad.

SUPER RGB SCART CABLE

BY: JOYTECH **PRICE: £9.99**



SCART televisions offer clearer pictures and higher definition, but only if you're using a SCART cable. Connect your PlayStation to the TV with the standard RF connector and you get no benefit at all. Joytech's Super RGB Cable performs this function, and more besides.

Not only does the Super RGB Cable offer a SCART connection, it's also compatible with the GunCon - using one of these, you can plug in your GunCon-compatible light gun without the need for an AV Multi Out Adaptor. Also, because it has phono sockets built in, it makes it easy to connect your PlayStation to your stereo or surround sound equipment. This is especially useful on newer PlayStation models, which didn't offer built-in phono sockets.

COMPETITION

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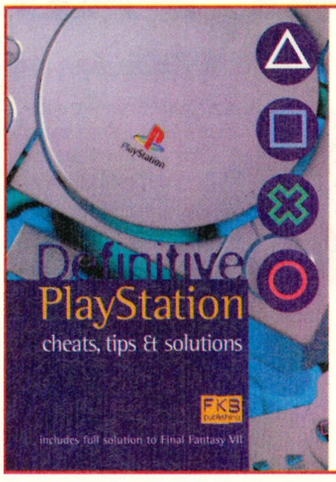


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• The PlayStation is driven by a CD-ROM; what does the ROM stand for?

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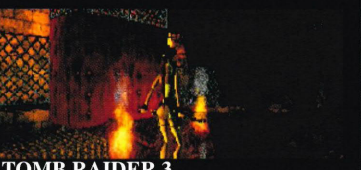
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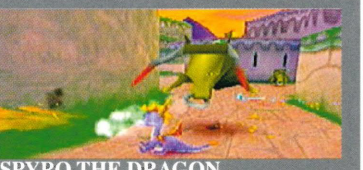
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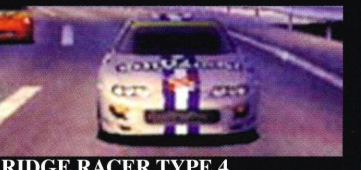

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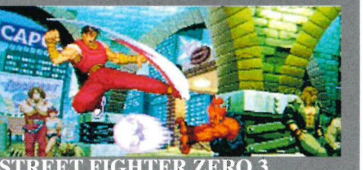

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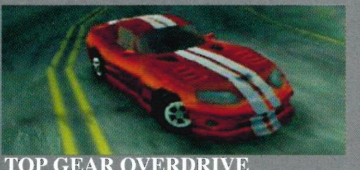

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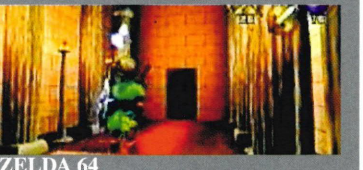

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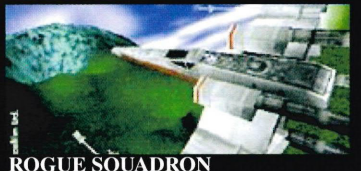

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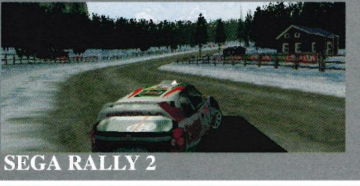


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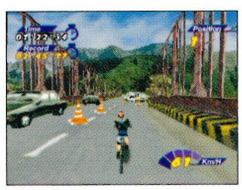
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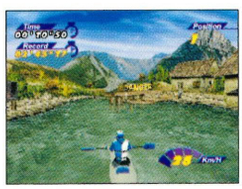
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