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ISSUE 15 March '99



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POOL HUSTLER
GLOBAL DOMINATION
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A BUG'S LIFE

Disney's blockbuster comes to life on the PlayStation

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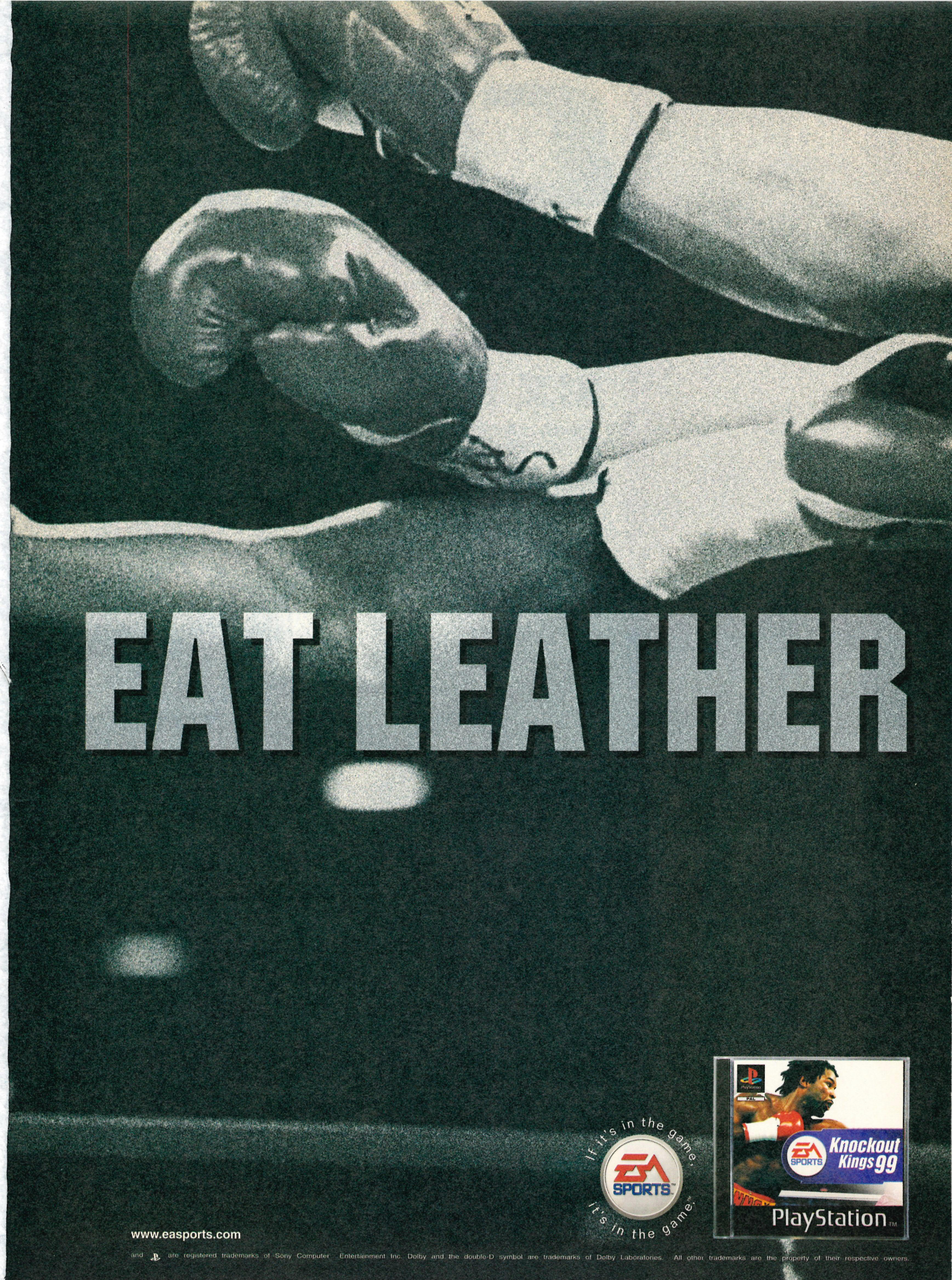
THE UK'S BEST UNOFFICIAL PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

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PlayStation

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Editorial

Welcome to another issue of extreme PlayStation Magazine. This month sees the arrival of what is arguably the best PSX game ever released. Konami's Metal Gear Solid combines a hot storyline, cinematic-quality graphics and thoughtful, strategic action. That's not all, though - A Bug's Life offers great cutsie platform-pounding thrills, Populous: The Beginning will keep the strategy gamers happy and Poy Poy 2's perfect for some multi-player mayhem. We've also got in-depth previews of Le Mans 24 Hours and Carmageddon. The year started slowly for the PlayStation, but it certainly seems to be hotting up now...

Ian Osborne
EPM Editor

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TACTICAL ESPIOAGE ACTION

METAL GEAR SOLID

SIX INCREDIBLE PAGES OF THE BEST PLAYSTATION GAME YET RELEASED



ents



LE MANS 24 HOURS
The toughest motor race in the world - can you handle it?



A Bug's Life - Pixar's PSX platformer is every bit as cute as the film...

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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KING OF IRON FIST CROWNED

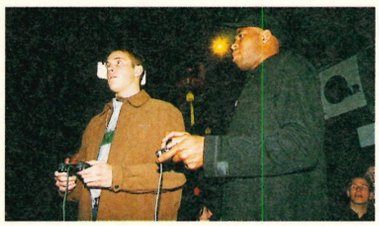
Tekken 3 tournament won

Tekken gamers from all over the world flocked to Namco Station for the first ever Tekken 3 Championship, held on 27th January. At stake were a cheque for $5000 and a Tekken 3 arcade machine worth around $9000.

After many a bloody fight, the semi-finals saw gamers from Sweden, Australia, Germany and the UK battling it out for a place in the final. The prize was eventually taken by 19-year-old Ryan Hart from London.



The event also included a martial arts display and a celebrity challenge, where Arsenal and England's Martin Keown falling to his Arsenal team-mate Matthew Upson. Media and showbiz stars joined in the fun at the party afterwards, including an appearance from top model Jordan.



With any luck, Namco and Sony CEE will host a similar event in the future, so maybe you'll be the next King of the Iron Fist.

'THAT'S ME!'

Prince naz inspects his game...



So far, so good - Prince Naseem Hamed has taken a look at an early version of game which bears his name, and he likes what he sees. "I like the style", says Naz. "Codemasters are trying to get my exact style in the game. It's great to see a computer game of yourself, doing what you do best. They've done a great job". Naz intends to remain involved in the game's development. "That's what I'm really interested in", he says. "When I play it, I want to feel, 'that's me'".

Although in real life Naz is undefeated (he's beaten all 31 of his opponents, 28 inside the distance), he won't be invincible in the ring. His reaction? "If the Prince Naz character goes down, he deserves to get up. I should try and rig it so I never, ever lose on that game".

Prince Naseem Boxing sees Naz and 15 other world-class boxers battling it out. With 800 polygons per character and every move hand-animated, his unique style should shine through.

WILD SAVINGS

Another price plunge



Peripheral peeps Wild Things have dropped the price of their leading PlayStation accessories. The PlayStation Premier Pad falls from £9.99 to £6.99, the Chameleon Pad from £12.99 to £9.99 and the Soft Touch from £12.99 to £9.99. The PlayStation Sabotage Pad is also cut, from £7.99 to £6.99.

Wild Things' Managing Director Howard Jacobson said, "We have been overwhelmed by the tremendous demand for our PlayStation peripherals throughout 1998. We believe our new prices will make our digital PlayStation pads the most sought-after gaming peripherals for quality and value for money".

THIRD OUTING FOR WIPEOUT

Psygnosis' ace racer returns to the PlayStation for a third time...



Fans of the futuristic race games WipEout and its sequel, WipEout 2097, will be thrilled to know there's a third game on the way. WipEout 3 hits the shelves in the Autumn, and developers Psygnosis promise the same hi-octane racing thrills delivered in the first two games but a degree of accessibility that makes newcomers feel right at home.

The new game stays faithful to the original, but offers a host of new features. These include eight new circuits, three new teams as well as the five offered by WipEout 2097, enhanced gameplay modes and Dual Shock compatability. The graphics in 2097 were streets ahead of those in the original game, and Psygnosis promise a similar leap forward in quality for the third instalment.





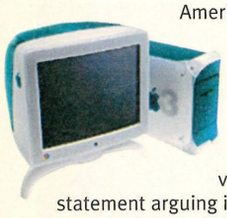
According to Glen O'Connel, Psygnosis' Head of Public Relations, "Wipeout is widely recognised as game responsible for the successful launch of the PlayStation across Europe, and the brand still continues to command respect from press, trade and consumers alike. We believe with the introduction of WipEout 3 we can continue to ensure that Psygnosis dominates the racing game category"

SONY SUES EMULATION ENTREPRENEURS...

PSX emulator in hot water

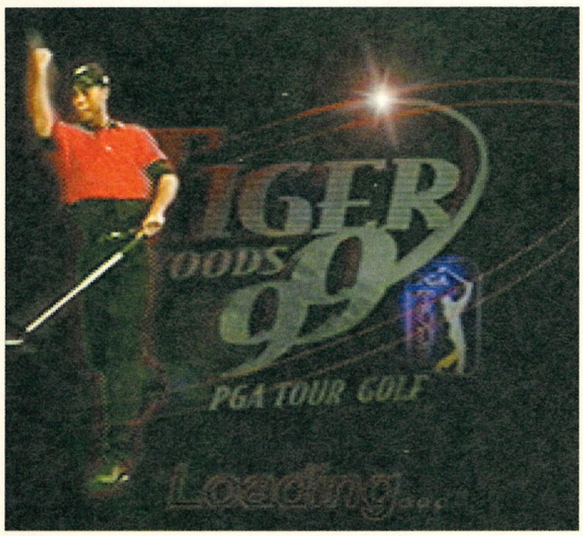
Sony are taking legal action against Connectix, a software company who recently produced a PlayStation emulator for the Apple Macintosh G3 series. The program, Virtual Game Station, allows Apple Macintosh owners to play PlayStation games using the Mac's CD drive, and was produced without Sony's consent.

The Virtual Game Station has already been released in America, though the US version plays only American games running on Macs with the American operating system, though a UK version is planned. At present, the PlayStation's analogue controls are not supported.



Sony claim the Virtual Game Station violates their copyright, and have issued a statement arguing it "circumvents the PlayStation's anti-piracy protection" and will "hurt not only Sony but its third-party publishing partners as well". Connectix' President Roy McDonald denies this, arguing that, "As a software publisher and developer, Connectix strongly opposes the use of illegal copies of PlayStation titles", and that the Virtual Game Station has been designed to prohibit the use of counterfeit discs.

A San Francisco court refused to grand Sony a restraining order against Connectix as it had insufficient time to assess the evidence, but the case is proceeding.



OH MY GOD, THEY'VE KILLED TIGER...

Covert cartoon capers for EA

Electronic Arts hit a Cartman-sized snag when they released Tiger Woods 99 in the States. The first batch of discs were scrapped when a cartoon from South Park was found on a portion of the disc not usually accessed by the PlayStation. The cartoon was added by the programmers as a joke, intending to remove it before duplication, but somehow forgot.

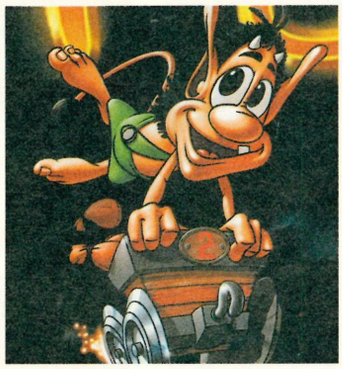
Although the PSX is incapable of accessing the portion of the disk used, by loading it into a PC the cartoon could be opened. Only the American NTSC edition of the game was affected, though, and the rogue copies were withdrawn and destroyed before the game hit the shelves, so there's no point looking for it on your UK copy of Tiger Woods 99.

POCKETSTATION DELAYED

The PocketStation, Sony's curious PlayStation accessory which operates as both a memory card and a hand-held games console, has been delayed. Due to hit the shelves in Japan before Christmas, the add-on is now pencilled in for a February release, but could slip still further.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

No one loves his trusty PSX more than John Stirling. Videogames fanatic John has changed his name by deed poll - to Sony PlayStation! Mr Stirling - sorry, PlayStation - told The Sun his favourite chat-up line is, "Would you like to come back to my place and play with my joystick?", a very old joke which makes little sense now most gamers use joyPADs. Unsurprisingly, he hasn't got a girlfriend.



HUGO RIDES AGAIN

Hugo, the loveable troll star of European children's cartoons, is to return in a second cutesy-kidsy game. The nature of the game has yet to be decided, but it will be aimed at children aged four to 12.

LARA LIES

Contrary to idle speculation on the Internet and in other PlayStation publications, no one is yet pencilled in to play Lara Croft in the forthcoming Tomb Raider movie. Nor has the script been finalised. Nor has a director been appointed.

"Things are moving slowly", says Core Design's Susie Hamilton. "We don't mind the speculation as it's all good publicity for Tomb Raider, but at present it's all just guesswork. Core have a veto over who's chosen, so no one could be pencilled in without our knowing".

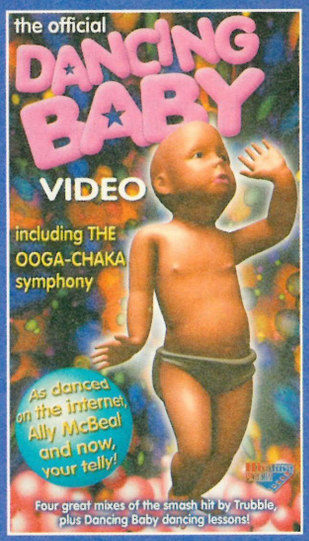
On a lighter note, Tomb Raider II is to be released on Sony's Platinum label on 19th March. Expect a review next issue.

PLAYSTATION PRICE CUT

Sony have reduced the price of the PlayStation in Japan from Y18,000 to Y14,000, or around £75. Sony claim the move brings Japan's prices into line with those of the other major territories.

There are no plans for a UK price cut, but a reduction to a £70-80 price point just before the launch of Sega's new Dreamcast console seems possible.

GADGETS



If you're a fan of Channel Four's Ally McBeal, you've probably seen the quite scary dancing baby that appears during the titles. But if you haven't yet had the pleasure, or you haven't managed to find the Internet site while surfing, look no longer, as you can soon buy it on video!

Yes, there's 52 non-stop minutes'-worth of this baby, strutting its funky stuff to four different remixes of The Ooga-Chaka Symphony. And just so you can be part of the action, there's also step-by-step Dancing Baby dancing lessons, so no matter how old you are, you too can take part.

The thing is, that you have to pay a tenner for the privilege of owning this on video, and trust us, you have to be someone who's got money to burn if you're even considering buying it. The backgrounds the baby dances in front of change from merely psychedelic to so psychedelic that your eyes pop out of your head. Maybe with a few other dance routines and an additional one or two different songs, they just might be able to get away with it - as long as there was only around 15 minutes-worth of it to watch.



You may feel that we have slated this a little much, but we reckon it's more than justified.

NEW FRIEND FOR ABE

Grandad gets game cameo

If you think you're Abe's biggest fan, think again - 72-year-old grandfather Alf Gamble has you beat hands down. Alf was on the brink of depression after his wife died, until his daughter bought him a PlayStation and a copy of Abe's Oddysee.

He became so hooked on the game he sent letters to publisher GT Interactive, the developers Oddworld in California and extreme PlayStation outlining how much he liked it. Oddworld's President Lorne Lanning was so impressed he named a character Alf in the second bonus world of the sequel, Abe's Exoddus, in honour of Mr Gamble. Alf is also included in the FMV sequence at the end of the game.

Mr Gamble is such an Abe fanatic he's even had Oddworld's favourite son tattooed on his arms and made pictures of him to hang on his walls. He still doesn't look very cheerful, but you can bet he's happy when he's playing an Abe game.



MEN IN BLACK PRICE PLUNGE

...But why did they bother?



Gremlin's Men in Black is to be re-released on 26th February at a budget price of only £25.99. The game, licensed from the blockbuster Hollywood film, has sold over 350,000 copies since its release last April. We don't know why, though - it's bloody awful, scoring only 38% in Issue Eight.

ACTUA GOLF, ACTUAL COURSES...

Actua Golf 4 gets PGA licence

Gremlin's forthcoming Actua Golf 4 is to be augmented by a licence from the PGA European Tour. The PGA's three-year agreement with Gremlin allows genuine golf courses to be reproduced in the game.

Actua Golf 4 will boast fully motion-captured professionals, including the 1998 Golfer of the Year Lee Westwood. The exact courses to be included have yet to be confirmed, but the licence gives Gremlin the option on courses like St Andrews, Wentworth, Lytham St Anne's and Valderama.



According to Nigel Bruce, Head of Marketing, "This licence will enable us to take the whole game to new levels of realism and playability and give us a real edge over other publishers' player-endorsed games. We are delighted to be working with the PGA European Tour".

TRIUMPH AND AGONY

Cool Boarders 3 / Phat Air (Snowboarding Games)



Last year's snowboarding craze inspired several snowboarding games for the PSX. Some were good, others not so good, but never was the difference so marked as with Cool Boarders 3 and Phat Air: Extreme Snowboarding.

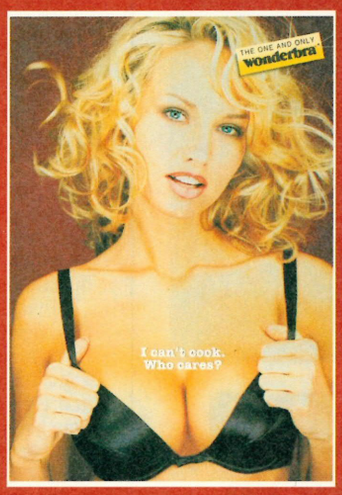
Cool Boarders 3 is truly a triumph. Drawing on the experience of the first two Cool Boarders games, what Sony delivered is essentially more of the same, but bigger, faster and better. It made no great leaps forward over CB2 (except in size), but instead tweaked, polished and upgraded every element in the game. The end result? Issue 13's 92% rave review.



Compared to Cool Boarders 3, Phat Air is little more than a demo. It's only a fraction of the size of Sony's marvel and features blocky, badly-animated graphics, awkward controls and no lastability whatsoever. The whole game looks sloppy and unfinished - could it be that it was rushed out to hit the shelves before CB3? Either way, for those that bought it, Phat Air offered nothing but agony.

POST TASTE

The best and worst postcards used as competition entries.



This month and every month, the best and worst postcards used as competition entries win a prize. Not much of a prize - it's usually some tat we've got lying around in the office, but it's a prize nonetheless.

You've got to hand it to R. Bruce of Arbroath, Scotland - he (or is that 'she'?) knows how to pick a bad postcard. This dreadful painting of a basket of sunflowers is quite the worst we've seen this month. The whole thing's just one confused mess; not exactly Van Gogh, eh? More like the lid of a cheap box of chocolates. Never mind - it's won you an Agatha Christie novel sent to us as a print sample.

Much better is Julia Hydes' Wonderbra advert - yes, that one was sent in by a female! It isn't exactly art, but who can resist it? We don't care that she can't cook either, though this is probably a gratuitously sexist remark.



Well done - you get a copy of Prima's flawed-but-interesting Lara's Book.

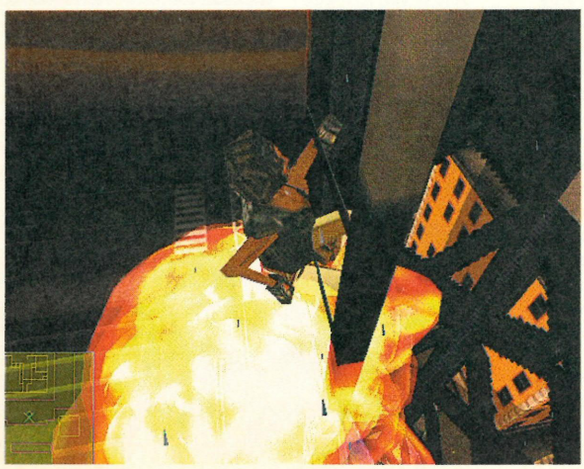


MORE URBAN CHAOS

Eidos already signed sequel

Even though Urban Chaos isn't due until the Summer, Eidos have already signed up the sequel with developers Mucky Foot. The game, featuring a mixture of gamestyles and demanding stealth, agility and martial arts skills, is set in a post-apocalyptic cityscape. It boasts a fully-interactive environment and some impressive technological advances.

"We firmly believe Urban Chaos will be a huge hit and we're delighted to sign a sequel", says Eidos Chairman Ian Livingston. Only time will tell whether his faith in the game is well placed, but expect a full preview soon.



PSX TO BE MODIFIED?

There's a new PlayStation developer in town - Manhattan-based Modified, having acquired a PlayStation developer's licence, are planning their first PlayStation title. Set for a 2000 release, Chiller Killers is a futuristic 3D action game set in the not-too-distant future which puts the player in the role of a rogue oxygen dealer racing across an urban landscape, seeking new weapons and vehicles to evade holographic police authorities.

The game's main strengths are, according to Modified, its advanced 3D video mapping techniques designed to create new levels of graphic realism. The sound is another high point, with quality music to back up the FX.

As the release date is over a year away there's no point holding our breaths for Chiller Killers, but expect more news as it's made.

PIG POKED

Team 17's platformer PiG has been cancelled due to the company deciding the platform market is saturated and PiG just wasn't the right game at the right time, even though it didn't play badly at all. "Our attitude was that the game had to be fantastic", said Marketing Director Debbie Beswick. "'Reasonable' isn't good enough".

Team 17's next two PlayStation games are the Infogrames-published Addiction Pinball, due soon, and Worms Armageddon which won't be ready until September.

SECOND BITE FOR CROC

That loveable lizard Croc is back - Fox Interactive are working on a sequel to the now-Platinum original which sold over a million copies world-wide.

Croc 2 expands on Croc's move range and introduces new characters such as Swamp Meet Pete, Canon Boat Keith and Venus Von Flytrap.

Although it sold by the bucketload, the first Croc game was less than wonderful (Russell gave its Platinum release 67% in Issue Ten), but hopefully the sequel will offer significant improvements.



DATE SET FOR ED HUNTER

At long last, a release date has been set for Ed Hunter, the light gun game based on the lyrics and imagery of Iron Maiden, previewed back in Issue Nine.

The game, developed by Synthetic Dimensions, will be released in May, and now features beefed-up sound effects and extra Maiden tracks in the background.

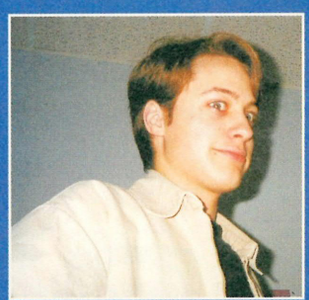
MEET THE TEAM

It's not just the hares that go mad in March. The EPM team are pretty barmy too, if these photos are anything to go by. Programmers looking for scary monsters and other assorted fiends could do well to study our office - especially Russell's desk, the dreaded pit of despair. So what sort of lunatic monsters would the EPM team make?



IAN

Is he impersonating the dreaded swamp beast of Stygia? Could he be the bullet-headed alien responsible for the deaths of countless pilgrims on their journey to the Temple of Arrkon? No, he's just having a Bad Hair Day and is too embarrassed to have his greasy locks photographed.



RUSSELL

Russell's in a big, menacing mood today. His evil eyes glare ferociously at anyone stupid enough to get in his path. But then, the man who said 'the camera never lies' was completely wrong - when you meet him face to face, he's only a little squirt.



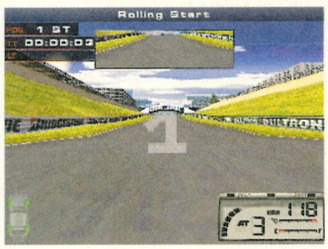
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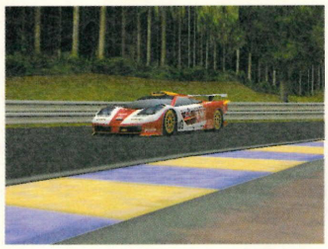
If Ian's having a Bad Hair Day, Claire's is downright abysmal. She's doing a great impression of a cross between Chewbacca and Captain Caveman. Scary? Sure, but some might consider it an improvement.

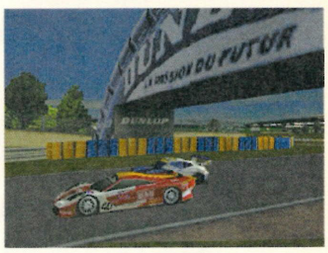
expected

Insider info on future games...









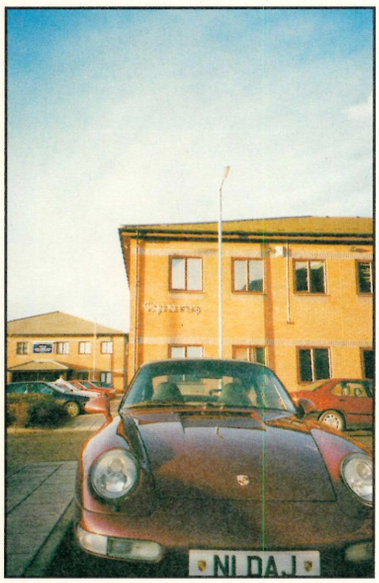
Following their success with Max Power Racing, Eutechnyx are working on a game based on the Le Mans 24-hour endurance race. Ian Osborne paid them a visit to see how it's shaping up...

PUBLISHER Infogrames

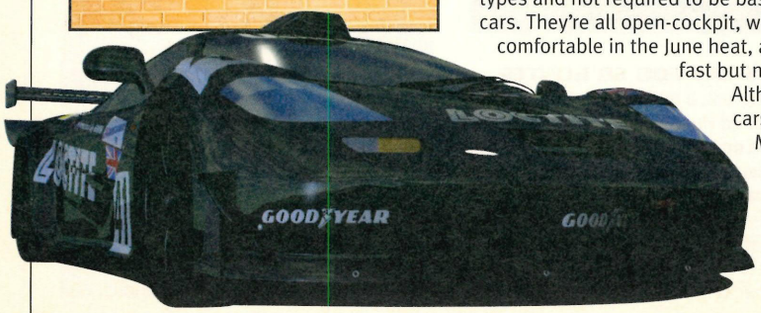
DEVELOPER Eutechnyx

RELEASED May '99

Le Mans







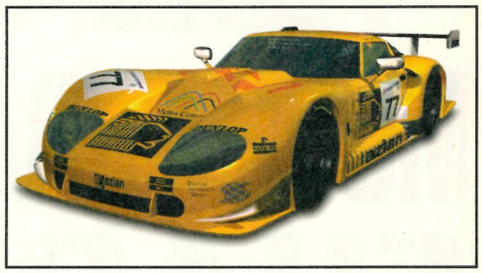
The Le Mans 24-hour road race is the ultimate test of driving endurance. Set in northern France partly on a public road and partly on a dedicated circuit, the car that wins is the one that completes the most laps in 24 hours. Needless to say, this can only be achieved by going faster than your foes, taking a better racing line and pushing the car to its limits.

The teams must drive strategically too. With cabin temperatures reaching anything up to 120 degrees Fahrenheit, it's impossible for drivers to race for more than an hour at a time during the day or two hours at night, and they often lose up to ten pounds of bodyweight. Lucky you're allowed pit stops where you can refuel, change drivers and make extensive repairs on your cars - it's not unknown for a Le Mans car to pit in with the engine in flames or on three wheels, and only around half of the 48 starters actually finish the race. Sounds like an ideal for a PlayStation game, doesn't it? Good job Gateshead's finest Eutechnyx have picked up the licence...

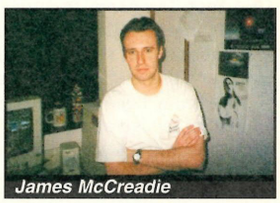
The Cars

There are three classes of car competing at Le Mans; GT1, GT2 and LMP1. They all compete on the same track at the same time, with the winner in each category declared at the end of the race. GT1 cars are the fastest; GT2 cars are obliged to get out of the way when a GT1 racer wants to pass. Both GT classes must be 'homologated', that is based on a genuine road-legal car of which at least 200 have been produced and sold. Of course, big manufacturers aren't above developing a road car with one eye on the racing version. The LMP1 class are experimental prototypes and not required to be based on road-legal cars. They're all open-cockpit, which is scary but comfortable in the June heat, and tend to be very fast but not very reliable.

Although there are 48 cars in the actual Le Mans event, the PlayStation version only allows 16 to race at a time, but let's face it - that's more than most driving games. A team of three people work tirelessly getting all the cars set up correctly, using telemetry and information obtained from the real-life teams to keep them true to life. Le Mans drivers are also interviewed, their constructive comments helping to polish the cars' handling and performance still further.

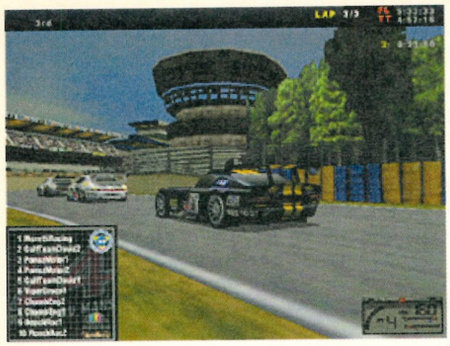


According to QA Manager James McCreadie, "The main difficulty is getting the right balance between realism and gameplay. It can't be too much of a simulation or it would be impossible to play unless you're a genuine racing driver".

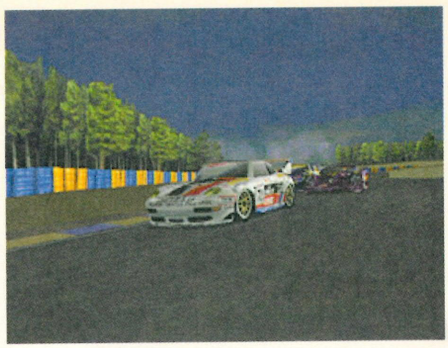

James McCreadie

The artificial intelligence also caused problems. "You've got to get it realistic so the cars behave as









24 Hours

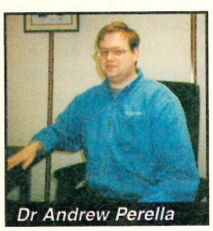
DYNAMIC DETAILS...

As well as photographing every inch of the Le Mans track, Eutechnyx even snapped these items of trackside trivia, creating 3D models of them back at their studio and incorporating them into the game, all under the watchful eye of Studio Manager Malcom Montgomery...





they should", says James. "As well as the physics involved, they must also obey the racing rules". For example? "Cars can be disqualified for deliberate or excessive contact or dangerous driving, so your opponents have to bear this in mind". A GT1 car can order a slower GT2 racer to move aside by flashing his lights too, another feature to be added to the game.

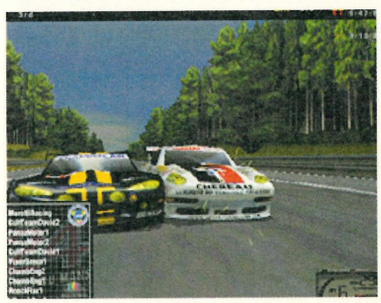


Dr Andrew Perella

To facilitate overtaking, four different 'lines' have been incorporated into the tracks - the racing line, which is the fastest route through the course, a primary overtaking line for passing your opponents and two secondary overtaking lines. This means computer-controlled cars can race intelligently without clinging to the apex like a Scalextric car. Opponents can make mistakes and lose the racing line, but this happens less often than in Eutechnyx' own Max Power Racing - the drivers are seasoned pros, after all.

The car graphics are again very accurate representations of the real thing, using around 540 polygons per car and containing all the advertisers' and sponsors' logos.

Programming Manager Dr Andrew Perella argues, "One of the main difficulties we faced was keeping the physics engine realistic with so many cars on the track at once. Crash physics are especially tricky - unlike TOCA, our frame rate doesn't drop when cars collide". Crash damage is catered for, but don't expect Max Power Racing-style somersaulting vehicles. Although Le Mans cars are very light, they have a low centre of gravity and a wide wheel base, meaning they rarely leave the ground.

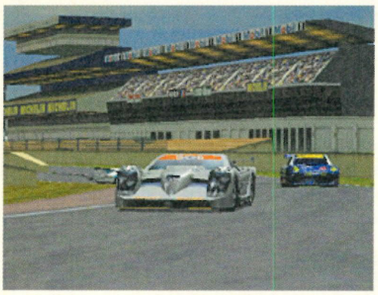


The Tracks

Le Mans 24 Hours offers six tracks; the Le Mans track (obviously), the Bugatti course and four made-up tracks which













THE ART OF RENDERS...

Rachel Bamford and Shaun Allen produce the hi-res images for the game's front end and magazine art, like the ones featured in this preview. The cars are built with polygons, just like the ones in the game, though the hi-res material is far more detailed - each car is built from around 80,500 of them. After building the wireframe, the hi-resolution texture map is added, along with the light sourcing to make it photo-realistic. According to Rachel, the final touches are the hardest part. "Getting the curves is tricky, though adding the advertising logos isn't that hard at all".



are nevertheless faithful to the overall 'feel' of Le Mans - they're even named after Le Mans corners such as Tertre Rouge and Maison Blanche. All have been approved by the ACO.

Starting in Christmas 1997, Eutechnyx photographed every inch of the genuine courses, ensuring they're as accurate as possible. Director of the ACO (Le Mans organisers) Bruno Vanderstick videoed himself driving down the Le Mans track and offered help making them more accurate, even to the point of moving trees a little further from the track's side and rotating a house which, while photographed and modelled accurately, had been placed in the game with the wrong side foremost. The artist's team leader Kev Mountjoy says, "We took four to five hours of film for each track to make sure they're as realistic as possible. They're accurate to the point where trackside adverts are in the right places". But might they not move before the game comes out? "We want to be as accurate as possible as late as possible", he says.

Trackside objects are all solid, so you CAN collide with them. There's little room for artistic licence when designing the tracks and props, but finishing touches like Max Power Racing's smoking chimnies and overhead planes are to be considered. How many such touches and what they are will depend on the remaining memory, but fireworks in the night sky are confirmed.

Although the tracks are all faithful to the 'feel' of the accurately-modelled Le Mans course (no roller-coasters or dirt roads here), subtle variations keep them different. For example, one of the fantasy tracks is raced wholly in the dark, unlike the genuine Le Mans course, where day turns to night and then to day again. Also unlike Le Mans, the course is lit with streetlamps.

The Pits

As mentioned earlier, pit stops are essential at Le Mans, especially if your car's falling to bits. As you enter the pit lane, the computer takes control of your car and guides it in. In the real race the cars are expected to slow to almost nothing as they approach the pits, but as the pit lane is very long, Eutechnyx cheated a little to let you in faster.

While in the pits you can change your tyres, refuel and carry out repairs to your car. If you've trashed it too badly, though, you're forced to retire. Last year, this happened to Martin Brundle and the Toyota team - 23 1/2 hours into the race. Such is the passion generated by the race, his mechanics were in tears.

To plan your pit stops effectively, you must pay attention to the wear and damage indicators showing tyre damage, oil and fuel levels and offer general information on the state of your car. You have to tell the pit crews in advance what you want them to do, and to keep the level of realism high, they sometimes make mistakes.

The Game

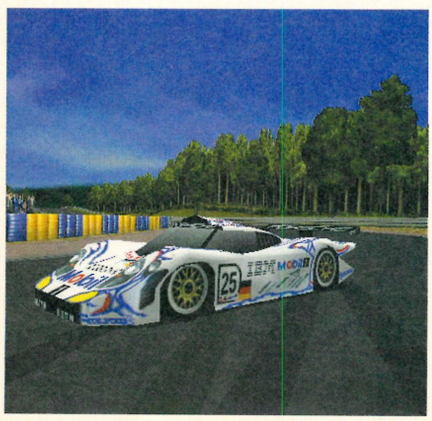
So what other features are present in Le Mans 24 Hours? Well, there are 24 real-life teams with the correct driver and car statistics. Featured cars include the LM600 Marcos, Nissan R390, Panoz GT-R1, Toyota Gti, Kremer K8 and the Lister Storm.

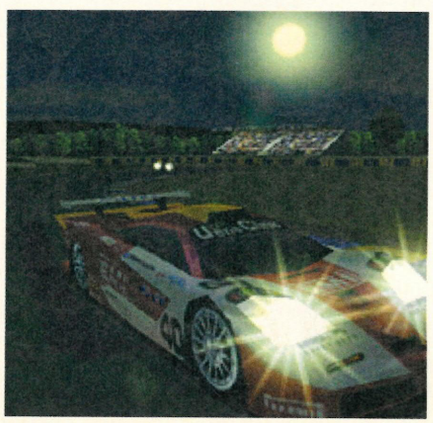
As well as the six featured courses, there's also a test track where you can hone your skills and perfect your car set-up. Here you're offered realistic telemetry, based on digital read-outs enjoyed by the genuine Le Mans teams during testing (telemetry is banned during the race). Your own read-outs can be compared to library data and saved to memory card for future reference.

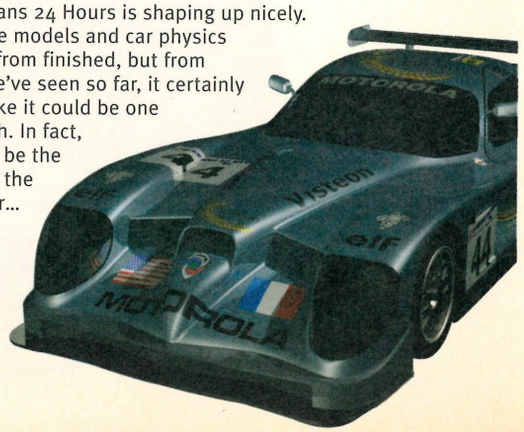
The game is to have three modes of play. The Arcade option involves no qualifying, no pit stops and no set-up. Take on the Championship game and you start as a member of a weak team in the slower GT2 class. Work hard and drive well and maybe a stronger team will ask you to sign for them. Do you accept or leave it on the table and wait for a better offer? Don't wait too long, 'cos if your driving deteriorates the offer could be withdrawn. For the real hardcore Le Mans nuts, there's the Endurance mode where you compete in the Le Mans 24 Hours road race - in real time! Yes, that's right - you actually race for 24 hours. Luckily there's a load and save option, so you don't have to go a whole day without sleep.

The graphics are hi-res, and benefit from Eutechnyx' 'Fiddler' system that all-but eliminates pop-up. The letterbox-style higher-res mode, ideal for widescreen TVs, is also there, just like Max Power Racing.

Le Mans 24 Hours is shaping up nicely. The race models and car physics are far from finished, but from what we've seen so far, it certainly looks like it could be one to watch. In fact, it could be the drive of the Summer...







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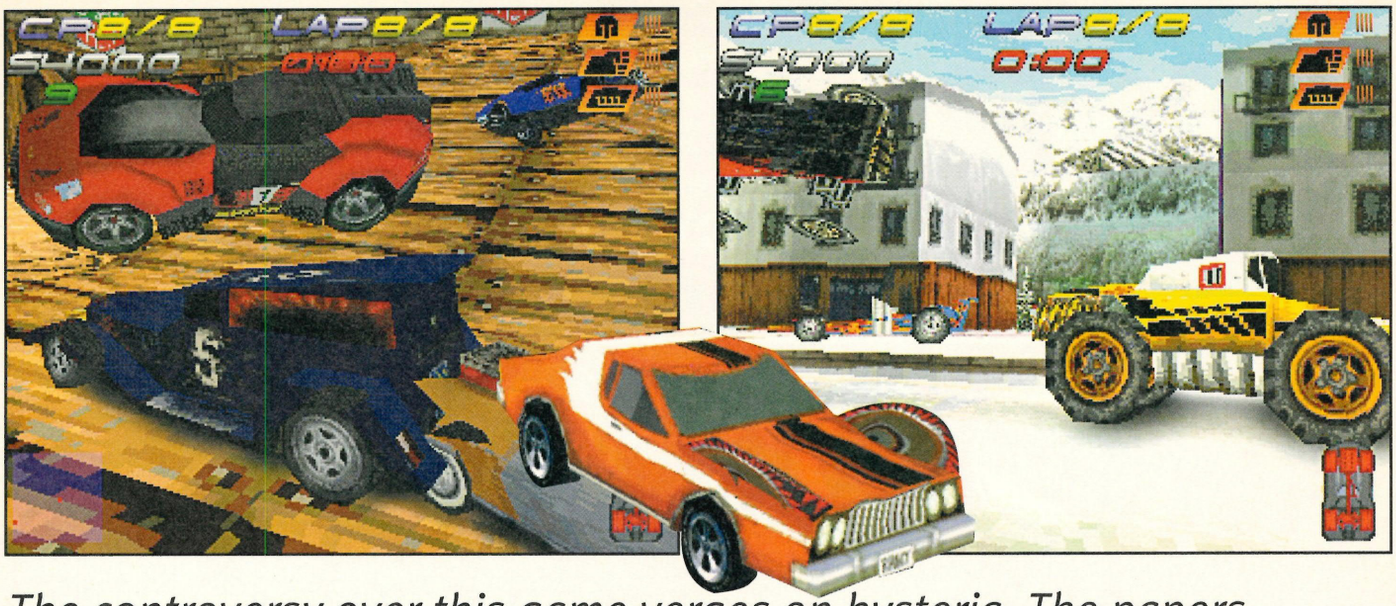
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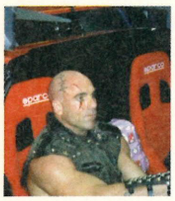
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ACTION REPLAY, EQUALIZER ARE TRADEMARKS OF DATEL ELECTRONICS. GAMESHARK IS A TRADEMARK OF INTERACT.



The controversy over this game verges on hysteria. The papers screamed blue murder when it was released on the PC, and now it's coming to the PlayStation. Ian Osborne paid developers SCi a visit to see if the game matches the hype...

Carmageddon

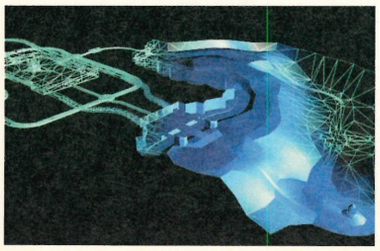


PUBLISHER
SCi

DEVELOPER
SCi

RELEASED
April '99





Ever wondered why the bald geezer in Carmageddon's bright red? "He was originally red because the tail lights of the car in front of him were shining into his face", said SCi's Sam Forrest. "It just grew from there". It's amazing what you learn by going to a development studio and getting the inside story on the game. Last month we gave you a brief description of the PlayStation conversion of the PC phenomenon Carmageddon, but now we can offer a programmers' -eye view as well. Let's take a look...

If you read last month's preview (and if not, why not?), you know Carmageddon is a violent future race where the players get points for driving over pedestrians and animals. Following complaints from the BBFC, the PlayStation version of Carmageddon will feature zombies with green blood rather than red-blooded humans, but what the hey? Let's see what its creators have to say about it.

"Unlike most racers", says Steve Haggerty, the programmer responsible for the graphics engine, "Carmageddon gives you total freedom - you can drive anywhere". This has caused a few problems. For example, with levels so large and heavily textured a certain degree of pop-up is inevitable, but this has been kept to a minimum and disguised where possible. Another difficulty is, according to Haggerty, "getting the balance right between level size and running speed". The team seem to have managed, though - the game runs at a fair old rate and no one will fault its size. Each of the game's ten levels contains around 20,000 polygons, making them bigger than the PC version's, and have been designed from the bottom-up for the PlayStation, though the PC's best ideas have been adopted.


Steve Haggerty

Getting Physical...

Although the game is arcade-based and not a realistic driving simulation, motion physics are still very important to the team. As the game is free-roaming, the surface you're driving on has a huge affect on the way your car handles. This is where Gary Hughes comes in. "It's my job to work out what happens as the car passes from one surface to another", he said. Once again, the biggest problem is keeping the speed up while the PlayStation is dealing with huge numbers of polygons. The kerbs are drawn too high at the moment too, though these will be lowered to make it easier for the cars to mount the pavement.


Gary Hughes

Guy Moss is responsible for the driving mechanics and crash physics. When two cars collide, it's up to him to make sure they bounce away accurately and don't take off like half-filled helium balloons. "The main problem", he says, "is achieving what we want without losing speed". The game isn't a simulation, but has realistic driving physics geared to gameplay rather than accuracy. Thus the crashes use realistic physics models, but are exaggerated to emphasise the spectacular. For example, gravity is slightly reduced. Crash damage reduces performance, but running down people or animals has no effect on the car. Guy's friends insist we point out he had sex last Saturday and says, "Hello, Joanne".


Guy Moss

Artificial Intelligence is always a factor when computer-controlled opponents are present, and John Wilson is there to make sure your foes behave realistically. He's taken pains to make sure they corner effectively without sliding off. Cars you bang into become more aggressive towards you, and as there are five cars to race or battle in the arenas, it's probably best not to upset everybody.


John Wilson

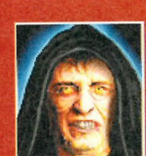
The AI works in a similar way to the PC version of the game, but John has improved on the way the cars

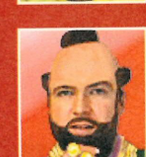
MEET THE DRIVERS...

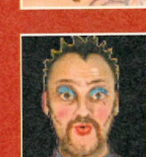
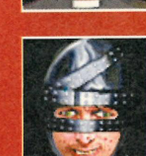
Here are some of the 30 enemy drivers you face in the game. Pretty ugly, aren't they?

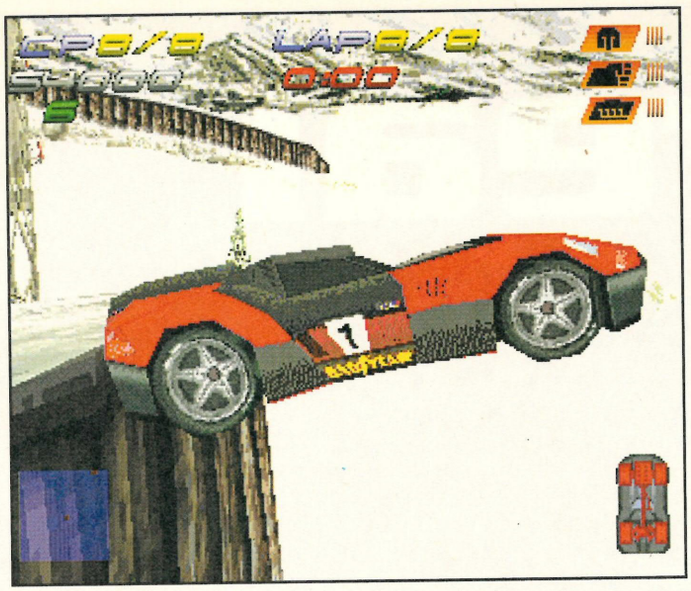


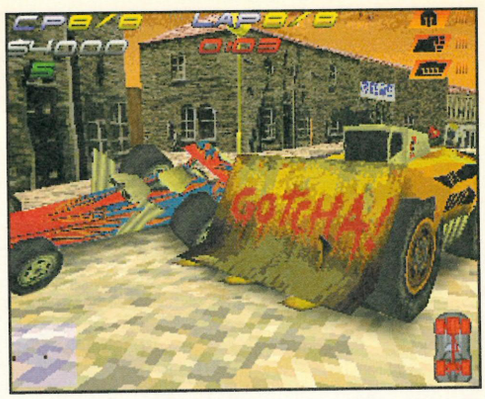




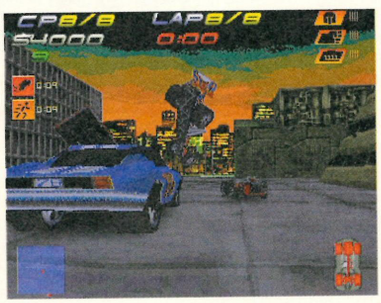


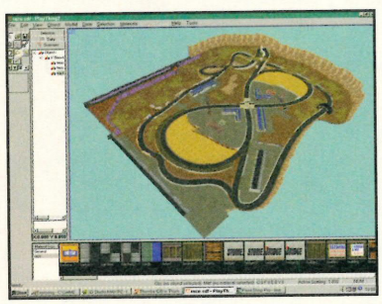







> "We've pushed the machine to the limits, and it's been fun"







move around the road. For example, on the PC you could hit a solid corner and find everyone behind you drove into you, creating a time-wasting pile-up. On the PlayStation they back off a little and squeeze their way past.

The Art of Gameplay...

Realistic physics and cool levels are all very well, but they're not much use without talented artists to bring them to life. SCi are working hard to make sure Carmageddon is a real treat for the eyes.

James Sharman is working on the pedestrians you run down for points. The first PC Carmageddon game used sprites for the peds, whereas the second used around 100-120 polygons per person. The PlayStation uses only 12, but because of clever programming techniques this is hardly noticed. The polygon model is flat and always faces the camera, but this is disguised to make the pedestrians look like 3D models, enabling loads of them on screen without causing slow-down. The people are blown to pieces when you hit 'em rather than rolling over the bonnet realistically. This once again ensures the speed is kept up, and looks more exciting anyway.


James Sharman

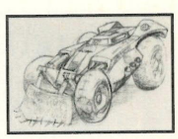
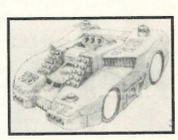
The 3D levels and some of the features within them are created by Bob Plested, who's keen to give each stage a flavour and atmosphere of its own. Although the same models (eg. street lights or checkpoint signs) are used throughout the game, varying lighting techniques are used to make them look different for each stage. "Trying to keep such huge open levels in the memory of the PSX is an absolute nightmare", he says. "We've pushed the machine to its limits, and it's been fun". The levels are certainly interactive - you can drive or leap onto the roofs of most buildings using ramps and scenery.

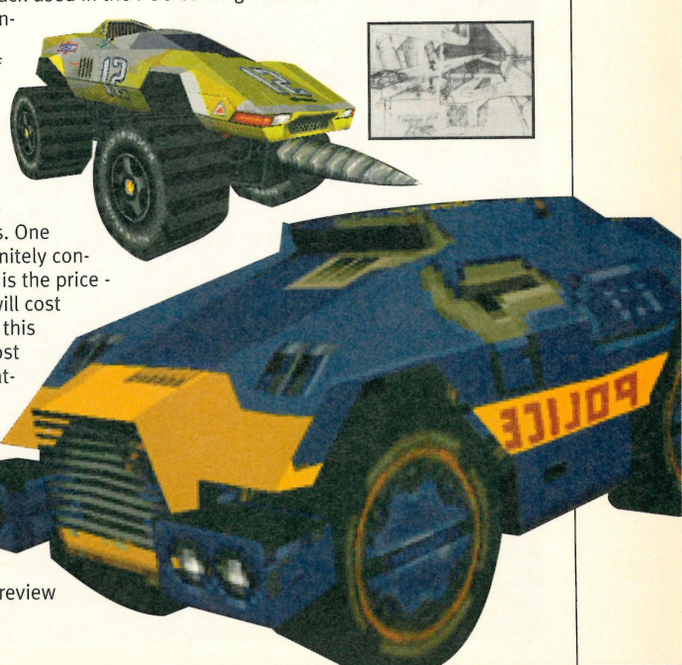


Incidental art isn't neglected either. Graphic artist Dan Knight produces cameos of each individual driver using photographs of the programming team, which he distorts beyond recognition into the hilarious mug-shots you see here. The geezer with the enormous chin is actually himself, and the transvestite vicar with a bad taste in make-up started out as SCi's PR man, Sam Forrest. Starting with a respectable photo, Dan turns it into a freak, though some might say he started out with freaks.


Dan Knight

A few minor details are yet to be decided. The Iron Maiden soundtrack used in the PC's Carmageddon II has yet to be confirmed, and the exact number of rogue drivers is undecided but will be around 30. The player gets a choice of two characters - the rest are foes. One thing that's definitely confirmed, though, is the price - Carmageddon will cost only £34.99. As this is one of the most eagerly-anticipated games of 1999, a sub-£40 price point is a real bonus. Stay tuned for a full review - soon.



Unreal





Will this be as Unreal as it is on PC?

If you're a huge fan of games such as Doom and Duke Nukem, you're in for a treat. PC gamers have been spotted nationwide, sitting at the computers hollering and screaming at their monitors playing this game, while PlayStation owners have just sat in anticipation waiting for the shred of hope that they will one day be playing it themselves.

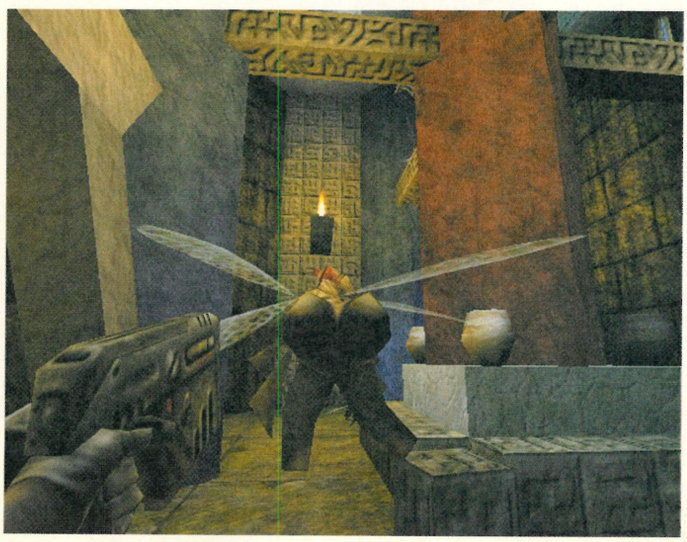
PUBLISHER
GT Interactive

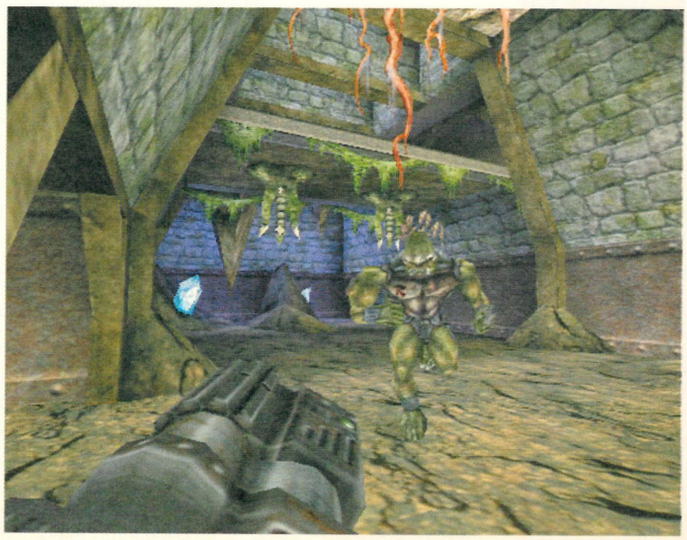
DEVELOPER
Aardvark

RELEASED
TBA

We won't have to wait much longer; it's alive and kicking and waiting to be delivered. There's no need to tell you the general characteristics of Unreal. You could tell us that it's an own-eye perspective offering boasting incredible realistic affects and is about as huge as a game can get!

This is going to be one of those games you just can't switch off. Unfortunately we haven't been able to get our hands on a preview copy yet . However, we're not going to let you down; here are a selection of shots so you can at least see exactly what you're in for.













Monaco Grand Prix Racing Simulation

Its engine's still running...

PUBLISHER UBI Soft

DEVELOPER UBI Soft

RELEASED Spring '98



Back in Issue 11 we commented on the lack of imagination involved in the title of this game, hoping that by this stage Ubi Soft may have seen the light and altered its name - no such luck!

Having played it, the game still looks quite promising. It has 16 tracks, including ones based in Australia, Germany, Hungry and Italy and it also has 11 racing teams and 22 drivers, which, as you can tell, is quite similar to the real-life F1 season.

There are three different modes of play; Arcade, Championship and Single Race, but you also, of course, have the option of playing in multi-player, with up to four people competing. If you choose to, you can edit your team so each of your drivers has a different car and as with every other racing sim, you can choose auto or manual gears.

Also back in Issue 11, we said there was a Career mode, but in the version we've been sent there's no longer any sign of it, which is a shame as it looked quite a promising feature. The graphics at this point look about average, and the backgrounds aren't very exciting, and the crowds look like the usual cardboard cut-out effort. You never know, they could get better before it's released and apart from the graphics it's shaping up to be a good-un'.

Rainbow Six

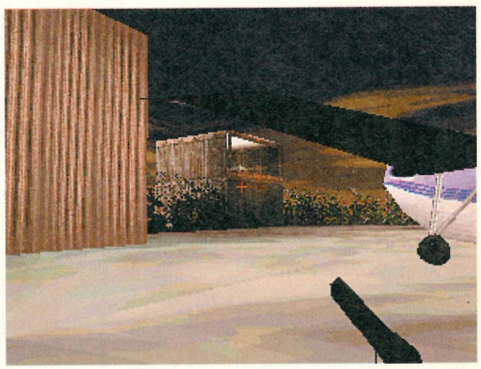
The world is being held to ransom...

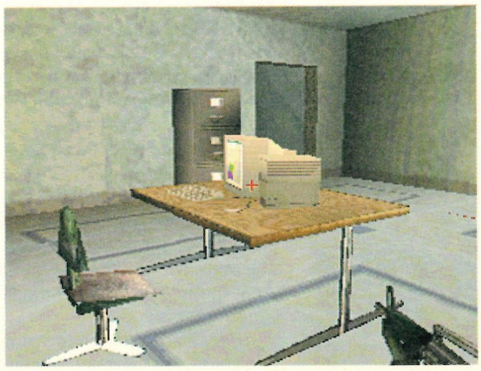
PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive

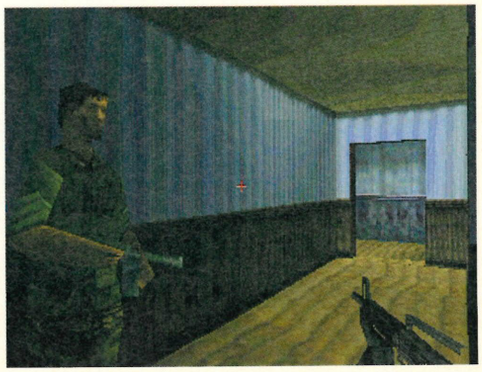
DEVELOPER Southpeak Interactive

RELEASED May '99







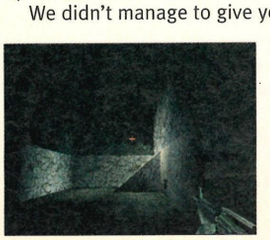


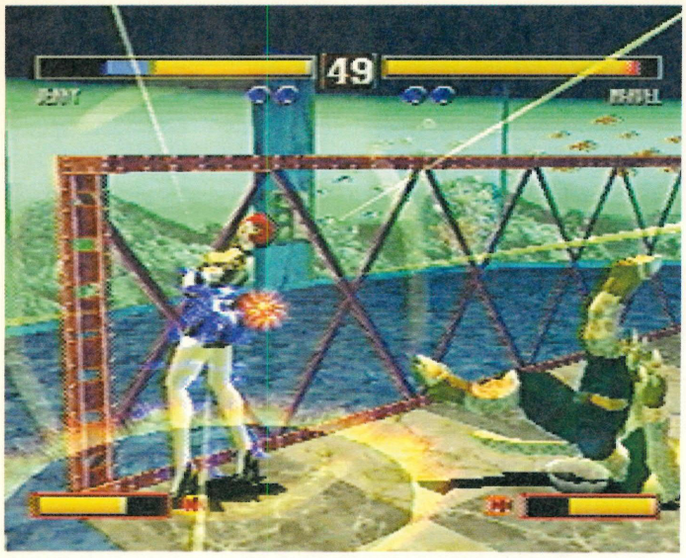
The terrorists have still been causing havoc since we last filled you in back in Issue 13.

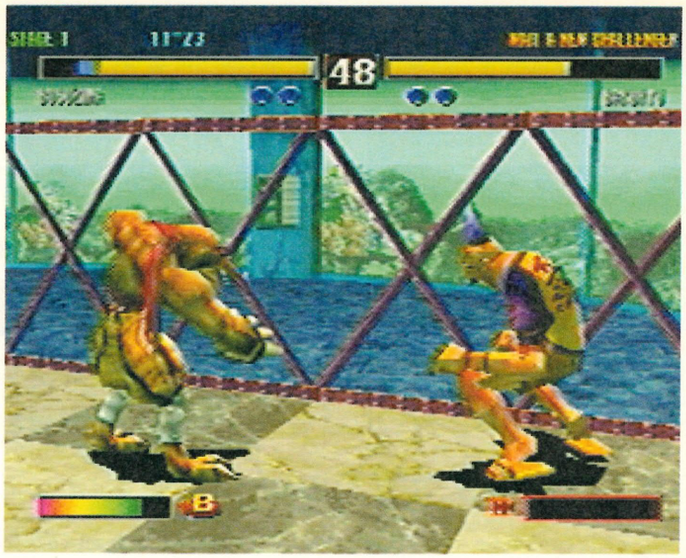
Still heading the elite forces, you're currently arranging the meetings with the men at the top of the company ladder on how to take care of the situation in hand. Eventually the game will get a move on and we'll be able to kick some bad terrorist butt (or whatever you would prefer).

Choose your team wisely from the 20 different special forces operatives and plan your attacks down to the minutest detail. Just as Unreal is about to hit the shops, along comes a second Doom-style 3D blaster for some competition. The affects and true-to-life action is about as realistic as it gets. According to Take 2, they sought knowledge on the subject from technical advisors from the real special forces.

We didn't manage to give you many sneak screenshots on our last update, so here, just for you, are a few more.

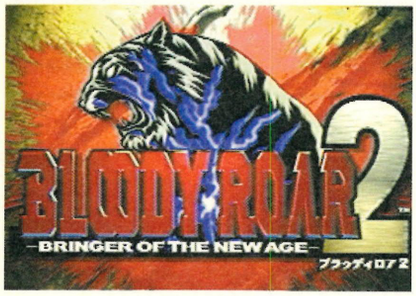






Bloody Roar 2

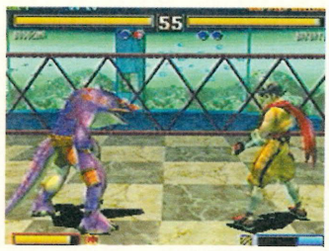














PUBLISHER
Virgin Interactive

DEVELOPER
Hudsonsoft

RELEASED
30th April

It brings out the animal in you...

If you thought the first Bloody Roar was good, you'll probably enjoy this one even more, as it's described as 'the bringer of the new age'. Its looks and gameplay will probably remind you of a beat-'em-up arcade game; fast-moving and loads of fun.

There are ten characters to choose from, and as if you didn't know from the first time around, all of them have a darker side - an animal instinct, you could say. You see women who turn into creatures such as a rabbit, a tiger or a bat and men who develop into lions, insects and lizards. It all sounds quite strange, but wait until you see it and then you'll understand that this is going to be one cool game when it's eventually finished.

You can also take your pick from four different modes of play; There's Survival, where you choose a character and play against a CPU character for one round at a time without getting killed, then there's just the usual Arcade or Versus mode. Finally, you can choose a character and follow their story with some scrapping to be done in between their tales of woe; it's a little like Survival Mode really, as the more freaks you manage to beat the further through the story you progress.

There is also the option to watch the characters play each other in Watch Mode, but what the point to this is we're not quite sure. Maybe it's so you can watch the characters' moves and learn to do them yourself. You can also customise your games as well like changing the backgrounds and other such details within the game.

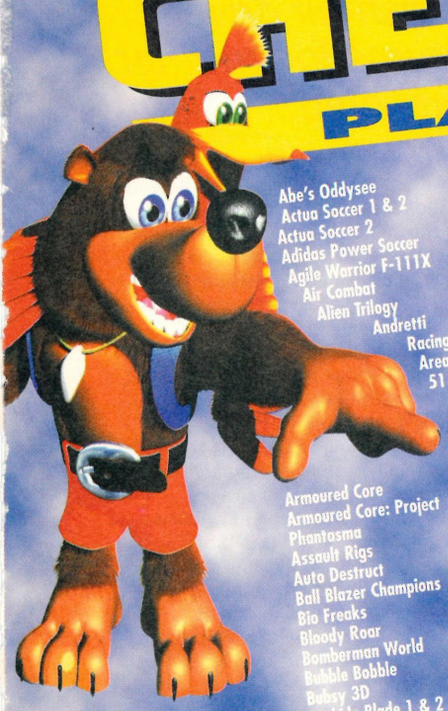
Like all beat-'em-ups, Bloody Roar 2 is really addictive and the fact that your character turns into some kind of animal makes it a lot more, erm; interesting, shall we say, as your other half has different moves to when you're just playing as a human. As usual, when you first start playing your opponent is pretty easy to beat, but the further you progress the harder they become.

The characters are also given a lot of personality, some are even quite flirty. Take Jenny, for instance, who wears a very short skirt and a rather low-cut top. When she finishes an opponent off she says something along the lines of, 'I love it when you scream in pain'. Oo-er Missus! But then she turns into a bat, which isn't very sexy at all.

This game will surely be as good as, if not better than its predecessor - it's nothing if not unique. If you're looking for something a little extra in a beat-'em-up, this will definitely be worth a look. It's just a shame we'll have to stay patient a little longer.

VIDEO GAMES CHEATS & TIPS

PLAYSTATION, N64 & PC



Abe's Oddysee
Actua Soccer 1 & 2
Actua Soccer 2
Adidas Power Soccer
Agile Warrior F-111X
Air Combat
Alien Trilogy
Andretti Racing
Area 51
Armoured Core
Armoured Core: Project Phantasma
Assault Rigs
Auto Destruct
Ball Blazer Champions
Bio Freaks
Bloody Roar
Bomberman World
Bubble Bobble
Bubsy 3D
Bushido Blade 1 & 2
Bust a Move 1, 2, & 3
Cardinal Syn
Carnage Heart
Cheesy
Circuit Breakers
Colin McRae Rally
Colony Wars
Command & Conquer
Command & Conquer: Red Alert
Command & Conquer: Retaliation
Contra Legacy of Wars
Cool Boarders 1, 2, & 3
Courier Crisis
Crash Bandicoot 1, 2, & 3
Crime Killer
Critical Depth
Criticom
Croc
Crusader: No Remorse
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 Wars
Excalibur
Fade to Black
Fanny 11-79
FIFA 96, 97, 98
Fighting Force
Final Doom
Final Fantasy VII
Firo and Klawd
Formula 1 & 97
Formula Karts
Forsaken
Frogger
Gex
Gex 3D
Ghost in the Shell
G-Police
Gran Turismo
Grand Theft Auto
Gunship 2000
Hercules
Hexen
Impact Racing
In the Hunt
Independence Day
Indy 500
International Track & Field
J. Mcgrath Super Cross
Jersey Devil
Jet Rider
Jonah Lomu Rugby
Jumping Flash 1
Jumping Flash 2
King of Fighters 95, 96, 97
Klonoa
Krazy Ivan
Kula World
Lemmings 3D
Loaded
Lone Soldier
Lucky Luke
Machine Hunter
Madden 97, 98, & 99
Magic Carpet
Magic The Gathering Battle Mage
Marvel Super Heroes
Mass Destruction
MDK
Mech Warrior 2
Metal Gear Solid
Micro Machines v3
Monopoly
Monster Trucks
Mortal Kombat 1, 3, 4 & Trilogy
Moto Racer 1 & 2
Motor Head
Motor Toon Grand Prix 1 & 2
N20
Nagano Winter Olympics 98
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Nascar Racing 98 & 99
NBA Hangtime
NBA Jam Extreme
NBA Live 96, 97, & 98
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Need for Speed 1, 2 & 3
NFL Face Off 97 & 98
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One
Pandemonium 1 & 2
Panzer Bandits
Parappa the Rapper
Pitfall
Pitfall 3D
Porsche Challenge
Poy Poy
Premier Manager 98
Pro Pinball
Project Overkill
Psychic Force
Rage Racer
Rally Cross
Rapid Racer
Rascal
Ray Racers
Ray Storm
Rayman
Reboot
Resident Evil 1 & 2
Resident Evil: Director's Cut
Return Fire
Ridge Racer
Ridge Racer Revolution
Rise of Robots 2: Resurrection
Riven: The Sequel to Myst
Road Rash
Road Rash 3D
Rosco McQueen
San Francisco Rush
Shadowmaster
Shellshock
SimCity 2000
Skull Monkey
Soul Blade
Soviet Strike
Spawn
Speed Racer
Speedster
Spice World
Spider
Spot Goes To Hollywood
Spyro the Dragon
Star Fighter
Star Gladiators
Steel Harbinger
Steel Reign
Street Fighter Alpha 1, 2 & Ex Plus Alpha
Street Racer
Suikoden
Super Puzzle Fighter 2 Turbo
Swagman
Tekken 1, 2 & 3
Tempest X3
Tenchu
Tennis Arena
Test Drive 4, 5 & Off Road
Tetris Plus
The Incredible Hulk
The Lost World
Theme Hospital
Theme Park
Three Lions
Tiger Shark
Time Commando
Time Crisis
Tobal No. 1 or 2
TOCA
Tokyo Highway Battle
Tomb Raider 1, 2 & 3
Tommi Makinen Rally
Toshinden 1, 2 & 3
Total Drivin
Total Eclipse Turbo
Total NBA 97
Treasures of the Deep
Triple Play 97, 98 & 99
Tunnel B1
Twisted Metal 1, 2 & 3
Victory Boxing
Vigilante 8
VR Baseball 97
VR Powerboat Racing
V Rally
Vs
V Tennis
War Games
War Gods
War Craft 2: Dark Saga
War Hammer: Dark Omen
Warhawk
WCW Nitro
WCW Vs the World
Wing Over
Wipeout
Wipeout 2097
World Cup 98
World League Soccer 98
Worms
WWF in the House
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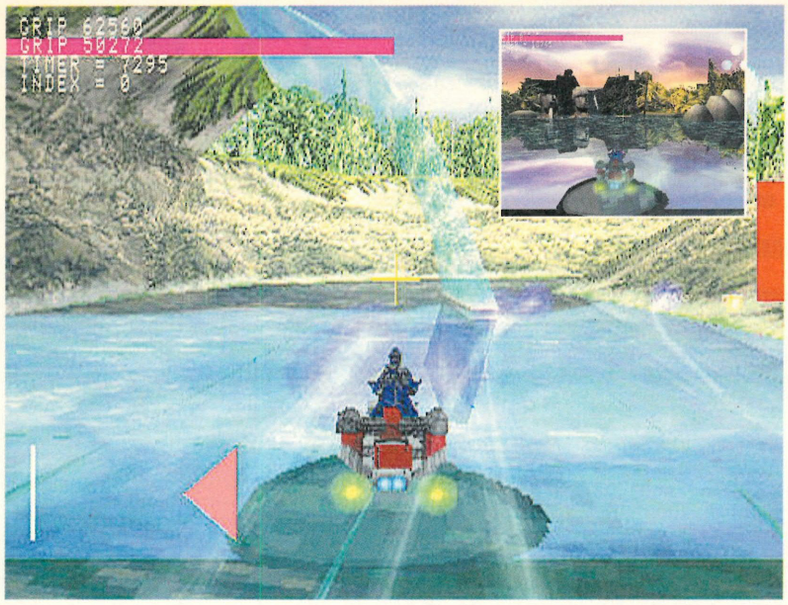
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INTERACTIVE TELCOM



Have Cryo got a winner on their hands!?

3Sixty

PUBLISHER Cryo Interactive

DEVELOPER Smart Dog

RELEASED April '99

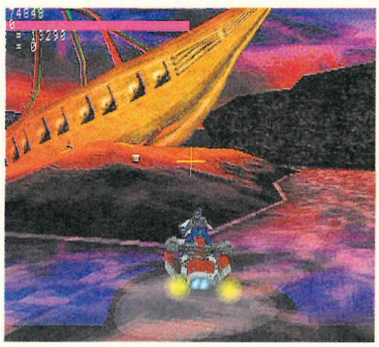
The plot of 3Sixty is solid and to the point. Thanks to a massive geological disaster, all world order is lost and a massive struggle to survive is being waged on a planet unfit for human habitation.

The game is made up of two distinctly different game types; track racing and deathmatch-style arena fighting. There are four separate worlds in all to visit, each having three courses to complete and an arena match to fight at the end. The idea is to come in the top three positions in each of your races to be rewarded with weaponry. This weaponry is taken to the arena (after all three courses have been completed) and used to kill as many opponents as possible without being killed yourself. If you haven't performed well in the races, it's obvious you're going to be blown away in the deathmatch event, but vice versa, and you're laughing.

There are also various other modes of play to take your fancy, including the vital four-player mode that makes the most of the arena play (just imagine the killing you could inflict on friends!). Others include Time Attack, Tournament (two, three, or four players can compete) and Arcade. There will be three views to use: cockpit, behind and distance, but I'm sure the cockpit view would be best for deathmatch - first-person perspective normally is.



Watch out for a more in-depth preview very soon when we get our hands on a more complete version of the game.







PUBLISHER Infogrames

DEVELOPER Infogrames

RELEASED June '99

V-Rally 2

Inforgrames' smash-hit driver returns for another thrashing..

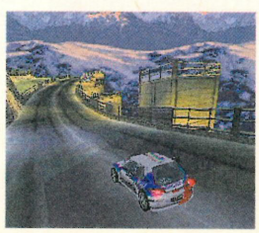
V-Rally 2 to is set to take the driving genre by storm this Summer, but with so many driving games floating around, what can it offer over the rest?

There will be 20 new and improved cars at your disposal, seven taken directly from the World Rally Championships itself, while the remaining 13 are especially designed custom kit cars. We'll see all-new graphical effects and dynamics like mud, dust and snow staining the wings and bumpers of the cars, vastly improved car dynamics and light sourcing that makes the original look positively dim. Other graphical touches so far include animations inside the car (allowing you to see the co-driver and driver at work), exhaust flames and even overheating brake discs! There will also be an incredible new replay system incorporated to show these effects, rumoured to rival that of GT.

The new 3D engine for V-Rally 2 has been fully utilised by Infogrames due to its incredible abilities in processing collision detection and car physics and dynamics. You'll also be amazed to hear that it's being programmed to be compatible with possible later add-ons like cars and courses, perhaps even with the inclusion of teams. There will be 12 countries to be raced on, some of which will be looped courses (like GT) and others linear courses (as used in Colin McRae).

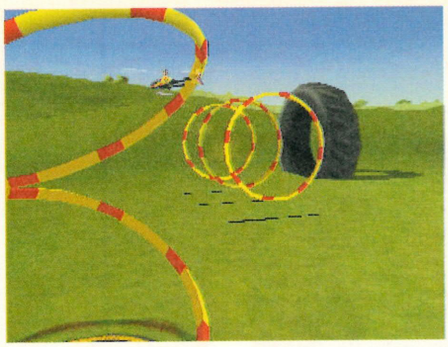
Watch out for more on V-Rally 2 very soon - it's looking pretty hot so far...













R/C Stunt Copter

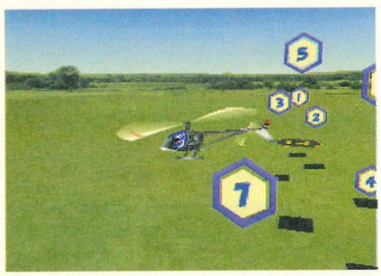
Just pray the batteries don't run out...

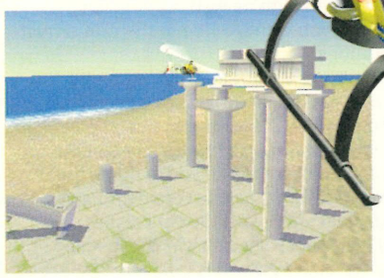
PUBLISHER
Interplay

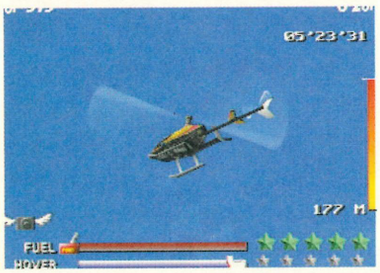
DEVELOPER
Shiny Entertainment

RELEASED
Spring '99



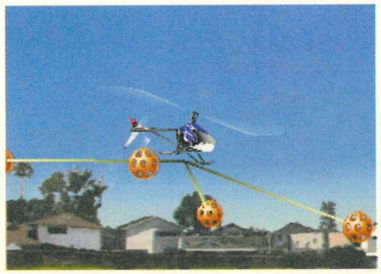












It's been a long time since we last looked at this one (Issue Nine to be precise), so let's see how it's come on since then...

For those of you who missed our last preview, R/C Stunt Copter is described as a 'software toy' you can play for hours or in a spare ten minutes. You're in charge of a remote-controlled helicopter which you must guide through a series of increasingly difficult missions. You may have to fly through hoops, crash into a target marked on a barn (and hitting a barn door at ten paces is NOT easy), land in an awkward place or burst floating balloons. Realistic flight physics are implemented using the twin analogue sticks (though digital controllers are catered for too) just as if you were flying a real R/C chopper, though for beginners, stabilisers make flying easier.

As Dave Perry, the President of developers Shiny Entertainment, is a keen fan of remote-controlled helicopters, realism isn't reduced to guesswork. To make it even more true to life, Shiny recruited world R/C helicopter champion Curtis Youngblood to advise on technical details. But how did they come up with the idea of such an unusual game?

Blowing in the Wind...

One day, Dave wanted to go out and fly his helicopter, but high winds made this impossible. Ruing the fact that you can't fly indoors (unless you live in the Albert Hall), he suggested a remote-controlled helicopter sim to a colleague who went out and bought himself a chopper and boned up on flight physics. He quickly found that simulating remote-controlled rather than genuine helicopter flight presented its own kind of problems. After two months of intense study and hard graft, he showed his work, at this stage just a flight model, to the rest of the team. They loved it.

Having created a credible simulation of the chopper, the team then went about designing a game to put it in. The last thing they wanted was a clinical, lifeless sim - it had to be fun. It was decided R/C Stunt Copter was to be a 'software toy', that is, a sim you could play as a game, with missions, objectives and points, or just fly around enjoying yourself as you would a real remote-controlled helicopter. To keep the fun in the game, it's packed with bouncy tunes and tongue-in-cheek presentation. This is NOT a game that takes itself too seriously.

"R/C Stunt Copter is PlayStation-exclusive", says Dave. "Although novice flyers on real R/C choppers have been known to lose a finger or put out an eye, there will be no blood and gore in the game". Indeed, this would spoil its sense of light-hearted fun. "We've tried to make the game work for people who don't fly 'real' model helicopters as well as those who do. You can fly around having a laugh without worrying about blade pitch or engine size, though techie elements are there for people who are serious about R/C helicopters and want to hone their skills.

Sounds like fun...





PUBLISHER
TBA

DEVELOPER
Funcom

RELEASED
April '99

Motorbike racing at its most realistic...

D.I.R.T.

No developer can boast they've produced the definitive motocross racing sims for the PlayStation. The closest we've seen is the Moto Racer series, but nothing's going to come as close as Funcom's effort with D.I.R.T.

We've all had a bash at this one in the EPM office and even though it was only a sneak preview version and there were still a few glitches (understandably), we were all hooked! It is quite difficult to get used to at first, but that too is understandable as it really is just like riding a trail bike in that you have to compensate for bumps in the track and massive slides around tight corners.

D.I.R.T. features seven different modes of play, including Championship, Training, Time Attack, Practice and Arcade to name just a few. There must be hours of gameplay with all these types of play modes, though it would probably be a good idea to have a practice first to get used to the bikes.

Talking of bikes... There are also a few of these to choose from, nine to be exact. All of them are from three different teams of 125cc, 250cc and 500cc motocross bikes. If the bike you're using sustains some damage, there's a garage you can use to carry out some highly technical tweaking to get yourself ready for the next race.

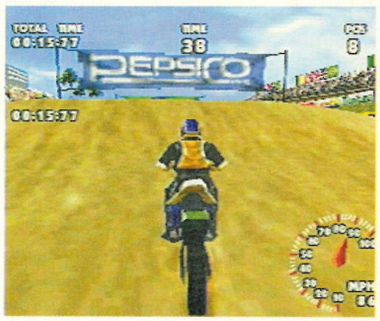
Twelve unique tracks will be available when the game hits the shelves in the Spring, five motocross-based tracks, four supercross tracks and three enduro tracks; you'll have to see for yourselves what the difference is, as we ain't got a clue. Whichever track you choose, you'll have the weather to contend with as well, as you can choose whether you want to ride in the rain or just normal conditions.

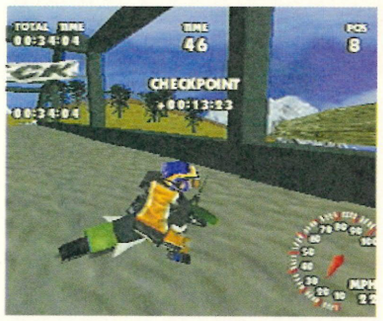
The rider animation is already looking pretty impressive at this stage of development; watch him lean from side to side, stand up and ride one-handed as you can also perform up to seven stunts, both on the ground and in the air. While you're riding the tracks you see dirt flying, smoke coming from your exhaust and some pretty spectacular crashes.

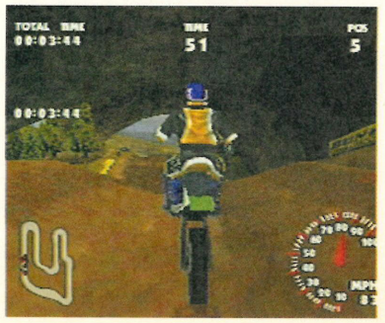
You really feel it when you crash into something or fall off your bike as this game has Dual Shock support.

This one's shaping up to be one of the most playable motor racing sims - EVER! The version we saw wasn't the complete one, but even that was better than some of the others out there, so you obviously have no worries about whether or not we'll be reviewing it sometime in the very near future.

















Rollcage

It's car-flipping good...

PUBLISHER Psygnosis

DEVELOPER ATD

RELEASED 1st Quarter '99







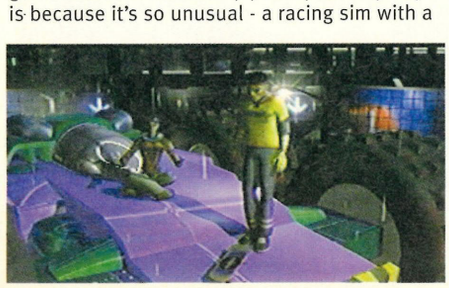
Back in Issue 13 we said that Rollcage is going to herald a 'new breed' of racing game, and now we've actually had a preview copy to play with, we can certainly confirm that!

'Extremely fast, very explosive' and 'stunningly unique' can just about sum this game up, and it's not even finished yet! You can smash into trees and boulders, drive over turbos which are set into the road to make you fly round corners and shoot into pole position. Not only that, but you can motor along tunnel ceilings and along sloping walls to sneak past the cars in front of you.

The reason why you're going to like this game and the reason why you'll probably buy it is because it's so unusual - a racing sim with a difference, you might say. The cars are mostly built for speed, but they're also designed to take part in some hardcore battle situations. While you're driving any of the six different models, you can pick up weapons and power-ups which you can use against your competitors. Just some of the pick-ups are a shield, a means of slowing all the other racers down so you can zip past them and missiles you can target at anything which may get in your way. Or if you haven't got a weapon at a crucial point, you can always ram into parts of the scenery which causes them to explode.

There are three different game modes; Time Attack, League and Two-Player Battle, but make sure you pick your car wisely as some are a lot better on certain tracks than others. The courses are all very different as well. In some you have to negotiate jumps, whereas in others it's important you stay on the main course, as if you wander off the beaten track you could end up going backwards.

This game will not bring out the calmer side of your personality, so make sure you're not in a bad mood before you begin a race. Look out for a full review in an up-and-coming issue and we'll unleash some serious road rage action...













PUBLISHER
Grolier Interactive

DEVELOPER
Glass Ghost

RELEASED
Easter '99

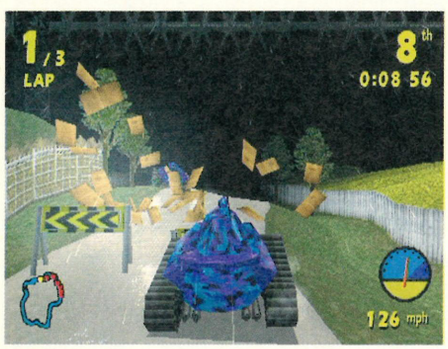
Tank Racer

Who needs cars - you've got a tank?

We'll ever get bored of racing sims, but don't you agree what's needed now is an action-packed tank racing game? Well wait no longer (or maybe just a bit anyway), as Grolier are about to release exactly that.

There are five game modes; Single Player, Single Race, Multi-Player, Battle and Racing Mode. For each different game you choose which cup you want to play; Bronze, Silver or Gold. In the Bronze Cup there are four courses to play, in Silver there are five, and in Gold you can choose from six.

After you've selected which cup to play, you then choose which course you want to do battle on. These range from deserted little villages to huge swamps, all of which contain lots of buildings, cars and animals to run over.

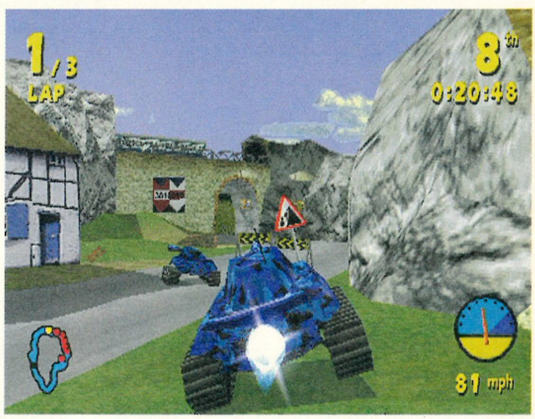


Choose Your Weapons...

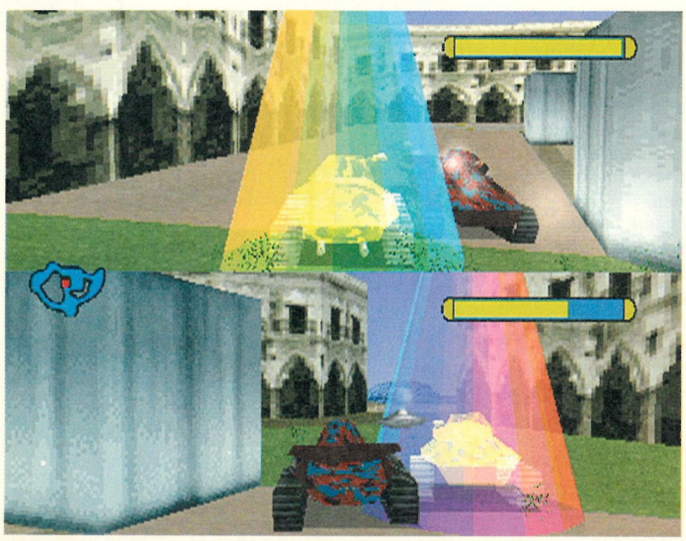
You have the choice of four tanks to pick from for each championship, plus there are three hidden bonus tanks. Each of them have a different top speed, handling, acceleration and grip, so depending on which course you're on you can choose the tank to which it's best suited.

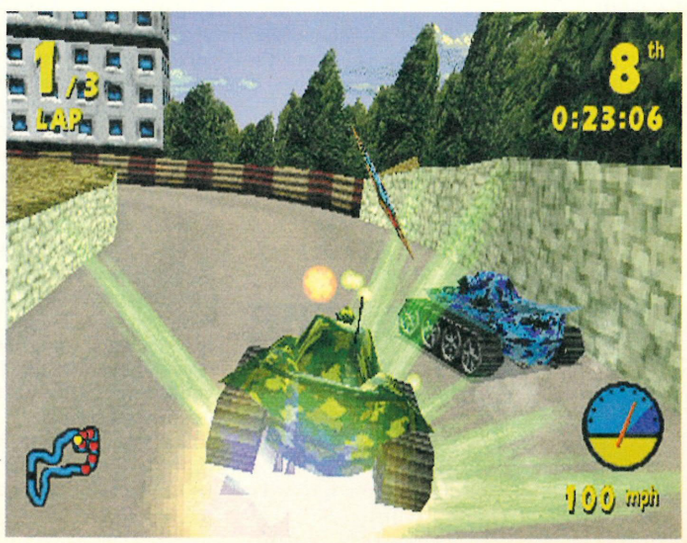
But it looks as though the best part to this game is the destruction you can cause by picking up objects as you race. If you really want some fun you can collect homing missiles, turbos, mines or a shield which protect you from enemy fire. When you shoot the other players it slows them down so that you can sneak past and climb up the places.

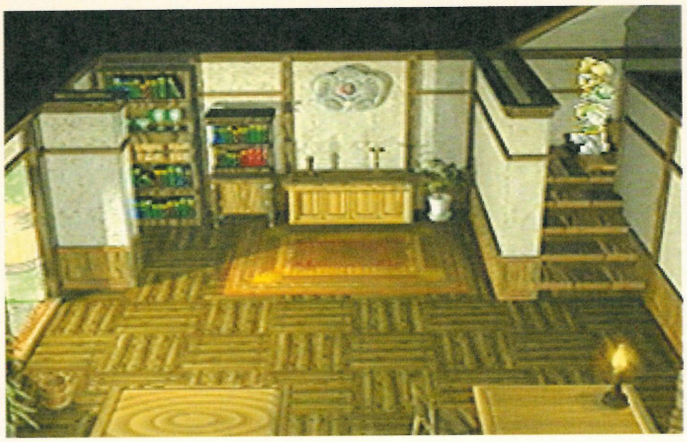
You've also got Battle Mode, where two players can just blow each other up whilst racing around an arena trying to make your opponents energy bar run out. You can again choose which tank you want to use and which colour cup to play, but it does seem as though it will take a long time to finish a game as the arenas are so big and you spend half the time looking for each other.



We played a preview version and it looks pretty impressive at this stage. You might say that the only novelty value there is the fact that it involves you controlling a tank rather than a car; if it was just a normal racing game maybe we wouldn't be so impressed as we would have seen it all before. But who cares? A bit of mindless killing in a tank never hurt anyone (ay?).















Putting a new perspective on spreading your seed...

Monster Seed

PUBLISHER
Sunsoft

DEVELOPER
Sunsoft

RELEASED
Easter '99





In the little town of Rempearl, recent excavations have led to the discovery of a huge amount of Monster Seeds. These are very ancient relics that are usually found in the fourth world buried in the surrounding Jedis Mountains. More excavations to uncover the mysteries of these intriguing and potentially lethal eggs have revitalised the town. However, in doing so, a number of opposing gangs have stepped up their fiendish activities in a bid to find, nurture and control the most powerful monsters and destroy their enemies using their evil creations.

It's been said these eggs can be genetically altered during the incubation process by carefully controlling the environment in which the germination takes place. There have been a number of reports telling of fearsome mutants created by the rival factor; the resulting breakdown in public order is of great concern to everybody.

The law enforcement agencies can't seem to do anything about the increasing amount of disorder. However, salvation seems to be at hand with the sudden appearance of an unlikely band of would-be heroes led by the courageous Daniel. This gang has also managed to find out the secret of incubating monster seeds and they, too, are trying to defeat those who terrorise the once peaceful town of Rempearl, and who possibly have even more sinister plans that we don't even dare to think about.



Cunning Stunts

It's another helping of RPG from our good friends at Sunsoft. The idea of the game is to allow the player to build his or her own allies and characters to life and open up a plot which is apparently going to keep us 'gripped'. You must buy eggs and incubate them using various techniques to try and produce the monster that would make a good addition to your army, and there's no limit on the number of monsters you can make!

With all this plus spectacular special effects, an in-depth plot and storyline and the option to play against a friend in two-player mode, this game seems to be more of a fun-packed RPG rather than one of those which takes hours of working out and offers hundreds of puzzles to get through. More of this kind of thing is just what we like at EPM, and we'll be reviewing it soon.





You can always trust Electronic Arts to bring out some decent games. And shock, horror, gasp, there are yet more winging their way over here for us to get our hands on. EPM has done some investigating to see just what they have in store...

ELECTRONIC ARTS™

EA has always been one of the most recognised games companies in the world. As you know, we have them to thank for such great games as the FIFA series and Populous: the Beginning (see Page 44), but they've had a few flops as well. It's painful to say this, but they were responsible for Knockout Kings, which is one of the worst boxing sims we've played here at EPM. We're hoping they'll continue to have a lot more good offerings than bad, though. We decided to do some investigating by rounding up what they've got in store for the coming months.

Superbike World Championship

DEVELOPER
Milestone

RELEASED
TBA



SUPERBIKE IS...

...An ultra-competitive motorcycle racer EA hope will beat all others, licensed from the SBK Superbike Championship.

We have yet to see a splendid effort where motorcycle racing sims are concerned, so let's hope that this one will do much better then games such as Moto Racer 2. Superbike has been officially licensed and endorsed by the SBK Superbike World Championship series, so the game should be extremely realistic and have all accurately-modelled courses.

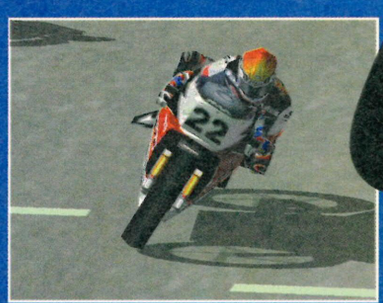
The game features real bikes such as the Ducati 916, Honda RC 45, Kawasaki ZX7R and a Suzuki GSXR, all of which have been developed using precise technical data from each manufacturer. Once you've run through the list of bikes, you're then faced with the decision on what racing circuit to choose. Just some of them are Laguna Seca (USA), Phillip Island (Australia) and Brands Hatch (we all know where that is).

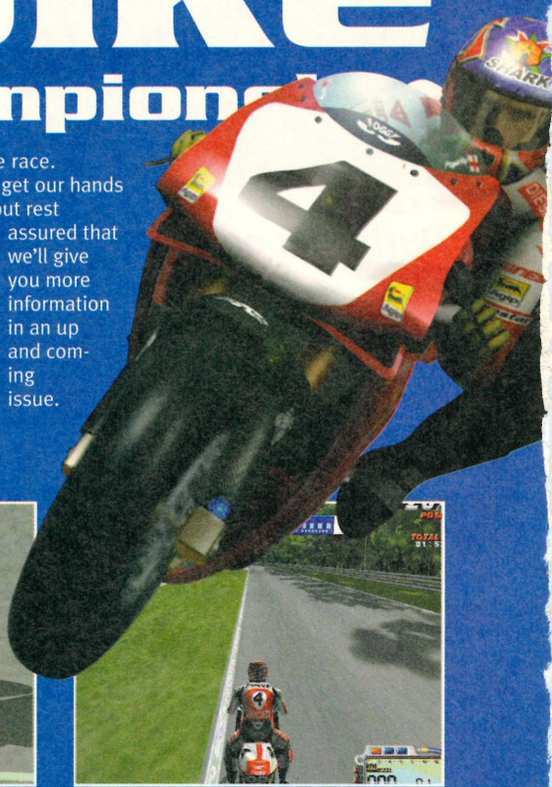
You've probably noticed by now that this game sounds as though it has been specially made for real motorbike racing fans that know what they're talking about. Not many people would know what we were going on about if we also told you that the game features teams and racers from the event itself, like Carl Foggarty or John Kocinski for example - unless they were knowledgeable on the subject.

The different bikes and their riders have been modelled as separate entities, which means that they move completely independent of each other to accurately simulate the physics of both to the most realistic degree yet seen. So you can imagine how it will look when you crash as riders are shot into the air, hit the dirt, rise and then collect their bikes before burning off to rejoin the race.

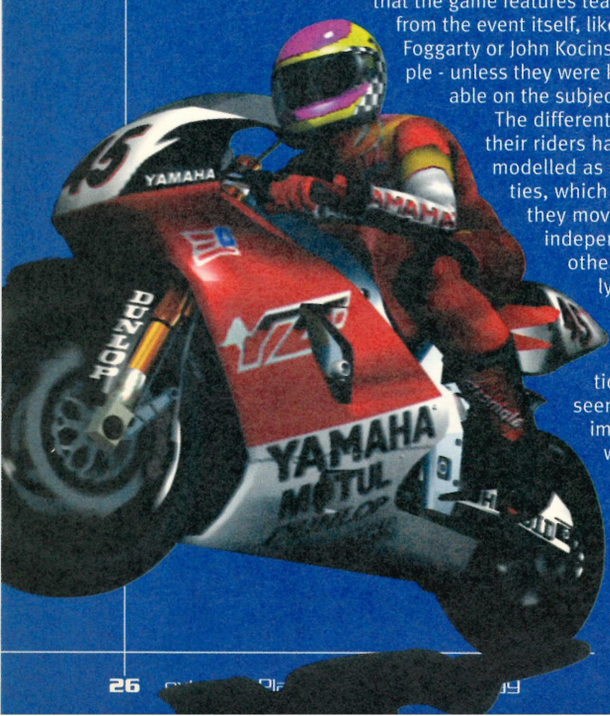
Unfortunately we only managed to get our hands on screenshots from the PC version, but rest assured that we'll give you more information in an up and coming issue.



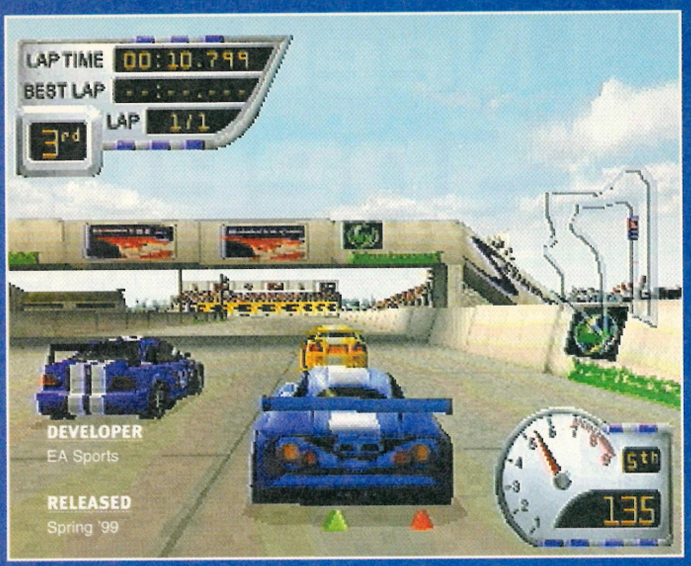




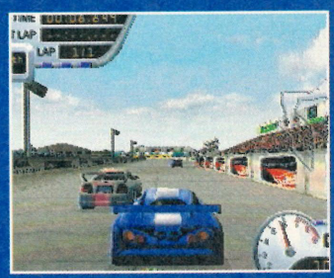




Sports Car GT





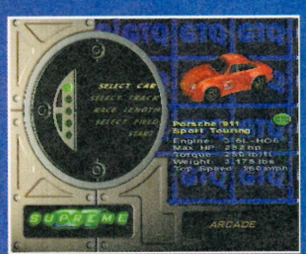


SPORTS CAR GT is...

...Another attempt by EA to bring us the best racing sim - EVER.

The race is on to develop the ultimate racing game and EA are hoping to be in the running with at least one of their new releases. So let's get into second gear for our second look at how it's going.

Every single one of the cars that are featured in the game are taken from last year's racing season at The professional Sports Car Championship and EA has been in discussions with both the sponsors and the organisers to make sure that the cars themselves are authentically created.

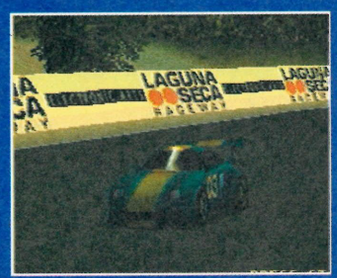


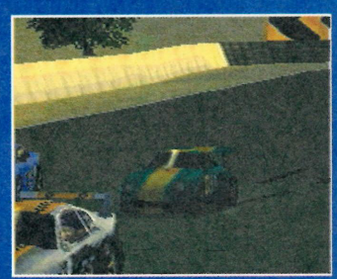
Each track and car has been reproduced down to the last minute detail and the real-life drivers have had their driving skills simulated to make sure the game is as realistic to play as possible. This gives you more decisions to make before you start a race, but they're worth it as you can rest assured that whichever you pick you've made an informed and detailed choice (so you have no excuse if you lose, because it won't be the driver's fault).

There are well over 50 dream cars to choose from such as the Mercedes CLK GTR, the BMW M3 and the Marcos LM-600, and they're only a few, no doubt you'll be flicking through each one for hours trying to find the ultimate racing machine.

Not only are you going to be spending hours on endless searching through the cars but you also have to decide which course to race. The majority of the tracks are from both Europe and North America and they all have very detailed trackside areas and the backgrounds incorporate particular climates and surface physics like grass and dirt.

EA have yet to leak out more details on when the game will reach review stage. We're quite eager to give it a look though.





BIG AIR IS...

...Yet another snowboarding game for us to get the hang of, but it will be as good as Coolboarders 3?

Big Air

This game promises all the realism of snowboarding as players choose to compete in either Half Pipe, Big Air, Boardercross, Slalom or Free Ride competitions in any of six countries. You also get to compete against the international Board Champion, Shaun Palmer.

Big Air was covered in Issue Ten, and at the moment we're still waiting for extra details, but we do have some brand-new screenshots...



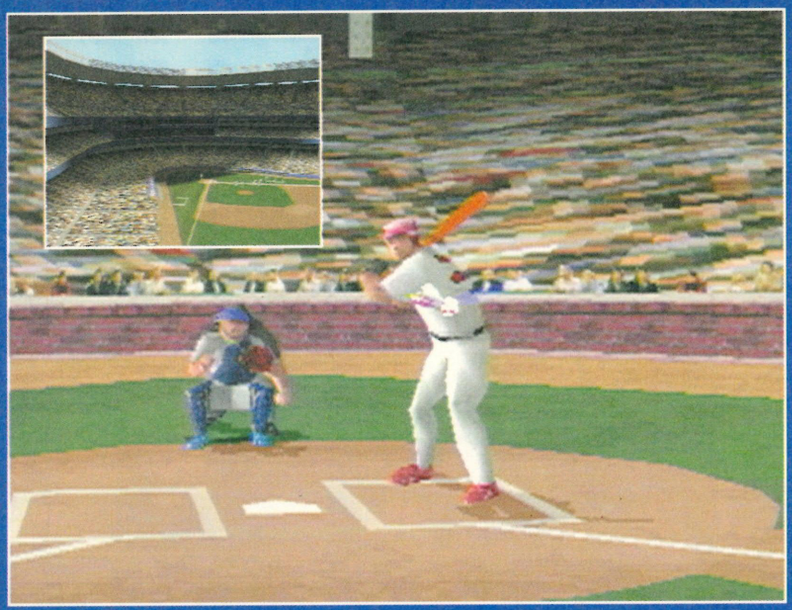
DEVELOPER
Pitbull Syndicate

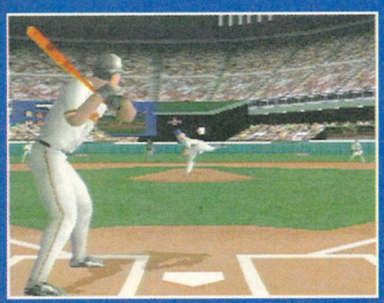
RELEASED
TBA

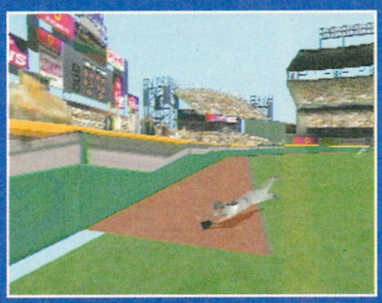












Triple Play 2000

DEVELOPER
EA Sports

RELEASED
April '99



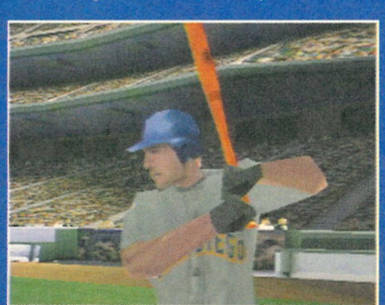
TRIPLE PLAY 2000 is...

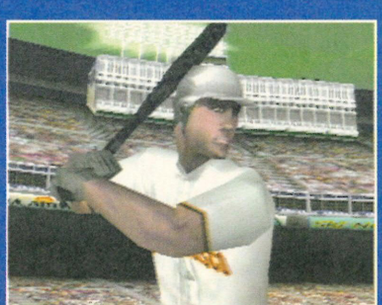
...A deep-hitting arcade-style home run derby of a baseball sim.

Now you can home-run into the year 2000 as EA Sports is set to bring us a realistic, fun-packed baseball game. There are various different games you can take part in; Quick Play Mode, Home Run competitions where you can challenge your friends to a quick game, an arcade-style Home Run Derby which is a one-on-one slugfest and Rookie Mode where you just focus on the action and let Triple Play 2000's AI do the rest of the work.

Other features include a new batting meter that gives you more control over the direction and power of your hits, all-new fielding cameras which capture the action both on the field and on the bases and new player facial animations that brings all of the players to life.

VR Baseball '99 is about the only average game on the market at the moment, so hopefully Triple Play 2000 will be in the running to take pride of place as being the best baseball game so far. We hope.





Need For Speed: Road Challenge



NEED FOR SPEED is...

...A racing game that gets closer to reality than ever before?

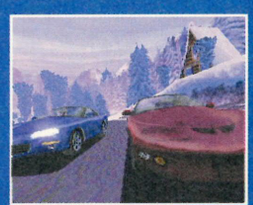
DEVELOPER
Electronic Arts

RELEASED
April '99

Fancy a ride in a Pininfarina-styled Ferrari 550 Marinello or taking a quick spin in a front-mounted V12, rear drive coupe that effortlessly accelerates two people and a small suitcase to somewhere around 199mph? Well tough luck old fella-me-lad, because the nearest you'll ever get to doing that is by buying the latest in the Need For Speed series - sorry!

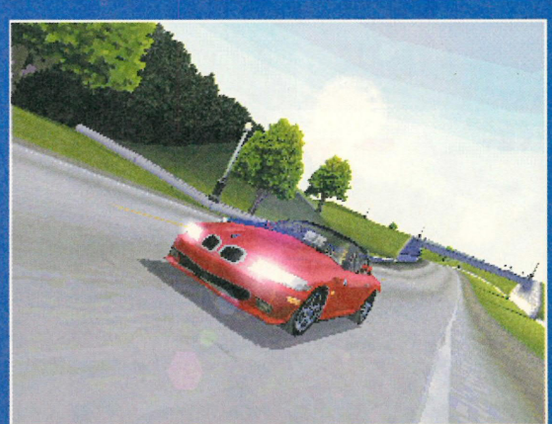
Drive leisurely along real roads with the fastest straights you have ever set your eyes on and the sexiest curves you've ever run your car over, and choose whether you would like to drive on a pleasant sunny day with a warming summer breeze. Sounds idyllic, don't you think?

There are up to 16 of the world's meanest fighting machines, including exclusive licences from car manufacturers BMW, Mercedes, Ferrari, Lamborghini and McLaren. And if you're not satisfied with the performance of your supercar (for some strange reason) you can buy performance upgrades and even better cars.



All of this plus more spectacular and realistic collisions with visible car damage which affects your car's performance is making for a jolly good Need For Speed number four!





March Madness 99

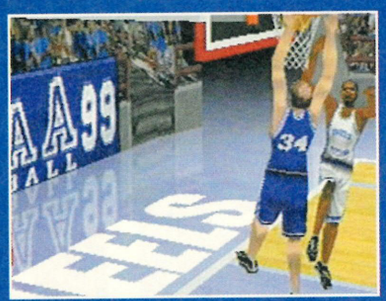


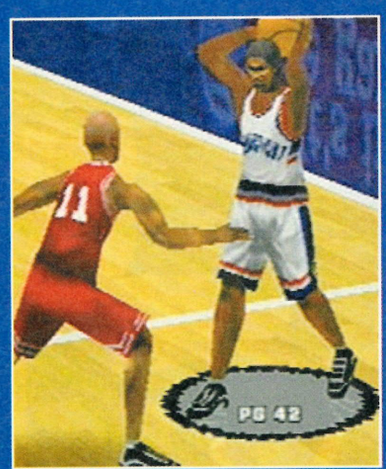
MARCH MADNESS 99 is...

...A basketball sim which will only be available in the UK on import.

DEVELOPER
EA Sports

RELEASED
TBA





Oh no, not another bad attempt at a basketball game' is what first springs to mind. But let's not jump the gun, maybe we'll be pleasantly surprised.

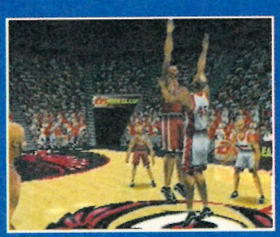
There are over 140 teams to choose from, including 16 women's teams and 20 all-time greats (whoever they are). Depending on which team you pick, you hear a different licensed fight song that are linked to the colleges that use them. There are also over 60 unique crowd chants as well; gosh, you feel as though you're actually there in the thick of the action!

Game modes include Arcade, Dynasty, where you choose from over 100 Division One teams and attempt to take them to the tournament, Practice, Three-Point Shoot-out which is played split-screen with a friend or against the CPU and Bubble Watch (don't ask)!

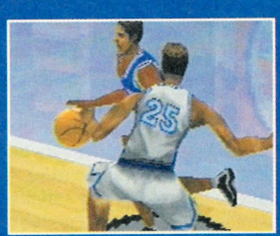
Whatever happens, the crowds are there with you to cheer you on to victory or boo you right off the court. You can watch your team climb the CBS Sportsline Poll or the EA Sports Poll and then take part in the 'Championship Week'. Let's hope this one is going to astound us with its brilliance and originality, as all we've had up to now are bad try-outs for basketball sims.



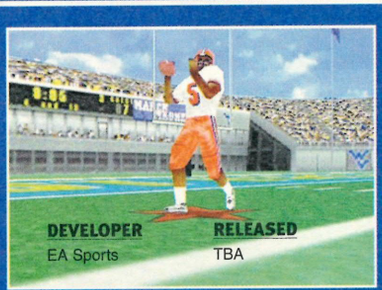


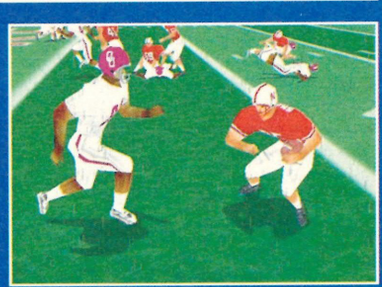






NCAA Football

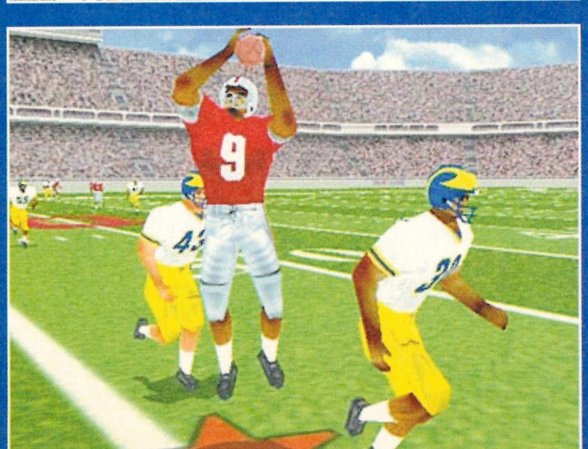






NCAA FOOTBALL 99 is...

...A football sim which boasts crazy new features and makes for lots of 'beef'. Import only, I'm afraid...

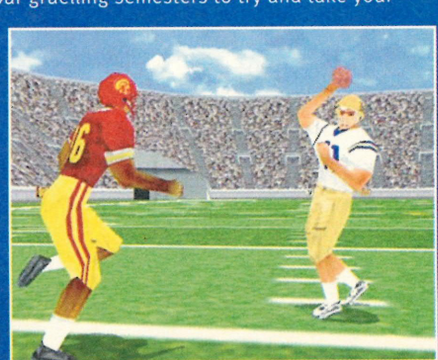


You can safely say that EA has always been the main publisher to bring out new football sims, John Madden's being one that they're probably most renowned for. Most of them are based around the NFL league, but this time, NCAA Football 99 focuses on college football, but it's hardly going to be for the little guys!

This game will only be available on import over here unfortunately, but if you do decide to indulge there are loads of unique features. To start with, it delivers a very realistic college atmosphere and includes 112 different teams and stadiums. It also includes authentic fight songs and chants.

It also has a very unique Dynasty Mode, which is a simulation where you jump on a coach and play your way through four gruelling semesters to try and take your team to one of the most prestigious Bowl games.

You can see freshmen grow up to become seniors (hopefully that's not as bad as it sounds), and then the seniors finally graduate to hopefully be drafted by the NFL. In Dynasty mode you collect what are called prestige points, which you either lose or gain through each of the semesters. If you attain enough, you're approached by some of the best colleges in the nation. But if you lose too many points, you probably get fired!



PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Konami	Konami	Adventure	February '99	UK	£39.99	1	Memory Card Dual Shock Analogue Pad

Russell Barnes is the pawn that's been sent into the Lion's den to save your worthless ass from sub-standard PSX games. Don't move, don't make a sound and don't start harping on about how long you've been playing MGS already...



Metal Gear Solid

Okay, so some of you have doubtless been playing a Jap import version of MGS for some time now, some may be stuck due to the language barrier, some of you may even have completed it already. But have you got your money's worth with the nonsense Jap language version? I suppose you'll never really know unless you buy it again when it's officially released, but what are the chances of that happening? Those of you that have saved yourself and are still MGS virgins have got a lot to look forward too, and I mean a lot...

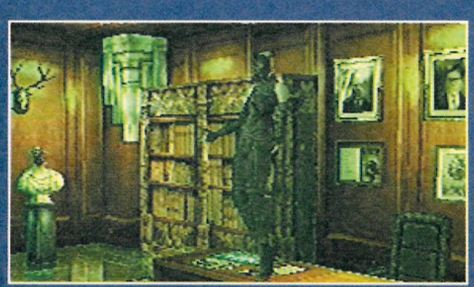
This has got to be THE most eagerly awaited game since Gran Turismo and has received more than its fair share of coverage from all the magazines out there in PlayStation land. In our magazine alone we have previewed it and reviewed it on import in previous issues, but now it's time for the big one. The official UK version is making its way onto shelves near you very soon, so it's time to see if it has everything the hype has led us to believe.

As you may be aware, many games that have been converted to our standard PAL format (from Japan and America's NTSC format) suffer from big boarders and slower gameplay (17.5% slower). Tekken 3 is a good example of this, and received a slightly lower UK mark as a result back in Issue Ten. Admittedly it's a slightly different story with MGS due to the masses of text and speech to wade through, but it's still a fair comparison nevertheless. Not to worry, though; the UK version doesn't seem to suffer the deadly 'PAL syndrome' one bit, which is a great

PSYCHO MANTIS...



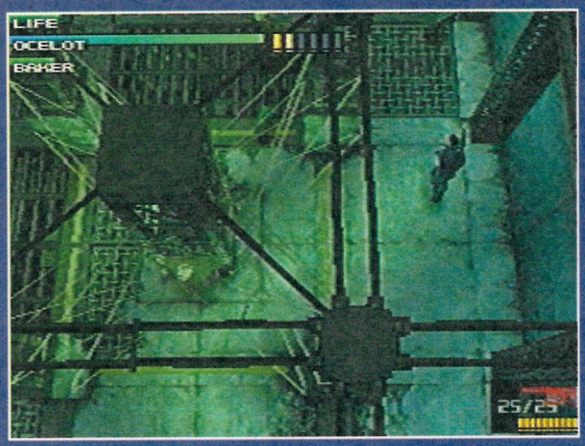
Coming face to face with the wicked Psycho Mantis isn't recommended for players of a nervous disposition. He uses his mind-reading powers to control your friend Meryl and gets her to try and kill you. Should you stop her (without shooting her) you can fight Mantis, but he tries to force Meryl to kill herself, so stop her if you can. To defeat Mantis you must first find a way to stop him from reading your every move, then you're free to go in for the kill. At the end of the battle you learn quite a bit about Psycho and it turns out he's not all bad, but I don't want to spoil the plot for you now, do I?

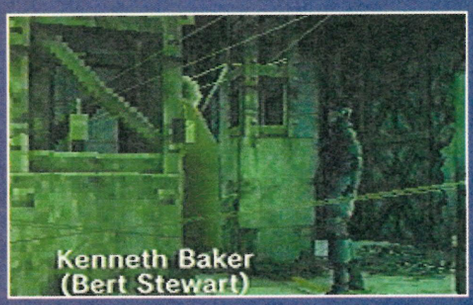




SOON YOU'LL UNDERSTAND WHY THEY CALL ME REVOLVER...

Revolver Ocelot is the first boss you encounter in MGS. He is holding the President of ArmsTech hostage, surrounded by trip-wires connected to C4. You must defeat Revolver and somehow release the President and get him to safety. The battle takes place around the outside of the room, where the ArmsTech chief is wired to explode in the middle. If you touch the wires it's 'goodnight', so stay clear and follow Ocelot until he runs out of ammo. Let him have everything you've got and stay clear of his amazing ricochet shots from a distance. Prepare for a surprise after the battle; it seems that you're not the only one on a mission around here...







SMOKING KILLS (UNLESS YOU'RE SOLID SNAKE)...

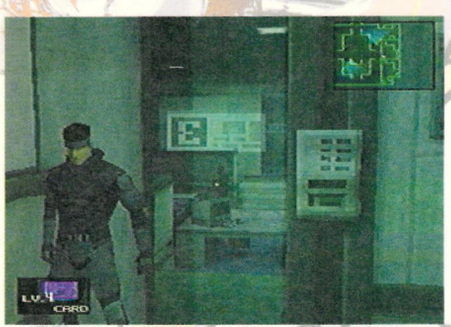
Indeed Smoking does kill, after it's caused all sorts of cancer in your lungs, throat and mouth; unless you're playing MGS, in which it offers invaluable help and protection from capture. The idea behind this clever item of inventory (which you have from the start) is that the emanating smoke shows up any sneaky laser trip-wires or moving beams that have been set to foil any potential trouble-makers in certain areas. Don't worry, though; you don't have to wander around the whole game with a fag in your gob (it slowly drains your energy, but doesn't kill you), as there are only a few areas that require you to do it.

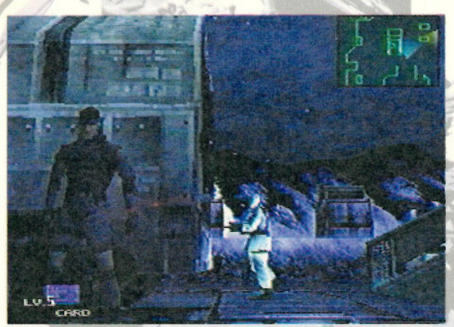


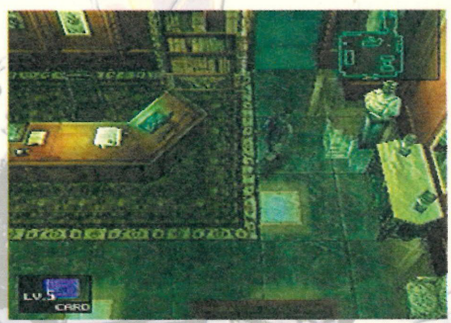
Watch the radar, which shows the guards' and cameras' positions...



Snake regretted his decision to appear on Through the Keyhole...







start. It's obvious Konami have taken their game very seriously.

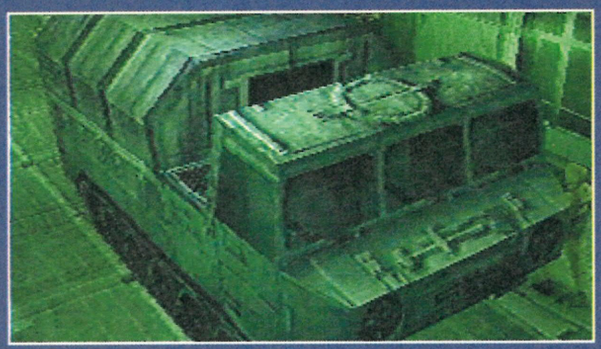
So what about the story, what about the backbone of MGS which has been a bit of a mystery until now? What can I say? Where do I start? The words 'jaw' and 'dropping' spring to mind, but that doesn't do it justice. What about 'freakin' and 'wicked'? No, that just ain't good enough. It's all down to the direction of the action and the interwoven cut sequences that help to make the game what it is. Obviously it's not that alone, but it plays a major part in the proceedings. It could be classed as an 'interactive movie'; even though that phrase sends shivers down my spine, this is actually what the game is like.

The story unfolds in the introduction sequence and you're briefed on the gameplay without even realising it before the action begins. You're immediately introduced to your Codec (see boxout) and its functions as well as your mission objectives. One thing that really helps to keep the 'interactive movie' part of it alive is the fact that almost the entire game has been produced using the same graphics engine. This helps to keep the feeling of continuity and fluidity so the line between actual gameplay and a cut sequence becomes very blurred. Another major factor is the acting; just think back to Resident Evil and you'll remember the 'budget' actors playing each part and the fact that the actual character and the voice were so disjointed. MGS offers the best vocal talent I've ever witnessed in a game and the way it's been utilised helps to create characters that are both believable and convincing.

WHAT I'D DO FOR A CARDBOARD BOX...



If you wanted to infiltrate a top-secret, top-security base holding some of the deadliest weapons in the world, what would you have stashed away to help you? Big weapons, clever Bond-style toys, weapons- and tactics-training and, of course, the most important item of them all; a cardboard box. In fact, you'd be pretty stuck without it during the game, and it plays an important role in taking you quickly from one location to another. Basically it's possible to hide under a cardboard box (which you carry in your inventory) at any time to avoid being noticed by the guards. It's really funny to see Snake wandering around levels under a box, but it's more than possible for a guard to get suspicious of the container and take a look inside.



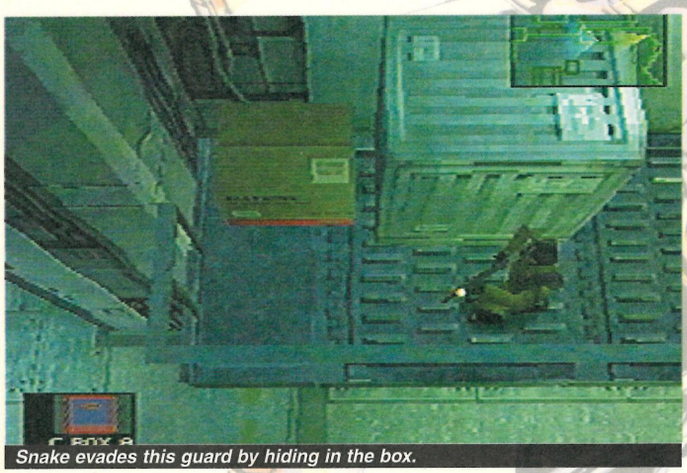
There are in fact two different boxes to collect during the game; one is signed for transport to the Heli-Pad and the other to the Warhead Facility. If you hide under a box while aboard either of the haulage vehicles in these areas, a guard notices the parcel ready for transport and delivers it! This means you can be moved between these two locations incredibly quickly and in safety, so you don't have to do as much of that nasty back-tracking like you did while playing Resident Evil, for example.

SNAKE VERSUS TANK? NO WORRIES...

Vulcan Raven is the next boss you encounter. He's not to be taken lightly, though, because he's in a huge bloody tank armed to the teeth with exploding shells and machine guns. Watch out too for the mines dotted around on the floor; better equip your mine detector from your inventory so you can stay clear. Your best method of attack is to stay close and use your grenades. That should send him on his way!



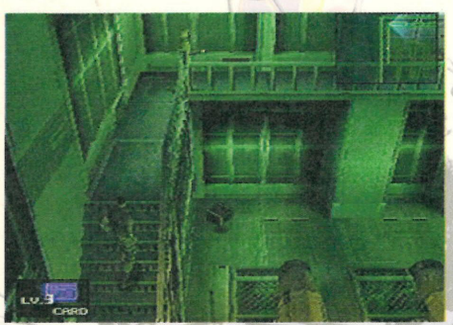




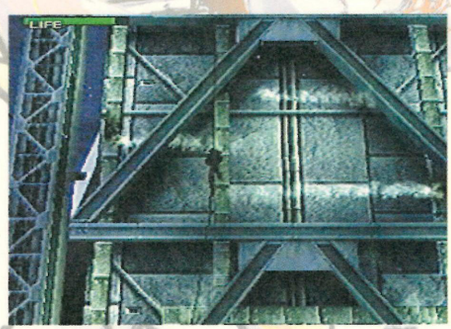
Snake evades this guard by hiding in the box.



When taking a break from saving the world, Snake often visits Madame Stern's House of Correction...







It's basically a fully interactive James Bond movie with knobs on...

Similarly to enjoying a good film, you get to know the characters as you would a close friend. This is all perfectly portrayed in the game, with huge brass knobs in the form of a fantastic storyline that sucks you in and spins you around with breathtaking sub-plots and twists. So many offerings fail by offering poorly-directed story and action as well as offering laughable B-movie acting, the whole 'interactive movie' scene has been given a bad name. MGS is here to right that wrong in fine style.

Top Gear

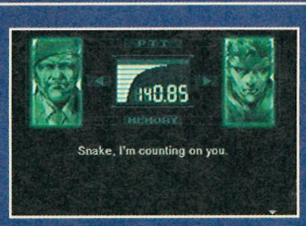
It's obvious that MGS is the best game in its genre when considering the ingenious way that important factors like cut scenes and gameplay blend together so perfectly and seamlessly. It's only when all the other factors are taken into account that you realise you've got a real masterpiece on your hands. Take the control method as a good example. It is simplicity itself but still allows you to carry out the most complex of tasks with the greatest of ease and agility. You can stand with your back to a wall and gently tap on it to attract a passing guard or use real military technology like Night Vision and Thermal Imaging Goggles while you target an unaware enemy using a high-

FAST, HARD AND WICKED TO BOOT...

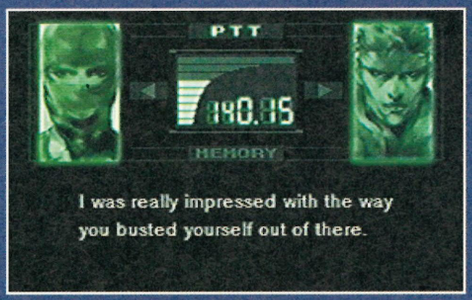


Cyborg Ninja plays quite an important role in the game, helping you out more than once on your mission thanks to his clever exoskeleton suit and cut-throat sword. Just as you get closer to finding out his true identity, you must fight him face to face in a battle of stealth and strength. Unfortunately he can become invisible at a whim, so you must devise a way of constantly keeping him in your sights so you can kick him into submission...

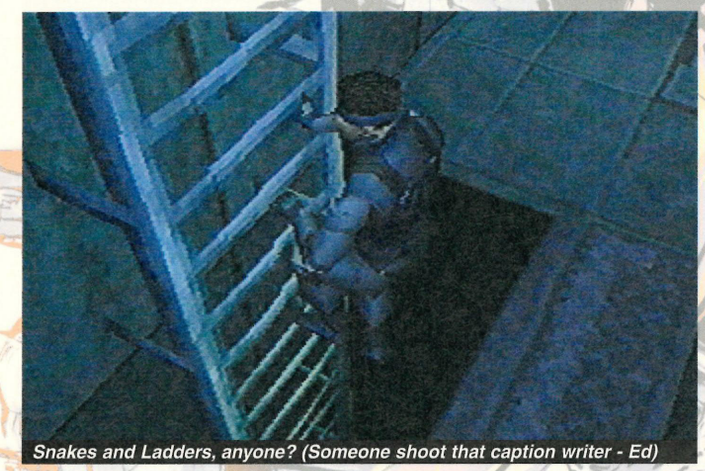
CODEC IS THE KEY...



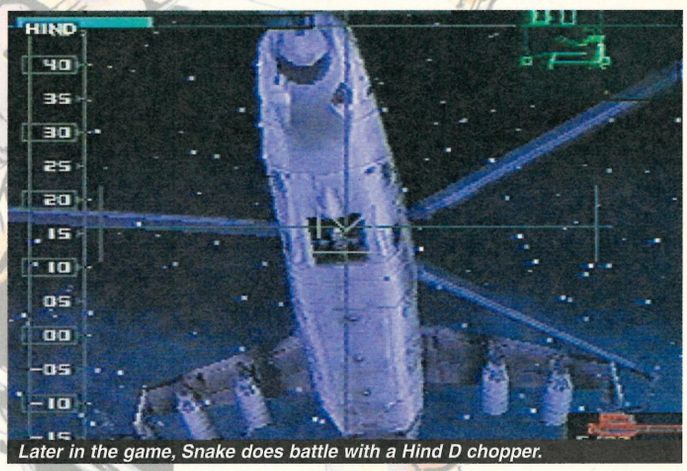
Due to the nature of your work, it would be a bit silly to wander around with a mobile phone in your back pocket ringing every five minutes, so you're communications device keeps you in constant contact with your team via the minute Codec system. It cleverly alerts you to a call by gently massaging the bones in your inner ear so your communications can be as stealthy as possible.
There are many frequencies for you to learn which allow you to contact the various members of the team yourself. In all there are seven contacts and each are able to help you with different aspects of the game. For example, Dr. Naomi is one of the games sexy lady characters who takes care of your general health and controlling the nanomachines that look after you from the inside. Mei Ling is there to tend to your Codec to make sure it's all in constant working order. She's also there to download your game data and save your progress.
One of the most regular characters you talk to through the game is Donald Anderson, your direct superior who is there to co-ordinate the mission. The other characters pop up now and then as you progress to conveniently add a helpful comment though more often than not you have to tune into their frequency to ask their advice on subjects ranging from nuclear devices to weapons and tactics.



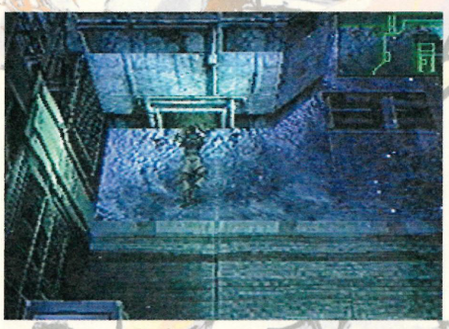




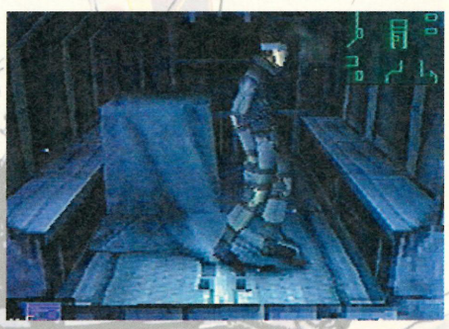
Snakes and Ladders, anyone? (Someone shoot that caption writer - Ed)



Later in the game, Snake does battle with a Hind D chopper.







powered, laser-sighted Sniper Rifle. The scope of the game is seemingly endless as you progress, and you are constantly wowed by the uncanny realism when you discover it's entirely possible sneak up to a guard that's using an urinal and break his neck without him realising you're there. It's like the creators have managed to capture the essence of stealth itself and injected it into directly into the game.

There's no danger of getting bored of the style of play either, as it unfolds so eloquently that each new weapon or hi-tech toy you discover is like receiving a wicked Christmas present or something.

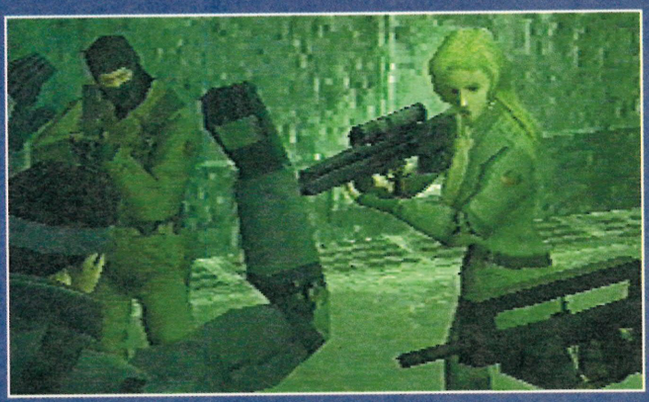
The entire game spans over 2 CDs and offers the best roller-coaster ride ever, but how long can it last? The answer to that question just has to be 'Not long enough!' There is so much in the game that it would be next to impossible to sum it up in mere words, but it definitely isn't anywhere near as big and meaty as Tomb Raider III (countless comparisons will be made), but frankly that isn't the point. The game requires you to infiltrate a bloody massive top-secret base, not an entire country like India or even England as you find in TR III; it's the depth of the game that keeps you coming back for more. If

The game spans 2 CDs and is the best roller-coaster ride ever...

GUN-TOTING TOTTY...



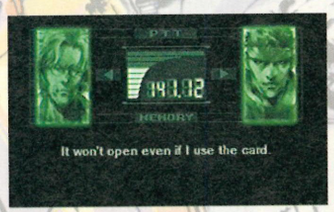




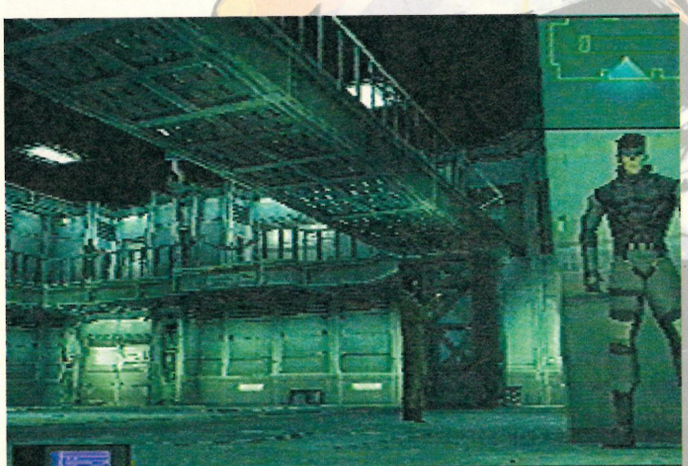
Sniper Wolf is the fifth boss you encounter in MGS. She's got you cut off and in the sights of her high-powered sniper rifle. There's no way you can take her out from her distant position. You've got to go back to the relative safety of the Armoury and find an equally-powerful weapon. Then is the time to challenge Sniper Wolf and hopefully take her out (as it were).
Each time she gets you in her sights, though, you can expect a bullet in the head as soon as you see the blinding glare from her laser sight magnified through your own. Should you get shot, your aim is thrown right off and you have to re-target and go for the kill.



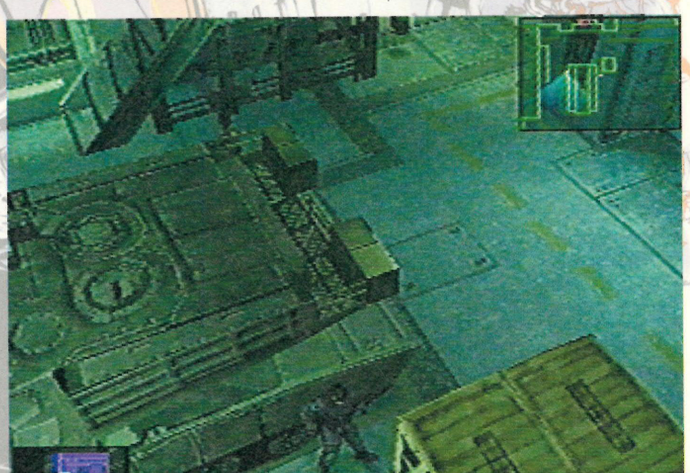






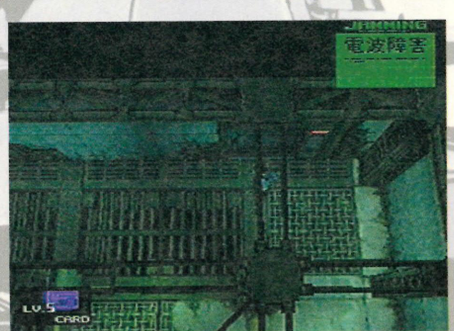


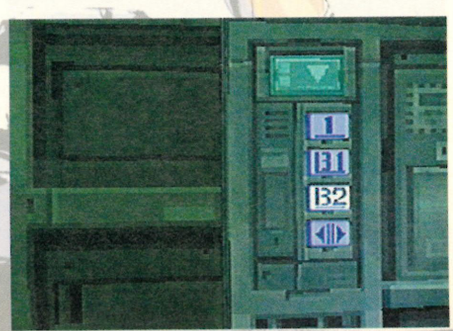
Hide from the guards and pass by unseen - you won't get far by charging in with all guns blazing...



Snake is always tankful for somewhere to hide...



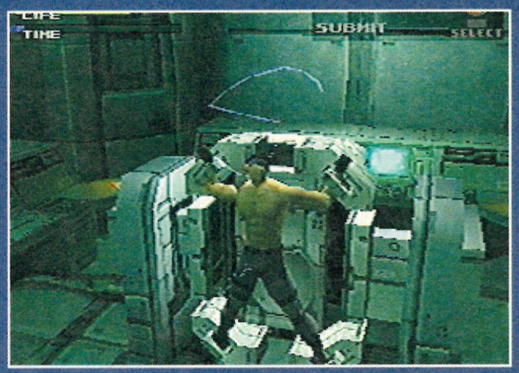


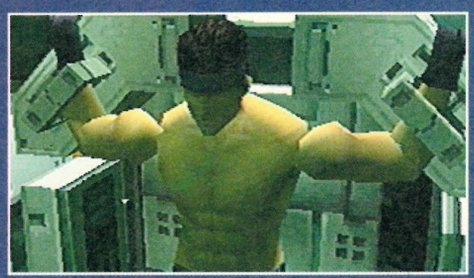


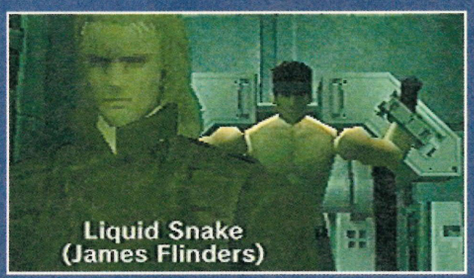
TORTURE CHAMBER...

This neat and clever little excursion comes around about halfway through the storyline and acts as a turning point between the two available endings of the game. The idea is that you're captured soon after defeating Sniper Wolf and taken for interrogation and torture in a secure location. While being tortured you are prompted by your torturer (Revolver Ocelot) to tap the Circle button to replenish your energy or press Select to submit (this is where the two possible endings are determined). He also tells you he'll know if you're using a Turbo-Fire function and that you'll be killed as a result!

If you can button-bash your way through the torture, you're taken back to the cell where you're being held. If you can hide under the bed there when the sickly guard watching you goes to the toilet, he unlocks the cell, giving you a chance to escape. If you don't make your exit you still have two more hopes; the scientist Otacon offers you some tomato ketchup (which you can use to fake your death for another escape attempt) or the Cyborg Ninja returns to free you.







Liquid Snake
(James Flinders)

MGS was comparable in size to TR III, the score box on these pages would have been through the roof; it's the size that's kept it at 96%.

To cap it off, it would be fair to say that MGS has got everything a gamer could ever want; it's basically a fully interactive James Bond movie with big brass knobs on.

Russell Barnes

SECOND OPINION

Is this the best videogame ever? Like Tenchu, stealth and cunning get you further than pure brawn, and the storyline's so good you can't put the game down. At last - a genuine interactive movie instead of alternate gameplay and cut scenes.

Ian Osborne

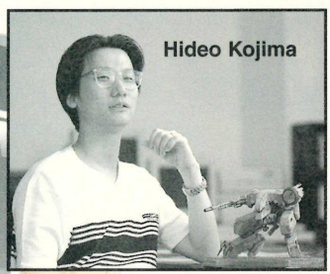
THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	10
SOUND	9
GAMEPLAY	10
LIFESPAN	8

96%

WIN! METAL GEAR SOLID





If you've read the review over the last few pages you know Metal Gear Solid is THE game for 1999. If you're quick on the draw and as stealthy as the legendary Solid Snake himself, you'll want to enter our exclusive competition for your chance to winning the game.



Just as it's you, we're going to make it worth your while with the incredible Metal Gear Solid Premium Box Set. Not only do you get the game in a fantastic limited edition finish, you receive a special edition T-shirt, special edition dog-tags, a memory card sticker set, exclusive (UK only) soundtrack CD and a limited edition film-sized double-sided poster. It doesn't stop there - it is also signed by the genius behind MGS, the creator Hideo Kojima.

All you have to do stand a chance of winning is to answer this ridiculously easy question:

- Smoking kills, there's no doubt about that, but what are the two main consequences of smoking in Metal Gear Solid?

Send your answers on the back of a postcard to the usual competition address below, making sure all entries are in by 28th March, 1999.

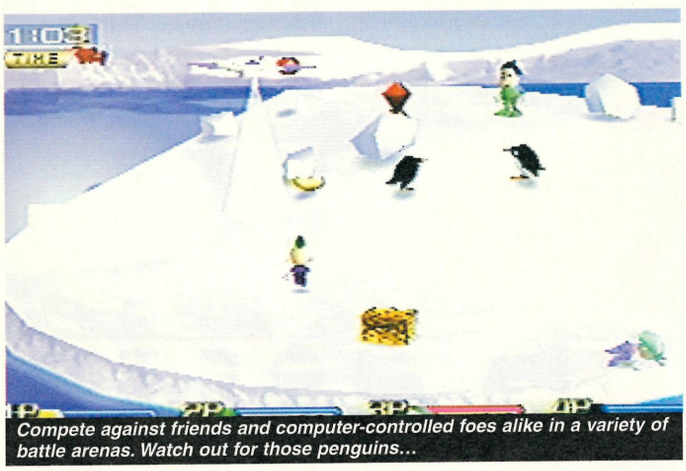
Smoking Kills Competition
extreme PlayStation, 22 Strand St, Poole, Dorset BH15 1SB

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Konami	KCET	Action	March/April '99	UK	£39.99	1-4	Memory Card	Analogue Pad

It's just a normal sunny day. Things are much the same as usual; a stroll in the park picking up the odd boulder and throwing it at the passers-by. This kinda thing only happens in Claire Webster's house and Poy Poy land...

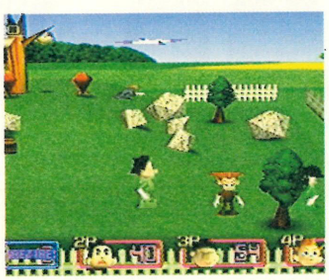
Poy2 Poy





Compete against friends and computer-controlled foes alike in a variety of battle arenas. Watch out for those penguins...





A long, long time ago, back in Issue Four, we reviewed the first Poy Poy game and gave it a smashing 89%. So surely, you would think that it couldn't get much better in the second offering, which is out soon. There are a few odd new features, but really you're just going to see a rehash of the first attempt.

If you didn't read the review (and if not, why not?) I'll fill you in on the basics. There are five different arenas in which the battles take place; the Park, the Grass, the Sand, Moai or on Ice. It's just you against three other CPU players (unless you're in multi-player) and all you have to do is pick up objects that are scattered around and throw them at your opponents to steal their endurance before they get their hands on yours.

Before you start, of course, you must choose your character. There are 15 of them, and you'll notice that each has a different level of Health, Psycho Power and Speed. Which one you choose depends on what stage you're at, or what game mode you are about to play. But if you pick an all-rounder, you can't go far wrong.

A Good Pair

There are three different modes of play; Party Play, Poy Poy Cup and Team Battle.

In Party Play you must first choose your character, then the stage and finally you have to choose which type of glove you want to use. Yes, that is as strange as it sounds. There are 22 kinds of gloves which you can use. If you choose the Fire gloves, during play you can shoot fireballs at your opponents which leaves them burnt to a frazzle. The Psychowhip is also a good one as it let's you pick up boulders or other

It's a lot more enjoyable if you play with a few friends...

WEAPONS OF DESTRUCTION...

Here are the weapons you find in the game:

HUGE ROCKET
These are about the best weapon you can get; they're the most destructive of them all, but don't stand to close when you throw it as you feel its impact as well if you're not careful.



BOULDER
These come in two sizes, one causing a little more damage than the other. They roll quite a long way as well, which means it's more like bowling than anything else.



NOT-SO-HUGE ROCKET
This weapon obviously isn't as powerful as its bigger counterpart, but useful nonetheless. More of these appear than anything else, probably to make the game look more visually interesting.



TREE TRUNK
These can cause some serious injuries. if you're lucky you may be able to knock out more than one opponent.



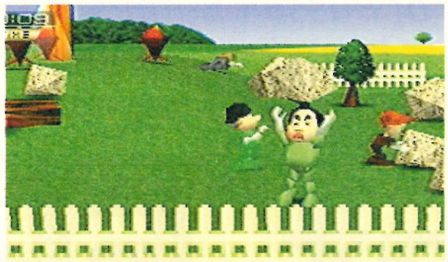
CRATES
If you smash one of these then you not only inflict some pain, but you also collect extra luck points when they explode. Watch out for the bombs which come flying out, as they slow you down.











It's difficult to perform a Mexican Wave on your own...



objects and fling them around your head to throw them at other players over and over again.

So what's the point of these gloves? You may well ask. One of the main objectives to the game is to inflict as much damage as you can on people. On the bottom of the screen you see everybody's health gauges; the more you hit someone, the more the player's health depletes, until they're retired and out of the game.

This principle carries over all the game modes. In Party Play there are three rounds to get through and between each one you see how well you're doing points-wise, as the overall winner is the one with the most points after all of the rounds. There are three kinds of points you have to collect; Round Points which are decided by what position you came in, Luck Points, which are calculated by how many little gold hearts you collected, and Direct Hit Points, which means the more times you hit someone, the more points you score.

In the Poy Poy Cup you challenge more CPU players to attain the Championship title. But first you can buy new gloves or just upgrades depending on how much money your character has in his or her pocket. All 15 characters take part and four of you at a time do battle over five matches consisting of three rounds each. At the end of each match a lovely helpful lady called Linda gives an update on the rankings and then you're on your way again to take on three more different opponents. To be able to qualify for the final rounds you must come in at least ninth place on the leader table, and if you don't, you have to just collect your winnings and leave (how upsetting)!

Working Together

Finally, you can take part in a Team battle. This is much the same as the Poy Poy Cup, but you play as part of team and you have to beat your two opponents. There's another cup to play for, and again, if you lose you can either choose to try again or take just the money.

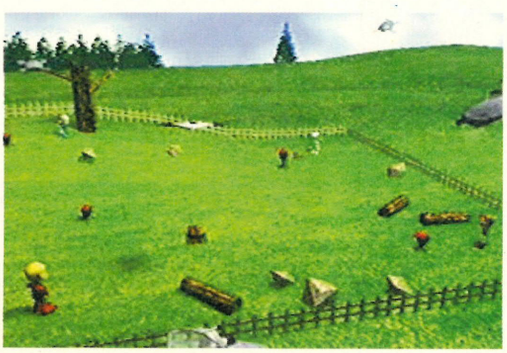
What's particularly good about this game is that you can not only pick up and throw certain objects like boulders, tree trunks or rockets, but you can also grab hold of your opponents or even the bad guys that wonder around hitting you as well. Take the penguins on the Ice level, for example; you can pick them up and throw them at the other players - as long as you can avoid them attacking you first.

This game gives you the sort of fun you like to have after you've spent an evening in the pub. There's nothing serious about it and it's nothing that stunning to look at either. It's a lot more enjoyable if you play against a few friends or you both work together to beat the CPU players. In a nutshell I'd say it would be a good game to just pick up and play every now and again.

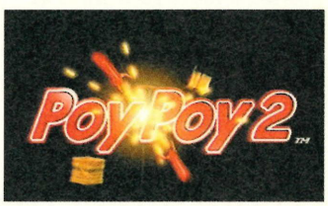
Claire Webster

A good game to pick up and play every now and then









SECOND OPINION

Poy Poy 2 offers quick thrills rather than a long-term challenge, but it's none-the-worse for that. In fact, you couldn't wish for a better bash when you have your friends round. It's nothing special on your own, but the multi-player bout is a great laugh.

Ian Osborne

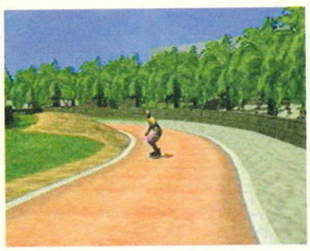
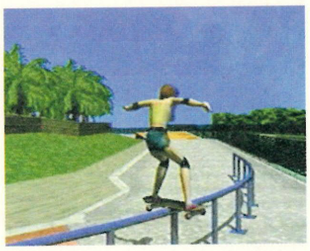
THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	6

78%

SKATING STREET STYLE...

Here are a few 'rad' stills from the introduction sequence. Watch how they really get some 'phat air' off some of the 'verts', dude (I think I'm going to throw up).



PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Electronic Arts	Micro Cabin	Sports Sim	2nd April	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card Analogue Pad	Dual Shock

Catchin' rad air was one of Russell Barnes' favourite pastimes during his younger years. He has been know to perform some dope tricks in his time, but now prefers to let the PlayStation do all the hard work. Let's skate with EA's latest extreme sport-em'-up!

Street Skater

It's not often we see skateboarding on the PlayStation, and less often still that we see it in a game on its own. It's immediately comparable to the excellent Top Skater from the arcades (where you stand on a moving skateboard), which challenges you to perform the best stunts in the fastest time around a selection of street and private courses. If you've got a pair of Air Walks on and you're notorious for ripping up park benches, this might be just what you're looking for...

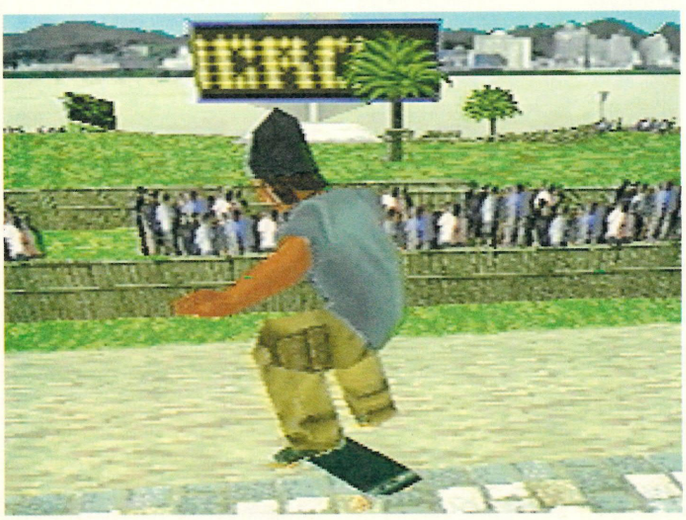
Hmm... Skateboarding on the PSX is a great idea. Sony themselves are know to sponsor some of the best events in skateboarding; I'm quite surprised they haven't put their interest to better use in the production of a great game. So EA have jumped into the hot-seat but decided that development of their game would be done out of house and by a small company known as Micro Cabin.

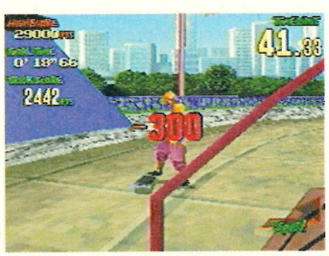
The introduction sequence that opens the game shows what you can expect as far as contents goes. It offers street, half pipe, bowl and arena skating and tricks that are as stylish as they are daring. There's a selection of skaters for you to play as each having pros and cons in different areas like top speed and cornering. You also get to choose differently-designed boards, but aren't offered any information to show that one is any different from another. That small fact is beside the point; it's the gameplay and in-game graphics that deserves the attention from the front end of the review (we'll leave any smaller niggles 'til later).

Skate Hate

From the first look Street Skater is, well; like all the sub-standard snowboarding and extreme sport racing games moulded into one. The backgrounds aren't particularly impressive (bystanders look like very badly drawn cardboard cut-outs), the frame rate is quite low and suffers further when there's a lot of action and the animations generally look the same what ever the player is doing (bar stunts and tricks). The main point I'm trying to put across here is that it isn't anything outside anything I've seen before, immediately turning me off to the game in its entirety. It's not that the graphics are appalling, it's just that they look like all the other duff 'extreme sports' games I've ever played (and hated). I knew that a dumb American 'dude' was going to be commentating my every move with phrases like 'Medic!' when I crashed and other such aggravations before the first challenge had even started. There are plenty of tell-tale signs plastered all over the gameplay as well. It's more than possible to accelerate (without pushing off with your feet) up a hill on your board, very ridiculous and something that skaters will take real offence at too, I think you'll agree. The height, size and length

There aren't that many courses for you to conquer...











Beautiful light-sourcing, dynamic motion capture, detailed scenery, exciting gameplay - Street Skater has none of these.







of jumps is bordering on the insane too. Okay, it's just a game, but it's more than possible too hover around in the air (after already performing your trick) like some sort of a Helium balloon for a few seconds and then come floating back down onto the course. What the hell's that all about? If you're going to attempt to make a game to please a certain vacant market, you may as well do it properly as you're only going to make enemies if you don't. Something sadly missed by the creators, but maybe I'm being too harsh; I don't know.

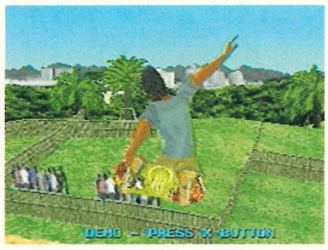
Basic Bonuses

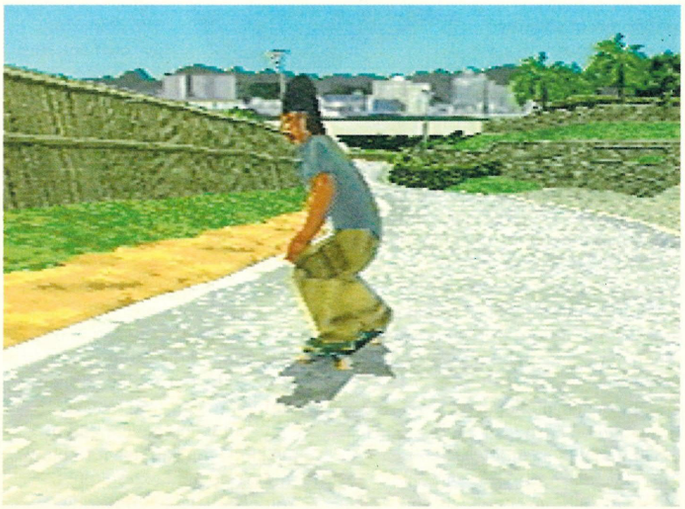
So then, I've decided it's a pretty crap game on the surface, but what's it got if you look closer - any saving graces, any addictive additions to bring you back time and time again? No, not really, but what it does offer in the gameplay and replayability department isn't badly done. The basic rule of the game is to choose a character, then a board, and take part in kind of a Street Skating challenge. The idea is that you jam around (the only course available) doing big jumps and tricks to score big points, you pass through numerous checkpoints on your way around the track making sure you set time limit doesn't run out before you reach the end. You're then awarded points for stunts and then more points for a quick time bonus, so in essence you have to do as many cool tricks, but in the fastest time; not bad really. Should you succeed in beating the set quota of points set for you before you race, you go onto the next course which is automatically opened up for you. There aren't all that many courses for you to conquer, but some have different routes that you can negotiate after completing them all. Your boarder can also be upgraded by adding to their jumping ability and top speed and other abilities as a reward for performing well. This isn't a new feature, or one that I personally agree with, but it works nevertheless.

Forget Street Skater for now; wait for something better...

Given the choice between Cool Boarders 3 and this, you know where I'll be and frankly that's where you should be too. Forget Street Skater for now, because I can guarantee a better option within the next six months; you just wait.

Russell Barnes









SECOND OPINION

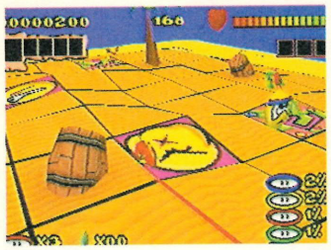
The physics in this game are ridiculous. By all means exaggerate towards the arcadey end of the market, but Street Skater just takes the piss out of the sport it claims to reproduce. Not recommended, even for skateboarding fans.

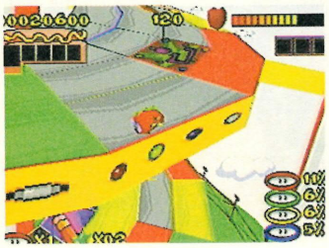
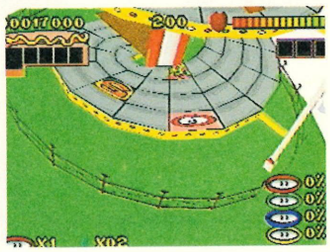
Claire Webster

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	6
SOUND	5
GAMEPLAY	6
LIFESPAN	5

54%

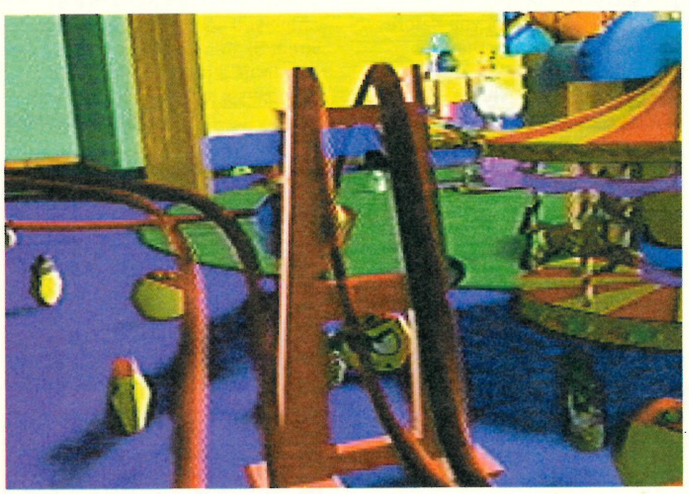


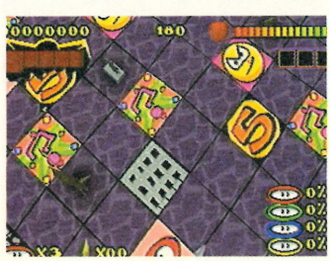




PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
SCI	Code Monkeys	Puzzle Game	19th March	UK	£29.99	1-2	Memory Card, Analogue Pad, Dual Shock

It's fast, but it makes you furious. It's colourful, but it makes you go bog-eyed. Claire Webster finds out how long she can be a Live Wire! without going completely bonkers!

Live Wire!




There seems to be an influx of puzzle games arriving for the PlayStation just recently, such as Devil Dice and Bust-A-Move 4 which are both great fun and addictive to play. Just when you thought it was time to give your brain a rest, along comes another one - and it's a bit of a 'Live Wire' (sorry!).

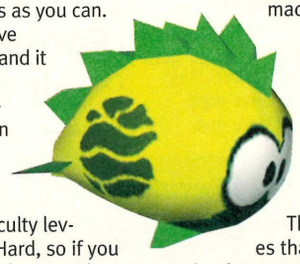
The object of the game is easy to figure out. You have to use your hyper-charged character (which looks strangely like a fish) to race over the lines and other objects to colour as many squares as you can. Sometimes, when you've coloured all four sides and it flips over, you acquire anything from a power-up to a wave that, when you use it, flips an entire row of squares to your colour.

There are three difficulty levels; Easy, Normal and Hard, so if you are competing against the CPU players at the Hard level, you have difficulty keeping up and problems avoiding ticking time bombs which other players can send after you. At the end of the game, the amount of squares you own are totted up, and whoever has the most wins the level. The only drawback is that coming second or third will not be good enough to get you onto the next stage.

Obviously you begin on Level One, and on each level there are five environments including Oceanic, Spooky, Space, Fun Fair and Wild West. All of them change as you progress further into the game as they use different combinations of shapes of cells, including square, hexagonal, octagonal and rectangular. As you can imagine, this makes moving around the board awkward at times, but you soon get used to it.

Pick-Me-Ups

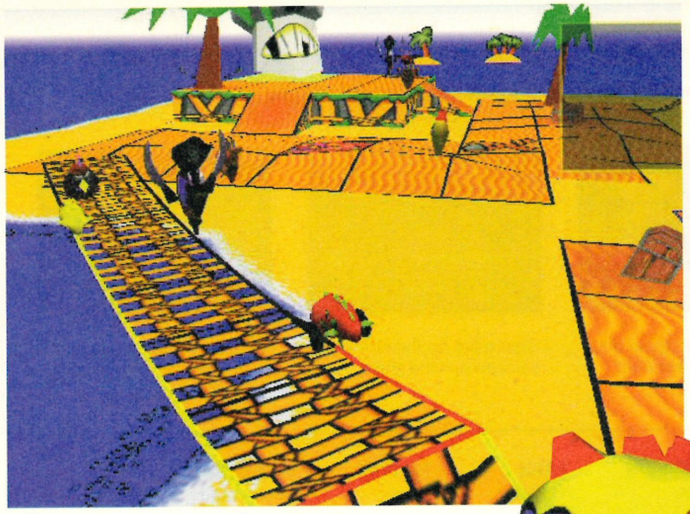
At the top-left of the screen you can see what pick-ups you've collected. Some of the objects are more useful than others, like the different kinds of guns, for instance. There are machine guns, mortars, pistols and cork guns, all of which you can use to shoot the other players on the board to stop them from colouring their own squares.

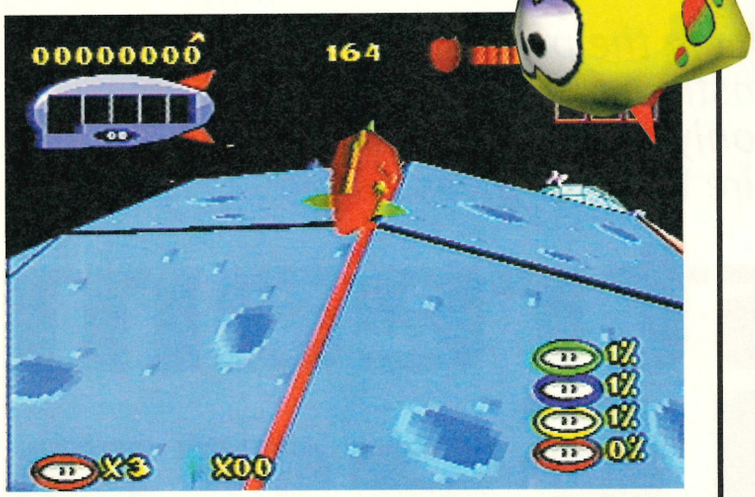


There are also vortexes that suck other players in, time extensions and extra speed, to name just a few. Put it this way; if the game didn't have these features then it would be totally dull, let alone impossible to win.

There are also enemies to contend with on each of the levels whose aim in life is to make winning as hard as possible. On the Spooky level they come in the shape of ghosts and in others they could be pirates, crabs or cowboys. When they run into you, you lose some energy, but if you have a gun of some kind, you can use it to blow them up and gain extra points.

You also have a radar, which





Overall, Live Wire! is a bit of a laugh, especially with friends...

shows the relative positions of the other players in the game. Each fish is represented by a coloured dot in the centre of the radar. This is useful for keeping track of where your opponents are so you can mosey on over and shoot them. Extra treats that can be found on all of the levels include extra life, energy, additional points and ammo.



There are a couple of things wrong with this game (as of course there would be). Firstly, controlling your fishy character takes a lot of getting used to and if you pick up extra speed it becomes even harder. Because it is so fast and furious and the levels are extremely colourful to say the least, your eyes do become tired very quickly, so you shouldn't play it for too long at a time. However there are a lot of levels to complete (50 in all) which means there's a lot of fun to be had. There are even levels inspired by Pac Man and Space Invaders!

Overall, Live Wire! is a bit of a laugh, especially if you're playing against a friend in split-screen. It's also quite unique in that you can hinder your opponents progress and beat up some bad guys. If you're a sucker for puzzlers, but you don't want one that doesn't take much thought, then I'd steer clear of this. But if light-hearted fun is your cup of tea, you won't be disappointed.

Claire Webster

SECOND OPINION

Live Wire! is a bit of an oddity. Its power-ups are a little awkward, and it's really annoying when the foes turn the tables on you completely in the closing stages of the game, but it's a fair old blast for a while. Not bad, but nothing outstanding.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	6
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	7

73%



COMPETITION

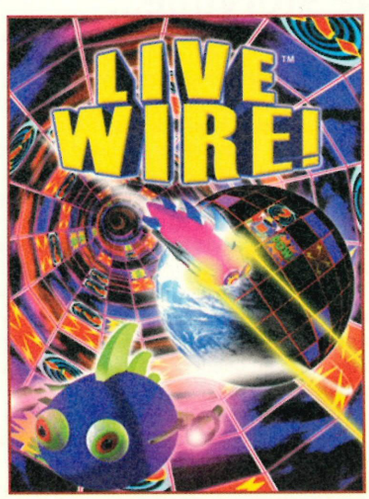
Play That Funky Music....



The music in Live Wire! is pretty mad to say the least, but did you know it was composed by the apparently 'legendary' house DJ Allister Whitehead?

Allister's flair on the club scene has placed him at the forefront of the culture since way back in 1988. His name has been seen on hundreds of thousands of albums all over the world and he's been Djing in Internationally-renowned clubs such as the Ministry of Sound and Cream.

At the moment he's currently mixing his latest in the series of the Fantazia compilation albums and it's probably going to be his best yet. So what better competition prize could we get than his latest CD? All you have to do is answer this easy question:



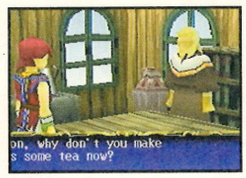
• Name five things you can shoot in Live Wire! to gain extra points.

Please send your answers on a postcard, to arrive no later than 26th March, to:

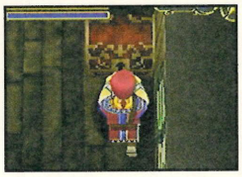
**Live Wire! competition,
extreme PlayStation Magazine,
Quay Magazine Publishing,
22 Strand Street,
Poole,
Dorset
BH15 1SB**

A HELPING HAND...

Getting to know the story helps you understand what to do next, and right at the beginning of the adventure you can't find anything out until you've made Valos a cup of tea. Just in case you're not sure how, here's a clue...



Valos needs a cuppa to calm his nerves and asks you to oblige.



Go to the chest and open it to obtain the tea set.



Walk over to the stove and choose the tea set from your Items menu.



Start a fire on the stove so you can boil the kettle.



While the water is heating, Valos fills you in on some more of the story.

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Sony	ARC Entertainment	RPG	Out Now	UK	£39.99	1	Memory Card Analogue Pad	Dual Shock

In a world where magic and myth are the peoples' saviour, trouble looms. The Granstream Nebular is slowly being destroyed and only the chosen one can save the four continents. Claire Webster gives it a go...

The Granstream Saga



One thing you can't call the characters in this game is 'two-faced'. Most of them haven't even got one...



One thing this game has got is an imaginative storyline...

Around one hundred years ago in the Granstream Nebular, a great war took place between two opposing forces; the Imperial Wizardry and the Allied Spirit Army. During the battle, a dangerous weapon was used which sunk deep into the planet's core, which left the land slowly falling away into the ocean.

Distressed by the disaster, four Wise Men went to a special temple in Airlin to try and prevent the four continents, Airlin, Volcos, Aquas and Zephere, from sinking. To do this they used magical orbs and to ensure that when they passed on, their work would continue, and left one of these orbs on each of the four continents so that their descendants could hopefully save their land.

Some years later, the two forces were still at loggerheads, and it looked as though war was going to break out again as Imperial warships had been spotted patrolling the continents. The land was still sinking and the new Wise Men were rapidly decreasing.

The land is now slowly running out of energy to help it float and is drifting into the sea, so to slow down its descent, parts of it are being sliced off, making it lighter.

The town of Arona is located on the land of Shilf. As the world approaches its certain doom, the population hopes for salvation. A tall mountain stands in the very centre of the land and at its base stands a small shack where an archaeologist named Valos and his adopted son, Eon live. They are responsible for slicing off the precious land, with the help of a magic stone.

Tales of Woe

It all sounds very intense, doesn't it? One thing this game has got is a very imaginative storyline. During the intro, we see Valos and Eon slice the land and watch it fall into the sea below. However, they used their very last magic stone and now there seems to be no way of saving their continent.

I was feeling the pressure already. How on earth am I going to save all of the innocent people? Maybe if I sat down and had a cup of tea everything would become clear. Don't think I'm joking. That literally is the first thing you do in this game - make a cup of tea. Can you believe that?

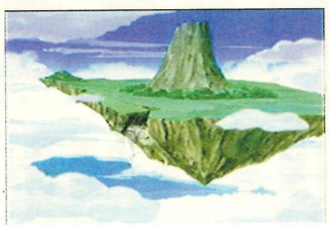
As you sit quietly and sip your cuppa, Valos tells you his plan to solve the secret of the Wise Men's power to save the Shilf. He thinks that if he asks permission from the Elder to enter the Killia Shrine he will find where the secrets are hidden. Of course he tells you that you're not to



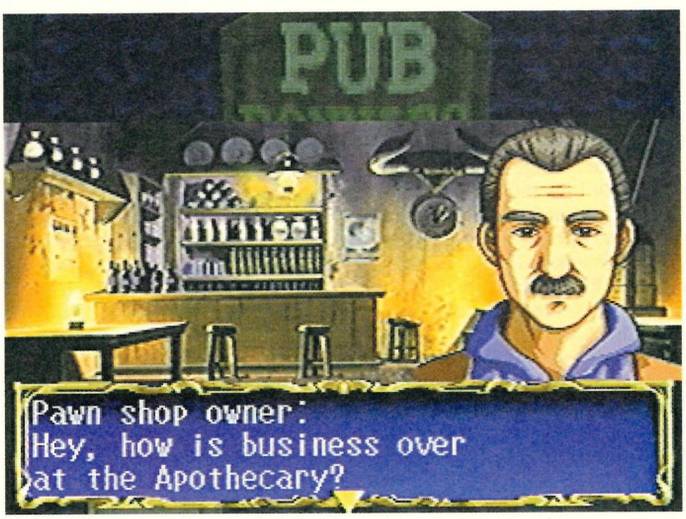
















There's a little too much coaxing in this game as well...

follow him. The journey is dangerous and you cannot risk your life.

Something you notice very early in the game is that Eon NEVER does as he's told - or at least he's really not supposed to. You also notice that although the graphics are wonderful in that they're colourful with the odd moment of them being in 3D, all of the characters are faceless, which makes you wonder whether they forgot to draw them in or it's just that they're purposefully made to look scary.

So now you know what you have to do. Find the Wise Men's secrets and save the world. But you know and I know that it isn't going to be that easy. There are loads of other mini-missions for you to do first, such as saving the local landlord's son, finding the priest's gorgeous daughter and collecting magic and health along the way.

As with all RPGs, collecting different items is imperative to completing the game. Sometimes you can't open doors without a particular key and other times you have to collect things just so you can sell them to obtain some money. In The Granstream Saga the usual rules apply; feed Eon regularly, steal everything you can pick up and make sure you ask people's permission before becoming a stowaway on a cargo ship.

Doing Battle

There is also an element of action in this game as well. When you reach the cemetery (about three hours into the game), and you enter the altar, there are enemies which block your way. They might be Guardians or just big, ugly-looking creatures that have nothing better to do than pick a fight. As you approach the bad guys you hear some real fighting music that sounds as though it has been taken from an old movie and Eon turns from a skinny slip of a lad into a fearsome fighting machine. There are only two buttons that you have to use, one which attacks and one that defends. All you have to do is slay the enemy before they kill you. Some of them are easy to destroy, whereas others won't go down without a long brawl.

This fighting element is a nice feature and brings in a little variation to the game. The only problem is, if you enter a room, kill the bad guy, leave, and then re-enter, he suddenly appears again, full of life, so you can end up defeating the same guy over and over again, which isn't much fun at all really!

There's also a little too much coaxing in this game as well. Eon has a little bird in his pocket who helps him out occasionally by telling him which way to go. In fact, if you take a wrong turn, he tells you about it. This means it's impossible for you to go wrong, which makes the game rather too easy. In fact, I'd even go so far as to say that it's for youngsters who are just venturing into the RPG genre for the first time. Why else would they have made it so simple?

However, Granstream Saga is a huge game, and don't even think about playing without having a memory card close at hand, or you have to go through the whole thing again for hours until you reach the place you left off. The storyline's good, the graphics are stunning and there are a few unique features slotted in for good measure. But be careful; if you're looking for a challenge, you won't find it in a barrel or a treasure chest here, I'm afraid.

Claire Webster



SECOND OPINION

As a beginner's RPG for kids or those who find the likes of Final Fantasy VII a bit of a chore, it works pretty well. The storyline and graphics are outstanding, but the game itself is too easy for anyone who's already completed a couple of RPGs.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

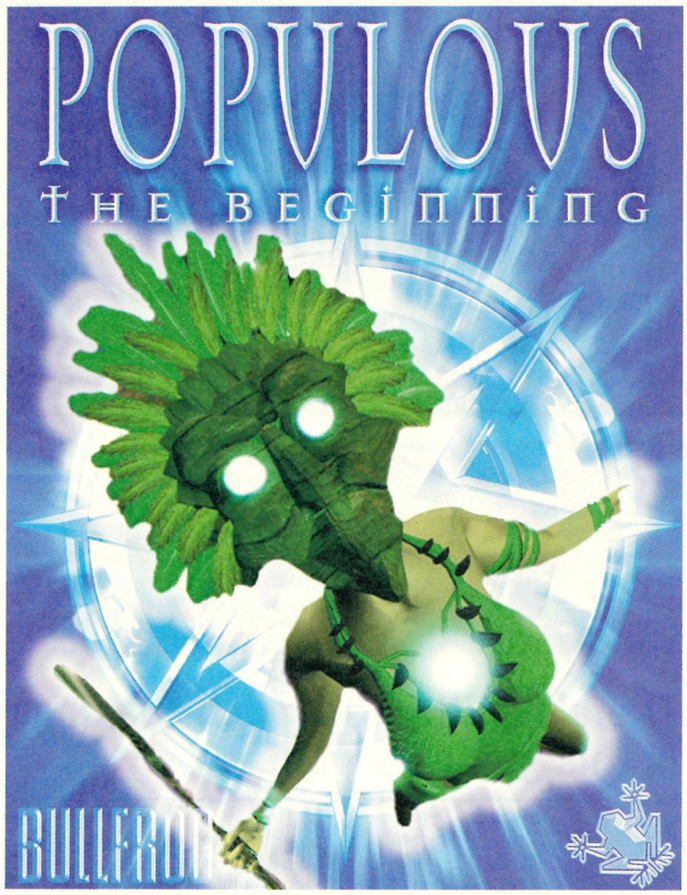
GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	6
GAMEPLAY	6
LIFESPAN	7

72%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Electronic Arts	Bullfrog	Strategy Game	5th March	UK	£39.99	1	Memory Card	Dual Shock

First there was darkness, then there was mana; or was it the other way around? Russell Barnes might no know about the birth of creation, but ask him about Populous: The Beginning and this is what he'll say...

Populous: The Beginning



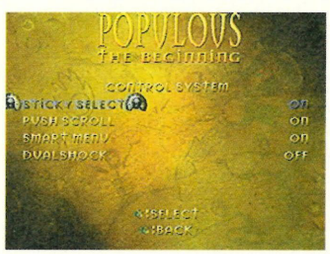
The creators of the god game genre return, this time to the PlayStation, with the third instalment of their critically-acclaimed series. Populous: The Beginning adds a whole new twist on the proceedings as your goal is guide your tribe through 25 huge battle scenarios for total supremacy and the right to become a god. Can the change in direction summon new followers or will Bullfrog's latest effort banish interest without a trace?

To save any confusion, for those of you unfamiliar with the game or the genre as a whole, the idea is you're a powerful shaman in control of a tribe of believers. These believers carry out a vast number of tasks on your command, assisting you in your quest to defeat all other shamans across 25 vast worlds. Early on in the game you begin each battle with a couple of huts (where workers can be created), a few workers and you, the shaman, stood in the middle of the Reincarnation Stones (These stones allow the shaman to be brought back to life should she die, assuming there are still some members of your tribe remaining).

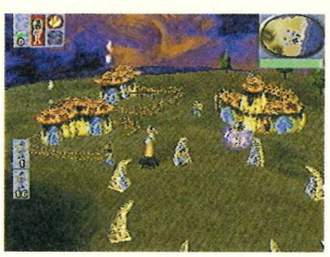
From the 'off' it's your task to set your workers in motion, creating new huts and buildings designed to train some of your workers in various arts to aid your cause. If there are any Obelisks, Tombs of Knowledge or Towers around your immediate vicinity (ie. away from the enemy) it's a good start to direct the shaman and a couple of free workers to them for worship. After praying in front of them for a short period of time it's possible to gain different powers from them. You gain spells for the shaman to cast (including Earthquakes, Lightning, Volcanoes that grow from

Another top touch is the incredibly atmospheric soundtrack...



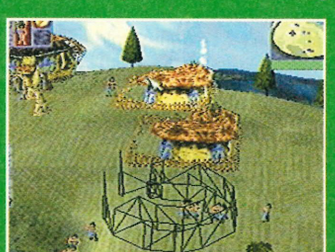


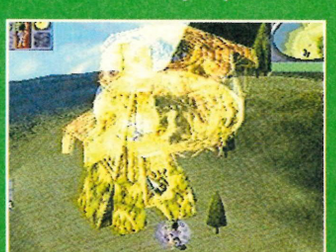




ANCIENT ARCHITECTURE...

Constructing new buildings plays a very important role in Populous: The Beginning. When you first begin, the shaman is only capable of knocking together a hut or two for your tribe. To construct new ones you first have to gain plans. These can be stolen from your adversary's Tombs of Knowledge and used to your own ends. You need training for your workers so they may become warriors for the front line of battle, preachers to gain support for your cause and many other roles that become available to you as you progress.
When you have selected the building you want, select where you wish to put it and set your minions to work on its construction. If you leave them to it, they all muck in (if they're available) and construct it faster, but they need plenty of building materials nearby (in the form of trees) to make fast work of it.





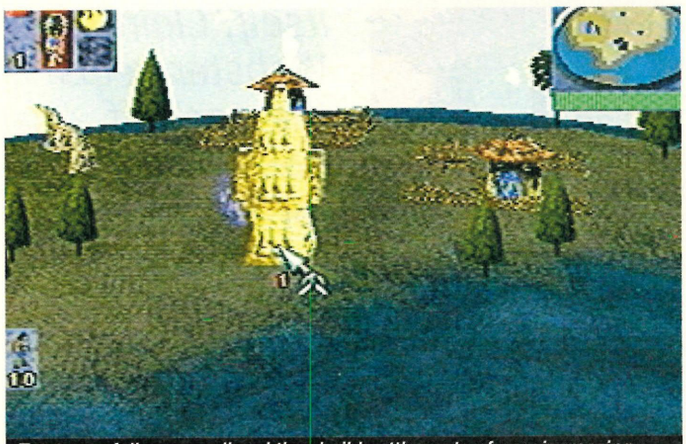
INTRODUCING YOUR FUTURE...

From the darkness came mana and with mana came the visions that we were not alone. There were other worlds and other tribes that would destroy us like a plague, but I alone have the second sight and am elected to lead as the chosen one; the shaman! An excellent introduction to an excellent PlayStation game, but I think they really need to keep taking the pills...









Treat your followers well and they build settlements of ever-increasing size and complexity. This in turn increases your power...

At the end of the day, you'll either love it or hate it...

the ground and the ability to create land bridges to other areas) and other powers that can give you the upper hand in the heat of battle. Once you've utilised your abilities to build up a suitable mini army (after checking out the size of the opposition), you can venture out of your base area to do some killing, or if you're smart, send a couple of preachers off on the sly to convert enemy tribesmen to joining your own. This increases your numbers much quicker and diminishes their own at the same time.

When Two Tribes Go To War...

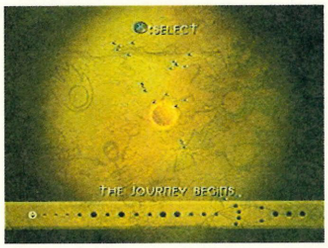
Ultimately you must use your tribe to defeat the opposing tribe to win the battle and move onto the next world. All the action takes place on a smooth, totally 3D environment that rotates and spins beautifully in co-ordination with the 'sphere' playing field (the battle takes place over an entire planet). Considering the amount of complex operations under your control, it's amazing how easy (with a little patience and practice) it is to complete tasks with only a couple of well placed button presses. Selecting different tribe members (individually, as a team or all of them) is easily done, as is directing them to their next task like building or training to become warriors, etc. This is a really important aspect of the gameplay and one that really shines through after a few hours in command.

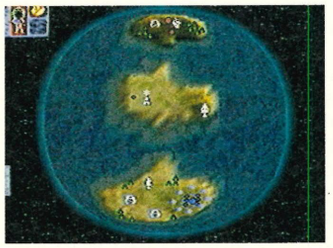
Another top touch is the incredibly atmospheric soundtrack. It is ambient and moving as well as setting the scene in this mysterious and dangerous universe. The only problem I had with the sound is the way the narration of the god cuts in instead of the music and not simply over it, giving it a rough 'stop and start' effect that doesn't do it any favours.

At the end of the day either you'll love it or you'll hate it; it's a cop-out I know, but if you love Warcraft 2, Settlers and games of that ilk, you'll be really happy with Populous: TB. That's the way it goes, I'm afraid.

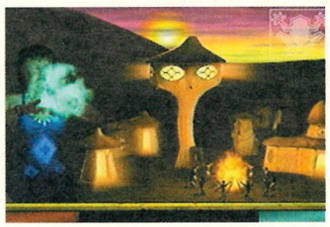
Russell Barnes











SECOND OPINION

This one is close enough to the 16-bit Populous games for those already familiar with the series to feel quite at home, but it's more than just an update - they were wise not to call it Populous 3. It's a real 'must buy' for strategy fans, but far from off-puttingly complex.

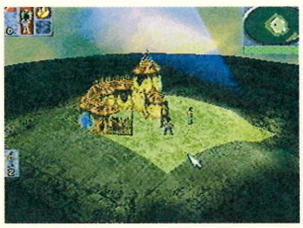
Ian Osborne

GODLY TUTELAGE...

It's vital that your enter your first battle in full control of your faculties as it were, and what better way to prepare yourself than being taught by a god well versed in the battles lying ahead of you. It may not be your particular god, but it's certainly one who's helpful advice offers all you need to get off on the right foot towards the realm of the omni-present. After learning a few of the more general playing controls, you learn in detail about fighting scenarios, spellcasting and building work. All the information is passed onto you through the voice of a man upstairs, and the applicable buttons are displayed clearly on-screen.





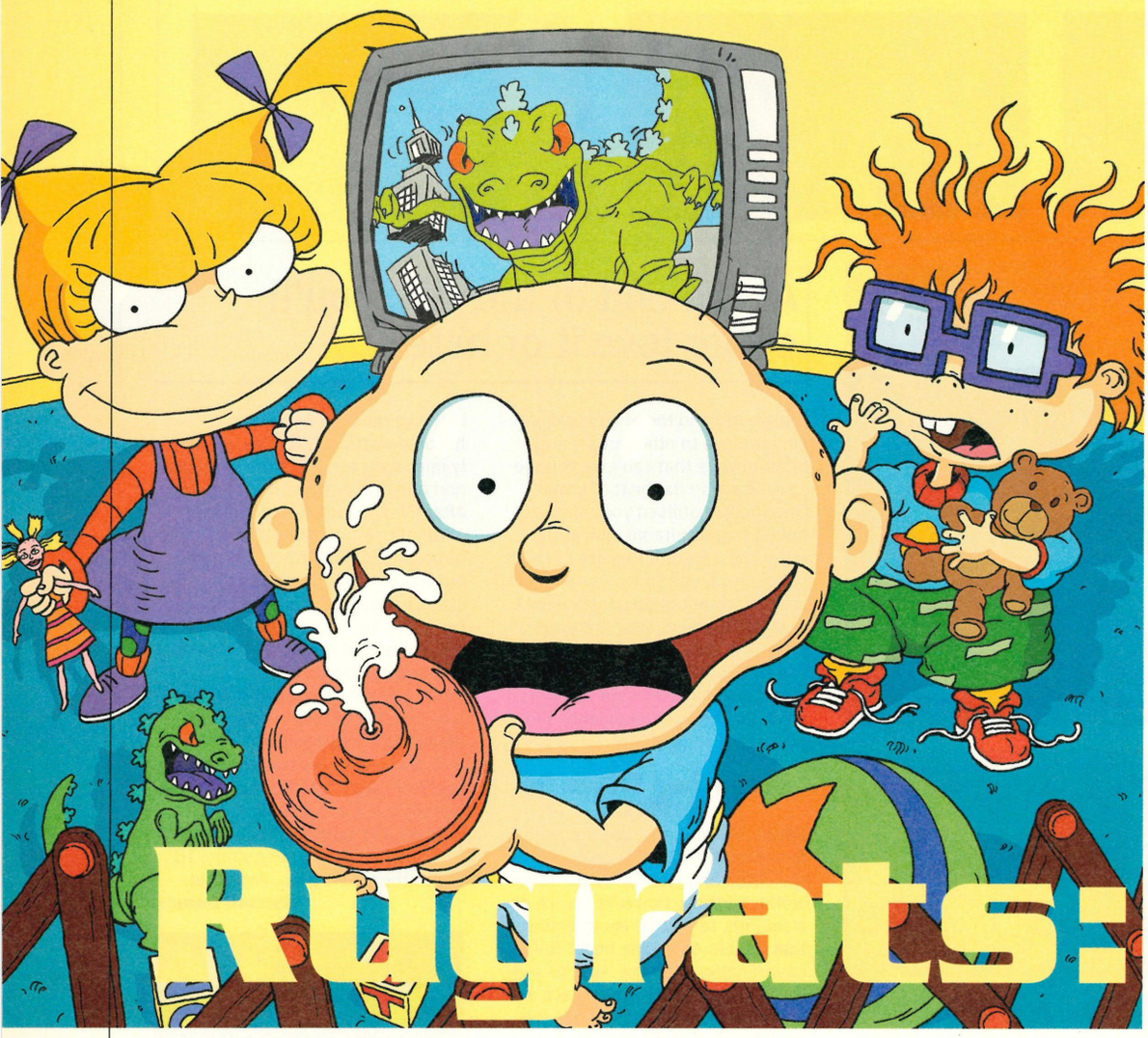


THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	8

86%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
THQ	N-Space	Cartoon Adventure	March '99	UK	£34.99	1	Memory Card, Dual Shock Analogue Pad



Rugrats:

Search for Reptar

One of the most popular children's TV cartoons has come to the PSX, but is it as much fun as the series itself? Claire Webster helps the gang of babies to search for Reptar...

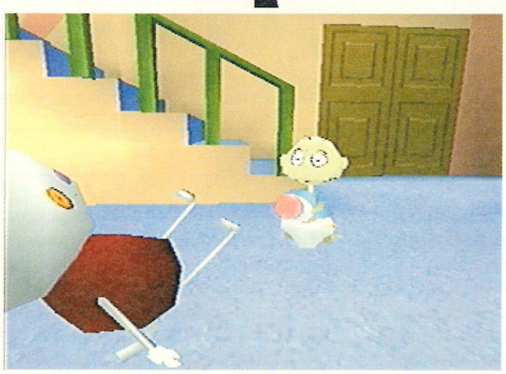
That oh-so-familiar theme tune; Saturday mornings were the highlight of the week, when I'd sit and watch Tommy and his pals explore their imaginations. The first thing you notice when you play this game is that the theme music is not only there, but the entire game is almost exactly like the cartoon itself.

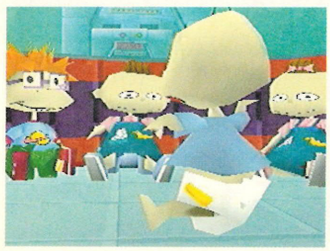
You see all the usual characters; Tommy, Chuckie, Phil and Lil, Spike the dog and, of course, Tommy's trouble-making cousin Angelica. Like in the series, whenever the adults are around they act like normal babies, crying and generally making a mess. But when the parents are out and grandpa is supposed to be baby-sitting but is sleeping instead, all hell breaks loose and the babies run wild around the house.

What is it with this month's issue and me? I think I'm being told something in some subtle way. First it was A Bug's Life, and now Rugrats; anyone would think everyone in the office is trying to tell me I'm too young for my age. Or maybe it's because I'm the only girl in the office. Whatever the reason is, I don't really mind, as we all know that children's PlayStation games can be just as much fun as any other. And that includes this one.

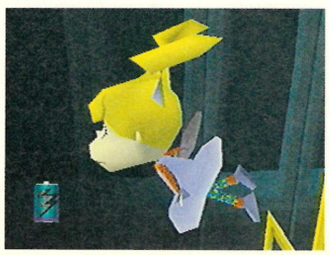


'Cookies'? Bleugh - don't you just hate Americanisms?









Fun at the Playpen

There are three game modes to play; Training, Activities and then the Main Game. Like all games, it's a good idea to do some training first. All you have to do here is practice either running or walking around the house, negotiating your way over slippery surfaces, picking up and throwing objects and climbing over all the furniture (as babies so often do). You also notice the controls are a little twitchy. You can use analogue but it doesn't really help as your character just seems to wander off by itself.

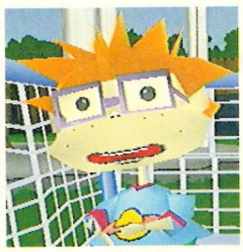
It's when you start playing the

BOUNCING BABIES...

For those of you who aren't familiar with the popular Rugrats characters, here's a few shots and some brief words so you can familiarise yourself with them...



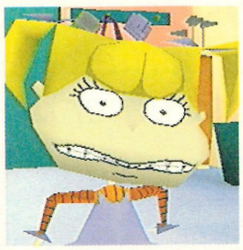
TOMMY
Even though he's the youngest baby, he's the ringleader of the bunch of friends and probably the one with the wildest imagination. He always has the bright ideas, and for a baby, he's got the most common sense.



CHUCKIE
He's a bit dim really; he's basically scared of everything and hasn't got the kind of courage Tommy has. Chuckie always gets himself into difficult situations, but the others always rally around to help him out.



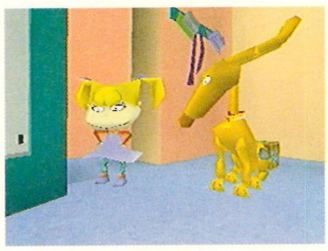
SPIKE
Troublesome, but very loyal. The babies often come to the pet dog for help with moving things around the house. He plays an important role in some levels of the game.

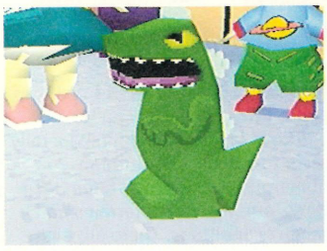


ANGELICA
Most people know that as the oldest of the group, Angelica is always purposefully making trouble for the babies. In her mom's eyes she can do no wrong and she knows the babies will always believe every word she says.

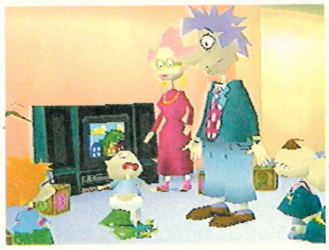


LIL & PHIL
These two babies are twins, and they're always at each other's throats. They're not quite as brave as Tommy, but if someone's in a scrape they're soon at the scene in an attempt to resolve the situation.









Makes up in fun gameplay what it lacks in control...

different activities you begin to see some of the great features to the game. Each activity has its own intro sequence which looks exactly like the cartoon. All of the characters' voices are done by the same people and the storylines reflect the series almost exactly. And the graphics - well, when we said last issue that they were looking promising we weren't kidding, and now they're even better - if that's possible. All the environments are fully explorable and each level, or activity, takes place in familiar settings such as the Park, the Mall and, of course, the Pickles' own home.

Innocent Fun

There are four different activities to choose from, the first being the Cookie Race. Somebody has eaten all of the cookies in the household, but Angelica and Tommy can smell some being baked in the kitchen. Whoever gets to the kitchen first can have all of them to themselves, so you have to race Angelica to the kitchen. Already you may think you're at a disadvantage as she's older and should be more nimble than Tommy, but if you're accurate enough round the corners and quicker at stumbling down the stairs you have a good chance at reaching the cookies first.

Other activities you can take part in are Gold Rush where you play Lil who has to run around the garden collecting silver pieces before the time runs out, Egg Hunt, where Tommy has to search the downstairs of the house for eggs before his time runs out as well, and finally, Mini Golf, which is the only part of the game you can play as a multi-player offering.

But, of course, what you really want to know about is the main game. There are 15 levels to complete, and eventually you get to play as each of the Rugrat's characters - even Spike. Needless to say, the whole point of the main game is to find Reptar. In case you're wondering what Reptar is, it's a jigsaw puzzle and most of its pieces are missing. As you explore the house, a few of the pieces are seen lying around, but the remainder of them are found in the different levels you have to enter from inside each room of the house.

Each of these levels varies in difficulty; Easy, Medium and Hard (pretty obvious really). It would take rather a long time to run through them all for you, but an example of one of the easier levels is the Cookie Race, which for some reason is exactly the same one as you played in the activities. One thing I did forget to point out, though, is that while you're racing Angelica, make sure you don't touch her as you bounce off her and then spend the rest of the time playing catch-up.

'Let There be Light' is one of the titles for the Medium levels. Tommy has just been put to bed and all the lights have been turned off in the house. Of course, he thinks that something has gone terribly wrong and decides that the only way he can fix the problem is to get to the fridge and let out all of the light which is in there. Playing Tommy, you must find your way in the dark, downstairs to the refrigerator. You have a flashlight which you must shine at the ghosts which block your way. There are batteries along the route so you can recharge. Once you get to the fridge, the only way you can get it open is to enlist the help of Spike, but you have to find him first, which means you have to again search round the house.

Just for kids

So you think it sounds easy? You haven't got onto the Hard levels yet. 'Grandpa's Teeth' is just one of them. Spike has run off into the maze with Grandpa's false teeth and Tommy and Chuckie have taken it upon themselves to search for them. Watch out for the geese that are dotted around the place as they peck you (not very friendly!).

As you complete all of the levels you get to place your collected jigsaw pieces in the jigsaw itself, and when you've successfully got all 12 parts, you're laughing!

Whether you're a fan of Rugrats or not, you're more than likely going to love this game. You're soon in Rugrats heaven as well, as the film is also out at the end of this month (great timing). Like I said, the only let-down is the controls and perhaps the camera angles, which never stop sweeping all over the place and after a while just makes your eyes hurt. So I'd say, all things being equal, this game makes up in fun gameplaying what it lacks in control.

Claire Webster

SECOND OPINION

Unless you're quite a youngster or you have kids of your own, Rugrats has mostly novelty appeal. It has fun graphics, great voice parts and a few fun games, but that's where it ends. The controls soon start to aggravate after that, so its replayability is questionable.

Russell Barnes

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	7

81%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Sony	989 Studios	Driving	March '99	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card Analogue Pad Dual Shock Steering Wheel

This is the latest driving game from top-notch publishers Sony, but have 989 Studios developed a worthy adversary to Sony's own Gran Turismo? Russell Barnes sits firmly in the driving seat and buckles up ready to rock (and other associated clichés)...

Rally Cross 2

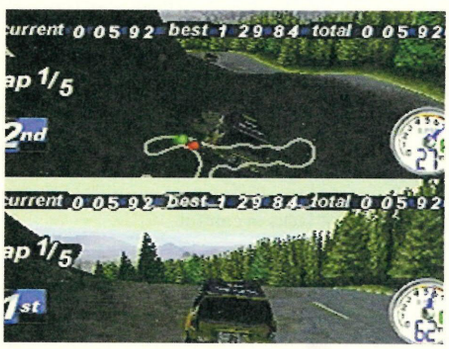


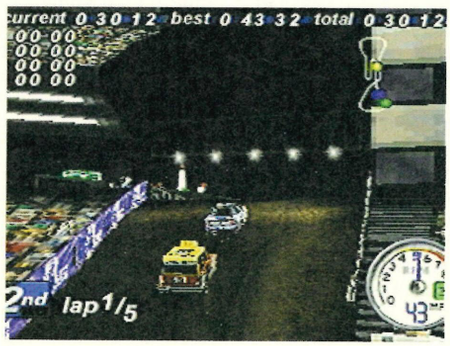


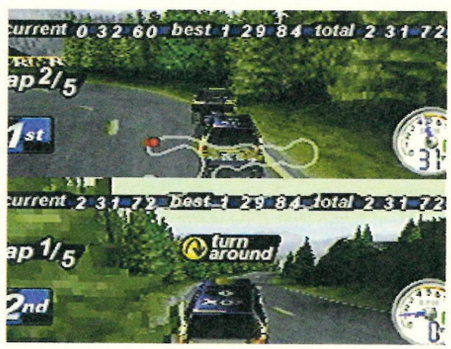
Judging simply by the size of our driving games feature towards the back of the magazine this month (and last month - Ed), it's easy to see that the genre has a stranglehold on the PlayStation. If this is the case it would be in the publisher's best interest to handle only the games in the fast lane, and steer well clear of the ones lagging in the middle of the road and down shite creak. Is Rally Cross 2 a good enough follow-up to Sony's previous wonders, or is it simply a Skoda among Porsches? There is a simple answer to that question that, if answered, would send you on your way past this review onto the next without so much of a glance at the score box . We can't have that though, so you'll just have to wait until I've at least told you a little about the game...

RC2 is (as the title defines) a rally racer that leads you through numerous courses in different locations, offering varied terrains and driving conditions. There are eight courses in all, which admittedly

It's just like playing an old Spectrum racer...

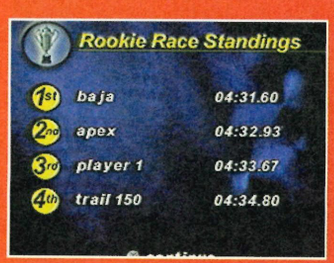


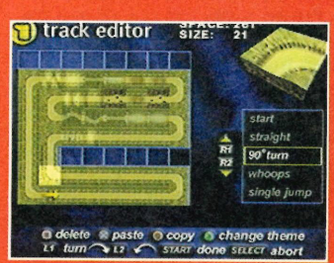


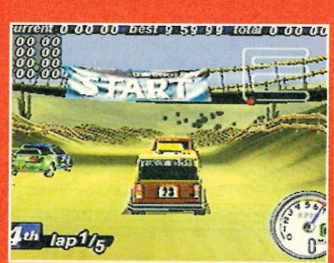


SAVING GRACE...

A saving grace it is, but the truth is that this course editor is probably very similar to the one they used to create the tracks in the game. Using the editor in Rally Cross 2 couldn't be simpler. Just select the 'block' of terrain you wish to use (be it a straight, single jump, chicane, etc) and place it on a grid of squares where you want it. You can choose from all the different road conditions featured in the game (sand, road, dirt, snow etc) and even mix and match as your course takes shape. When you've finished, save it to your memory card and challenge computer-controlled opponents (or your friends) to a race on the finished product. Should you not be happy with what you've got, simply load up your track in the editor once again and make your vital alterations. Easy, satisfying and fun; what a shame the rest of the game doesn't reflect those three words.



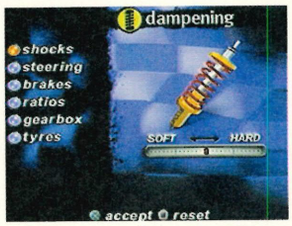




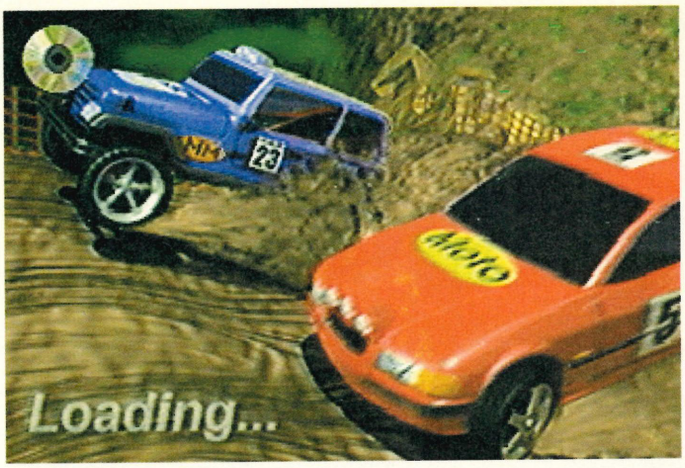


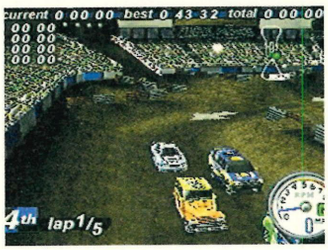
CAR SETTINGS...

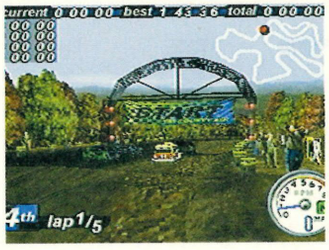
There are several variables within the car set-up to adapt your vehicle to your personal specifications or that required by the track you're racing on. Tyres can be changed, brakes can be altered along with shocks, steering, gearbox and the ratio between acceleration and speed.









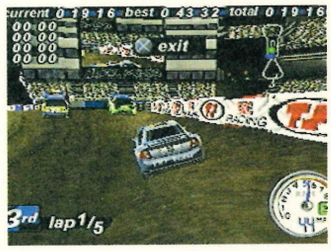








A blue doorstop challenges an orange shoebox for position...



The cars themselves are badly drawn and animated...

isn't a great deal, but there are a few factors to consider that make up for this downfall. Some of the tracks, particularly the later ones, are some of the biggest and most adventurous I've seen recently. To complement the large courses and long lap times, the basic Championship requires you to complete five laps to finish the race to it can take quite a while to progress. There is also a cunning track editor (see boxout) that allows you to save up to three of your own designs as well as all your in-game settings and progress on a single memory card. The courses can all be played in reverse and even in clever Head-On or Suicide scenarios that see your opponent racers travelling around the track in the opposite direction. As you can imagine, the crashes can be amusing.

When you begin the game from a fresh start, you can choose one of three vehicles to race in (there are ten in all), each having pros and cons of its own and adjustable settings (see boxout). In essence these are the 'facts' about the game; unfortunately they are also all the good points I could think of, so here's the rest (let's get ready to rumble!)...

Spectrum

Oh, Where to start... I think I'm safe with the graphics to warm up with, and frankly it's the source of most of the complaining. The most obvious bugbear when the action begins is the way the course goes around the car instead of the car travelling around on the course. It's just like playing an old Spectrum racer. Sure it brings back loads of memories, but they're memories best left in the past. It sadly appears that the car and the course are two completely disjointed routines that don't work together to produce anything like a believable driving experience. It would be far too easy to argue the game isn't trying to be true-to-life in an arcade sort of way, but you really need to see it running to truly get the point. This leads onto the car and background graphics, which also leave a lot to be desired. Your vehicle quite happily bumps and jumps its way around the track with fairly amusing consequences (generally flipping onto the roof) and the car reacts to this action by picking up nice dents and crumples in the bodywork. But the actual cars themselves are badly drawn and animated, looking like nothing more than breakable boxes on wheels. The vacant backgrounds mostly go by unnoticed, not because they're bad; it's more a case of being underachieved and aesthetically drudgery. The same can be said for the control method behind RC2. It doesn't manage to be arcadey or a simulation of the sport, it's just way off in a league of its own, comparable to football's Division Three. It cleverly renders the analogue stick useless by deciding it's not how hard you turn that causes a powerslide, it's how long you turn for. It's entirely possible to keep your finger jammed on the accelerator (oh dear) and tap the brake once in a while when you don't think your car's going to make it (even though that's hit and miss too). There are three difficulty modes for you to get your proverbial teeth into, but this is dampened by doubts that anyone's going to play it for that long.

I'm sure there are a few people that would argue the game's merits come in the form of it's pick-up-and-play value (no brains required for five minutes of road rage), but that really is all it's got going for it apart from the course editor. If you're an avid racing buff or you simply enjoy the challenge of a good racing game, there's no way you'll get your money's worth here. Save your money, gamble it away or buy some shares; just don't buy Rally Cross 2.

Russell Barnes

SECOND OPINION

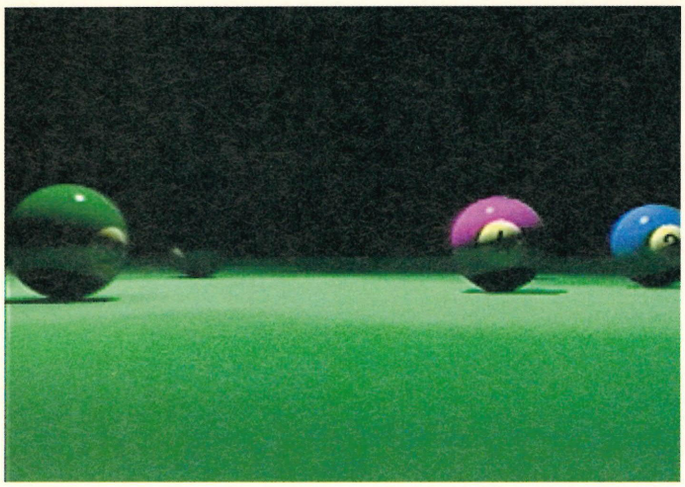
This one is shamed by drivers released two years ago, and stands no chance in a head-to-head with the likes of Max Power Racing and Colin McRae. Its physics are a joke, the graphics rough and unfinished and you hardly ever need your brake.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	4
GAMEPLAY	4
LIFESPAN	5

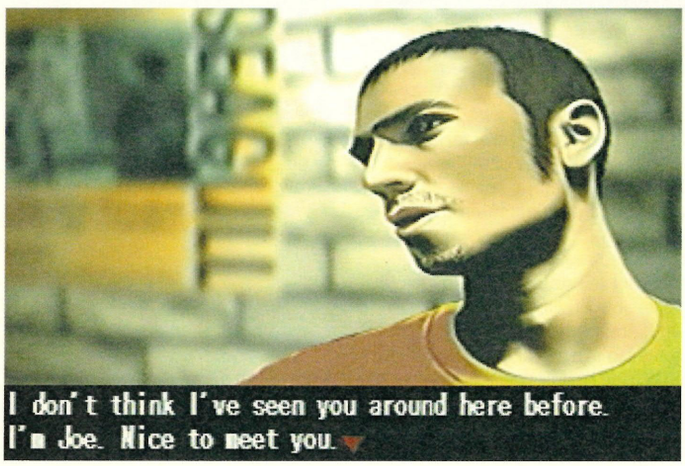
40%





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

Is Pool Hustler the Steve Davies of baize-bashers, or about as much use as a bent cue? Ian Osborne fouls the eight-ball then orders another pint...



Pool Hustler

Let's get one thing straight right from the start. The most important element in a pool or snooker game is the physics governing the movement of the balls. If a game gets this wrong it's a non-starter, regardless of how good the rest of the package is. Thankfully, Pool Hustler comes up trumps in this department. The balls behave just like their real-life counterparts, slowing accurately as they roll across the baize, reacting to collisions with cushions and the lip of the pockets exactly as you would expect and handling multi-ball cannons with ease, never slowing down or producing dodgy collisions in certain areas of the table. In fact, the game's physics are just about perfect. Fine. What about the rest of it?

The variety Pool Hustler offers is fine. You can play eight- or nine-ball pool, as well as rotation and 14-1 games. As well as the inevitable two-player bash, there's a single-player Story Mode where you take on 12 fictional opponents, travelling across the city to their home hall and betting on each match as you go. There's a minimum wager on each game, so you have to build a pot of cash to get through. You can also, when asked, bet on individual shots. The official Billiards Congress of America rules and scorings are accessible at any time during the game. There's also a Practice option with which to hone your skills, though this is just a free table which ignores the second player, fouls and misses. Watch out too for the Lesson Mode, with over 100 lessons on topics such as ball control, friction and anticipating shots. There are also 30 trick shots to overcome. There's no option to play three- or four-player games, but let's face it - you can take it in turns to make a shot, just like you do down the pub.

In Control...

There's nothing wrong with the controls either. Move your cue left and right or up and down using the D-Pad, set the strength by holding and releasing 'X' and then press again to take the shot. The 3D table is fully rotational and the camera can be moved in or out. Alternatively, hit 'Circle' for an overhead view and a path indicator, but only for the cue ball. For your first few shots you're cursing the lack of a power bar, but the control method used here soon becomes instinctive and is, if anything, less cluttered than a power bar-based interface. You can also redefine the point of contact between the cue and the ball, adding spin just like the professionals.

Even the most cursory glance at the screenshots on this page tells you that, like the physics and controls, the graphics are just fine. The balls are excellently light-sourced and perfectly spherical. The backgrounds are a little dull, but they're mercifully unintrusive. The game's front end holds together too, the gambling and travelling giving the

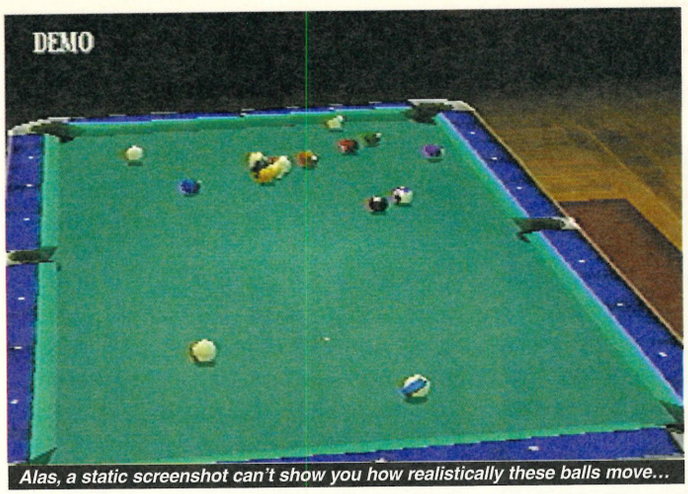
TURNING A TRICK...

Here's just one of the trick shots you can attempt. You must send the cue ball cascading through the colours, pocketing all six of them, before hammering the brown into the side pocket and spinning back onto the black. Cool, eh?

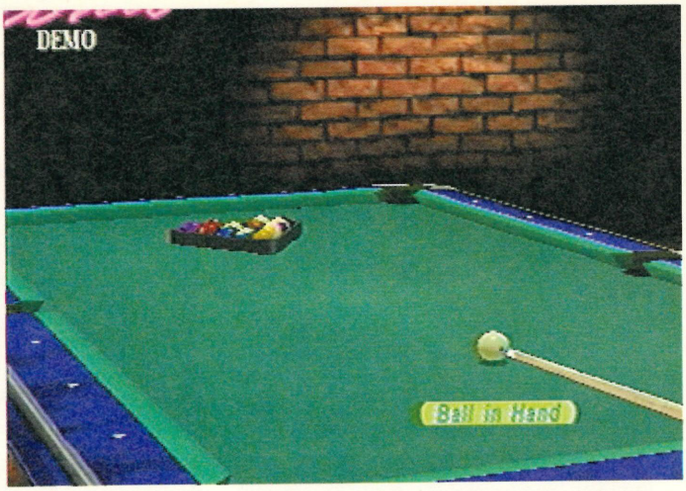


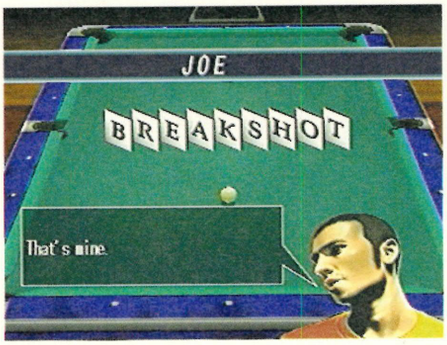




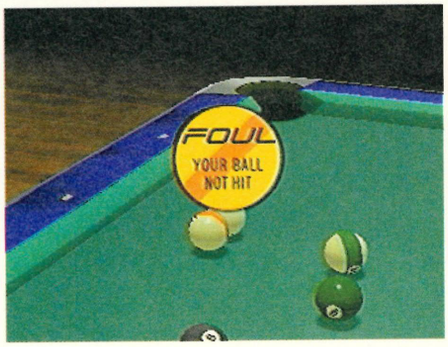


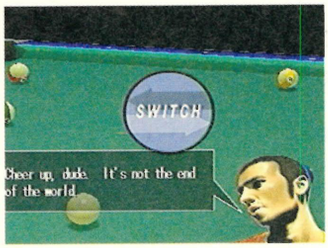
Alas, a static screenshot can't show you how realistically these balls move...

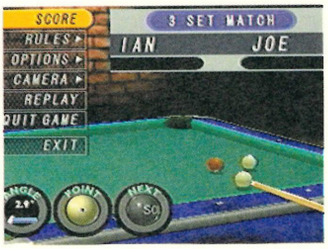


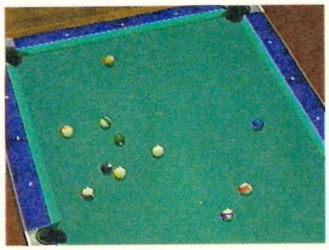


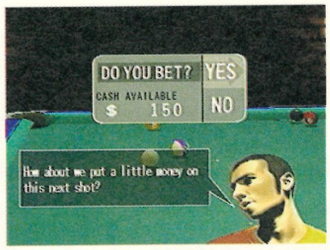












It's good, maybe almost great, but lacks pizzazz...

game a plot (unusual for a pool sim), though the in-game music is truly awful - it's like being stuck in an elevator. Thankfully, you can turn it off and just be left with the excellent sound FX.

Taking the Pizz...

Sound aside, it looks like the game's damn-near perfect, right? Wrong! It's good, maybe almost great, but it lacks the pizzazz needed to make it an all-time classic. It needs more bells and whistles to give the game a heart and soul.

Take the cameos you get from your opponents during the game. They're dire. A badly-drawn image appears in the bottom-right corner of the screen, and offers a few words of wisdom - in a speech bubble! What's wrong with FMV cuts and sampled speech drawn from the CD? The PlayStation is easily capable of that. The things they say get on your nerves after a while too. They're badly written and there aren't enough of them. When your first foe says 'Come on dude, get your head in the game' for the third time, you feel like taking his own off his shoulders.

Pocket a ball and you're told, 'Nice shot'. Fine - unless you fouled beforehand! For example, hit an opponent's ball before your own but still pocket the one you were aiming for and you've fouled, despite potting. It wasn't a nice shot at all, and I resent being told it was. There's no celebrations after winning a frame either - you just start the next as if nothing had happened. This doesn't affect the game, of course, but it gives it a tatty, unfinished look that really isn't deserved.

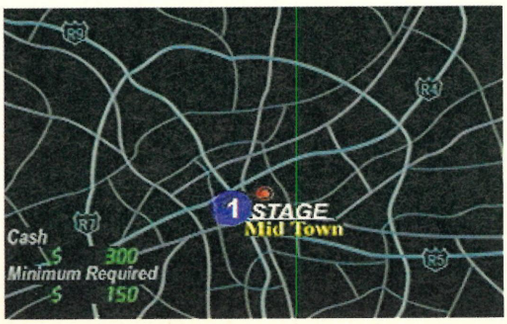
Aside form one or two minor flaws, Pool Hustler is a fine game. Its learning curve is excellent, the gambling (or should I say, 'hustling'?), adds an element of plot and progression that would otherwise be absent and its physics model is second to none. Unfortunately it's a little rudimentary in the style department, but don't let this stop you buying it - you can play this one for hours.

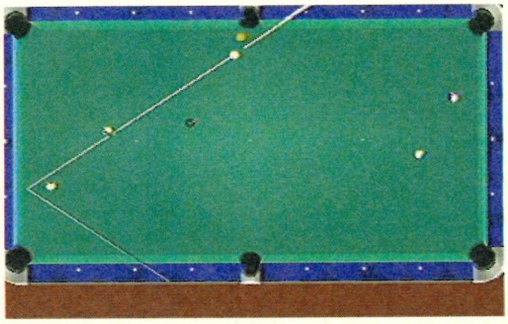
Ian Osborne

SECOND OPINION

I'm a big fan of pool games and as a result a fan of Pool Hustler, but Ian's comments on the lack of excitement hit the nail on the head. Pool itself may not be full of it, but what's wrong with injecting a bit to spice up the gameplay? Close, but no cigar.

Russell Barnes





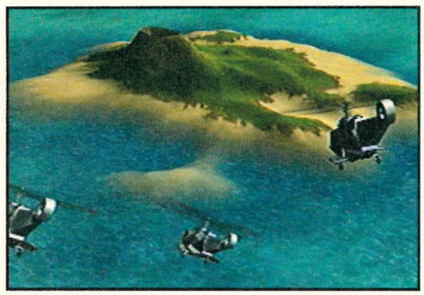
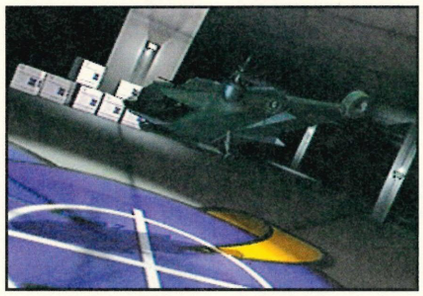
THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	4
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	8

79%

A TRIP TO THE MOVIES...

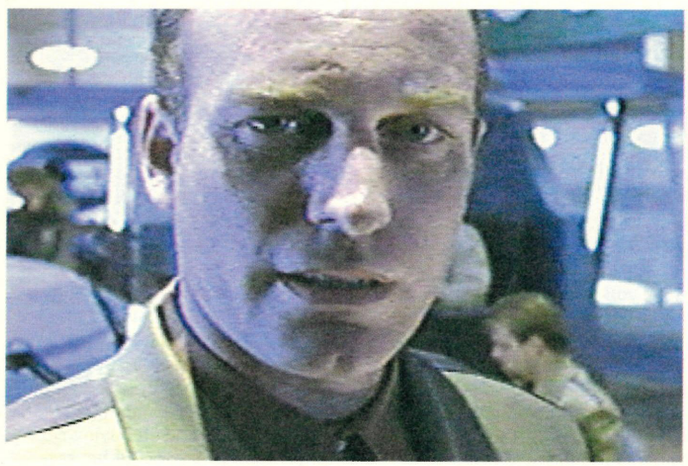
The FMV intro in Global Domination is one of the most elaborate I've seen in a game since I've been here at EPM. So I can't let you go without seeing some shots...






PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Psygnosis	Psygnosis	Strategy	Out Now	UK	£39.99	1	Memory Card



Some people prefer to the dominant one, whereas others thrive on being dominated, but not in this game. Here you can't just roll over and wave the little white flag, as Claire Webster knows...

Global Domination

Trying to turn into a regular James Bond and playing the hero who saves the world is no good here. Unless James is feeling particularly shaken and stirred, there's no room for any heroic stunts which save the day or help you get the gorgeous babe. It's a race to see who will own the planet first and whether you win or lose, there ain't gonna be no happy ending.

I mean, what's wrong with people? Can't we all live peacefully and happily ever after for once? Obviously not. I'll spare you the insight into which country is currently at loggerheads with the other. If I just mention that every country is having a political crisis you'll surely get the gist. Governments have called in their special agents and have hired and fired their Secretaries of Defence; in Global Domination everyone's running the show!

It's now the 21st Century. The Millennium Bug has taken hold and there's been a breakdown of civilisation as we know it. The International Command Agency is rapidly losing agents and is taking on new recruits - you're one of them. In the first FMV sequence you're given a tour around the most sophisticated outpost, which looks like an enemy base from a James Bond movie. In fact, it's surprising how like a movie this sequence is; it zips through the characters like the beginning of Dallas and has music to match. Although this sounds quite bizarre, it is quite amusing, not to mention impressive, I suppose.

Take Yer Pick...

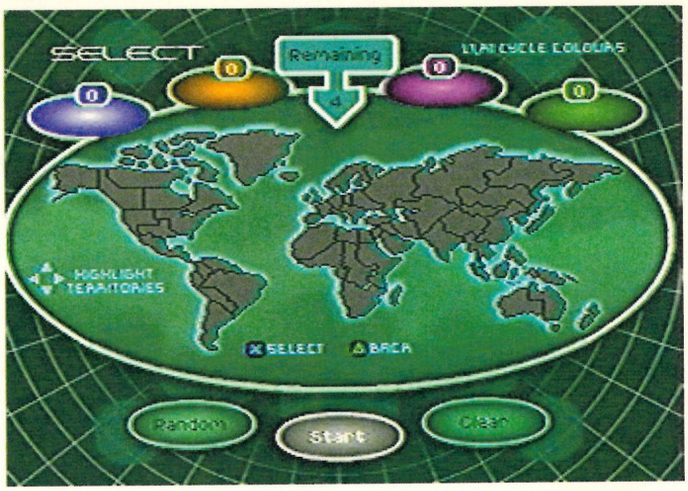
Basically all you have to do in this game is target an enemy country and order a missile launch to either destroy it or to force it to surrender, generally anything which achieves the domination of the entire world.

There are 20 missions to complete, and for each one there's another intro FMV sequence which doesn't exactly have any relevance, but I suppose it adds something.

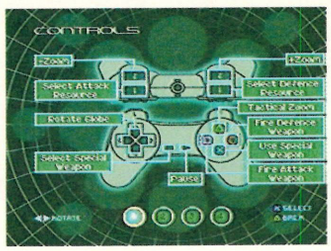
Before you start, of course, there are lots of settings you can alter at your disposal. You can turn pick-ups on or off and choose to assign territories. You can also determine how scientifically progressive you are by altering your technology which ranges from one (being the lowest) to seven (highest). The more technology you gain, the further you progress and the better your attacks become.

When you're not playing an integral role in dominating the world, you can have a bash at some of the other three game modes, namely Percentage, Deathmatch and Global Domination. Percentage mode involves you conquering twice as















Strategy fans will probably be very pleased to get this game...

many valued territories as the Empire which is in second place. Some of the territories have very profitable levels of production and are understandably rather sought after. Billions of dollars rests on acquisitions like these... mmm, feel the pressure!

In Deathmatch mode you must conquer all of the enemy Empires, which is quite similar to Global Domination, which is the ultimate challenge to own all the territories on the globe. You can also give yourself a time limit by choosing 5, 15, 30 or 60 minutes' worth of international chaos. Though to be honest, I can't see anyone wanting to play this for an hour at a time.

All of the action takes place on only one screen, which in any other game would normally be a bad point, but here there is a need for it, as there are so many wars going on at the same time anything different would become frustrating. Your mission is outlined in great detail on the screen before you start bombing people. You have to basically carry out the orders given, which usually includes whether to use defensive or attacking methods of destruction.

Tool Up!

The symbols on the game screen are colour-coded red for attacking weapons and green for defence. As you progress through the missions you pick up special weapons including a Smart Bomb Destructor, an Anti-Satellite Missile and a Doomsday device. You can even guide your missiles to be direct, indirect, curved or smart - just like a game of global pool.

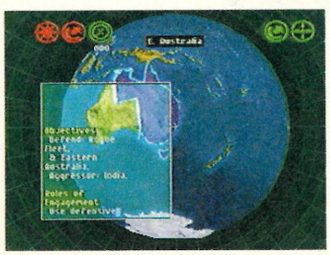
To launch your attack you can use the 'Tactical Zoom Facility' which isolates any of the resource points in any of the countries so you can home in on an enemy airfield or operation centre and launch to your heart's content. You can also use this feature to change your own territory's war emphasis. If you're running drastically out of time, the whole territory can be given the orders to produce more weapons or carry out damage repairs.

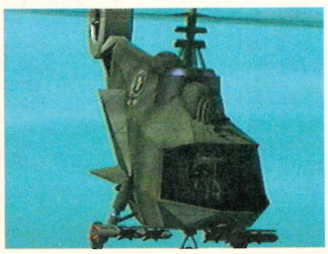
I think a good hint on how good this game is for me to tell you what happened the first time I sat down and played it. I basically had no idea what I was doing because I wasn't given a complete manual, so I just made some educated guesses and attacked every resource facility in Argentina and Northern Africa. Using up all of my missiles just about made me complete the mission. You could probably have a full-on conversation with someone in another room whilst pressing the odd button and you'll somehow achieve Global Domination.

One of the worst points about this game are the controls. This game would be much easier using a mouse, as it was obviously designed for that. Strategy fans will probably be very pleased to get their hands on this game, but it just doesn't have that much appeal to those of us who are buying a strategy game for the first time.

Claire Webster







SECOND OPINION

Not the most exciting strategy opus around, but the cut scenes are incredible. Psygnosis have obviously put a great deal of effort into the presentation of the game, though many, perhaps even most, will find the game itself infuriatingly dull.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	5
GAMEPLAY	5
LIFESPAN	5

55%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Sunsoft	Activision	Puzzle Game	Out Now	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card	Mouse

Can this derivative of the ancient Oriental game of Mah Jong succeed on the PlayStation? Ian Osborne prepares for a night on the tiles...

Shanghai: True Valor



Mah Jong - it's a simple game. It plays like a cross between Snap and Patience. You're faced with piles of tiles arranged in various complex formations, which you must get rid of by matching similarly-designed pieces and removing them from the board. Needless to say, there's a snag. You can't take tiles which are partially covered by other tiles, and nor can you remove pieces that are 'boxed in' - unless you can see the whole of its face and its right or left side (doesn't matter which), that tile just isn't selectable. If you manage to remove every tile on the board, you win. If you get into a position where you can no longer match two accessible tiles, you lose. Simple.

Pixel Power!

So much for Mah Jong; what does its conversion to the PSX as Shanghai: True Valor offer over the boardgame? Lots as it happens, but still nowhere near enough...

Interestingly, as you remove the tiles, a background is revealed. It's black and white during the game (anything else would be a distraction) but becomes coloured when you've emptied it. Hardly earth-shattering, but a nice little bonus. You can tilt the board to get a better view of the proceedings, but on the board version you'd achieve this by tilting your head - no added bonus there. As with any console or computer version, though, the machine sets the board up for you, saving endless tedium, and warns you when further moves are impossible. In Original Mode it even helps you by pointing out available matches, though this function should be used sparingly (it's cheating).

There's more. Shanghai offers 25 different tile layouts and 30 background pictures. There are three Arcade Modes; Classic Shanghai has you battling your way through 25 timed stages, each of which involves toppling 144 tiles. There's Battle Shanghai, where you choose one of five warlords and battle the other five. Here the two players' tile boards are positioned next to each other split-screen style, and the winner is the warlord who finds and removes his gold tile first. Bonus tiles, such as the flame piece which scorches the surface of your foe's tiles and makes them difficult to identify, are also available. Finally, there's Rolling Shanghai where the tiles are spread across four sides of a rotating cube. You need a good memory for this one! All arcade modes offer a choice of three sets of tiles.

If you only want to waste a spare five minutes, go for the Original game, a single tile-set and the option to 'shuffle' the pieces if you've run out of moves. All modes are cursed by some seriously unnecessarily sluggish controls, especially when using the mouse - come on guys, this game's ideal for mouse control, so why is yours so blimmin' awful? Poor controls make the already-too-difficult Battle Shanghai game damn-near impossi-

Poor controls make the already-difficult Battle game impossible...

ROUND THE BEND...

The tiles indicated by the pointer are on opposite sides of the rotating cube, but can be matched and dispatched nonetheless. See what I mean when I say you need a good memory for the Rolling Shanghai game?





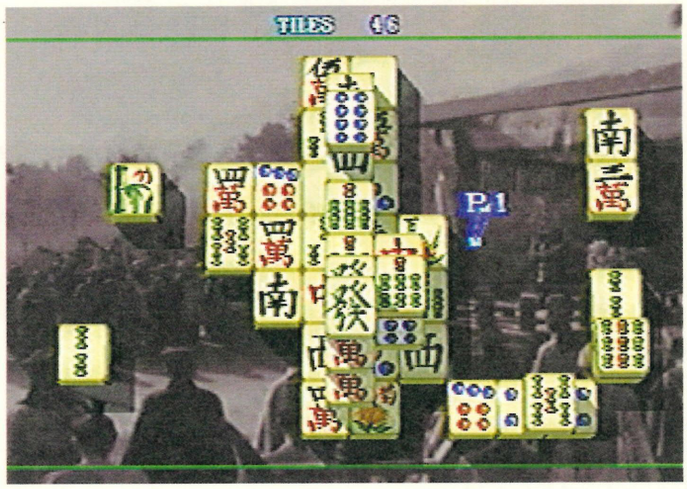
BAD TIMING...

While you're choosing your game style, a timer ticks away at the top of the screen, the choice being made for you if it reaches zero. WHY? If I want to make a cup of tea or pick through the instructions at that point, what business is it of the programmers? This isn't a coin-op, guys, and there's no queue of eager gamers clutching 50p pieces being held up by someone who takes his time on the options screens. So what have you gained by hurrying me along? Nothing, that's what.





When we said we wanted a night on the tiles, this wasn't what we meant...







You can't help wondering why it wasn't put out at a budget price...

ble to win. In fact, the entire Arcade Mode seems to have been rushed out with little or no playtesting, resulting in games which are way too difficult. This isn't the only example of weak programming either. In Battle Shanghai, the gold tile can be placed in a ridiculously easy spot, offering a cheesy win (and probably your only chance of beating it). When you shuffle deadlocked tiles in Original Mode, there's no guarantee this will lead to a possible match being produced, forcing you to shuffle over and again until you get one. These flaws would be spotted with even the most rudimentary playtesting.

Value For Money?

Mah Jong has been converted to just about every computer and console format ever, and on most it costs nowhere near the £40 asked for here. On the PC, it's in the Public Domain, and can be 'bought' mail order for the price of copying it to a disk or even downloaded from the Internet for free. On most home computers, Mah Jong conversions appeared as budget games, and there's even a Net Yaroze version for the PlayStation doing the rounds. So why does Shanghai: True Valor cost 40 flippin' quid? Yes, we have the added game modes and choice of tiles, sure, there's those pretty backgrounds to reveal, and best of all with certain game modes offering several stages of increasing difficulty, there's a genuine sense of progression on offer. Alas, this isn't enough. Computer/console Mah Jong was always offered as a time filler, perfectly suited to fritter away that spare few minutes between finishing your homework and the big match on TV. Shanghai: True Valor makes a (ahem!) valiant attempt at developing this into a worthy puzzle game by including differing game modes, progressive difficulty levels and bonus tiles, but, alas, its casual-pastime roots still show. What's there's good, but there just isn't enough of it to justify the asking price.

When you bear in mind just how little this game taxes the PlayStation and how easy it must have been to program, you can't help wondering why it wasn't put out at a budget price. If THQ can put out Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling at £20 and Activision offer Asteroids for £30, why does Shanghai: True Valor (daft name, by the way) cost the best part of £40? In a year's time this one will change hands for around half that, and it will be worth it too - some of what's there's good. It just ain't worth £40...

Ian Osborne

SECOND OPINION

Mah Jong and its videogame derivatives is a fun pastime, but hardly worth £40. Sunsoft were wise to beef up the game with various challenge modes, but they screwed up big style by making them so ridiculously hard. Woefully under-playtested.

Claire Webster

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	6
SOUND	6
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	6

37%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Sony CEE	Traveller's Tales	Platformer	Spring '99	UK	£39.99	1	Memory Card Dual Shock Analogue Pad

Disney Interactive have bought the blockbuster movie to the PlayStation, but is living the life of an ant all that it's cracked up to be? Claire Webster takes a wander down to the anthill to find out...

A Bug's Life



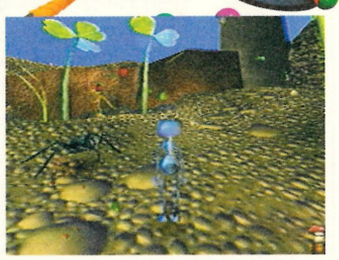
We all love a good Disney film and, let's face it, we've all wept a tear at the odd one. PSX games such as Hercules did their job, but nothing, you would think, could come close to a version of A Bug's Life where frivolity and great game-playing are concerned. I wouldn't be far wrong in saying this after playing this game. It's obvious from the outset that it has more-than-likely been developed with a younger audience in mind. However, the same was said for Spyro the Dragon and I remember spending at least four days playing it almost non-stop. You could say A Bug's Life is of the same ilk, although ants aren't quite as cute. Like Spyro, you have to collect and kill things using various means, whether it be by doing an abdomen jump on their heads or by throwing deadly berries at them. But it's nowhere as big as our fire-breathing Dragon's game and it's not quite as much fun either.

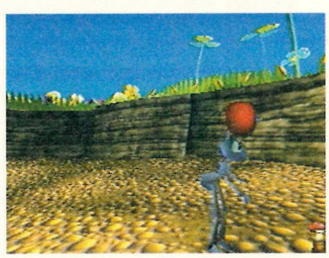
On second thoughts, I might be doing this game a slight injustice there, because I was becoming quite addicted to it the more I played it, and some of the challenges in there are quite hard, even for experienced game players like us! There are plenty of bad guys to kill, lots of specialist ant skills to master and the odd one or two movie clips to sit back and watch.

Love at First Sight

But it's not those qualities that you're immediately drawn too when you first watch the game and play through its intro. A Bug's Life definitely overtakes Spyro in the graphics stakes. The animation of all the creepy-crawlies and the backgrounds are stunning and the cut scenes make it all the more impressive.

As the star of the game, you get to play a rather dashing (can ants be 'dashing'?) young ant named Flik, who can do lots of athletic things such as throwing, jumping and handstands, all of which you







DEADLY ENEMIES...

Not many people are lovers of insects, and neither is Flik from the looks of it. You encounter many a creepy-crawlie in the game. Here are just a few:

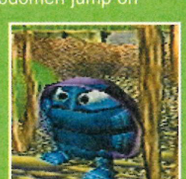
WASPS
We're not quite sure whether wasps sting you or just jab you with their bottoms in the game. Whatever it is, it's not very friendly. They also reappear after a few seconds as well, so you always have to watch your back. Again, throw a few berries their way and they're easily killed.



SPIDERS
These eight-legged enemies come chasing after you as soon as you've been spotted. They're very quick, but at the same time, are easy to kill. Just practice your throwing action on them with a few berries and they soon leave you well alone.



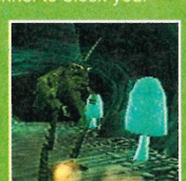
WOODLICE
These guys are huge, and most of the time they're blocking entranceways. The only way you can kill them is by doing an abdomen jump on their head as they have protective shells to shield themselves from berries.



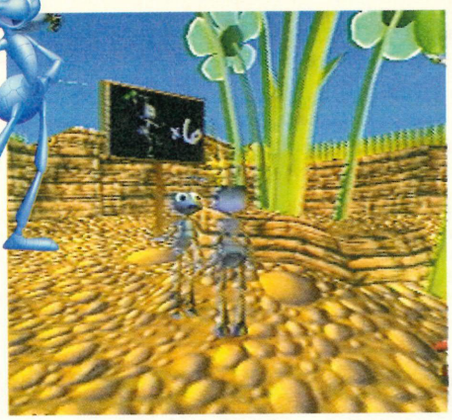
CENTIPEDES
Again, you find these only when you're travelling underground. At any moment they pop out of the walls and if you walk into them you sustain some heavy injuries. You don't have to kill them - just walk around them.

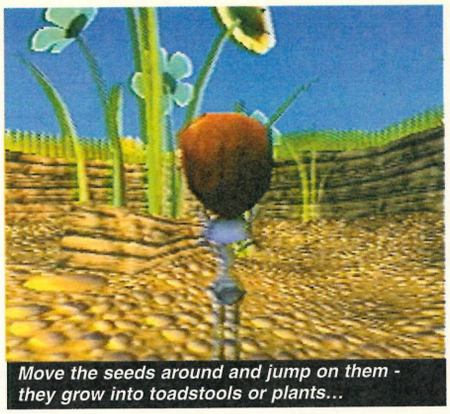


GRASSHOPPERS
You won't encounter any of these until you get further into the game at the Tunnels level. They fall through the roof of the tunnel to block your path and the only way you can destroy them is to collect some super-berries first.









Move the seeds around and jump on them - they grow into toadstools or plants...

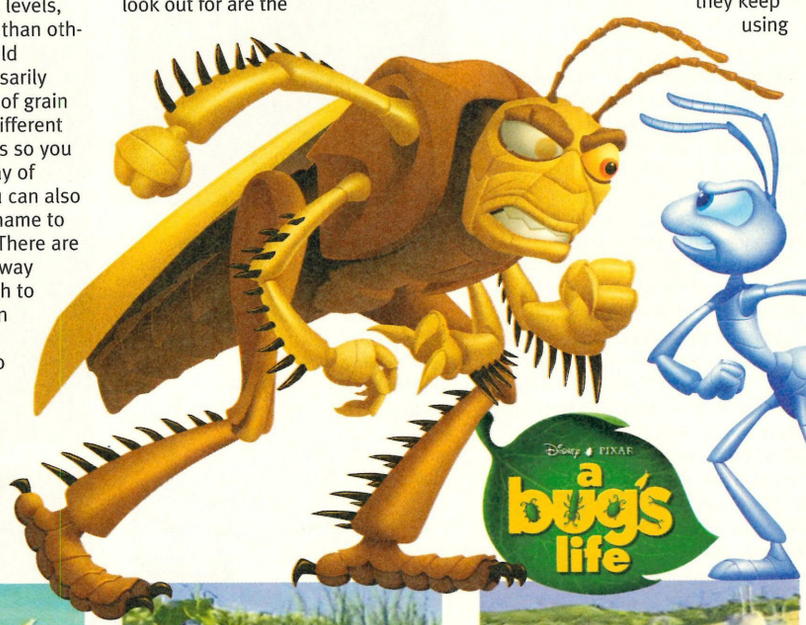
can practice in Training Mode. Here, a fellow ant has a chat with you on how to turn seeds into toadstools and berries into deadly fighting weapons. By the time you've completed every task he sets, you're well equipped to start your heroic journey to save the ant colony.

The game spans over 15 levels, but some are a lot smaller than others. On each one you should (meaning 'you don't necessarily have to') collect 50 pieces of grain so you gain an extra life, different specified amounts of seeds so you can grow a flourishing array of berries and plants and you can also collect the letters of your name to receive another extra life. There are cameras dotted along the way which you can look through to give you some guidance on where to go.

Level One brings you into the game gently with just a stroll around the ant hill, killing spiders and wasps as you go. You will no doubt notice the humorous comments made by Flik at certain points, and although these are quite refreshing at first, they do get repeated over and over again which is somewhat aggravating after you've heard it about a hundred times.

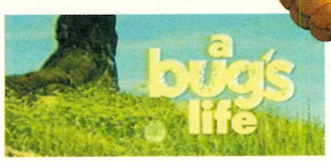
The final destination you want to reach is the entrance to the tunnels, and a helpful little bee gives you hand getting there. One thing to look out for are the woodlice which block your way. These can't be killed with berries as they keep using their backs as a shield, so you either have to jump over them or squish them with an abdomen jump.

A Bug's Life definitely overtakes Spyro in the graphics stakes...



Going underground

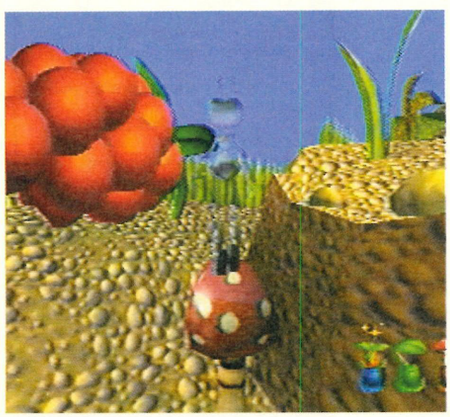
Next you enter the dark underground tunnels which you must follow to reach the Council Chamber. This level seems even easier than the first as you haven't got so far to go and such a wide area to cover to find all the pick-ups. This is where you first encounter just some of the evil centipedes which you have to kill with a specific type of berry. There are also other new enemies, including very small worms and some huge ones that are bigger then you (but that isn't difficult). Once you enter the Council Chamber you've got a boss to contend with, a huge flying insect to



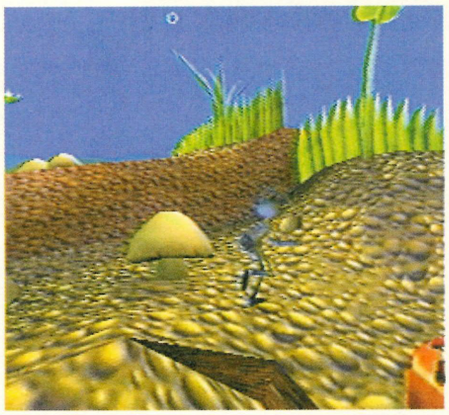




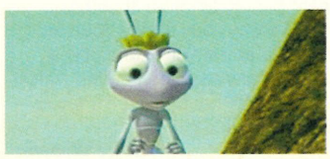








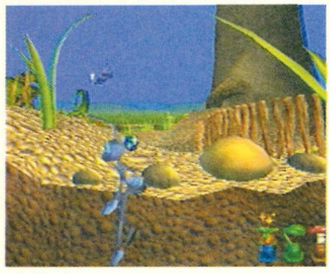


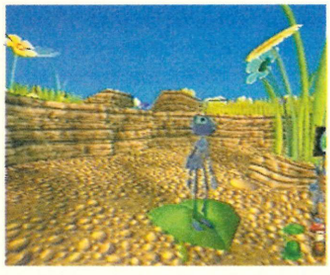


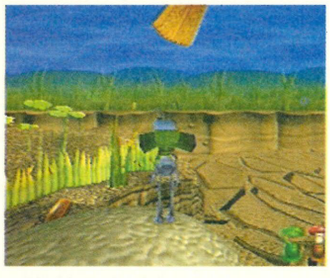














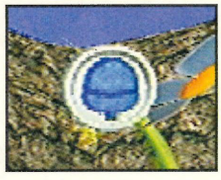
PICK-ME-UPS...

Some of the objects you collect on your travels aren't as important as others. Some give you an extra life, and some enable you to grow super-berries to use against your enemies. Below are just a few that come in handy.

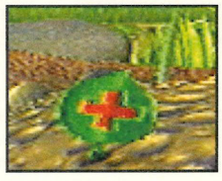
GOLDEN LETTERS
If you manage to find all of these you should be able to spell out Flik; then you're rewarded with an extra life.



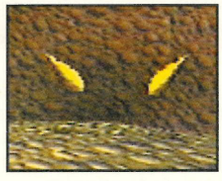
TOKENS
These enable you to turn seeds into various plants. The purple ones grow into super-berry bushes so you can replenish your weaponary.



HEALTH
Flik sounds out of breath when low on health, so look out for first aid boxes scattered around the floor or left behind after you've killed an enemy.



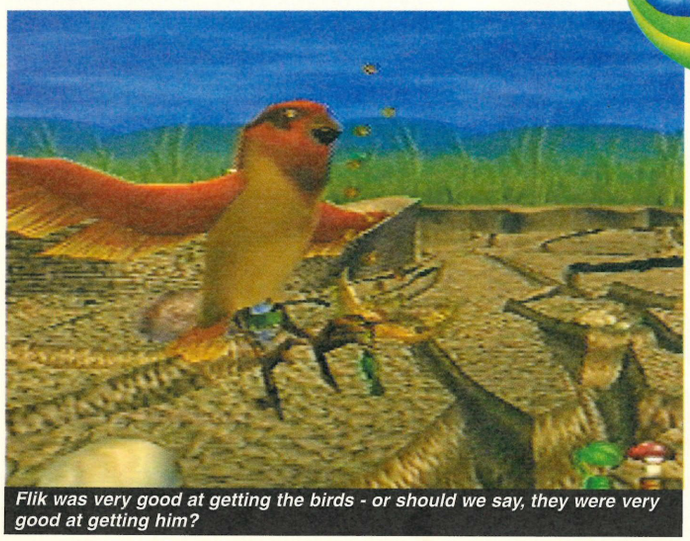
GRAIN
Pieces of grain can be found on every level and if you collect 50 of them you gain another extra life.



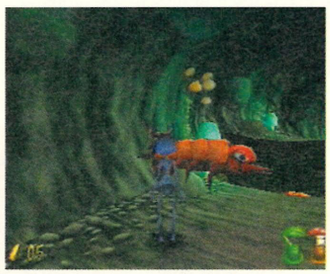
be exact. It's not hard to kill him; just use a few of your super-berries and he's soon lying on his back waggling his legs in the air!

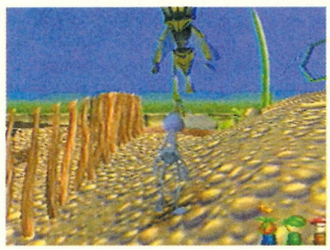
One of the harder levels is the Cliffside. Here you have to negotiate your way over the riverbed canyon using a dandelion. Watching the cut scene of the part of the film where Flik does it for real is no help. The only thing it's really useful for is to give you a clue on what you have to find once you start the level.

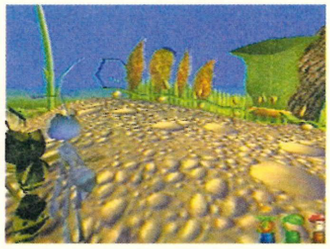
As you wander around the cliff top you must be careful not to fall off the side, which is harder than it sounds as you have to collect grain and berries positioned right on the edge. If you fall off you're bird-food, as the canyon is patrolled by a huge sparrow just waiting for its next meal. When you find a seed lying on the floor you have to jump on it to make it grow into a dandelion. Then you have to jump next to it and you start floating off. As you fly over the canyon there are air pockets that you use to keep yourself up in the air. The only problem is, you have no idea where these pockets are so you have to find out their positions as you're flying (which means you're probably going to lose a few lives to that bird).



Flik was very good at getting the birds - or should we say, they were very good at getting him?





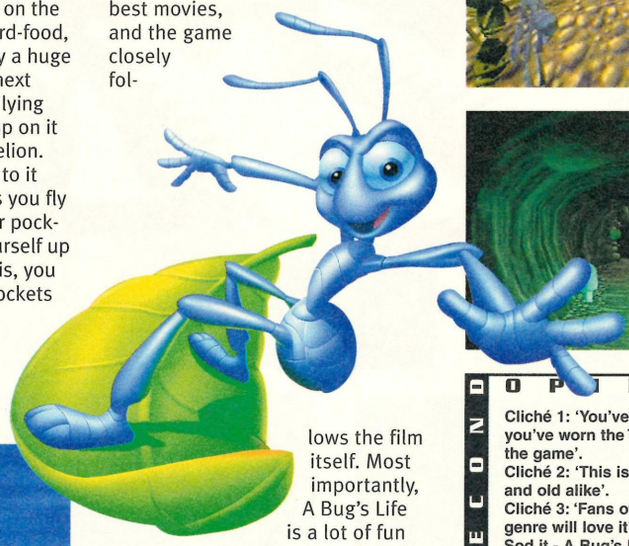




Disney have definitely done themselves proud with this effort. The animation is nearly as stunning as what you would find in some of their best movies, and the game closely follows the film itself. Most importantly, A Bug's Life is a lot of fun to play, even though it's not quite as big as I'd like. I'm convinced it will sell well, and that anyone who buys it won't be disappointed.

I don't care what anyone says. You can play this game whether you're a youngster or not. If you're too embarrassed to be seen buying it yourself because you think the rumours are true and you don't want people to laugh at you, you could always buy it for a younger member of the family and play it yourself anyway. I don't mind which way you do it; just make sure you give it a look.

Claire Webster



SECOND OPINION

Cliché 1: 'You've seen the film, you've worn the T-shirt, now play the game'.
Cliché 2: 'This is a game for young and old alike'.
Cliché 3: 'Fans of the platforming genre will love it'.
Sod it - A Bug's Life is great.

Ian Osborne

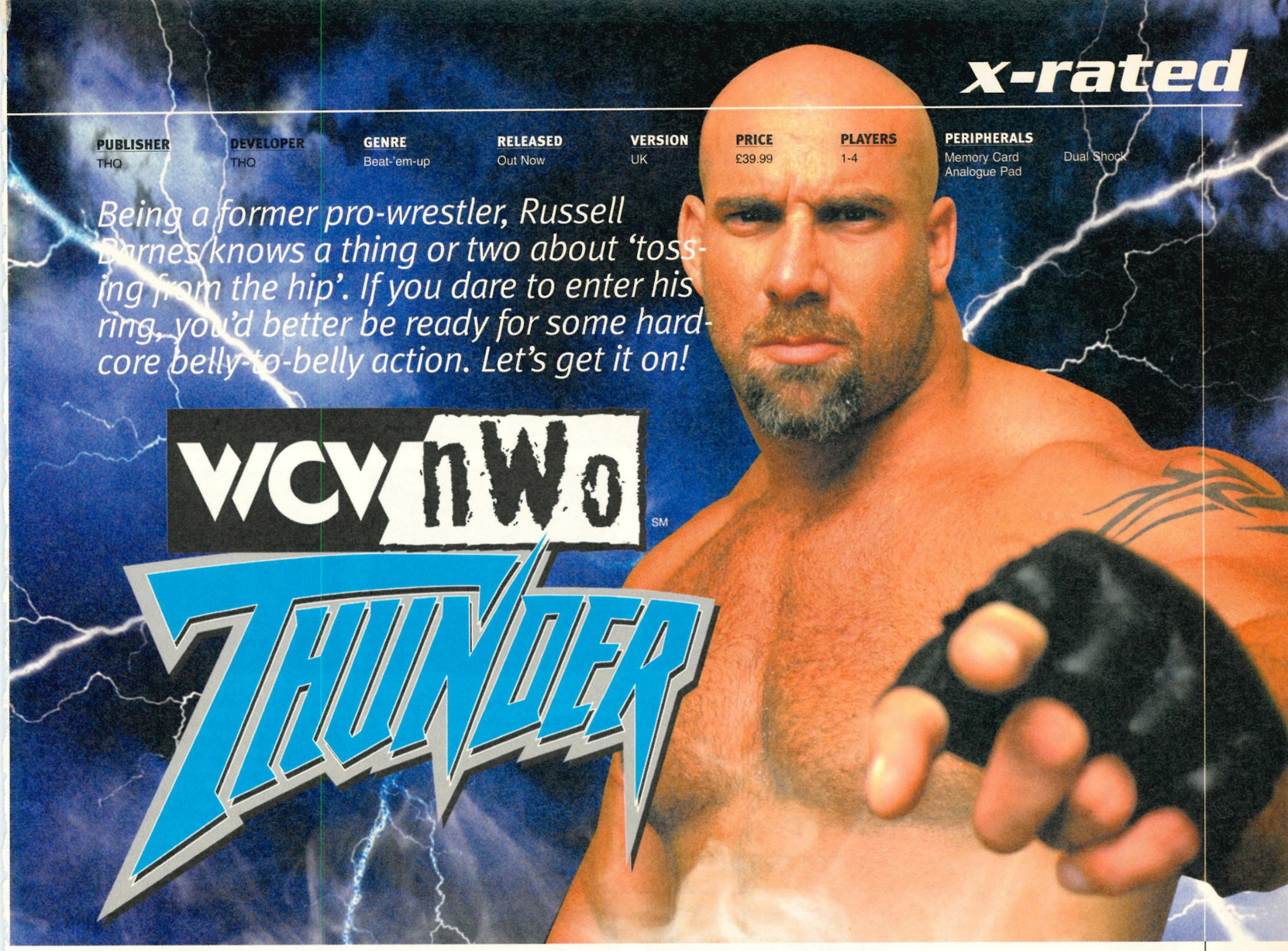
THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	7

88%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
THQ	THQ	Beat-'em-up	Out Now	UK	£39.99	1-4	Memory Card, Analogue Pad, Dual Shock

Being a former pro-wrestler, Russell Barnes knows a thing or two about 'tossing from the hip'. If you dare to enter his ring, you'd better be ready for some hard-core belly-to-belly action. Let's get it on!



WCW/NWO Thunder

YOU WANNA BE IN MY GANG?...

One of Thunder's few redeeming features comes in the form of a kind of player edit function that lets you change any wrestler's affiliation to any of the five factions. This means that when Hogan finally decides to drop the sad 'bad boy' act and becomes Mr. Good Guy again you can reflect this in the game with a click of a button. It's rather like updating players in football games; it adds to the game enough to increase its longevity (only in this case, the lifespan would be in minus figures without it).

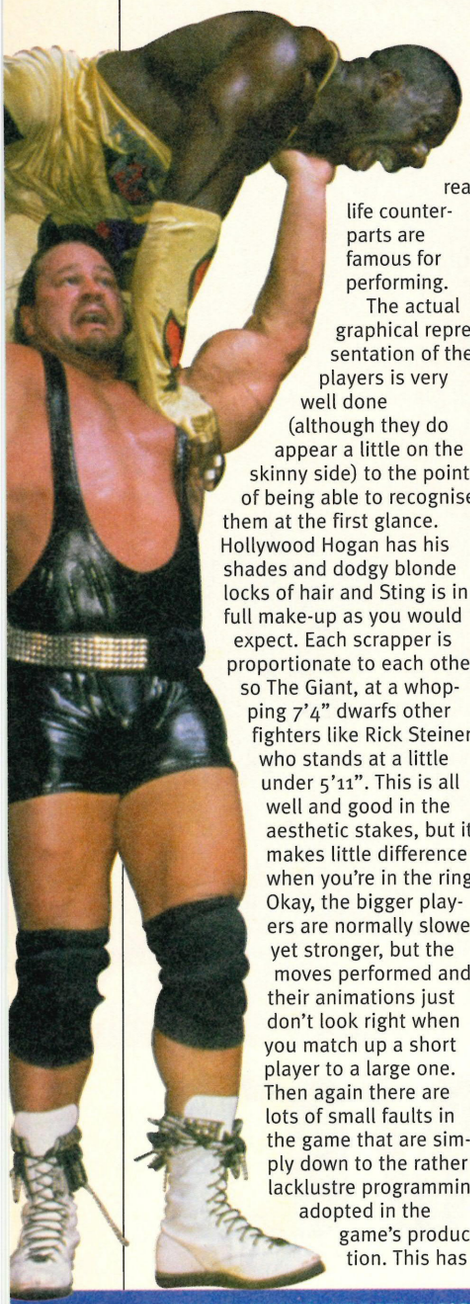
Each wrestler has three trademark moves...

Pro Wrestling eh? It doesn't matter how crap the acting is or how annoying the commentators are, it's just impossible not to love it. It's all in the atmosphere and wacky characters that makes wrestling so addictive, and that's what THQ have attempted to capture with their latest wrestle-fest Thunder. The all important question has got to be asked; does Thunder have what it takes to pin the opposition on the mat for a three-count?

Boasting 60 authentic wrestlers from the five factions of modern grappling (that's WCW, NWO White, NWO Red, Four Horsemen and Raven's Flock), with all the trademark moves and taunts, you'd be right for thinking that this is a particularly 'accurate' portrayal of the sport.

All of the title belts are up for the taking through the many different game modes, and up to four players can take part in the action courtesy of the tag-team modes that are also available. When the game first starts out there are 30 pro-wrestlers that are immediately available for you to use. When you take them to the ring they each have they're own accompanying live video and music clip taken from the real thing to get the adrenaline pumping for the action ahead. Each wrestler also has three 'trademark' moves at their disposal which their

x-rated



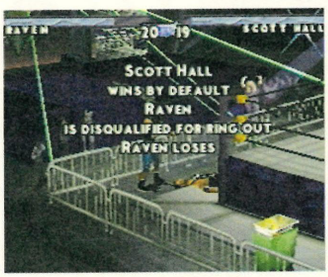
real life counterparts are famous for performing. The actual graphical representation of the players is very well done (although they do appear a little on the skinny side) to the point of being able to recognise them at the first glance. Hollywood Hogan has his shades and dodgy blonde locks of hair and Sting is in full make-up as you would expect. Each scrapper is proportionate to each other so The Giant, at a whopping 7'4" dwarfs other fighters like Rick Steiner who stands at a little under 5'11". This is all well and good in the aesthetic stakes, but it makes little difference when you're in the ring. Okay, the bigger players are normally slower yet stronger, but the moves performed and their animations just don't look right when you match up a short player to a large one. Then again there are lots of small faults in the game that are simply down to the rather lacklustre programming adopted in the game's production. This has worked to effect that the graphics, control method, gameplay and the overall enjoyment of the game as a whole, to be frank. The wrestlers (though aesthetically correct) don't move in a remotely realistic fashion. They plod around the ring looking like they're in desperate need of a Port-A-Loo while they're moves seem to take a week to execute (it's really that slow to play). Some wrestlers are faster, but this doesn't make up for the fact that half of them are as slow as sloths. The moves themselves aren't anything to shout about. Each player has basically the same moves (with some variations) and then an extra three moves each thrown in for good measure. It's not particularly impressive I think you'll





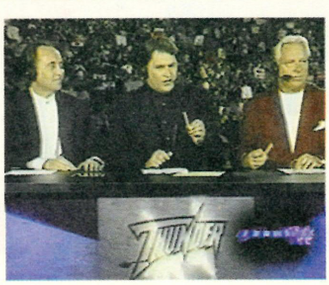






They plod around the ring looking in desperate need of a Port-A-Loo

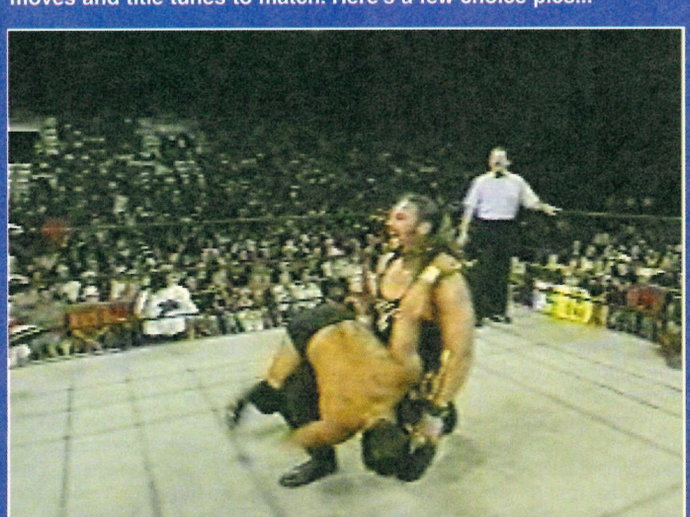




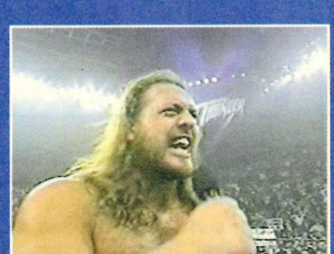


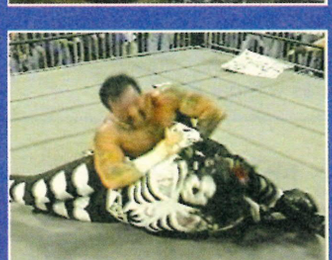
INTRODUCING WRESTLING'S FINEST...

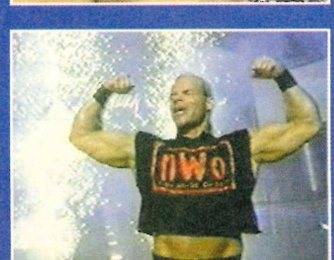
From what you may have seen from the review so far, you might be able to guess that the introduction sequence to Thunder is practically the best thing about the whole game. The quality of the FMV is reasonably good, as are the video clips themselves showing wicked moves and title tunes to match. Here's a few choice pics...











NAME THAT WRESTLER...

As I have mentioned in the review, there are 30 regular wrestlers to choose from then a further 30 secret wrestlers to discover as you progress. Even though I've giving this game a right old panning, I'm sure there are still a fair few of you out there who want to know the who's-who of Thunder. Read 'em and weep, sad boys...

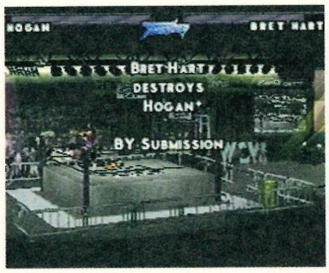
HOLLYWOOD HOGAN
Eddy Guerrero
BRET HART
Van Hammer
STING
Stevie Ray
LEX LUGER
Scotty Riggs
THE GIANT
Horace

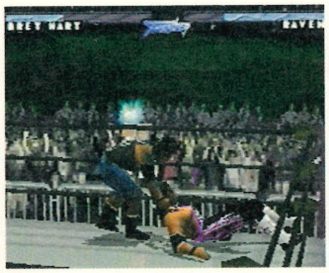
DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE
Rey Mysterio Jr.
RAVEN
Lodi
SATURN
Sick Boy
BILL GOLDBERG
Disco Inferno
KEVIN NASH
Ernest Miller
SCOTT HALL
The Barbarian
CURT HENNIG
Meng
RANDY SAVAGE
Fit Finley
RICK STEINER
Reese
SCOTT STEINER
Chavo Guerrero Jr.

CHRIS JERICHO
La Parka
BRIAN ADAMS
Eric Bischoff
BRITISH BULLDOG
Gene Okerlund
BOOKER T.
Miss Elizabeth
DEAN MALENKO
Arn Anderson
WRATH
Bobby Heenan
ULTIMO DRAGON
Kimberly
BILLY KIDMAN
Larry Zbysko
THE DECIPLE
Sonny Oono
CHRIS BENOIT
Steve McMichael
SCOTT NORTON
Kaz Hayashi

KONNAN
Jimmy Hart
JIM NEIDHART
Rick Rude
RODDY PIPER
Enos
BUFF BAGWELL
Psychosis
KANYON
Juventud Guerrera
ALEX WRIGHT









agree, but I'm afraid you ain't seen nothin' yet!

The choice of moves are all executed by using cheap crappy button combinations and direction button presses. All you need to do is push one button after the other, which requires no skill or timing at all (sort of defeating the object, wouldn't you say?). By the time you've completed executing your move your opponent has already slapped you on the mat and you're on your way down the slippery slope to a three-count. This would all be acceptable if the action of the moves was worth watching, but the animations are few and far between so there is no fluidity in the moves to speak of. The graphics also suffer in other areas bar the animations as well; the background graphics are nothing short of laughable. Just like in the old arcade hit Pit Fighter, they all appear to made out of thin slivers of card that seem to bob up and down uncontrollably using very few actual frames of animation (oh dear). Camera angles suck as well, while we're still on the subject of dodgy graphics and coding. Having two players in the ring is okay, it's just when it becomes three or more that the camera feels it has to zoom right out to keep all of the players on-screen at the same time (even though you're playing a one-player game). This means that half the time you can't even make out which player yours is, thanks to the shoddy pixelation, and what move you're performing if anything at all.





Discovering the 30 secret characters in the game is a real challenge, though I'm not sure if anyone other than the most loyal of wrestling fans could possible be bothered to do so. I'm not trying to be purposely cruel to the game as I had high expectations (I shouldn't say this, but I love the N64 version of WCW/NWO) and really wanted to enjoy the game for what it is. It's just that it's got so much going against it that playing the game for more than a few hours (with friends) is quite unlikely and frankly not recommended. I would normally expect there to be some small features that hook the player like funny comments from the resident commentators but even that's amiss here. The only things they really come out with is the names of the moves as you pull them off like it's on cue or something, apart from that it's pretty much non-existent (boring).

Lazy, shoddy work that doesn't deserve any attention...

Slow-Down

The last complaint I will make is regarding the four-player action in Thunder. It's hard to believe it considering how far console gaming has come in the past few years but this title suffers from slow-down (yes it's true) when there are a few players scrapping it out at the same time. It's frankly ridiculous that the action should slow down so much, but I suppose that just goes to show how much effort went into the programming and production here. It makes me sick the way these people just assume we're going to buy the game just because it's based on a popular sport, and not be worried about the contents. Lazy, shoddy work that doesn't deserve any attention whatsoever. Leave this one well alone and just pray there's something better on the horizon.

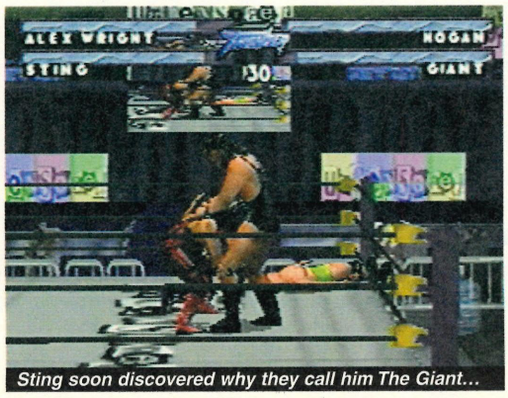
Russell Barnes

SECOND OPINION

To be honest, I'm not a fan of wrestling games, but I do pride myself on giving any game the benefit of the doubt. No chance here though, movement is slow, and it has dodgy animation which made this one more of a chore to play than a pleasure.

Claire Webster





Sting soon discovered why they call him The Giant...

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	4
SOUND	3
GAMEPLAY	4
LIFESPAN	3

34%

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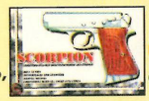
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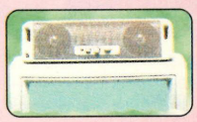
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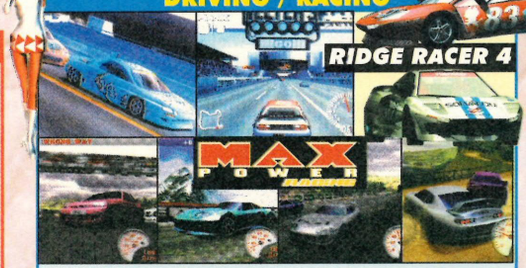
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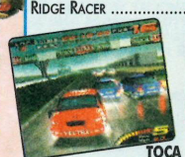


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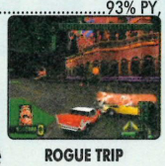


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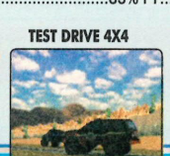
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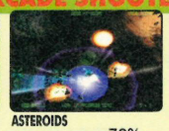


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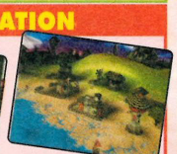
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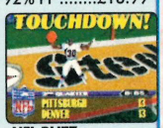


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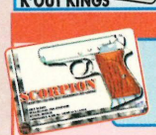
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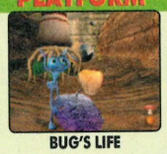
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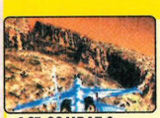

BUG'S LIFE


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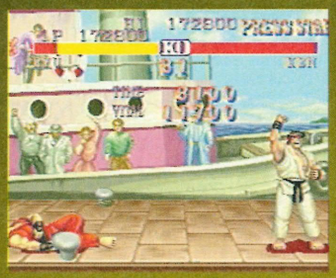
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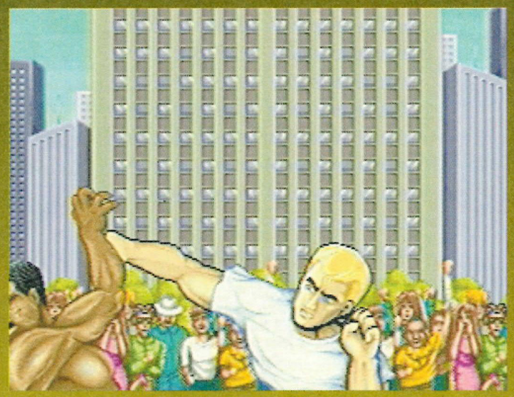
PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Capcom	Capcom	Beat-'em-up	Out Now	Jap	£50-60 (varies)	1-2	Memory Card	Dual Shock

The lone warrior Russell Barnes approaches his adversary and stands silhouetted by the setting sun, his bandanna blowing in the breeze. His gaze is fixed on his enemy, expressionless and cold... Round One: Fight!

Capcom Generation 5





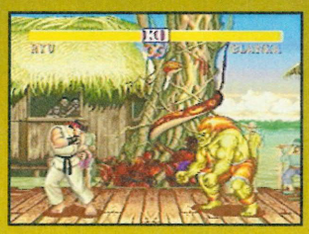


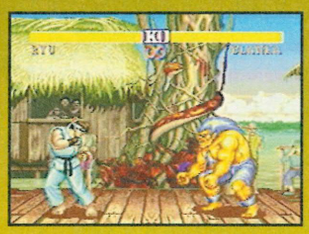




SPOT THE DIFFERENCE COMPETITION...

Here are three screenshots of the three different Street Fighter games on Capcom Generation. See if you can guess which picture is from which title. Remember, though, don't write in; it's just for fun!









When Ryu realised his 'topless racy little number' was a car, he was furious...

Capcom, the Mother of all development teams, the gods of fighting games and the Father of Street Fighter 2 and all its off-spring. If it wasn't for them, we wouldn't be enjoying such technically sound games like Resident Evil 2 today; it's equally unlikely we'd be playing Tekken 3 either. It doesn't matter that Capcom had nothing to do with the actual development of the game, but were it not for their early innovations in the fighting realm, Namco would have had no foundation to mould their own masterpiece from. Enough of the arse-licking for now, though; what's this Capcom Generation thing all about then?

Well, it's Capcom's homage to their very own Street Fighter 2 trilogy. The three versions (starting with the original SF2; doh!) are all arcade-perfect renditions of the 'retro classics'. Unlike Virgin's Street Fighter Collection, this compilations doesn't just give you the games and nothing besides. It offers in-depth information regarding the games, playing tips and all the original artwork. The only 'down' point to this interesting import is that it's all in Jap, which can't be helped considering the fact that it's unlikely to see a release over here.

After the original SF2 there was a huge demand to be able to fight as the four boss characters (Balrog, Vega, Sagat and M. Bison), Capcom had no choice but to create the Championship Edition, the second

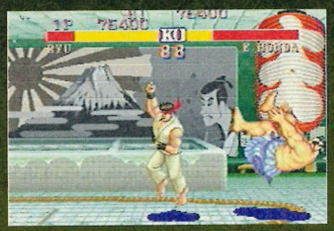
EXTRA, EXTRA, READ ALL ABOUT IT...

As well as offering three of the original (and the best) versions of the legendary Street Fighter 2 on one disc, Capcom have included plenty of interesting and useless information about each of the titles. There's tips and tactics, artwork from their original releases, information about the ream and loads more to boot. The only problem is you can't understand a bloody word of it! Never mind, though, it's the thought that counts in my book.















Each of the three games is truly faithful to its arcade counterpart...





of the trilogy in Capcom Generation. The third is SF 2 Turbo, Hyper Fighting in which players have new abilities like being able to perform some of their special moves in mid-air and to wear different colours. You also find the arcade versions (from where this compilation derives) didn't have extra home console options like you found on, say, the SNES version. This means you can't alter the speed of play here, so SF2 original is painfully slow whereas Hyper Fighting is wickedly fast compared.

Golden Wonder

Gameplay-wise, each version is true to its arcade counterpart; even the occasional golden fireball can be seen (a bug that was affectionately left in) along with the occasional slowdown that occurs when things get pretty hectic. When the game first boots up you're offered an option screen that allows you to choose which version of SF2 you want to play and sub-options like Stereo or Mono set up and so on. Once you've chosen your title, a short loading time passes and the game goes full steam ahead into full Arcade Mode for that particular incarnation. There is the odd extra option thrown into the games for the PlayStation's sake like Key Assign, Sound Test and even Vibration On and Off for Dual Shock-compatible pads, but it's still not to the standard of the earlier SNES console conversions or the latest incarnations of SF. In its defence, though, it's offering fully arcade-perfect versions, which of course the consoles at the time could not do, but still I like to fiddle with 'me options'!

When you think the original Street Fighter 2 was released eight years ago, it's amazing the latest version of the long-running series (SF Zero 3, rated in Issue 14) hasn't changed all that much. The fighters have kept there basic moves, looks and control methods and have simply been built upon to create a more complex and challenging experience. Game modes have been added to promote longevity, but bar a few other bells and whistles, what you have on your screen is basically the same as it might have been all that time ago. I suppose it's what they always say; If it ain't broke don't fix it. So if that's the truth, then Capcom must be the kings of home improvements, and they've proved that you don't need to reinvent a game to keep it's popularity. If only games like F1 '98 had taken a leaf out of their book, but that's another story I suppose...

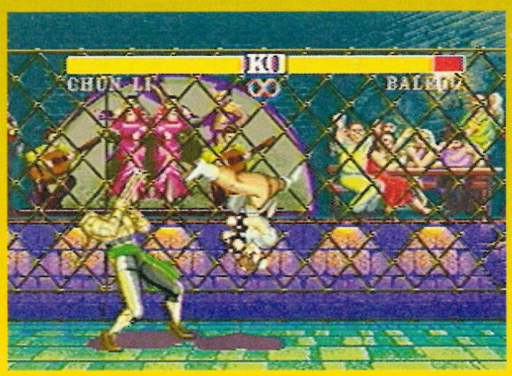
Back to the matter in hand and onto another important topic; gameplay. Obviously it goes without saying that each of the three games is truly faithful to its arcade counterpart, but is the gameplay experience different enough in each to warrant the purchase of all three together? Yes and no, I suppose; it's dependant on how much you liked the originals and whether you really want to go back in time to relive the past. For me, it's an essential purchase - all those memories of my mis-spent youth come flooding back when I play, and to be honest time hasn't taken any of the original magic with it. If you're a monster Street Fighter fan (and let's face it, we probably all are) you can't go wrong with this compilation, but you're playing basically the same game three times with only 'subtle' differences. Swings and roundabouts...

Russell Barnes

SECOND OPINION

Let's face it - you'll either love this game to death or ignore it completely. They're classic games, but gaming has moved on.
If you want a trip down memory lane, go for it, but don't expect anything that can match Tekken 3 or Soul Blade.

Ian Osborne





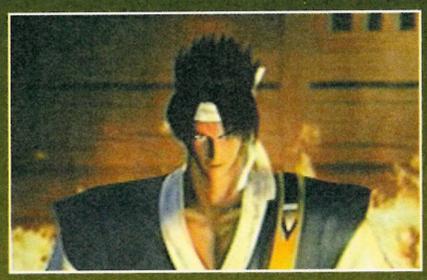
THE SCORE

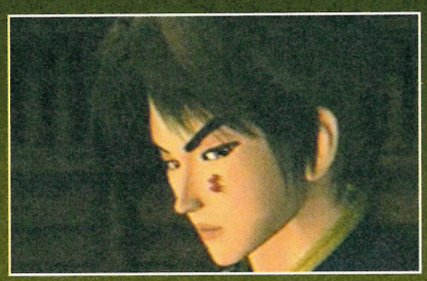
GRAPHICS	6
SOUND	6
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	8

77%

BLOOD LINES...

The mystical introduction sequence to Bushido Blade 2 shows the return of some of the original game's fighters as well as the addition of several new contenders. There's plenty of blood-splashing and explosive fighting on offer in a well animated package, which is nice...







PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Sony	Squaresoft	Beat-'em-up	Out Now	Jap	£50-60 (varies)	1-2	Memory Card	Linkup

As the warm blood of his enemy splashed across his tunic, Russell Barnes knew that victory was sealed. As he turned and sat back at the dimly-lit table, he returned his sword to its sheath and shouted, 'Let that be a warning to any man who would spill my pint'.

Bushido Blade 2

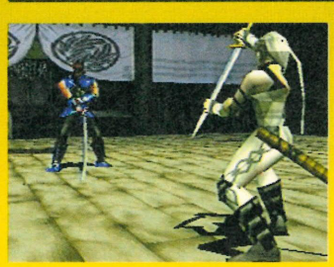
Around about this time last year, Squaresoft released the original Bushido Blade to an unsuspecting audience. Some were wowed by its fresh and realistic approach to the fighting genre, while others didn't quite understand why there was no health bar or Super Combo Finishes. Of course, in the real world it's more than possible to be killed in a second with a well directed slash to the throat, and that's what Squaresoft portrayed in the original. So what can it's sequel offer another year on?

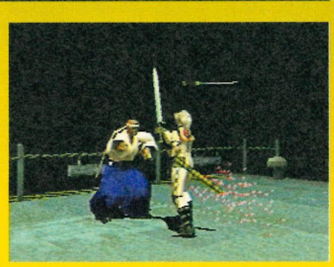
For a shocking start, BB2 actually has fewer weapons on offer compared to the original (down to six from the original eight), but each one gives a very different fighting style when put in the hands of a combatant. Some swords are noticeably heavier than others, while some are longer or require a different technique. It's not all swords, though, as there are also stick-like weapons and others that have short blades on the end with which to poke your enemy into submission. Obviously each weapon has numerous pros and cons, but you must also take into consideration there are also three different stances or fighting styles on offer to each fighter at a simple click of a button. If you think about the six different weapons that can be used in three different ways by up to 20 different characters, there's a lot of scrapping possibilities on offer. Learning them, however, is a slightly different story...

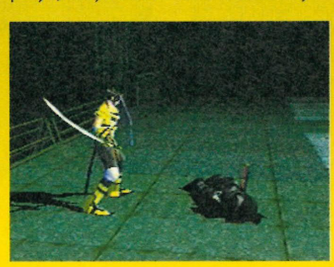
BB2 actually has fewer weapons on offer than the original...

Skilled Swordsmanship...

Even with a Practice Mode it's very hard to work out (and remember) how moves are performed given the type of weapon you're using and the particular stance you were assuming at the time. For the first few plays, maybe even for the first day or two, you're hitting and hoping at your enemies as opposed to parrying and swashbuckling as if you know what you're doing. There is a bit too much stabbing in the dark to contend with for a while, but this isn't helped one iota by the Jap text and speech coming at you for every direction. It took me quite a while to work out what every option on the start-up screen was (there are seven in all), but after a bit of trial and error it all became clear enough to enjoy. There is the Story Mode first, which you may remember from the









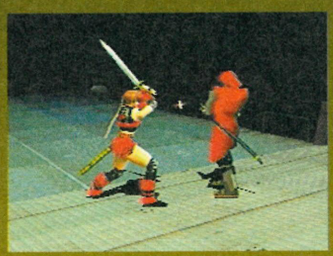
SWORDPLAY...

Should you clash weapons with your enemy at close quarters, you sometimes have the opportunity to test your strength against their own. By tapping the two attack buttons as quickly as you can, you can force your opponent down toward the ground until the finally are beaten to the floor. They won't become weaker as a result, but it gives you a great chance to attack as they return to their feet.

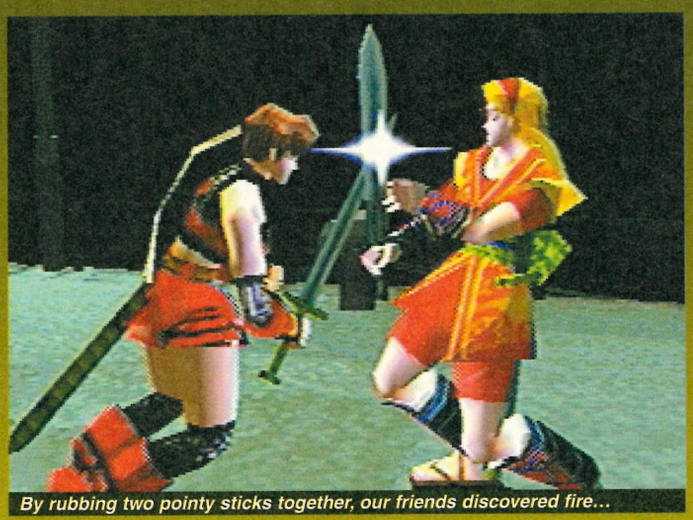












By rubbing two pointy sticks together, our friends discovered fire...





first game, then an arcadey sort of mode that simply pits you against an enemy for constant bashings. Further to that there's a Practice Mode which kind of speaks for itself followed by a couple of two-player modes that allow you to really have a challenging and nail-biting match-up which can take place in a third-person perspective or fighter's-eye perspective using the link-up facility (two PlayStations and two TVs) which really turns up the heat. One downfall of the two-player battles is the fact that it really takes two experienced players to be pitted against one another to get the most out of it. It just isn't much fun when you don't know what you're doing as the battle is often over in seconds. When there are two pros together, though, the swordplay can be fast, furious and intensely exciting.

There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that there is a great challenge on offer from the various modes of the game, Story Mode being the best of all. Once you've picked your fighter (there are six on offer from the start) and your weapon, you're taken to various locations where you meet, greet (that's the story bit in-between each battle) and eventually slay a whole host of characters. Don't expect to rush through it in half an hour as your would Street Fighter, for example, as many of the characters require you to beat them quite a few times before you continue. You gain new characters in a vaguely similar way to that of the Tekken series and given that there are 14 to discover in all, there's plenty for you to play for.

At the end of the day, BB2 has improved gameplay, control, graphics and sound to tempt you with, but that's all it really is; an improvement. Less of a sequel, really, which is probably the reason we won't be seeing it released over here. If you enjoyed the first game, it's especially for you, but don't expect to have a clue what the characters are ranting on about as you play. It's a mystery to me too, but hell; it looks good.

Russell Barnes

SECOND OPINION

I'm surprised that Bushido Blade 2 isn't going to be released in this country as it's a good game, but it must be to do with the fact that's it's more of an improvement over the original rather than a sequel. If you're a die-hard fan, though, I strongly recommend a look.

Claire Webster

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER...

The first-person perspective mode has been vastly improved from the original thanks to the clever wireframe graphics of your own fighter. You also see a little bloke stood in the corner of your screen; he represents the stance your fighter is currently in and the action of your attack as it happens. This allows you to be fully aware of your situation even though you can't actually see what your character is doing. Without it, the first-person mode would be rather crap (it's not exactly wicked anyway).







THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	7

86%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Sony	Namco	Beat-'em-up	Out Now	UK	£19.99	1-2	Memory Card

Who is the rightful owner of the Soul Blade? Claire Webster unsheathes her sword and takes a quick slash...

Soul Blade



This one was reviewed as a Platinum release nine months ago in Issue Six, but for one reason or another, the game didn't appear until now. Since then many a fine fighter has been released, including Kensei, Rival Schools, BioFreaks and the mighty Tekken 3. Can Soul Blade still measure up? Let's take another look at Sony's masterful hack-'n'-slasher, re-issued at a knock-down price at last...

Ten brave soldiers, but only one can be victorious in obtaining the legendary Soul Blade. Whoever has the skill to defeat all their opponents and then the evil Soul Edge can hold the Blade in their hands and commit themselves either to a life of damnation or salvation. None of these warriors will go down without a gruelling fight, but only those who are strong of heart have a hope of surviving.

It's not surprising that this game has reached Platinum status. Its graphics are rather splendid, the music and general sounds are; how shall I put it? 'Unique'. And it's generally just a fun and addictive game to play.

All of the characters you can choose from have their own strengths and weaknesses, but as with all fighting games, some just outshine the others in certain areas, whether it be their speed or the greatness of their special moves. The three women featured in the game, Taki, Sophitia and Seung Mina, are all quite quick at reacting and moving around the ring, whereas men such as Siegried and Rock may have some hefty weaponry but are a tad slow at blocking and pulling out special moves.

This game is very entertaining if you're playing in two-player mode, where you can either fight it out in Versus Battle or Team Battle action. You can both set your energy levels anywhere from 10% to 140%, obviously depending on how long you want the game to last. There are also two versions of each of the characters, which don't make any difference to the game; it just means that you can get to pick which one is the most attractive out of the two (heh heh!).











Axe Attack...

Other modes include Survival mode, where you try and beat as many opponents as you can before your health meter runs out. Then there's Time Attack mode in which you must compete against the clock until all the stages are complete and finally there's Edge-Master mode where you fight to gain your opponents' weapons. What's quite nifty about this one is that the weapons you do steal can be used in other modes, as long as you consult your manual that comes with the game to find the password.

In all of the game modes there's one thing to look out for and that's what I like to call the Weapon Bar. If you're blocking your opponents attacks for too long or too often, this bar actually decreases, and if it runs out, you lose your weapon and you have to continue the stage using only punches and kicks.

Not only is this game great to play but it's also very addictive. The harder the levels get, the more determined you become to beat your opponent, especially Soul Edge who you come up against at the end, and who is particularly difficult to slice, chop or cut (or whatever you choose to do) because he adapts to your style. If you're a fan of beat-'em-ups you may already have this one, in which case, why am I here? But then, if this one somehow passed you by, you'd better get down the shops quick-smartish!

Claire Webster

If this one passed you by, you'd better get down the shops...



After hours of searching, Rock and Taki found the torch in the long grass...

SECOND OPINION

This is one of the finest beat-'em-ups on the PSX. It's fast, playable and offers a real challenge. Whether it's better than Tekken 3 is a matter of opinion - depends whether you prefer weapons-based fighters or straightforward fist frays, but at £20 it's unmissable.

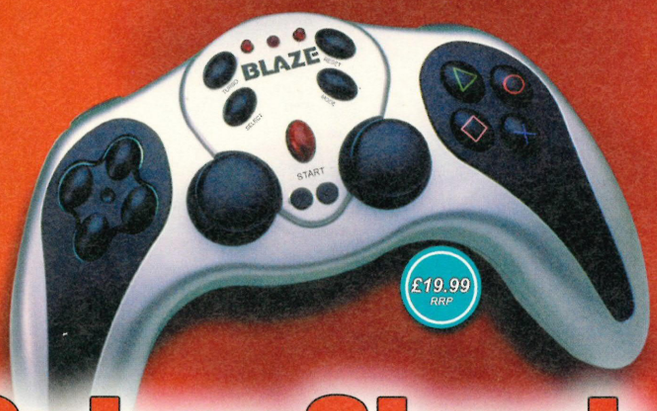
Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	9
LIFESPAN	8

92%

TOTAL CONTROL

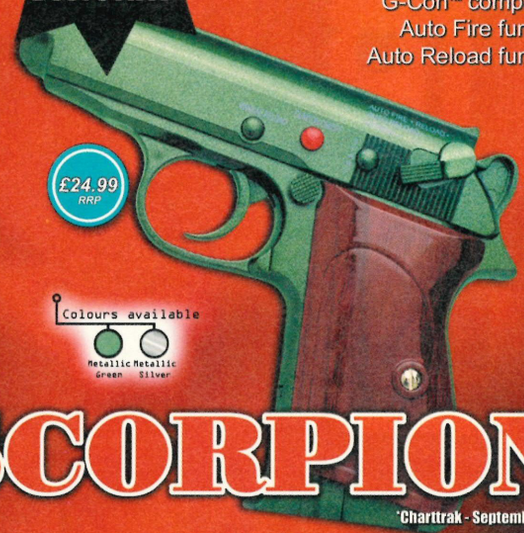


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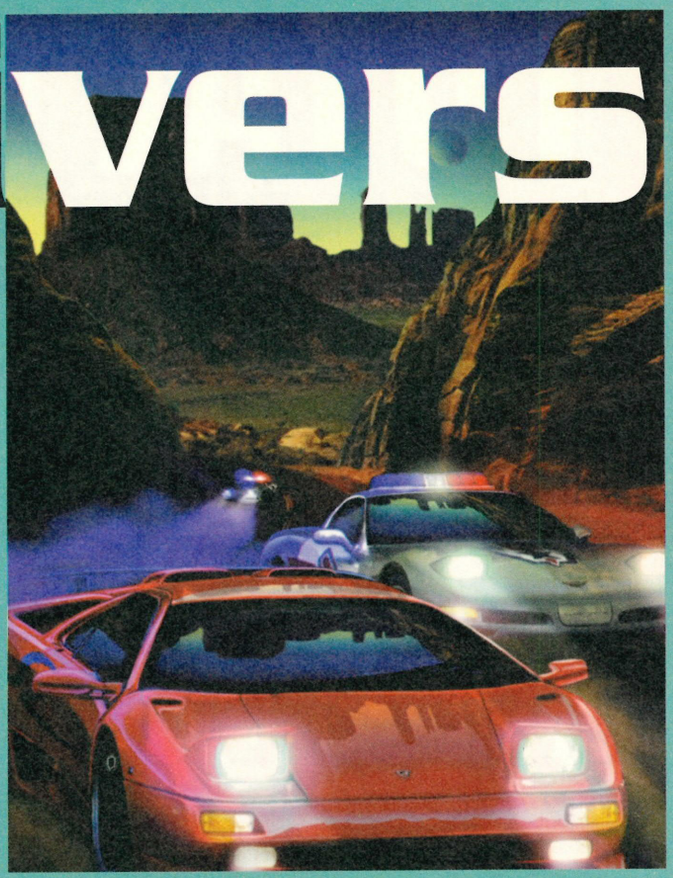
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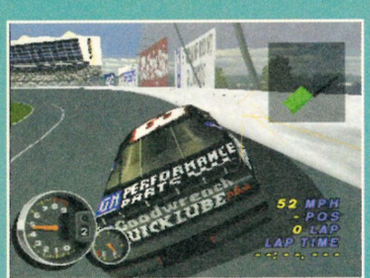
Crazy Drivers Part 2

Welcome back for the final half of the greatest driving games round-up in the world. Sit back, relax and get ready for the ride of a lifetime as extreme PlayStation Magazine look at yet more PSX racers...



NASCAR 99

75 PERCENT



A distinct improvement on the original, utilising better driving mechanics and forcing the driver to be more tactical. The graphics are slick and smooth but still suffer from lack of real detail, while the gameplay offers all the cars, tracks and drivers. Unfortunately after a while the tightly-packed racing begins to aggravate and it becomes apparent that it's not a patch on TOCA and GT. Strictly for fans of the American motor sport, unless of course you can't get enough of TOCA and you're gagging for more.

Need For Speed 2

68 PERCENT



Yes well; a bit of a disaster, this one. It seems to have taken most of the good points from the first game and tried to make them even better. Unfortunately it's done no more than ruin what was good about the game; the phrase, 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' springs to mind. It's lost the plot in other areas like the control, graphics and gameplay. It unfortunately has lost the feeling of speed somewhat too, which is kind of ironic considering the title.

Need For Speed 3

83 PERCENT



It looks like EA Road and Track team have made things better with the release of the third game in the trilogy. Improved graphics including brilliant light sourcing adds to the wonder behind this excellently-executed game. Your opponents' AI is much improved and really keeps you on your toes as you're weaving in and out for position. If you want something fast and furious that offers you the chance of driving in a high-speed police chase where they use every trick in the book to drive you off the road, this is your baby.

Newman Haas Racing

54 PERCENT



A sad day for those at Psygnosis. It's not a complete disaster as driving games go, but there are many aspects of the game that leave a lot to be desired. For example, there is a cunning 'crash camera' which is meant to zoom out when you have a smash so you can see it in all its glory. Unfortunately it's activated with the slightest rub with your opponents, so you're constantly fighting against the perspective which is changing all the time; talk about a design fault! You also find masses of under-steer at high speeds, sending you into unrecoverable spins on practically every corner.

Off World Interceptor

31 PERCENT



How can I be fair here? You see, the game was released around about the end of 1995, so it's one of the PlayStation's earlier offerings and certainly one of Crystal Dynamics first (for the PSX). It looks and plays rather sluggishly and the graphics are dingy at best. The controls are slow and unresponsive and the gameplay (what there is of it) is pretty dire. To be honest we can't see any reason why anyone would want to buy this old duffer, but each to their own we suppose...

Porsche Challenge

79 PERCENT



To celebrate the release of the new Porsche Boxter sports car, Sony knocked together this snappy little racer. Incorporating one car (in a variety of different colours) and four tracks (each with two routes and shortcuts) it would be easy to think that this is nowhere near a full game. It's saving grace is that it's actually very well produced with bucket-loads of playability and sharp, snappy graphics. It's also available for 20 quid on Platinum now so it's pretty much worth the money, but if you're looking for an extended challenge, look elsewhere.

Rally Cross 2

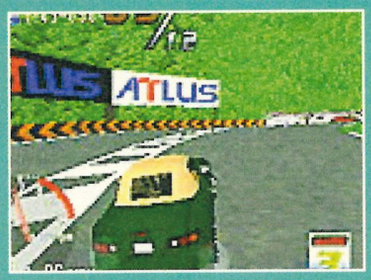
40 PERCENT



A marked improvement on the original, but still only really for collectors of the genre. New features include a reasonably clever track editing system, new graphical effects and much better music and spot FX. It is quite obvious that the sequel was developed by a different team to the original, though a few of the original games traits still remain (unfortunately). Course design has improved, as has the rather loose and tiresome control method. It's definitely better than the first Rally Cross, but that's not saying much really...

Peak Performance

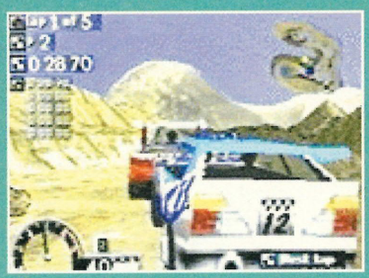
25 PERCENT



This game can be compared to a very well soiled pair of pants on a large stick. The collision detection is laughable (opposing cars sometimes drives straight through you and each other), the 'power sliding' is ridiculous and your opponents can catch you up even if you're a country mile ahead of them on the final straight! If you're still reading, there's a slightly ropy track editor, the usual spread of gaming modes and a large selection of basically the same cars. The graphics do move at quite a fast pace, but who gives a pig's tail when the game itself is so rough?

Rally Cross

36 PERCENT



Graphically accomplished, clever coding for the four-player split-screen game and nice undulating courses. Sounds good, but the game comes with a long list of gripes attached. There is visible pop-up in the distance, there aren't all that many courses to hold your attention for long and the control is thrown around a bit too much by the imaginative but annoying undulations of the tracks. The learning curve will have you screaming too; it's too hard one minute then piss-easy the next. What's that all about?

Rapid Racer

58 PERCENT



Offering some of the coolest hi-resolution graphics, you'd think this wet racer would deliver the gameplay goods as well. No, it doesn't, but it's not just poor handling and dodgy physics that dogs this game - there's loads more... The course design is quite dreadful in places and repetitive to the point of boredom. Once you have completed all of the tracks on offer, a random generator creates an infinite amount of courses for you to race on. Loads of courses indeed, but no thought at all to their contours and difficulty has been considered.

Ray Tracers

70 PERCENT

Born of the Chase HQ mould, which in itself isn't necessarily a bad thing. For those of you unfamiliar with the formula, the idea is to cane it through a number of different environments catching criminal cars and bashing the hell out of them until you drive them clean off the road. Ray Tracers is Chase HQ for the 90s, offering fast and frantic gameplay using Manga-style imagery and animations. Due to the arcadey nature of the gameplay there isn't much of a challenge to be found here, even though the later missions are very fast and very hard. It's great for a couple of blasts, but not one you'd want to fork out forty quid for.



Ridge Racer — 88 PERCENT



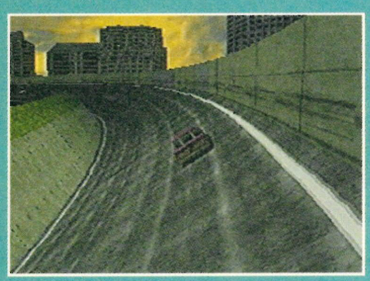
The fore father of all PSX driving games and the best reason to have a PlayStation when they first came out. Ridge Racer was hugely popular in the arcades when it was first released. Many said it couldn't be done on Sony's home console, but were proven wrong. As it is a direct port-over, the challenge is slightly short but the pure gameplay still keeps people coming back to it today. The graphics are fast (but not short of glitches), as is the speed of play. The courses are very well designed if a little short, and the opponent racers are hard to the core.

Ridge Racer Revolution — 87 PERCENT



Hmmm... Tough one to call, this. It's more like Ridge Racer version 2 than a whole different game, but it's damn fine (if you're into Ridge Racer) nevertheless. You find upgraded graphics, a cool link-up mode and more courses on offer here, but what you've got is essentially the same game. The graphical action is improved and smoother but the gameplay has change ever so slightly so the cars handle that bit different as a result. If you like Ridge Racer, though, you can get hold of RR and RRR together for less than 40 quid. Bargain!

Rage Racer — 90 PERCENT



This was the PlayStation's answer to the arcade hit Rave Racer, offering a bigger challenge for the home market. Instead of simply selecting a car and track (as you would in the arcade) you could save up money by winning races and upgrade your car, change its set-up and purchase new cars. The graphics are flush (even by today's standards) and the gameplay is consistent offering a hard challenge with an excellent learning curve. The soundtrack is one of the best I've heard, with wicked sounds in different styles. If you want Ridge Racer at its best, this is it.

Ridge Racer Type 4 — 85 PERCENT



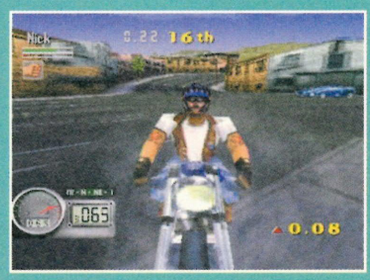
The latest incarnation of the Ridge Racer series is in the form of RR Type 4, reviewed in Issue 13's import section. The graphics have seen a dramatic improvement from the original, making sure it's the fastest, smoothest and most glitch-free driving game on the PSX. The gameplay is next to faultless and the game even comes with its own controller which has an analogue force feedback steering wheel on it (JogCon). This masterpiece of modern programming is sadly let down by the lack of overall challenge, even though there are about 300 different cars on offer.

Road Rash — 80 PERCENT



Not quite the original version of Road Rash, but quite possibly the best. Okay, the graphics are ever-so-slightly ropy, but the music, sound effects and overall gameplay is pretty damn fine. For those that don't know, the idea is to ride your bike around numerous tracks competing with loads of other wacky racers. If you can't beat them in terms of speed and skill, you can always take a chain, pipe, foot or fist to them and knock 'em for six. Get money for winning races and buy new bikes, talk to the other racers and find out who your friends and enemies are. Great fun at a cheap price.

Road Rash 3D — 82 PERCENT



Basically the same, only in glorious 3D with updated graphics, sound and music. There are over 100 miles of roads in numerous towns and locations through which to race, and your choice of weaponry has vastly improved. Steering too hard one way or the other sees your back wheel snake and you kissing dirt, which adds realism, and being able to jump clear over obstacles using a wheelie is great fun. The learning curve has greatly improved from the previous version too, but the difficulty is now way up to maximum in the later portions of the game as a result.

Rock and Roll Racing 2 — 21 PERCENT

Never heard of Rock and Roll Racing? You haven't lived. Rock and Roll Racing was an all-time classic SNES driving/blast-'em-up in which players would bounce and slide around numerous courses in a wide selection of vehicles blowing the bejesus out of each other. It was a huge success and players were begging for a sequel. Soon after the PSX came out talk and hi-res renders of Rock and Roll Racing 2 started popping up and excitement abounded. Then it came, and what a pile of shite it is. Disappointing is not the word...



San Francisco Rush

69 PERCENT



Loading, loading, loading... Please wait. Why spend 40 quid on a game when this is basically what you spend the majority of your time looking at? The title screen must be loaded, then the track selection screen must be loaded. once that's loaded the track you select has to load and each time it loads you get a separate loading screen. What the hell is that all about? This is a high-powered gaming machine, not a ZX Spectrum! Loading aside, the game has some small redeeming features but no where near enough to warrant a purchase.

Star Winder

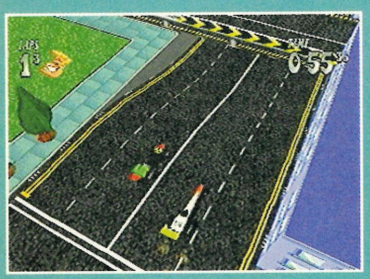
42 PERCENT



It's cash-in time for Mindscape with their not-so-imaginative Star Winder, which is basically WipEout without the bells and whistles. Okay, so you're on a different 'rail system' which frankly is pretty pants anyway. The graphics are passable, showing little pixelation or pop-up, while the sound is pretty run-of-the-mill but certainly nothing to write home about. There are about 40 tracks on offer, but having the staying power to complete them all without sticking a couple of pencils up your nostrils and wearing last weeks pants on your head is quite unlikely.

Supersonic Racers

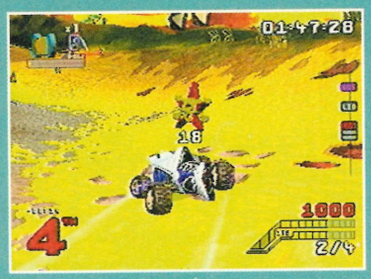
46 PERCENT



This is Mindscape's answer to the ever-popular Micro Machines V3. It's a real shame that they left it so late for their cash-in as by the time the inferior Supersonic Racers was released, MM V3 was down to Platinum. The graphics are basic, the sound's bitty and rough and the gameplay is simply a weak re-hash of what's already gone before. Only really worth playing in multi player mode, but even then it isn't a patch on the clever course design and game mechanics of MM V3, I suppose you can't win them all, but Mindscape really lost that one!

S.C.A.R.S.

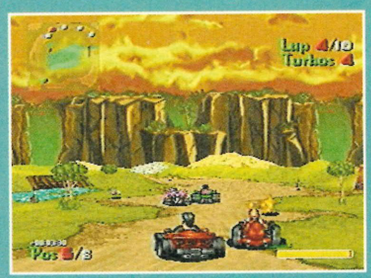
80 PERCENT



A bit like Mario Kart without Mario... or the Karts. The concept, though, is basically the same in that you choose your vehicle and track and compete against other racers using driving skill and weaponry to get an advantage. The one-player mode has slightly limited appeal, but like all good racers it's the multi-player modes that save the day. S.C.A.R.S. has numerous options and modes to keep players coming back for more. The graphics are as good as the sound, and just in case you're wondering, S.C.A.R.S. stands for Super Computer Animal Racing Simulation; full of useless information me...

Street Racer

81 PERCENT



A re-vamp of the classic 16-bit offering which was the only game to truly challenge the almighty Mario Kart on the SNES. The game concept was basically the same, cartoon-style racers driving ion karts around wacky landscapes hitting each other with baseball bats and various other manic weapons in their quest to reach the line first. The characters are well drawn and thought out, as are the weapons and courses. There's also the essential four-player split-screen mode that puts the icing on the proverbial cake. Wicked for kids of all ages.

Test Drive 4

70 PERCENT



Slightly ageing now, but has some good features that aren't to be sneered at. There are a fair spread of classic cars including the magical Jaguar XJ220 and the like as well as courses all over the world. There are 10 cars and 10 courses all together which isn't bad, but you've got to consider that it's at a cut-down price now due to its age. Graphically it would just about stand up today, but it just doesn't have the magic of Max Power or GT that just keeps you coming back for more and more. If this game was music, it would be a Gary Barlow album; simply middle of the road.

Test Drive 4x4

82 PERCENT

Graphics are pretty much up to scratch (good but not great) as is the sound, though the engine sounds tend to get to you after a while. The commentator really needs a good kicking for his 'awesome' comments, but that's a minor gripe. All the average game modes are available, including Mirror Mode and Arcade Modes. The level design is clever, allowing you to make the most of the track's humps and bumps to edge into the lead. All in all it's a solid racer, offering a tough challenge along the way; it would have scored better with a split-screen mode, though.



Test Drive 5

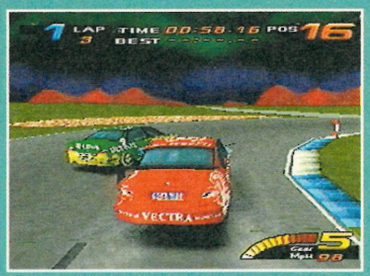
80 PERCENT



More cars, more tracks and a tougher challenge is on offer from the fifth game in the series. The graphics are sharper and smoother than ever before (as you would expect) and the course design has kept itself from becoming tiresome and samey (easily done in a series of driving games). It's a bit annoying when most of the cars are boring American shite; there's only a few others thrown in for good measure, but that's probably nothing too serious, I suppose (there are eight cars that handle differently). It definitely ain't no GT, but it's a fun and fast racer all the same.

TOCA

93 PERCENT



Daytona and NASCAR can get the hell out of Dodge because we've got Touring Car Championships and it kicks American ass. Similarly, TOCA kicks the hell out of the opposition on the gaming front. It's getting on a bit now, but it still holds its own graphically thanks to smooth animations and nice damage effects. The driving model is something for Codemasters to be proud of, as is the reproduction of the courses. It's a huge challenge and there's the top-notch split-screen mode which keeps up the speed and frame rate. Well worth the budget price it's now available at.

TOCA 2

93 PERCENT



There is no doubt that TOCA 2 is one of the most realistic driving games ever created. Codemasters have created car physics to die for and a graphic engine that deserves all the credit in the world. Attention to detail is absolutely second to none and the reproduction of 15 actual courses from all around the world is breathtaking. In Issue 12 we awarded TOCA 2 89%, but to be honest it's quite a harsh score for such a technically accomplished game. Given the tough learning curve it would be quite easy to dismiss the game as being 'fiddly' to play; easy mistake but frankly unjust.

Tokyo Highway Battle

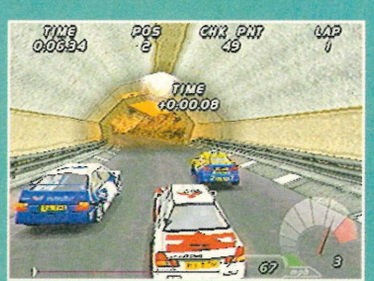
68 PERCENT



Yes and no... Tokyo Highway Battle takes a long time to get to grips with. Once you have learned to live with the touchy control method, gained the fastest cars and reached the best courses, there is a certain degree of enjoyment to be had. It's just that the journey there is a bit of a nightmare. The earlier cars available in the game handle poorly and have weak top speeds. It's nice that you can weave in and out of the pedestrian traffic (passing slower cars highness the feeling of speed) but it's obvious that the game isn't running particularly fast.

Tommi Mäkinen Rally

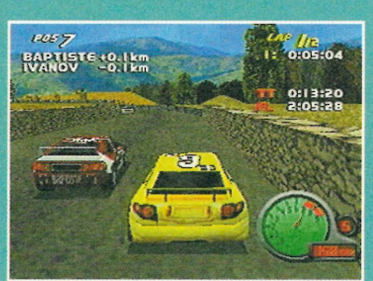
41 PERCENT



Pants, pants, pants! Rather like the dregs of the beer barrel or the little bits of orange at the bottom of your glass of orange juice, Tommi Mäkinen just isn't popular. Understandable when you consider that the tracks go around the cars instead of vice versa, the cars are actually floating above the road and the road keeps on breaking up into the separate polygons. Take into account that the cars don't drive like cars and you've got a pretty good case in proving this games ineptness. There is a 3D track editor, but who would want to drive around it upon its completion?

Total Drivin'

87 PERCENT



The game has simple but fast and fluid backgrounds that move along at a fair rate and the main core of the game is based on very much 'tried and tested' ground. The cars handle consistently and the different surface conditions effect play accordingly, giving off an air of real competence. There is a vast array of 36 courses in all, and an even more staggering figure of 40 cars (including different styles like Indy or Buggy) in the game. The buggies are notoriously hard to control on sand which is fair enough (as it realistic), but once you get the hang of things, two-player duels are a great way to play.

Twisted Metal

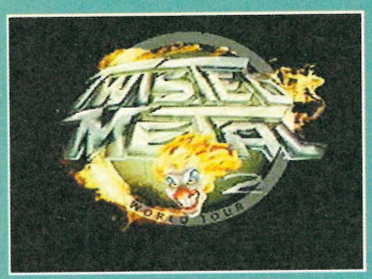
75 PERCENT

Before Carmageddon, and before Vigilante 8 it was still possible to quite literally drive your friends up the wall with the excellent Twisted Metal. The concept is much the same as Vigilante 8, using maximum power weaponry to 'take out' opponent cars as you drive around vast cityscapes jumping, bumping and sliding all over the joint. Great fun but slightly flawed partly due to its age. If you can't get enough of the genre, though, it's a blast.



Twisted Metal 2

88 PERCENT



As is normally the way of the world, sequels are always improved, revamped, re-jigged and generally much better than the originals (with the exception of Grease 2, Alien 3 and of course Blues Brothers 2000). Twisted Metal 2 is no exception to the rule, offering a vastly improved game in many of its respects. The graphics engine is much better than the original, offering faster and smoother gameplay, the physics engine is much improved too (the cars aren't meant to drive like real cars but they're fun nevertheless). Loads more cars, loads more weapons; don't miss out, it's smart.

Vigilante 8

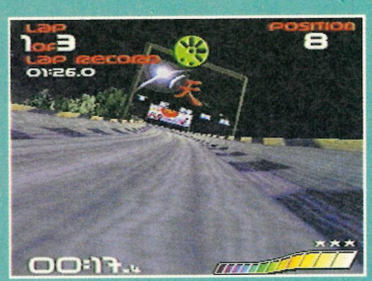
92 PERCENT



Picture this; you're playing Doom, only you're in a car. This essentially is what Vigilante 8 is all about; well sort of anyway. You make your choice of vehicle (with wacky driver), choose a level to drive on and race around blowing the crap out of all the other vehicles with tons of different weapons and bombs. The areas are vast and detailed offering everything you need for the Deathmatch-style action. There are loads of neat touches that add to the addictive gameplay. Well worth a look and well worth the money.

WipEout

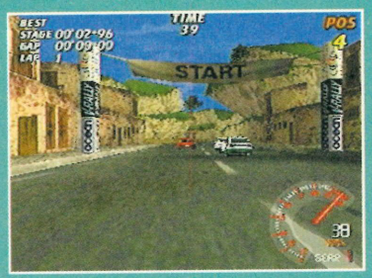
92 PERCENT



Welcome to the future of racing. Anti-gravity crafts capable of break-neck speeds around environments built for thrashing. Nothing of the sort had ever been seen on a home console before, and only its sequel has beaten it in terms of speed and thrills. WipEout offered a new challenge to speed freaks, new vehicles, new control mechanics, new music, you name it, it was new. Only really let down by its particularly tough learning curve and opponent racers who are a little wooden to say the least. A snip at 20 quid thanks to Sony's Platinum range.

V-Rally

89 PERCENT



An excellent racing game now available at an excellent price (courtesy of the Platinum range). I suppose this is a little like the PlayStation's answer to Sega Rally; it's fast and arcadey without being too much of an accurate simulation. Not being accurate as far as realism goes isn't really a bad thing as it keeps the game's instant enjoyment factor instead of having to get thrashed a lot first. The graphics are smooth (with only minor pop-up) with highly detailed backdrops and cars alike. In a nutshell, it's great fun with a good challenge and two-player split screen.

VR Powerboat Racing

67 PERCENT



Cunningly deceptive in its looks, but is really nothing more than a bog standard driving game on water. The gameplay is unexciting, unimaginative and, at best, pretty standard. There are however quite a few different gaming modes to make up for this including time trials, one-on-one shoot-outs, arcade and championship modes. The game's main saving grace is its two-player option which keeps the speed up quite well but that's about it to be honest. If you're really into boat racing you're out of luck; just sit tight until a software company decides to make a good one.

WipEout 2097

95 PERCENT



This baby is cool with a capital 'C' and is about as cutting-edge as one of Rosemary West's kitchen knives. Everything about WipEout 2097 wreaks class and sophistication beyond all competitors (in some ways, even GT). The vector graphics are smooth, fast and wickedly beautiful leaving you aghast every time you play. Any flaws from the original have been ironed out and new weapons, new tracks and new music have been added to its already-impressive repertoire. Gallons of gameplay and more funky shit than the Prodigy; if you want futuristic, you want WipEout 2097.

Wreckin' Krew

58 PERCENT

Cartoon graphics, crazy characters and gammy gameplay are all that's on offer here. The graphics offer a change from the norm, but they're too bitty and basic at times to keep your attention away from the poor control and challenge. If you've got a little brother or sister they'll probably love the wacky weaponry available but even they'll tire after a while.

To stand a chance of winning any of the races you have to constantly Nitro your way around the course; this does nothing but detract from the gameplay and annoy the player. If you like to drive cars and race competitively, you won't find anything of interest here.




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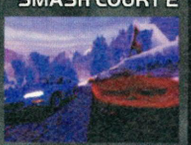

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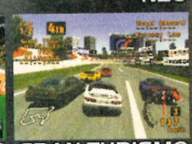
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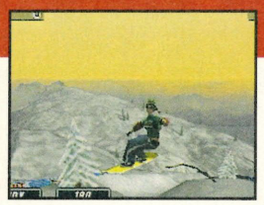
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tips & cheats

The latest codes and hints for the greatest PSX games...



Not many people can say with their hand on their heart that they are still abiding by their new year's resolutions. But here at EPM we are. In our last issue we promised that we would keep on expanding our tips and cheats pages as you requested, and we have delivered - of course. So now that we have created a new tradition, lets stay in keeping with it with some more useful info on the latest games. If however, we have missed out a game, then you can always write to me, Claire, at the Tips Clinic to make a request...making sure you ask nicely of course.



COOL BOARDERS 3

All tracks:
Choose to play tournament mode and enter WONITALL as a name. If you have entered this code correctly, the word 'Cheater' is spoken.

Eliminate falling snow:
Begin a run (and finish it if you want), quit, and then repeatedly press ✖. Once you have done this there is no falling snow and an extra view.

All boarders and boards:
Select tournament mode and enter OPENEMALL as one of the names. Again, the word 'Cheater' is spoken to confirm you have entered the code correctly.

Big head mode:
In tournament mode, enter BIGHEADS as a name. The word 'Cheater' is said to confirm you have entered the code right. Press R2 to increase or L2 to decrease the head sizes.



ASTEROIDS

Excalibur ship:
Hold down select and press ▲, ●, ●, ▲, ■, ●, ■ when 'Press Start' appears on the screen.



MEDIEVIL

Cheat mode (PAL version):
Pause the game, then hold down L2 and press ↓, ↑, ■, ▲, ▲, ●, ↓, ↑, ■, ▲

HINT: Getting the chalice in the time machine area:
Once your character has hit the skull to suspend the beams for three seconds,

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DIAGNOSED AND CURED

I've had a promotion (of sorts). I am now the doctor that you have to send all of your PlayStation gaming problems to here at the Tips Clinic. From now on you must address me as Dr Claire, Ph.D. This month, I have solved all of these people's problems...

Adam Kennedy said 'please' three times when he asked for some cheats for LEMMINGS, so seeing as he asked so nicely...

Level select:
First, enter the main menu and select the password option. Enter LAMPWICK as a password and then highlight 'END' and press ✖. The words 'Password Correct' will appear if you have entered the code correctly. Choose a level and select the 'Play' option. A select stage menu will appear which offer you 80 levels to play. Highlight the level you want and press ✖ to start the game.

Display FMV sequences:
If you enter the following passwords at the title screens you can view the FMV sequences:



Space: SPACEAAA
Egypt: EGYPTAA
Military: ARMYAAAA
Secret: MAZEAAAA
Highlight 'End' and then press ✖ to view this alternate ending.

Instant lemming save:
First, pause the game and select the following lemming commands in order: 'Turner', 'Bomber', 'Blocker', 'Floater'. When the lemmings have been destroyed, they're counted as saved.

Mark Rees lives at Glencroft Avenue, and that's all I know as he didn't include the town. But seeing as it was such a good letter he sent, I'll forgive him (just jokin'). Mark is a bit of a gambling man by the looks of it and has bet his friend five pounds that we can tell him where to enter the Level Select cheat on ABE'S EXODDUS.

Well, Mark, it looks as though you're about to be a fiver better off as you have to enter the code at the main menu, the one that appears when you load up the game. Abe magically appears through the hole in the centre. Hold R1 and enter the following:
↓, ↑, ←, →, ↓, ↑, ←, →, ▲, ■, ●, ▲, ■, ●

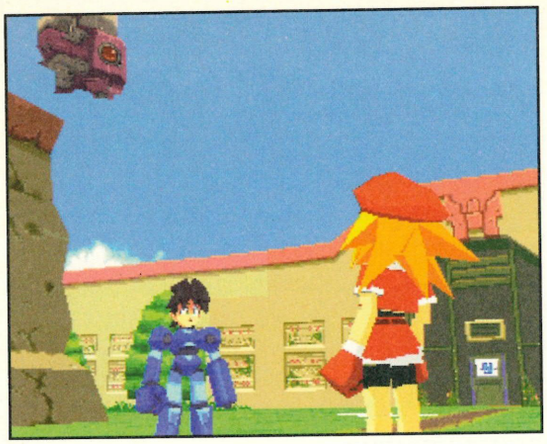
Daniel Lumley from Selly Oak has kindly sent us some cheats for TOMB RAIDER III, so that we can pass them on to you. Here goes:

Collect the Quad Bike quicker:
If you enter the following cheat in the Maze room you can collect the key to the Quad bike. This saves you from having to go all over the place to get it yourself:
L2, R2, R2, L2, L2, L2, L2, L2, L2, R2, L2, L2, L2, L2, L2, R2, R2, L2.

End secret level:
L2, L2, L2, L2, L2, R2, L2, L2, L2, R2, L2, R2, L2, L2, R2, L2, L2, L2, R2, L2, L2.

Access all weapons:
L2, R2, R2, L2, L2, L2, L2, R2, L2, R2, R2, L2, R2, R2, L2, L2, R2, L2, L2.

Caroline Peters and her little brother from Nottinghamshire are having a few problems with



hit one of the funnels and the timer stops. After this, switch all the funnels until a square that meets the chalice forms. The funnels forms the corners of the square. Once the square has formed, the wall surrounding the chalice shatters.

HINT: Zarok's Lair:
As you enter the castle you see two chests on either side of the door. One of them contains a shield and the other has Good Lighting. Get the Good Lighting. When Zarok's soldiers begin to fight, the soldiers that appear out of the chalice shoot your soldiers with the Good Lighting. This imparts your health to them. You see your life meter drop, but your soldiers remain green and healthy and they eventually destroy all of Zarok's men.

MEGAMAN X4

Megaman's ultimate armour:
Highlight Megaman at the player selection screen. Then press ●, ●, ← six times, then hold L1+R2 and press start. Remember to hold R1+R2 until the game begins.

Zero's black armour:
Highlight Zero at the player selection screen. Hold down R1 and press → six times. Let go of all the buttons then hold ● and press start.

MEGAMAN LEGENDS

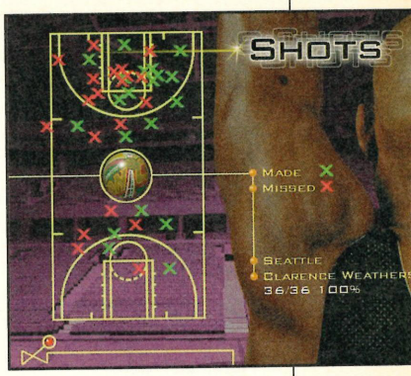
Rolling invincibility:
Hold L1 or R1 and jump to roll either side. This momentarily makes Megaman invulnerable during this time.

Unlimited money (method 1):
Find the garbage can and pop can on the ground near the Jetlad Bakery located on the shopping street. Kick the can into the bakery and have a chat to the woman inside to get yourself $1,000. You can repeat this to gain an unlimited amount of money.

Unlimited money (method 2):
Play the Beast Hunter game at the studio to receive 4000 pieces of gold for completing Grade A. You can also repeat this as many times as you want to collect unlimited amounts of money.

HINT: Extra life:
Some of your opponents have small 'Lego men' pirates appear when they have been killed. To receive free energy cubes you must shoot the 'Lego man' a couple of times with the buster. Then kick him while he's down on the floor and a life cube should appear.

Bonus options:
You must complete the game to unlock a further option on the main menu which allows the game to be played at a more difficult level. Beat the game on this level to unlock yet another level that allows you to play at an easier difficulty level, with dash boots and full left arm weapon capability.



NBA LIVE '99

Bonus teams:
Go to the 'Rosters' screen and select the option 'Create Custom Team'. Enter one of the following team names and locations to activate the team that includes the members of the development staff.

Location:	Team Name
Hitmen:	Coders
Hitmen:	Idlers
Hitmen:	Pixels

Fake pass:
Press L2+✖ during the game

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DUKE NUKEM: TIME TO KILL and would like some cheats. Happy to oblige, as always...

Unlimited continues:
Pause the game and press ←, →, ↑, ←, →, ↓, ←, →, L1, R1

Level select:
Pause the game and press ↓ nine times, ↑ and then exit the game. Then select the 'Time To Kill' option and press ← or → to select a level and press ✖ to start the game.

All weapons:
Pause the game and press L1, L2, ↑, L1, L2, ↓, R1, →, R2, ←

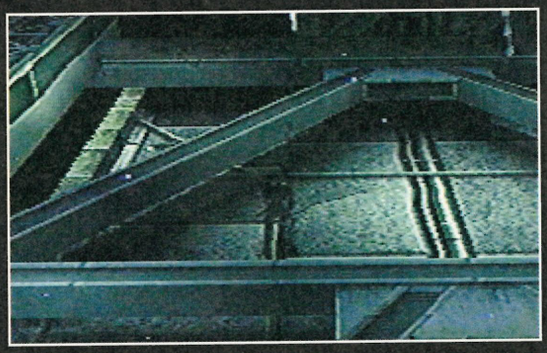
All keys:
Pause the game and press ↑, →, ↑, ←, ↓, ↑, →, ←, →, ↓

Powered-up weapons:
Pause the game and press R1, R2, L2, L1, R1, R2, L2, L1, Select(2)

Kilt sequence:
Pause the game and press Select, ↑ nine times, Select, R2

Nick Beech from Walsall has recently purchased METAL GEAR SOLID (the import I hope) and he reckons it's the 'best game ever made' - we reckon it's definitely a competitor (read our review this issue)! I hope these few cheats help you out:

Alternate costumes:
Complete the game two times using the same save location each time. Snake will then be dressed in a rather dashing tuxedo in the elevator the next time it is played (third). Complete the game once more and Snake will change into a ninja costume the fourth time you play.





Stealth gear:
Complete the game under the Easy difficulty level after submitting during the torture by pressing Select. Otacon gives you the stealth gear after being saved. Allow the credits to run through and then save the game. Then load the saved game and you can begin wearing the stealth gear.

Bandanna:
Complete the game without submitting to the torture. Your character saves Meryl and receives the bandanna. This bandanna gives you unlimited ammunition on any weapon.

John Wilkinson from Oxfordshire says that BUBBLE BOBBLE is his fave game, but hasn't got any cheats for it yet. John, now you have...

To enter debug mode:
Press ↓, ↑, ↓, ↑, →, ↓, ←, ↓, ↑, ↓ at the title screen.

Debug menu:
Go into debug mode. Press R2 during the game to display the debug menu. This shows the map number and Bub's lives. Press R1 to hide the menu during the game.

Level skip:
Enter debug mode. Press L1 during the game to jump to the previous level. Or press R1 during the game to skip to the next level.

Original version:
At the title screen press →, ←, ↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, ↑. This original version lets you enter the diamond rooms at levels 20, 30 and 40 even if you manage to lose a life.

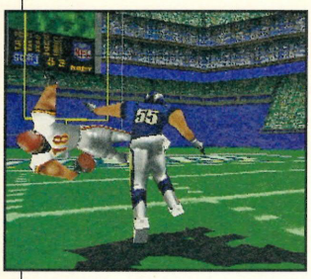
Alternate bonus effects:
Enter any one of these initials on the high score screen, then begin another game. New effects then appear when certain bonuses are found during the game:
SEX, TAK, STR, KTT, I.F, MTJ, NSO, KIM, YSH, LSD

Gareth Lawson from Clywd wants to know how to get Bruce Willis to become invincible in APOCALYPSE. Here are some more cheats to be going on with as well...

Invincibility:
Pause the game and then hold L1 while pressing ↓, ↑, ←, ←, ▲, ↑, →, ↓. You hear the sound of a gun to confirm you have entered the right code.

Level select:
Pause the game, hold L1 and press ▲, ↑, ✖, ↓. You hear the sound of a gun - you've entered the right code. Next exit to

tips & cheats



NFL XTREME

Flat head mode:
Enter COINHEAD COREY as a name at the Create Free Agent screen.

Big head mode:
Put in BIGHEAD BOBBY as a name at the Create Free Agent screen.

Short arms:
Again, enter SHRIMPY SEAN as a name at the Create Free Agent screen.

Long arms:
Enter MONKEY MICKEY as a name at the Create Free Agent screen.

Long neck mode:
Put in GEORGE GIRAFFE as a name at the Create Free Agent Screen.

Small players:
Enter TINY TOM as a name at the Create Free Agent screen.

Huge players:
Enter BIG BEN as a name at the Create Free Agent screen.

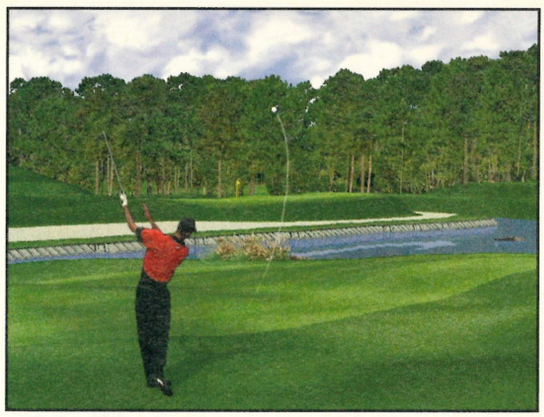
RIDGE RACER TYPE 4

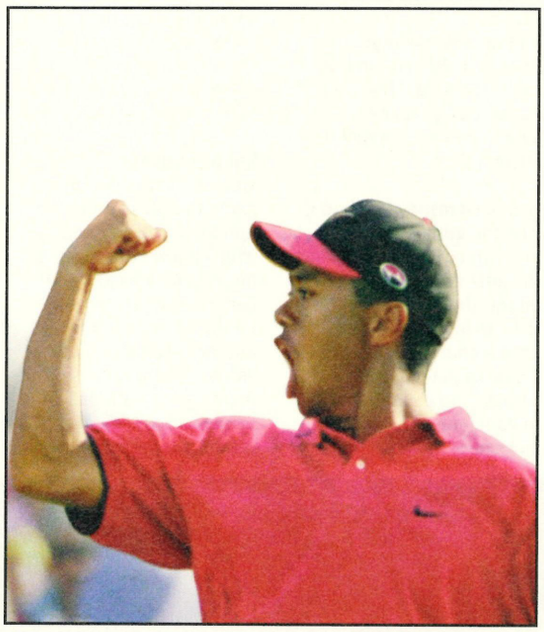
Four-player mode:
Connect two PlayStations using a link cable. Now a 'Link Battle' mode appears, where four people can play simultaneously.

TIGER WOODS '99

Destroy the golf cart:
Go into practice mode and choose the driving range. Hit the golf cart three times to destroy it.

Swap voices:
Press and hold either ↑ or ↓ and then press ✕, ■, ▲, ●, L1, L2, R1 or R2 to decrease or increase the pitch of the comments made during the game.





THE LOST WORLD

Free movement:
Start the game on the Hunter levels or the Human Prey levels. Hold L1+↑ and then press ✕, ■. Your character can now move freely through the level and have a rapid fire weapon. Not only this, but your character will also become invincible whenever he shoots the weapon.

Level select:
Enter ■, ✕, ●, ▲, ▲, ✕, ■, ●, ▲, ●, ✕, ■ as the password three times. Make sure you ignore the invalid password response between the entries. Go to the blank position at the bottom of the 'Movies' menu to view all FMV sequences that are in the game.

Galleries:
If you enter one of the following passwords you can view artwork and extra scenes for the corresponding character in the game.

Compy:
✕, ▲, ■, ✕, ●, ▲, ■, ▲, ●, ✕, ●

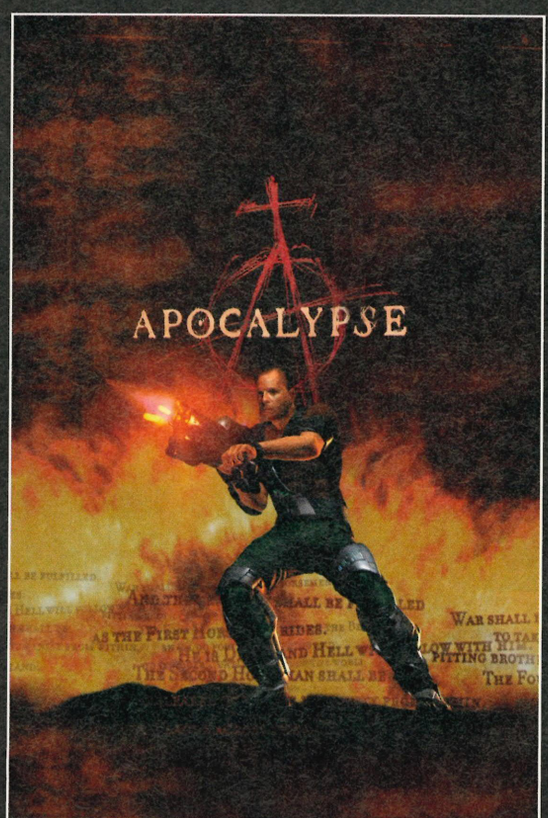
General:
■, ●, ■, ●, ●, ●, ■, ●, ■, ●

Human Prey:
▲, ■, ●, ■, ✕, ▲, ▲, ●, ✕, ■, ▲, ▲

Hunter:
▲, ✕, ■, ▲, ●, ✕, ■, ●, ▲, ■, ✕, ●

Sarah:
●, ●, ✕, ✕, ▲, ✕, ▲, ■, ✕, ✕, ▲, ▲

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access the new level select option at the main menu.

All weapons:
Pause the game, then hold L1 and press ■, ●, ↑, ↓, ✕, ■. You hear the sound of a gun if you have entered the code right.

Full health:
Pause the game, then press L1 and press ■, ✕, ▲, ●. You hear the sound of a gun again.

Unlimited lives:
Pause the game, hold L1 and press ▲, ●, ✕, ■. A gun shot sounds if you have entered the correct code.

Continue from last location:
Begin again after you have lost a life. Then pause the game and hold L1 and press ■, ●, ✕

Debug mode:
pause the game, then hold L1 and press ↓, ↓, ▲. You hear the sound of a gun if you have entered the code correctly.

THE CRITICAL LIST

Here's just some of the readers who need your help this month...

• Matthew Francis from Maidston is playing Grand Theft Auto and wants to know if he can get onto a train in Liberty City. he also wants to know if there are any more kill frenzies except for the tank and the little explosive cars.

• Alan Kennedy from Lancashire wants to know the best way to conquer level 49 of Lemmings.

If you need any help with any PlayStation game, write to:

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

Don't forget to tell us which game you're having problems with and exactly what you want. The best letter received by the Tips Clinic wins a surprise selection of Blaze PlayStation peripherals, so get scribbling.

This month's winner of those Blaze goodies is Joanna Charles from Surrey who gave us four pages worth of Tomb Raider III cheats, each issue we'll be including some more of them, so keep a look out.

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

Tyrannosaurus:
▲, ▲, ●, ■, ▲, ✕, ▲, ■, ■, ✕, ▲, ●

Velociraptor:
●, ■, ▲, ✕, ●, ▲, ■, ✕, ●, ■, ✕, ▲

Level Passwords:
If you enter one of the following passwords below you can begin playing at the corresponding level with 99 lives.

Human Hunter:
■, ■, ▲, ●, ✕, ■, ■, ■, ■, ✕, ●, ▲

Velociraptor:
✕, ✕, ●, ▲, ■, ✕, ■, ✕, ■, ■, ▲, ●

T. Rex:
✕, ✕, ●, ▲, ■, ■, ■, ✕, ▲, ■, ▲, ■

Human Prey:
■, ■, ▲, ●, ✕, ✕, ■, ■, ▲, ✕, ●, ▲

KNOCKOUT KINGS

Regain energy:
Hold L1+L2+R1+R2 when given the choice to hit either the heavy or the speed bag between fights. Two to eight energy points are regained depending on how long you hold the buttons down.



GRAN TURISMO

High resolution mode:
If you earn yourself an International A Licence and then go to the GT League and win all of the four cups you enter hi-res mode. Alternatively, complete all of the arcade mode tracks on the hardest difficulty level.

Chrysler Copperhead concept car:
Win all of the gold medals in the B class licence test or finish in first place in the UK Vs US championship.

Toyota TRD3000GT:
Win all of the gold medals in the A Class licence test.

Nissan Nismo 400:
Get all gold medals in the International A licence test.



Conserve your memory card slots:
Start playing the game in arcade mode, exit and then enter simulation mode and save your game. When you do this, the arcade and simulation mode info is saved together which cuts the amount of memory card slots used by half.

LIBERO GRANDE

Play as Arnold Lang:
Try and score 8000 points in 'Challenge 9' mode.

Play as Gregorio Zonaras:
Complete Arcade Mode



under the normal difficulty setting.

Play as Ruprecht Goes:
Unlock the last three of the options found in 'Challenge 9' mode.

Play as David Magellan:
Try and score over 1150 points in 'Challenge 9' mode under all of the difficulty settings.

Play as Maurice Poulenc:
Achieve a score of 100 using any of the teams in 'vs.CPU' mode.

1998 World Cup France mode:
Select the 'International Cup' and highlight the option 'New Game/Continue'. Hold L1+L2+R1+R2 and press ●. all of the teams are exactly the same as in the 1998 World Cup France Final.

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STREET FIGHTER EX PLUS ALPHA

Infinite Energy Player 1:
3671C1645922

Infinite Energy Player 2:
3671D68C5922

Full Power Bar Player 1:
3671C16359E8

Full Power Bar Player 2:
3671D68B59E8

Enable All Endings:
86719B9C4C4F
86719B9A584D

WCW NITRO

Infinite Energy Player 1:
76573848D6AE
867359585C42

Infinite Energy Player 2:
76573848D6AE
86735EB85C42

Infinite Time Player 1:
76573848D6AE
867359B0595A

Infinite Time Player 2:
76573848D6AE
86735E10595A

Big Head-Hands-Feet:
365C8BF85957

All Rings:
B669575C595A
165C89B85959

All Characters:
B673575C595A
165C8CEC5959
B665575C595A
165C89685959

CRASH BANDICOOT 3

Unlimited Lives:
365CE85F59BB

Unlock Levels:
365CE655595C

Have All Crystals:
365CE533594E
865CE532D04F
365CE538596D

Have 5 Coloured Gems:
365CE8B959CE

Have All Relics Saphire:
365CE6BB594E
865CE6BA504F
365CE6C0598F

Have All Relics Gold:
365CE6C3594E
865CE6C2504F
365CE6C8598F

Have All Grey Gems:
865CE8B85050
865CE8B6504F
365CE8BC598F

Have All Powers:
365CE680596F

FIFA 99

Lots Of Goals:
3657A49859AA

WARHAWK

Unlimited Lives:
366E4030595B

Unlimited Swarmers:
366FE3AE5971

Unlimited Lockons:
366FE3B059B6

Unlimited Rockets:
366FE3AA59B6

Unlimited Plasma:
366FE3B45C7A

Unlimited Flash Bombs:
366FE3B65959

Unlimited Doomsday Bombs:
366FE3B85959

LUCKY LUKE

Infinite Lives:
365D51C85955

Infinite Health:
365D51C6785F

Infinite Money:
365D51CC594F

Infinite Dynamite:
365D51CA594F

Infinite Bonuses:
365DC66C594F

R-TYPES

R-TYPE
Infinite Credits:
3667D5B6596A

Infinite Lives P1:
3667D5E85955

Infinite Lives P2:
3667D5F05955

R-TYPE II
Infinite Credits:
366310BE596A

Infinite Lives P1:
366310E95955

Infinite Lives P2:
366310F15955

LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE

Infinite Health:
365FAE58597A

Infinite Money:
8660B8005959

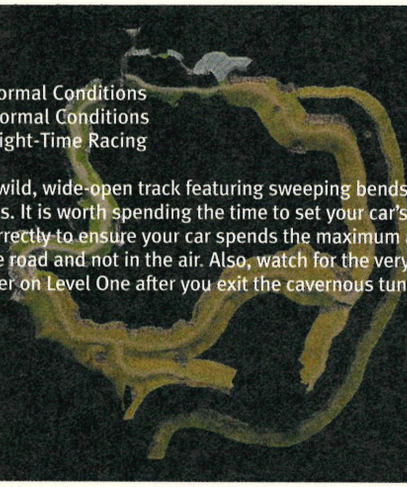
Infinite Lives:
8660AB985959

Last month's guide taught you how to set up your car and take corners at full pelt, but what about the courses? Here's a guide to tackling the tracks...

Max Power Racing Part 2

Each course in Max Power Racing requires different skills to conquer. The following breakdown gives you some extra tips on how to succeed at each location. Once you have beaten all 30 tracks, you unlock the Mirror Mode, where you race the tracks in the opposite direction.

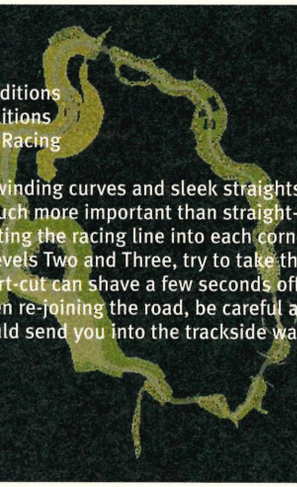
AFRICA



Africa 1: Normal Conditions
Africa 2: Normal Conditions
Africa 3: Night-Time Racing

Africa is a wild, wide-open track featuring sweeping bends and undulating roads. It is worth spending the time to set your car's spring lengths correctly to ensure your car spends the maximum amount of time on the road and not in the air. Also, watch for the very tight right-hander on Level One after you exit the cavernous tunnel!

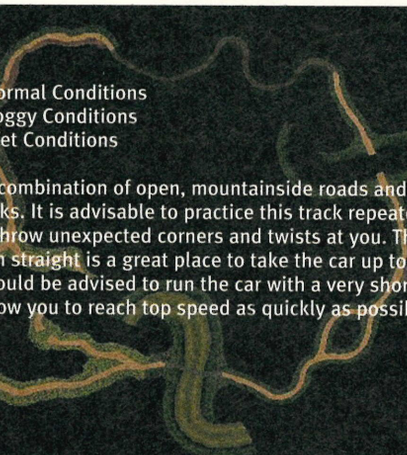
PERU



Peru 1: Normal Conditions
Peru 2: Foggy Conditions
Peru 3: Night-Time Racing

Peru is a series of winding curves and sleek straights, where control and skill are much more important than straight-line speed. Concentrate on getting the racing line into each corner and you perform well. On Levels Two and Three, try to take the beach-side route as this is short-cut can shave a few seconds off your lap time. However, when re-joining the road, be careful as there is a large ramp that could send you into the trackside walls!

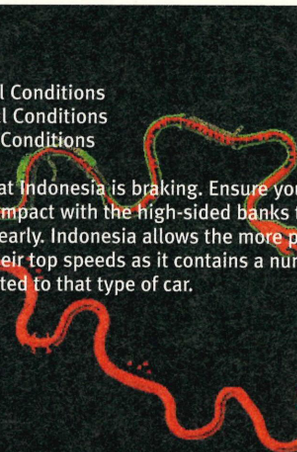
BRAZIL



Brazil 1: Normal Conditions
Brazil 2: Foggy Conditions
Brazil 3: Wet Conditions

Brazil is a combination of open, mountainside roads and dense jungle tracks. It is advisable to practice this track repeatedly as it can often throw unexpected corners and twists at you. The start/finish straight is a great place to take the car up to top speed and you would be advised to run the car with a very short gear ratio to allow you to reach top speed as quickly as possible.

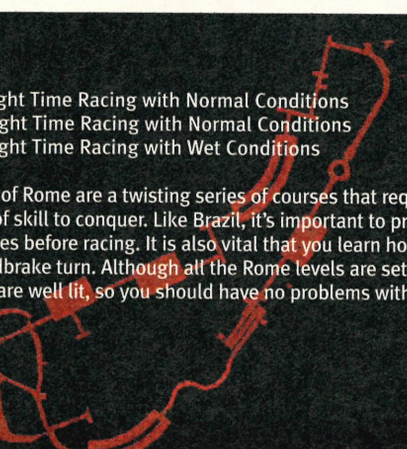
INDONESIA



Indonesia 1: Normal Conditions
Indonesia 2: Normal Conditions
Indonesia 3: Foggy Conditions

The key to success at Indonesia is braking. Ensure you slow down into the corners as impact with the high-sided banks that flank the road will cost you dearly. Indonesia allows the more powerful and faster cars to use their top speeds as it contains a number of straights ideally suited to that type of car.

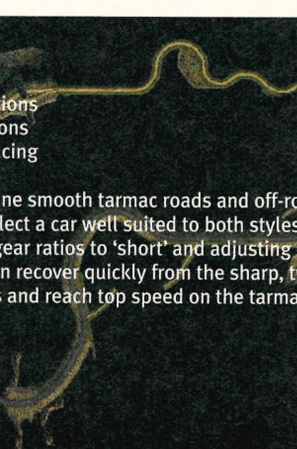
ROME



Rome 1: Night Time Racing with Normal Conditions
Rome 2: Night Time Racing with Normal Conditions
Rome 3: Night Time Racing with Wet Conditions

The streets of Rome are a twisting series of courses that require a great deal of skill to conquer. Like Brazil, it's important to practice these courses before racing. It is also vital that you learn how to perform a handbrake turn. Although all the Rome levels are set at night, the streets are well lit, so you should have no problems with visibility.

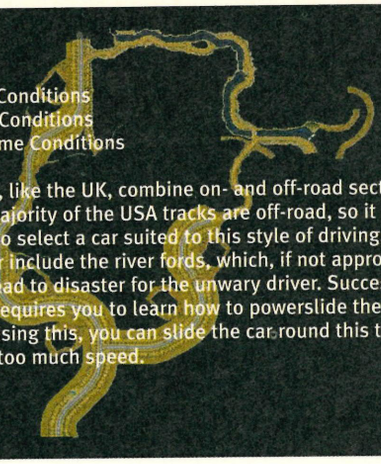
UK



UK 1: Normal Conditions
UK 2: Foggy Conditions
UK 3: Night-Time Racing

The UK tracks combine smooth tarmac roads and off-road tracks, so it is vital that you select a car well suited to both styles of racing. Again, setting your gear ratios to 'short' and adjusting each individually ensures you can recover quickly from the sharp, twisting corners of the UK levels and reach top speed on the tarmac sections.

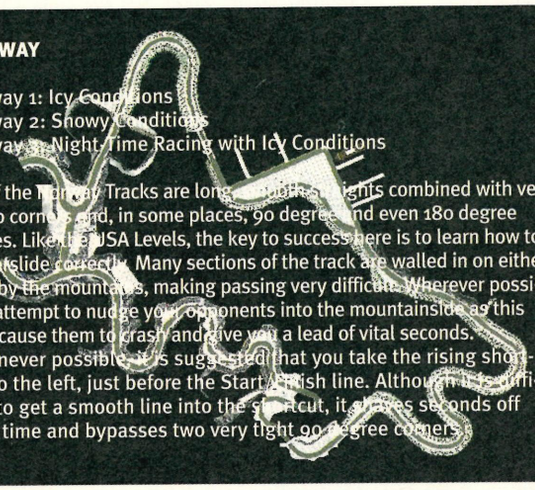
USA



USA 1: Normal Conditions
USA 2: Normal Conditions
USA 3: Night Time Conditions

The USA tracks, like the UK, combine on- and off-road sections. However, the majority of the USA tracks are off-road, so it is advantageous to select a car suited to this style of driving. Points to watch out for include the river fords, which, if not approached correctly, can lead to disaster for the unwary driver. Success on this level also requires you to learn how to powerslide the car correctly. By practising this, you can slide the car round this track without losing too much speed.

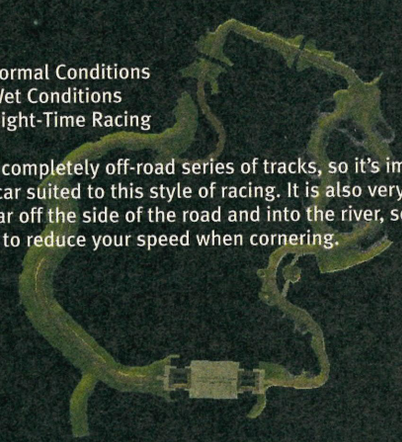
NORWAY



Norway 1: Icy Conditions
Norway 2: Snowy Conditions
Norway 3: Night-Time Racing with Icy Conditions

All of the Norway Tracks are long and contain straights combined with very sharp corners and, in some places, 90 degree and even 180 degree curves. Like the USA Levels, the key to success here is to learn how to powerslide correctly. Many sections of the track are walled in on either side by the mountains, making passing very difficult. Wherever possible, attempt to nudge your opponents into the mountainside as this may cause them to crash and give you a lead of vital seconds. Whenever possible, it is suggested that you take the rising shortcut to the left, just before the Start/Finish line. Although it is difficult to get a smooth line into the shortcut, it shaves seconds off your time and bypasses two very tight 90 degree corners.

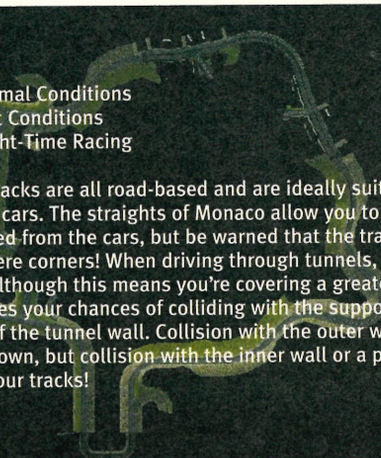
CHINA



China 1: Normal Conditions
China 2: Wet Conditions
China 3: Night-Time Racing

China is a completely off-road series of tracks, so it's important to choose a car suited to this style of racing. It is also very easy to lose the car off the side of the road and into the river, so it is important to reduce your speed when cornering.

MONACO



Monaco 1: Normal Conditions
Monaco 2: Wet Conditions
Monaco 3: Night-Time Racing

The Monaco Tracks are all road-based and are ideally suited to the sleeker, faster cars. The straights of Monaco allow you to get the maximum speed from the cars, but be warned that the tracks feature some severe corners! When driving through tunnels, take the outside line. Although this means you're covering a greater distance, it reduces your chances of colliding with the support pillars or the inside of the tunnel wall. Collision with the outer wall merely slows you down, but collision with the inner wall or a pillar stops you in your tracks!



COMPETITION!

WIN A COPY OF MAX POWER RACING

Those awfully nice people at Eutechnyx have come up trumps again, with another sizzling competition. This month you can win one of three copies of the excellent Max Power Racing, and three runners-up will get a Eutechnyx shirt, as modelled below-right by the delectable Caroline Prest.
All you have to do to be in with a chance of winning one of these coveted prizes is answer this simple question:

• What's Eutechnyx' next driving game going to be?

It's not as difficult as it sounds - take a careful look at this month's mag and the answer's staring you in the face. Just make sure your answers arrive on a postcard or the back of a sealed-down envelope by 25th March. Send your entries to:

Ace Racing Compo, extreme PlayStation, 22 Strand Street, Poole, BH15 1SB



exchange

EPM SAYS...

Another month, another mailbag and another lucky winner of a free game from those awfully nice people at Gameplay. If you've got something to get off your chest, drop us a line. Remember to state what game you'd like if you win our coveted Star Letter prize - to quote the National Lottery, 'It could be you'...

STAR LETTER

THE FINAL CUT...

Recently my PlayStation has started to jump and stutter on cut sequences in games like Tekken 3 and Apocalypse. I know that this can happen if you leave your PlayStation on for ages, but it happens even after it hasn't been plugged in overnight. What makes it even more annoying is that I've not long had this PlayStation which I had to exchange for my old one that was suffering from similar complaints. Is it just me that's having these technical difficulties or is it more of a common complaint? If it is, why are these sub-standard consoles hitting the high street? Surely Sony wouldn't allow something like that to happen.
J. Holder, Cambridge

EPM: It sounds to us as though your laser needs adjusting. You can sometimes overcome your problems by turning the PlayStation on its side or even upside down while the disc's being accessed (we kid you not), though you really ought to get it looked at by an authorised dealer. If your PlayStation isn't very old, it might be still under warranty - check this out. Finally, make sure your discs are clean (use a proper cleaning cloth), and treat them with care so they don't scratch. Nothing's worse for your games or console than clumsy handling.



RADIO MENTAL?

After reading about the pros and cons of playing import games and chipping, I decided to buy a Japanese PlayStation instead of chipping an old one. After getting my new machine home, I discovered my sturdy old TV wouldn't accept the NTSC standard (which is 60hertz compared to our 50hertz), so I quickly decided to rent a good one from Radio Rentals that would play my lovely new toy.
After talking to a helpful but unknowledgable lady on the phone for five minutes, she gave me the number for their technical support division who would be able to give me the facts about which television would be best. When I called, I was asked numerous questions about my address and told that I couldn't be put through to technical support because I wasn't registered as a customer. I politely explained to the receptionist that I would like to become a customer, but I must first talk to tech support to make sure everything would work. She replied by telling me that there was no way I could be transferred unless I rent a TV first. What a joke; I think the company sucks.
Phil Arkwright, Northampton

EPM: Some people can be very stupid. If you can't find one, take your Jap PSX to the shop and test it out while you're there. If they don't let you, tell them to shove it and take your dosh elsewhere. Perhaps you should try an independent dealer - they usually know far more about the products than the big high street chains.

MASS DEBATES...

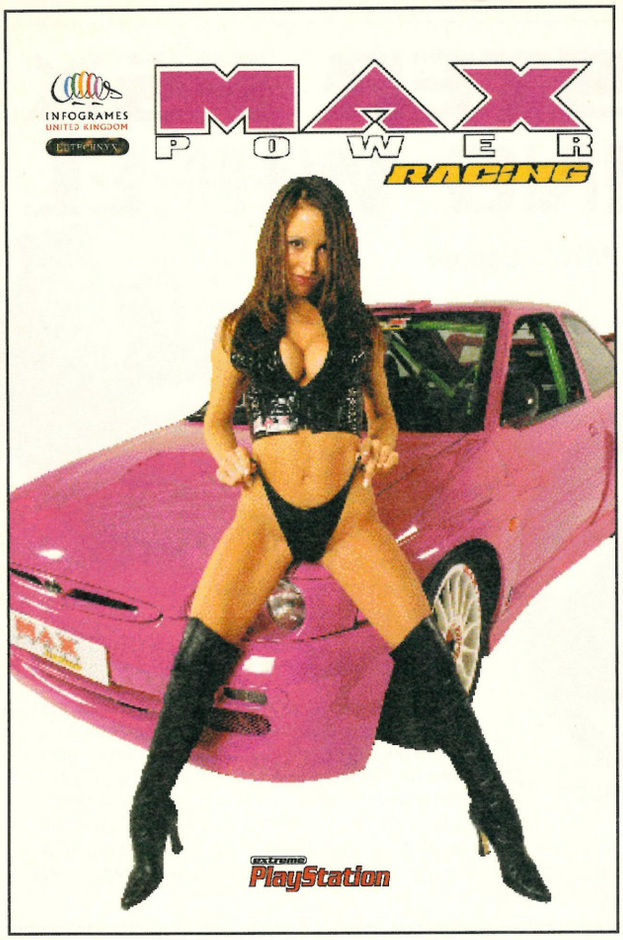
I've been keeping a keen eye on the debates going on in EPM and would like to ask what is the definition of 'gratuitous sex' in the gaming world? I take it to mean needless and unnecessary sex to advertise a game. Do you agree? True, some games require a certain amount of sex appeal to advertise them, eg. a game based on women's beach volleyball, bikini-clad women would be appropriate but not to advertise a game like, for example, Parappa the Rappa. And why was Jo Guest used to advertise Tetris? The bottom line is a game developed for a particular market and needs to be advertised accordingly. Also, is there any point in chipping your little grey box? As nice as it is to get the games before your friends, surely part of the fun in playing is to discuss tactics and gameplay of a particular title? This can't be done if you got it on import before anyone else. Besides, they're almost double the price of the PAL versions and haven't been translated, making them next to impossible to understand if you don't speak Japanese.
Mark Collins, Watford, Herts

EPM: For what it's worth, we agree on the advertising issue. Ridiculously gratuitous sex is unwelcome, but every game must be marketed according to its image. Not everyone will agree with you on chipping, though. Some people can't tolerate the black borders and 17.5% slowdown on many PAL conversions, though this is getting rarer all the time - for example, the UK version of Metal Gear Solid suffers neither, and offers more skill levels than its Jap counterpart.



RATINGS RANTING

First, May I congratulate you on an excellent mag. I wish all magazines could be like yours, but one thing that brings them all down is the ratings. Take Final Fantasy VII; it's crap! Three discs and 100 hours of gameplay? Not true, as a lot of it is FMV (and not very good FMV at that). I know people may not agree with me, but this is how I see it. For games like this, you should have a group of enthusiasts to come in off the streets to test the gameplay and lifespan. Alternatively, you could have people mail you about their opinions on it for your review section. Your opinions are different to some people's, but as you play many different games and have a better scope to say how they compare, meaning you do a very efficient job as it is. I'm not slagging you off.
One more thing - what's the word on Quake II and Gran Turismo 2? Please do your usual job of keeping us up to date and being faster than the other magazines, and keep churning out those lovely posters (you know what I mean, the Max Power Racing sort. Yummy!).
Mark Midgley and Richard Bassford, Bradford, W. Yorks



EPM: Nice idea regarding the reviews, but it just wouldn't work. For starters, we usually review pre-production versions of the games before they're even on the shelves. If we waited for readers to review them too, we'd be the slowest PSX magazine, not the fastest. Also, there's an element of personal taste involved when it comes to choosing games. Our job is to be objective, and we still think FFVII is fantastic, but if you hate all RPGs, it won't win you over. Our marks reflect the quality of a title, not whether a particular game is going to be to a specific reader's personal tastes. You have to read the review and make up your own mind on that score. Even so, if anyone wants to write to the letters page offering an opinion on a game, feel free.
Quake II is coming along nicely and should be ready later in the year, and look out for an in-depth feature on Gran Turismo 2 soon. Glad you like the poster too - what does everyone else think of it?

BIG BOOBY PRIZES?

I am writing on behalf of myself and friends aged between 20-35. we agree with the lady who sent you the letter printed in Issue 13 regarding the Vicky Lee pictures in Issue Eight, and also regarding the Max Power Racing poster in the same issue which again advertised the women. It is offensive. We feel there is no need to use pictures of women with big boobs all the time. Your magazine is good and you don't need to do that. If you feel you do have to do this it would be nice to have some hunky men with big lunchboxes to look at as women buy games too, but it would be better if you could keep it as a family magazine.
All the girls, Wales.

EPM: This is the second letter we've printed that complains about using women to promote computer games and then asks us to use men instead. On reflection, you might have a point about Vicky Lee in Issue Eight - her only relevance to the game was that she was wearing boxing gloves (how many female boxers take to the ring in bikinis and high heels?), but the poster was far from irrelevant. Racy cars and racy women is very much the Max Power attitude, and the game was associated with Max Power magazine.

ROBOT WARS

I've come up with a new idea for a game. It's based on the TV programme Robot Wars. You could design your own robots and fight with it. It could be one or two players, and you could use standard robots that are already programmed into the game or build your own from scratch. The game could offer the programme's Arena and Gauntlet challenges.
James Cromptom, Manchester

EPM: Great idea. Perhaps you could save your droids to a memory card and take it round your friend's to do battle as well. The nearest videogames have ever got to this is the ancient Spectrum game Battle Cars, but there you built and fought cars rather than robots. Maybe a developer will pick up the licence to Robot Wars, and hopefully use presenter Craig Charles for the voice-overs.



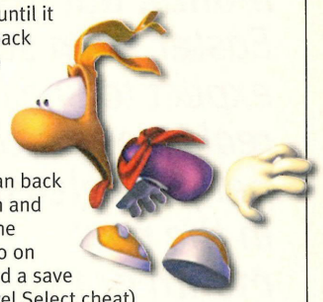
SONIC SOUGHT

My seven-year-old son is an avid fan of the PlayStation and has already bought several discs. He likes nothing better than to play on his PlayStation. However, in his view, the game that really should be released on the PlayStation is Sonic the Hedgehog. I believe Nintendo produce this game.
Could you please advise whether or not it will ever appear on the PlayStation.
Paul Vautrinot, Wirral, Merseyside

EPM: No. Not now, not ever. The Sonic games are produced by Sega (not Nintendo) and only ever appear on Sega consoles. If you're looking for something similar, try Crash Bandicoot 3 or Pandemonium.

RAYMANIAC

I know it's an old game, but I've found a cheat for Rayman. First load up the game and choose your level. When you've loaded up the level, remove the game CD and insert a music CD and wait until it starts playing. Go back to where you chose the level and it should be full of weird stuff, as if the game has crashed. Put Rayman back into the PlayStation and wait a while. Pick the level you want to go on (if you've pre-loaded a save game or used a Level Select cheat) and wait until it has loaded. Press L2. If done correctly, Rayman should pause,, which makes him move wherever you want using the directional buttons.



James Connor, Norwich

EPM: You almost hit the nail on the head - the game looked like it had crashed because it HAD crashed, hence the glitch allowing you to move Rayman anywhere on the screen, regardless of platforms. It isn't a cheat at all. We don't recommend you try this at home, folks. If you're looking for cheats, check out our extreme Cheats book free with this issue, and our tips column every month.

PEARLS OF WISDOM...

Curt comments cut from your merry missives...

• When is Carrier Command and any of the Star Trek games coming out on the PlayStation?
Mark Collins, Watford, Herts

EPM: Carrier Command almost certainly won't, even as a retro title, but Activision have the licence for PlayStation Star Trek games - watch this space for more info.

• Who's the girl on Issue 13's poster and holding the car in Issue 14's compo?
Doug Andrews, Gillingham, Kent

EPM: Karen Seafield.

• Will you ever do a round-up of American sports games?
Luke Francis, Halesowen, Birmingham

EPM: Next issue.

That's all for this month. Remember, every month the writer of the Star Letter wins a game of his or her choice, so if you want to be in with a chance, get writing! Send your letters on all things PlayStation to:
Exchange,
extreme PlayStation Magazine,
22 Strand Street,
Poole,
Dorset
BH12 1SB

stuff

Stuff hasn't been rolling in this month, but it's Easter soon so expect to see a real boost in the periphs released in the next month or two. This doesn't mean we haven't got anything to tempt you with this time round; feast your eyes on this little lot and check out the compo...

GAMESTER PSX STEERING WHEEL

BY: GAMESTER **PRICE: £59.99**



Gamester have been at the forefront of console peripherals for as long as we can remember, so it's safe to say they know what they're doing. Their 'standard' wheel embodies everything you would ever want or expect from it. It's not Dual Shock compatible, but it doesn't pretend to be, it's just a steering wheel that WILL work with EVERY PlayStation driving game available; pure and simple.



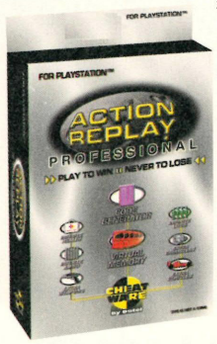
VERDICT: 8 OUT OF 10

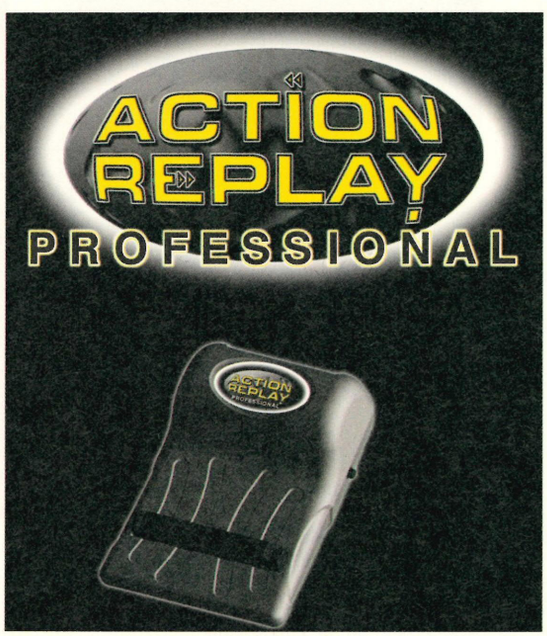
Their experience really shines through in the production of the standard PSX Wheel in almost every respect. The wheel itself has taken a great new round shape that reflects that of a car perfectly and the buttons, wheel-based gear shift and D-pad are all excellently placed and accessible. The only two things working against this brilliant product is the lack of a handbrake and slightly high price point. If you want something sturdy and reliable, though, this is your baby.

ACTION REPLAY PROFESSIONAL

BY: DATEL **PRICE: £39.99**

Datel's latest Action Replay cartridge has a whole host of new features and gadgets that really put the £39.99 price point into perspective. There is 24 Megs of virtual memory for you to save all your games onto, a real authoritative list of cheats already installed which you can add to (only 50% of the cart's space has been used by this), and a unique code generator that you won't find anywhere else.





VERDICT: 10 OUT OF 10

There's no doubt that the Action Replay Professional is worth the money when you take all of its key features into account. You'll never have to buy another damn memory card again, and it's remarkably easy to update codes and add new ones of your own at any time. Extra features include the ability of the cart to read information off the CD you have in the drive and run it through its own operating system. It can play music and sound from your games as well as viewing still images and even introduction scenes, mid-game sequences and endings. If you get the Action Replay Pro, you ain't going to need anything else.

MONSTER 24-PAGE MEMORY CARD

BY: WILD THINGS

PRICE: £24.99

If you're like us, you're sick of the amount of bloody memory cards it takes to save all your games from your massive collection of top titles. Football management games and the like require loads of save blocks, so in some cases it's a memory card per game; what a rip-off. What you really need is a single card that can hold the equivalent of two-dozen normal One-Meg cards. Enter the Monster 24-Page Memory Card, stage left...

VERDICT: 8 OUT OF 10

At £24.99, it's just over twice as expensive as the official One-Meg card, but considering it holds 24 times that, it's obvious it's worth the cash. It's easy to use, and even has a small display on the card; what more do you want?



CHAMELEON PAD

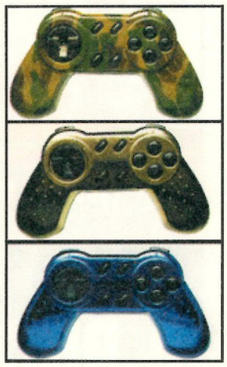


BY: WILD THINGS

PRICE: £9.99

Wild Things are quickly becoming the leaders in the PSX peripheral stakes and you can see why just by flicking through our Stuff pages from the past few issues. You name it, they've got it. This month it's the turn of the Chameleon Pad, the second pad to reach Wild Things' budget status.

VERDICT: 6 OUT OF 10



There definitely aren't any bells and whistles here, but that's not anywhere near the point of the pad. The idea here (as with last months Sabotage Pad offering) is a budget-priced product that can almost be classed as an 'impulse buy'. It's quite strong and sturdy so it stands the test of time quite well, but beyond the turbo functions, that's about all that's on offer. Going by its size, too, it's at best use in the hands of a grown man, if you see what we mean.

COMPETITION



Another issue, another competition. This month we've got six Wild Things Sabotage Pads to give away to six lucky winners. All you have to do is to tell us in as few words as possible why you should win! Make them funny, clever and as outrageous as possible.

Remember, use as few words as possible and make sure your entries are in before 26th March 1999. The address, as always, is:

Let me win!
Competition,
extreme
PlayStation
Magazine,
22 Strand Street,
Poole,
Dorset
BH15 1SB

CONSOLE KING

PSZ ACTION REPLAY - PLAYS ALL CDS INC. IMPORTS ETC (BEST QUANTITY DISCOUNT IN UK!) £17.99
e.g. 6.50 50 Pcs
UNIVERSAL PLAYSTATION - PLAYS ALL IMPORT / UK CD'S £129.00
POCKET STATION £CALL
Dual shock pad Official Sony £17.99
Tekken 3 Joy Pad £5.49
Playstation lazer unit - smooth loading no fmv skipping £35.00
Playstation scart lead £3.99
PS Gun-con Scart Lead £4.49
Virtual pistol - better than guncon, jolt action £24.99
PS Chip & ins- lets you play US/UK/JAP games (quantity discount) £5.00
Smart pal booster - lets you play import games in colour on any T.V. £15.00
Playstation replacement lazer unit £35.00
96 PS Memory £29.00
16 Meg PS memory card £19.00
Sony 1 Mb memory card £5.99
Virtual Pistol With Sliding Top - better than Gun-con £38.99
Formula Zero Dual Shock Steering Wheel £64.99
Playstation Mouse £13.50
Playstation joypad extension cable £5.00
Playstation link cable £3.99

PLAYSTATION CDS
Ace Combat 3 £44.99
WCW Thunder £44.99
Lunar Silver Star Story £CALL
Ridge Racer 4 (JAP) £CALL
Ridge Racer Special Edition £CALL
R-Type Delta (JAP) £CALL
Rival Schools (US) £44.99
Final Fantasy VIII (JAP) £CALL
Metal Gear Solid (US) £44.99
Marvel Super Heros Vs SF £44.99
Xenogears (US) £44.99
EZ Ehrgeiz (JAP) £CALL
Parasite Eve £44.99
Brave Fencer (US) £44.99
Street Fighter Collection 2 £44.99
Street Fighter Zero 3 £44.99
Silent Hill £44.99
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DREAMCAST & U.K POWER SUPPLY £299.00
Sega rally 2 £53.99
Sonic adventure £53.99
House of the Dead 2 £CALL
Power Stone £CALL
Marvel Vs. Capcom £CALL
Scart Lead £CALL
Pal Booster £CALL
Extra Controller £CALL
Dreamcasts VMS £29.00
PC Monitor Table £CALL

SEGA "WHITE FLASH" SATURN £159.00
4 in 1 IMPORT Adapter, lets you play all UK/US/JAP games + games that require RAM such as X-Men, M-Slug etc £27.00
Saturn Link Up Cable £12.00
Saturn Scart Lead £10.00
Saturn VCD Card £69.00
Capcom 4 Mb RAM Card £CALL

SEGA SATURN CDS
Sega Ages Mickey & Donald £44.99
Radiant silver gun £46.99
Marvel vs SF £49.99
X-Men Vs SF £46.99
Pocket fighter £39.99
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Capcom vol.1 1943 etc £44.99
Capcom vol.2 Ghouls and ghosts etc £44.99
Capcom vol.4 Mercs etc £44.99
Konami MSX collection £43.99
Castlevania £42.99

Dreamcast £259.00

Fatal fury collection £39.99
Waku waku 7 £46.99
Metal Slug £48.99

NINTENDO 64 CD-ROM DEVICE £229.00
Doctor Junior Cart. Emulator £120.00
Zelda 64 (US) £64.99
Smash Brother £CALL
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Star Wars Rogue Squadron £47.99
South Park £47.99
Castlevania 64 £47.99
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Nintendo 64 US/JAP - No Borders or slow down, import machines 17.5 % faster £149.00
All machines comb with UK Power Packs!
Nintendo 64 Passport plus - lets you play UK/US/JAP games with cheat functions £24.99
Official 64 Pad £17.99
DX 256 save cart for N64 CD ROM £29.99
DS1 F-ZERO / 1080 N64 CD-ROM Save Cart £34.99
N64 1MB Memory Card £4.99
N64 Rumble Pack £4.99
N64 Rumble/1MB Memory/Card £7.49
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Welcome to extreme PlayStation's round-up of every game we've ever reviewed. If we've covered a game more than once (eg. at full price and again on Platinum), we use the latest review.

• KEY RU: Round-up review taken from a genre feature; PL: Platinum title; IM: Import Review

Title	Publisher	Genre	Issue	Score	Comment
3D Lemmings	Psygnosis	Puzzle Game	#8 RU	60%	The 3D perspective makes for awkward controls that take the heart out of the game.
4-4-2	Virgin Interactive	Sports Sim	#10 RU	20%	The worst football game ever. Unbelievably shallow and simplistic.
Abe's Exoddus	GT Interactive	Platform Game	#11	75%	Packed with gimmicks and gags, but not everyone will appreciate its slow pace.
Abe's Oddysee	**GT Interactive**	**Platform Game**	**#9 PL**	**94%**	**An all-time classic platform puzzler executed with real style. Top animation too.**
Ace Combat 2	Namco	Flight Sim	#9 RU	72%	The flight simmer's flight sim - definitely not for the arcade-oriented.
Actua Golf 3	Gremlin Interactive	Sports Sim	#12	49%	Shoddy and poorly-executed golf sim from people who really should know better.
Actua Ice Hockey	Gremlin Interactive	Sports Sim	#3	74%	Rushed out to be on the shelves in time for the Nagano Winter Olympics - shame.
Actua Soccer	Gremlin Interactive	Sports Sim	#10 RU	88%	Puts in a good performance overall, but the goalies are a little weak.
Actua Soccer 2	Gremlin Interactive	Sports Sim	#1	88%	Controls are awkward at first, but great graphical touches.
Actua Soccer 3	**Gremlin Interactive**	**Sports Sim**	**#12**	**91%**	**The ball travels too fast when in the air, but this is the game's only real fault.**
Actua Soccer: Club Edition	Gremlin Interactive	Sports Sim	#13	59%	A cynical Premier League cash-in version of the original Actua Soccer.
Actua Tennis	Gremlin Interactive	Sports Sim	#11	31%	Disgustingly badly programmed sports sim. A complete joke.
adidas Power Soccer	Psygnosis	Sports Sim	#5 PL	39%	Arcadey football sim - not worth buying, even at Platinum prices.
adidas Power Soccer 2	Psygnosis	Sports Sim	#10 RU	65%	The best of the adidas games, but that's not saying much.
adidas Power Soccer 98	Psygnosis	Sports Sim	#7	55%	Shoddy soccer sim. Matches are slow, tedious and disjointed, and scoring arbitrary.
Agile Warrior F-IIIX	Virgin Interactive	Flight Sim	#9 RU	35%	Old flight sim which raised few cheers when first released and fewer still now.
Air Combat	Namco	Flight Sim	#9 RU	43%	Too much time spent doing nothing destroys this flight sim. Hideous fogging too.
Akuji The Heartless	**Eidos**	**Platform Game**	**#13**	**90%**	**Scary 3D action game with epic storyline developed through shocking cut scenes.**
Alien Trilogy	**Acclaim**	**3D Shoot-'em-up**	**#7 RU**	**90%**	**Another Doom clone, but for once the film licence actually adds to the game.**
All Star Soccer	Eidos	Sports Sim	#10 RU	34%	Tongue-in-cheek footie game with over-the-top violence and frustrating gameplay.
All Star Tennis '99	Ubi Soft	Sports Sim	#13	80%	A decent game of tennis with a few arcadey events thrown in for good measure.
Alone in the Dark	Infogrames	Action Adventure	#3 RU	70%	Dodgy conversion of great PC game. Too short to boot.
Alundra	Psygnosis	RPG	#5	83%	Arcadey RPG in the Zelda mould, but lacking in plot.
Andretti Racing	Electronic Arts	Driving Game	#14 RU	69%	Lightweight IndyCar/NASCAR sim which can't hold its own with modern drivers.
Apocalypse	**Activision**	**Shoot-'em-up**	**#11**	**90%**	**Spectacular 3D blaster starring Bruce Willis. Atmospheric and exciting.**
Arcade's G. Hits: Atari Col. 2	GT Interactive	Compilition	#8	60%	Paperboy, Marble madness, Gauntlet, Crystal Castles, Road Blasters & Millipede.
Area 51	Atari	Light Gun Game	#6 RU	79%	Light gun game with lots to offer. Superb interactive backdrops.
Armoured Core	Sony CEE	Shoot-'em-up	#6	65%	Slow and uninteresting mech game. Fun at first, but gameplay's too thin.
Assault	**Telstar**	**Shoot-'em-up**	**#10**	**90%**	**3D shoot-'em-up with great graphic explosions. Difficult to aim shots, though.**
Asteroids	Activision	Shoot-'em-up	#13	80%	Top update of the old '79 classic, which retains the charm and subtlety of the original.
Atlantis: The Lost Tales	Cryo Interactive	Adventure	#11	40%	Graphic adventure with a great engine but weak gameplay. Too many sudden deaths.
Auto Destruct	Electronic Arts	Driving Game	#2	67%	Boring and repetitive driving combat game made redundant by Vigilante 8.
Ayrton Senna Kart Duel	Phillips	Driving Game	#14 RU	72%	Interesting variant on the sports driving sim. Not perfect, but worth a look.
Ayrton Senna Kart Duel 2	Infogrames	Driving Game	#14 RU	74%	Not a bad game, but really only a tweaked version of the first offering.
Azure Dreams	Konami	RPG	#9	69%	Great new ideas in this RPG, but they don't really come off.
Baby Universe	Sony CEE	Utility	#10	40%	Create your own light patterns. A pointless and badly executed pile of shite.
Batman & Robin	Acclaim	3D Action Game	#8	70%	Interesting action adventure, but badly programmed and unoriginal.
Battle Arena Toshinden	Takara	Beat-'em-up	#4 RU	30%	Beat-'em-up from the dawn of time - dreadful by today's standards.
Battle Arena Toshinden 2	Takara	Beat-'em-up	#4 RU	58%	Interesting tactical weapons-based fighter, but too shallow for anyone but beginners.
Battle Arena Toshinden 3	Takara	Beat-'em-up	#4 RU	70%	More of the same, but let's face it - there are better beat-'em-ups around.
Big Race USA	Empire Interactive	Pinball Sim	#14	48%	What's there's good, but only one table? Not good value as a full-pricer.
BioFreaks	GT Interactive	Beat-'em-up	#11	80%	Great blood and gore in this beat-'em-up, but the aerial combat is unconvincing.
Black Dawn	Electronic Arts	Flight Sim	#9 RU	73%	Flight sim lite, featuring a helicopter and lots of arcadey bangs and flashes.
Blam! Machinehead	Sony CEE	3D Shoot-'em-up	#7 RU	55%	This Doom/mech offering's a chore to play, and has no real sparkle.
Blasto	Sony CEE	Platform Game	#8	80%	The graphics on this 3D platform shooter are terrible, but it plays better than it looks.
Blast Radius	**Psygnosis**	**Shoot-'em-up**	**#8**	**91%**	**Outer space dogfighting at its best. Intelligent enemy AI keeps you on your toes.**
Blaze & Blade: Eternal Quest	Funsoft	RPG	#11	81%	Four-player RPG puts new perspective on the genre. Interesting storyline too.
Blazing Dragons	BMG	Adventure	#3 RU	80%	Fun graphic adventure starring Monty Python's Terry Jones. For the younger gamer.
Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain	Eidos	RPG	#11 PL	88%	Mean and moody RPG with great cut sequences and chilling voice-overs.
Bloody Roar	Virgin Interactive	Beat-'em-up	#4 RU	72%	Beat-'em-up where you can change from human to animal form mid-fight.
Bomberman Wars	Hudson Soft	Puzzle Game	#8 IM	78%	Interesting Final Fantasy Tactics clone using the Bomberman characters.
Bomberman World	Sony CEE	Puzzle Game	#6	83%	Excellent multi-player game, but flawed single-player offering.
B-Movie	GT Interactive	Shoot-'em-up	#12	76%	Fast-paced and thoughtful shoot-'em-up that takes the PSX to its limits.
Brahma Force	JVC	Mech Game	#7 RU	76%	Doom meets mech in this fun but flawed offering. Fun for a while, though.
Breath of Fire III	Ocean	RPG	#7	86%	Little new in this Jap-style RPG, but if it ain't broke, don't fix it...
Brian Lara Cricket	**Codemasters**	**Sports Sim**	**#12**	**90%**	**As cricket sims go, this is as good as it gets. Flawless graphics and presentation.**

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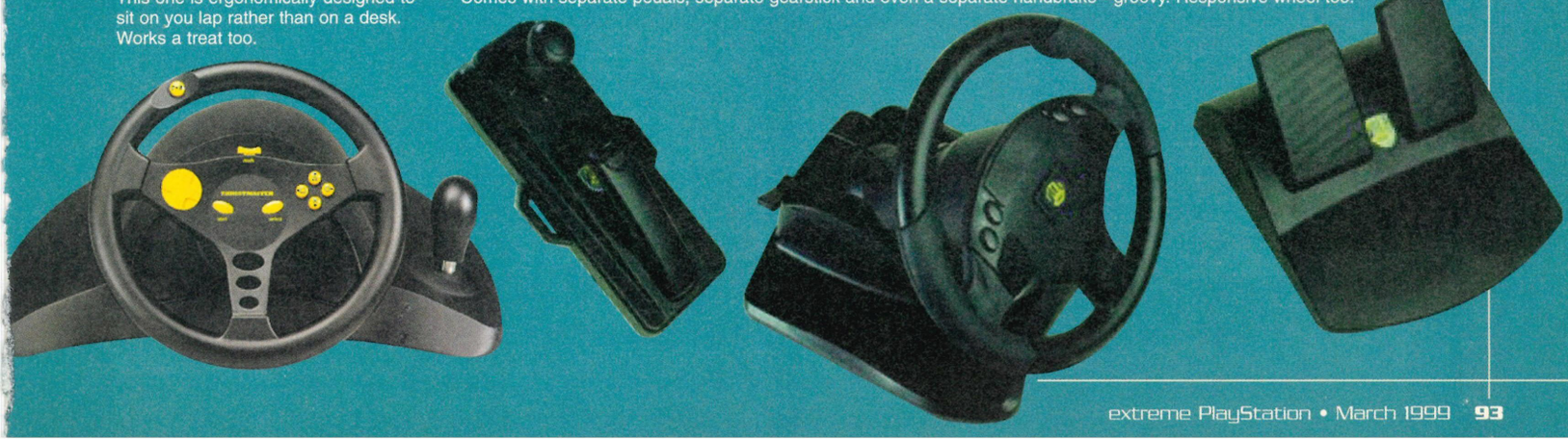
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Sturdily built, perfectly-weighted pedals and firm steering. The buttons are a little light, though.



Title	Publisher	Genre	Issue	Score	Comment
Brigandine	Atlus	RPG	#11 IM	74%	Solid but unspectacular RPG. Plays well, but offers nothing new.
Broken Sword	Sony CEE	Adventure	#3 RU	80%	Great graphic adventure, but sampled speech takes its toll on loading times.
Broken Sword 2	Sony CEE	Adventure	#1	81%	In-depth but occasionally obscure graphic adventure. Good plot, though.
Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling	THQ	Sports Sim	#14	89%	Excellent ten-pin bowling sim wisely released at a budget price.
Bubble Bobble Pack	Acclaim	Compilation	#13 RU	79%	Two classic games (Bubble Bobble and Rainbow Islands) and an update of the latter.
Bubsy 3D	Bubsy 3D	Platform Game	#13 RU	25%	This 3D platformer redefines the term 'bland'. It's awful.
Buggy	Gremlin Interactive	Driving Game	#11	70%	Driver based on remote controlled cars. Fun for a while, but shallow.
Bug Riders	GT Interactive	Shoot-'em-up	#8	51%	Playable for a while, but no lasting fun. A flawed concept is poorly executed.
Burning Road	Funsoft	Driving Game	#14 RU	70%	An ageing driver with lots to offer, but not when compared to the newer racers.
Bushido Blade	**Sony CEE**	**Beat-'em-up**	**#2**	**90%**	**A beat-'em-up with no life bar? A devastatingly slick and original offering.**
Bushido Blade 2	Sony CEE	Beat-'em-up	#5 IM	88%	An improvement on the original, but no great leap forward.
Bust-a-Groove	**Sony CEE**	**Puzzle Game**	**#10**	**94%**	**Follow button sequences to make your character strut his stuff. Brilliantly executed.**
Bust-a-Move 2	Acclaim	Puzzle Game	#8 RU	80%	Not as good as its sequels and not worth buying if you have one, but a great puzzler.
Bust-a-Move 3 DX	Acclaim	Puzzle Game	#4	86%	This puzzler's based on a simple concept, but is interesting and addictive.
Bust-a-Move 4	**Acclaim**	**Puzzle Game**	**#13**	**90%**	**Breaks no new ground, but offers the same addictive gameplay as its predecessors.**
Cardinal Syn	**Sony CEE**	**Action Adventure**	**#5**	**90%**	**Fast and bloodthirsty beat-'em-up with weapons. Powerful stuff.**
Cheesy	Ocean	Platform Game	#13 RU	14%	Great CGI intro, but the game's a woefully inept platformer. No fun at all.
Chill	Eidos	Sports Sim	#4	46%	A disastrous snowboarding effort with awkward controls and ill-conceived time limit.
Chronicles of the Sword	Psygnosis	Adventure	#3 RU	60%	Very poorly presented adventure with clichéd puzzles and weak animations.
Circuit Breakers	Mindscape	Driving Game	#6	89%	One of the best multi-player racers ever, and a damned good one-player offering too.
City of the Lost Children	Psygnosis	Adventure	#3 RU	81%	Slow interface, but its dark, depressing plot keeps you coming back for more.
Clock Tower	ASCII Entertainment	Adventure	#2	77%	Shoddily put together, but at times terrifying real-time adventure.
Colin McRae Rally	**Codemasters**	**Driving Game**	**#8**	**95%**	**The definitive rally driving game. Brilliantly realistic interpretation of the sport.**
Colony Wars	**Psygnosis**	**Action/Strategy**	**#14 PL**	**90%**	**A brilliant space combat offering with a great storyline and interesting strategy element.**
Colony Wars: Vengeance	**Psygnosis**	**Strategy Sim**	**#12**	**90%**	**Epic space combat and strategy outing with six possible endings. A truly epic game.**
Command & Conquer	**Virgin Interactive**	**Strategy Sim**	**#6**	**91%**	**Top strategy offering, but the lack of a link-up mode is criminal.**
C&C Red Alert: Retaliation	**Virgin Interactive**	**Strategy Sim**	**#10**	**91%**	**More of the same Command & Conquer action, but if it ain't broke, don't fix it...**
Constructor	Acclaim	Strategy Sim	#12	82%	City building and resource management in this wonderfully humorous strategy sim.
Contra: Legacy of War	Konami	Shoot-'em-up	#5 RU	60%	Dodgy 3D shoot-'em-up. Unspectacular in the extreme.
Cool Boarders 2	**Sony CEE**	**Sports Sim**	**#2**	**90%**	**Irons out the flaws which cursed the original and adds a host of new features.**
Cool Boarders 3	**Sony CEE**	**Sports Sim**	**#13**	**92%**	**A much bigger game than Cool Boarders 2, and with polished gameplay to boot.**
Courier Crisis	BMG	Driving Game	#1	82%	A game where you ride a bicycle? Fun, but imperfectly executed.
Crash Bandicoot	Sony CEE	Platform Game	#4 PL	82%	Surpassed by its sequels, but still worth a look at Platinum prices.
Crash Bandicoot 2	**Sony CEE**	**Platform Game**	**#1**	**91%**	**Great 3D platformer; a hugely varied cartoon-style experience.**
Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped	Sony CEE	Platform Game	#13	89%	Loveable 3D platformer, but repetitive after a while. Basically, more of the same.
Crime Killer	Interplay	Driving Game	#8	64%	Race 'n' chase cops 'n' robbers action, but too samey and full of design flaws.
Croc	Fox Interactive	Platform Game	#10 PL	67%	Not the worst 3D platformer on the PSX, but far from the best.
Crusader: No Remorse	Origin	Action Adventure	#5 RU	80%	Poor controls and lousy graphics fail to kill this strategy shooter. Great ideas.
Crypt Killer	Konami	Light Gun	#6 RU	11%	Disastrous light gun offering. One of the worst PSX offerings ever.
Cyberia	Interplay	Adventure	#3 RU	54%	Hopelessly linear adventure where exploration leads to almost-inevitable death.
Cyber Speed	Mindscape	Driving Game	#14 RU	65%	Hovercar racing/combat game made redundant by the WipEout series.
D	Acclaim	Adventure	#3 RU	62%	An adventure with a two-hour real-time time limit, no save and no pause - honest!
Dark Forces	LucasArts	3D Shoot-'em-up	#7 RU	79%	Technically superb Star Wars-licensed Doom clone, but the levels are a little too large.
Dark Omen	**Electronic Arts**	**Strategy Sim**	**#4**	**90%**	**Warhammer wargame in the Command & Conquer mould. Fiendishly addictive.**
Darkstalkers	Virgin Interactive	Beat-'em-up	#4 RU	80%	Street Fighter clone licensed from a Japanese cartoon.
Dead Ball Zone	**GT Interactive**	**Sports Sim**	**#6**	**91%**	**Violent futuristic sports sim. Spectacular gameplay, and a superb management system.**
Dead or Alive	Sony CEE	Beat-'em-up	#7	84%	Competent fighter, but not as good as the inimitable Tekken 3...
Deathtrap Dungeon	Eidos	Action Adventure	#4	88%	Hack-'n'-puzzle offering based on Ian Livingstone's Fighting Fantasy gamebook.
Descent	Interplay	3D Shoot-'em-up	#7 RU	78%	Quality gravity-free Doom game, but only if you can think in 3D.
Descent 2	Interplay	Beat-'em-up	#7 RU	50%	The sequel throws in extra weapons and gizmos, but throws out the original's playability.
Destruction Derby	Psygnosis	Driving Game	#14 RU	85%	Banger racing sim with a few flaws, mainly in its crash physics.
Destruction Derby 2	**Psygnosis**	**Driving Game**	**#3 PL**	**90%**	**Be the last car moving as you drive into other racers. Edge-of-your-seat stuff.**
Devil Dice	**Sony CEE**	**Puzzle Game**	**#13**	**90%**	**Fiendish puzzler where you make dice disappear by matching their numbers.**
Diablo	Electronic Arts	Action Adventure	#4	64%	An arcade shooter with RPG overtones. Combat is very straightforward and dull.
Die Hard Trilogy	**Fox Interactive**	**Compilation**	**#3 PL**	**94%**	**Three games in one, all of which could stand alone - superb!**
Discworld	Psygnosis	Adventure	#3 RU	80%	Too difficult for non-Pratchett fans, but otherwise a sound adventure.
Discworld 2	Psygnosis	Adventure	#1	86%	One of the best graphic adventures on the PSX. Great off-beat humour.
Disney's Hercules	Sony CEE	Platform Game	#12	73%	Stupid title, but the game's a great for-the-kids 2D platformer.
Disruptor	Interplay	3D Shoot-'em-up	#7 RU	89%	Too short at 12 levels, but now it costs around £20, this Doom game's a winner.
Dodgem Arena	Black Friar	Sports Sim	#12	85%	A driving game crossed with a sports sim? This football/racer hybrid works well too.
Doom	**GT Interactive**	**3D Shoot-'em-up**	**#9 PL**	**91%**	**Spectacular level design makes this 3D own-eye shooter a real winner.**
Duke Nukem	**GT Interactive**	**3D Shoot-'em-up**	**#7 RU**	**91%**	**Doom with attitude - takes the game's interactivity a stage further.**
Duke Nukem: Time To Kill	**GT Interactive**	**3D Shoot-'em-up**	**#10**	**93%**	**Owes more to Tomb Raider than Doom, but Duke's inimitable humour is intact.**
Dynasty Warriors	KOEI	Beat-'em-up	#4 RU	75%	Fighting game with lots of weapons but no kicking moves. Interesting, but unremarkable.
Earthworm Jim 2	Virgin Interactive	Platform Game	#13 RU	60%	A direct port from the Mega Drive version. Good, but surely the PSX deserves more?
Einhander	**Squaresoft**	**Shoot-'em-up**	**#7 IM**	**95%**	**Fantastic side-scrolling blaster with superb attention to detail.**

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By: Wild Things, £64.99
Comes with separate pedals, separate gearstick and even a separate handbrake - groovy. Responsive wheel too.

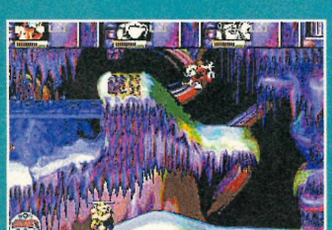


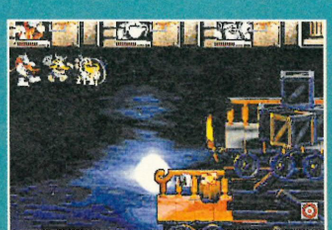
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Title	Publisher	Genre	Issue	Score	Comment
Elemental Gearbolt	**Sony Japan**	**Light Gun**	**#6 RU**	**94%**	**Superb import light gun game. It's about time it was released over here...**
Eliminator	Psygnosis	Shoot-'em-up	#14	43%	Acceptable two-player mode, but disappointing one-player blast.
Epidemic	Sony CEE	3D Shoot-'em-up	#7 RU	51%	Unofficial sequel to Kileak. Too little game spread over too much playing area.
Everybody's Golf	Sony CEE	Sports Sim	#6	65%	This one has a cult following, but we didn't like it. Lacks challenge.
Excalibur 2555AD	Telstar	Action Adventure	#7	78%	3D action adventure with object-based puzzles. Lacks polish.
Exhumed	**BMG**	**3D Shoot-'em-up**	**#7 RU**	**92%**	**Doom crossed with an adventure and set in Ancient Egypt. Superb stuff.**
Explosive Racing	TOKA	Driving Game	#14 RU	62%	Cartoon-style racer high on speed but lacking in depth and with weak controls.
EZ Ehrgeiz	Squaresoft	Beat-'em-up/RPG	#14 IM	54%	Interesting mix of game styles, but it doesn't work as a complete game.
Felony 11-79	ASCII Entertainment	Driving Game	#1	80%	Driving game where you steal cars. Fun but too short.
FIFA 97	Electronic Arts	Sports Sim	#10 RU	70%	Big improvements over the previous version, but still shoots wide of the goal.
FIFA 99	**Electronic Arts**	**Sports Sim**	**#12**	**92%**	**It's a FIFA football sim again. Well what did you expect? Virtua Country Dancing?**
FIFA: Road to the World Cup	**Electronic Arts**	**Sports Sim**	**#2**	**91%**	**Stunning football game outlining the World Cup qualifying tournament.**
Fifth Element, The	Sony CEE	Action Adventure	#9	85%	Interesting though imperfect Tomb Raider clone. More puzzles would help.
Fighting Force	Eidos	Beat-'em-up	#1	78%	A 3D run-around fighting game with too many glitches to be outstanding.
Final Doom	GT Interactive	3D Shoot-'em-up	#7 RU	80%	A polished sequel to Doom, but why only 30 levels when the PC game had 64?
Final Fantasy Tactics	**Sony CE Japan**	**Strategy Sim**	**#11 RU**	**90%**	**Turns-based RPG combat. Cool game, but only available on import.**
Final Fantasy VII	**Sony CEE**	**RPG**	**#1**	**96%**	**The best RPG ever - huge, in-depth and full of things to do.**
Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2	Core Design	Flight Sim	#9 RU	79%	Very old helicopter arcade flight sim. Showing its age technically, but can still thrill.
Floating Runner	THQ	Platform Game	#13 RU	21%	Awkward perspective and stupid controls destroy this 3D platformer.
Fluid	Sony CEE	Utility	#8	54%	Part game, part sequencer, but neither has the depth to justify the asking price.
Formula 1	Psygnosis	Driving Game	#5 PL	88%	Superb driving game, but cursed by some terrible bugs. Opponent AI's weak too.
Formula 1 '97	Psygnosis	Driving Game	#14 RU	84%	No replays or link-up, but fewer bugs than the original.
Formula 1 '98	Psygnosis	Driving Game	#11	80%	Significant improvements on opponents' AI, but overall the game has regressed.
Formula Karts SE	Telstar	Driving Game	#1	87%	It's a little short, but thrilling nonetheless. A whole new perspective driving games.
Forsaken	**Acclaim**	**3D Shoot-'em-up**	**#7**	**93%**	**Doom meets Descent, taking the best of both and melding them into a top 3D blaster.**
Frenzy	SCI	Shoot-'em-up	#7	59%	Kiddie's shoot-'em-up where it's almost impossible to die.
Future Cop: LAPD 2100	Electronic Arts	Shoot-'em-up	#11	85%	Soviet Strike on the ground. Nothing ground-breaking, but fun nonetheless.
G*Darius	THQ	Shoot-'em-up	#10	74%	Fun retro blaster, but at times relies on filling the screen with too many baddies.
G-Police	Psygnosis	Flight Sim	#14 PL	87%	Great space combat, but showing its age technically.
Grand Theft Auto	**Take 2 Interactive**	**Driving/Action**	**#10 PL**	**90%**	**Steal cars, bomb police stations, smuggle drugs; no wonder it's '18'-rated.**
Gex	BMG	Platformer	#13 RU	70%	This platformer seems to have it all, but is somehow a little uninspiring.
Gex 3D: Enter the Gecko	**BMG**	**Platformer**	**#5**	**93%**	**Fantastic 3D platformer - real effort has been put into the level design.**
Ghost in the Shell	Sony CEE	Shoot-'em-up	#5	81%	Great Anime blaster, but too insubstantial to be good value.
Gran Turismo	**Sony CEE**	**Driving Game**	**#6**	**96%**	**Near-cinematic visuals and great driving physics make this a real winner.**
Grid Run	Virgin Interactive	Puzzle Game	#8 RU	49%	Tag in a maze - useless in single-player mode, and not great even with friends.
Gunship	Microprose	Flight Sim	#9 RU	38%	Helicopter flight sim with terrible graphics and unusable in-chopper perspective.
Hardcore 4x4	Gremlin	Driving Game	#14 RU	75%	Monster trucks and rugged tracks, but little lastability.
Heart of Darkness	**Ocean**	**Action Adventure**	**#7**	**90%**	**Ground-breaking action adventure, but a little short.**
Hebereke Popitto	Sunsoft	Puzzle Game	#8 RU	34%	Derivative puzzler which 'borrows' from several games but fails to match any of them.
Hexen	GT Interactive	3D Shoot-'em-up	#7 RU	33%	Uses the Doom engine, but retains none of its playability and verve. Best forgotten.
Hi-Octane	Bullfrog	Driving Game	#14 RU	54%	Slow frame rate, sluggish controls and lack of visual detail make this one to miss.
Hugo	ITE Media	Platform Game	#11	64%	Don't laugh - it's for the kids. The very young will enjoy its cartoony graphics.
Impact Racing	JVC	Driving Game	#14 RU	58%	Destruction Derby-type racer, but nowhere near as accomplished.
Independence Day	Fox Interactive	Shoot-'em-up	#9 RU	29%	A complete joke. Bad graphics, dodgy gameplay and ridiculously samey levels.
International Moto X	Warner Interactive	Driving Game	#14 RU	71%	Motorbike scrambling game. Not bad, but lacklustre opponents' AI.
In the Hunt	THQ	Shoot-'em-up	#5 RU	59%	2D blaster for kids - sluggish and with poor visuals, but reasonable fun.
Indy 500	JVC	Driving Game	#4	53%	IndyCar game for kids - simplified driving models and easy handling.
ISS Deluxe	Sports Sim	Konami	#10 RU	66%	Update of an old SNES game. Can't keep up with today's offerings.
ISS Pro	**Konami**	**Sports Sim**	**#10 RU**	**90%**	**Perfect mix of simulation and arcade action. Graphics showing their age, though.**
ISS Pro '98	**Konami**	**Sports Sim**	**#9**	**95%**	**This tactical, in-depth soccer sim puts in a world class performance. A winner.**
Iznogoud	Sony CEE	Platform Game	#13 RU	10%	Disastrous 2D platformer. Don't even think of buying it.
Jeremy McGrath SC 98	Acclaim	Driving Game	#7	71%	Flawed, sub-standard motocross sim. For die-hard fans of the sport only.
Jersey Devil	Ocean	Platform Game	#13 RU	89%	Full freedom of movement in this fully-3D platformer. Great visuals.
Jet Rider	Sony	Driving Game	#14 RU	44%	Dull courses, dumb computer opponents and dodgy physics - it sucks.
Jet Rider 2	Sony	Driving Game	#14 RU	61%	Better-designed courses than the original, but still ropey and frustrating.
Johnny Bazookatone	US Gold	Platform Game	#13 RU	64%	A platformer for younger gamers. It's not bad, but is definitely showing its age.
Judge Dredd	Gremlin Interactive	Light Gun	#6 RU	33%	Boring light gun game with bugger all to do with Dredd. Not good.
Jumping Flash!	Sony CEE	Platform Game	#13 RU	79%	An own-eye perspective platform shooter? Sounds terrible, but it works really well.
Jumping Flash! 2	Sony CEE	Platform Game	#13 RU	86%	A similar game to the first one, but with tighter, better designed levels.
K1 Arena Fighters	THQ	Beat-'em-up	#4 RU	44%	Kickboxing sim with foes so thick they throw punches while you're miles away.
Kartia	Atlus	RPG	#9 IM	82%	This RPG's almost two games in one. It has a real heart-wrenching storyline too.
Kensei	**Konami**	**Beat-'em-up**	**#14**	**90%**	**Top fighting game with superb blocking animations.**
Kick Off '97	Maxis	Sports Sim	#10 RU	60%	Fair-to-middling soccer sim. It's not bad, but there are better games around.
Kick Off World	FunSoft	Sports Sim	#8	70%	So-so kick-around which just can't manage a Premier League performance.
Kileak the Blood	Sony CEE	3D Shoot-'em-up	#7 RU	28%	Great technically, but where's the game? As interesting as juggling on the radio.
King's Field	ASCII	RPG	#11 RU	69%	First-person perspective RPG. For die-hard fans of the genre only.

THE BARGAIN BIN...

LOST VIKINGS 2 (INTERPLAY). Search around and you should find this one for around £15, which is a barg - despite its painfully 16-bit graphics and fearsomely 2D gameplay, it's a real hoot to play. You control three Vikings who have been taken from their homeland and deposited in a very strange environment. To get them back to the 'shiny thing' which brought them there, you must gather ingredients for a teleport spell and take them to the witch, who then beams you to the next level. Needless to say, all sorts of obstacles are in your way, which you must conquer using the Viking's individual abilities. The tough one has a sword and bionic arm for scrapping, the fat guy uses his shield to stop missiles and falling hazards or, by holding it above his head, as a platform, and the lanky carrot-top jumps very well. A typical puzzle might involve using the shield bearer, shield above head, to get the other guys past some falling rocks blocking your way forward, the fighter to kill a monster further on and then the shield bearer to use his shield as a platform for the leaper to use, taking him to an ingredient. Only by thinking ahead and combining the Viking's abilities can you proceed.
Lost Vikings 2 made few waves when first released, probably because its presentation failed to impress. However, its bite-sized levels and addictive gameplay make it a barg at today's prices.



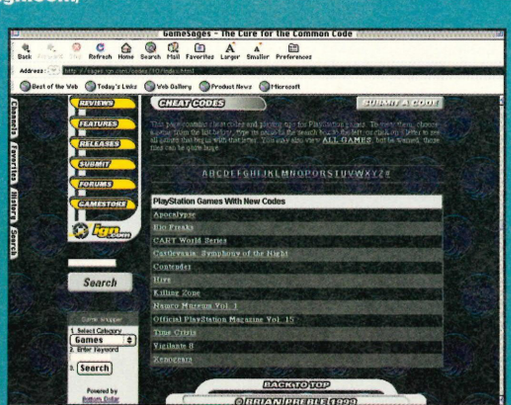


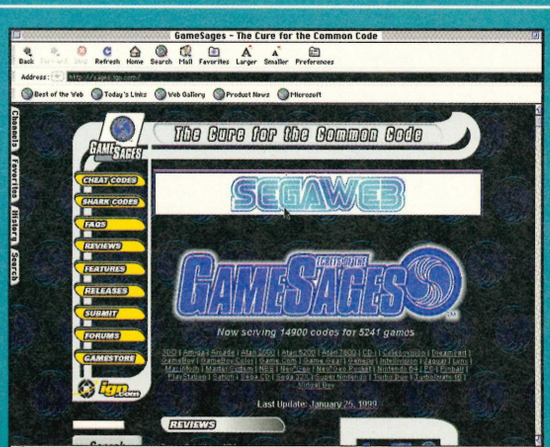

Title	Publisher	Genre	Issue	Score	Comment
Klonoa	Sony CEE	Platform Game	#6	74%	A decent cutsey platformer, but lacks long-term appeal. Ideal for kids, though.
Knockout Kings 99	Electronic Arts	Sports Sim	#13	42%	Abysmal graphics and dull fighting make this one to avoid.
Krazy Ivan	Psygnosis	Mech Game	#7 RU	43%	Mech game with graphics showing their age and simplistic combat.
Kula World	Sony CEE	Puzzle/Platform	#6	88%	Puzzle platformer where you guide a beach ball over some weird structures.
Kurushi: Intelligent Cube	Sony CEE	Puzzle Game	#8 RU	79%	Lousy presentation, but this unusual puzzler scores heavily in the gameplay department.
Legend	Funsoft	Beat-'em-up	#11	81%	Side-scrolling beat-'em-up in the Double Dragon mould. Good, but unremarkable.
Lemmings	Psygnosis	Puzzle Game	#12	59%	Retro compilation featuring the original Lemmings and the data pack for £20.
Lethal Enforcers 1&2	Konami	Light Gun	#6 RU	23%	This retro release shows how far games have moved since the 16-bit days. It's crap.
LiberoGrande	Sony CEE	Sports Sim	#13	80%	A new look at PSX football - you control a single player, not the team.
Lifeforce Tenka	Psygnosis	3D Shoot-'em-up	#7 RU	52%	Superb interactivity which makes Doom look dated, but the game itself is uninspired.
Little Big Adventure	Electronic Arts	Adventure	#3 RU	76%	Isometric perspective and interesting puzzles make this a cool adventure.
Lomax	Psygnosis	Platform Game	#13 RU	45%	A 2D platformer set in the land of the lemmings. Poorly designed levels ruin it, though.
Lone Soldier	Telstar	Shoot-'em-up	#5 RU	22%	Insipid disaster of a 3D shoot-'em-up with the worst control system ever seen.
Lost Vikings 2	Interplay	Puzzle Game	#8 RU	89%	Three Vikings with individual abilities puzzle their way through this epic game.
Lost World, The	Electronic Arts	Platform Game	#13 PL	29%	Outrageously shoddy platformer that breaks every known rule in game design.
Lucky Luke	Ocean	Platform Game	#4	84%	It's a kiddies' cartoon platform game, but an intelligently put-together one.
Madden NFL 99	Electronic Arts	Sports Sim	#10	81%	Great gridiron action, but scarcely changed from the last Madden game.
Masters of the Teräs Käsi	Virgin Interactive	Beat-'em-up	#4	82%	Star Wars beat-'em-up. Fun, but easy when you find Luke's near-unstoppable move...
Max Power Racing	**Infogrames**	**Driving Game**	**#13**	**92%**	**Top arcade-style driving game with loads of courses and real-life cars.**
MDK	Interplay	Shoot-'em-up	#1	85%	A brilliantly innovative 3D action game, but a little too easy to last.
MechWarrior 2	Activision	Mech Game	#7 RU	71%	Excellent mission-based objectives, but why is the scenery so uninspiring?
MediEvil	**Sony CEE**	**Arcade Adventure**	**#10**	**92%**	**Fiendish arcade adventure with lots of zombie-slashing and problem-solving.**
Megaman Legends	Virgin Interactive	Platform Blaster	#13	82%	Megaman, that old warhorse from the 16-bit consoles, returns in glorious 3D.
Megaman x4	Virgin Interactive	Platform Blaster	#13	79%	Looks and plays like a SNES game, but this 2D platform shooter is still enjoyable.
Men In Black	Gremlin Interactive	Action Adventure	#8	38%	Bloody awful 3D action adventure with lousy controls and disastrous glitches.
Metal Gear Solid	**Konami**	**Action Adventure**	**#10 IM**	**92%**	**Espionage thriller, and one of the best games ever made. Can't wait for the UK version.**
Michael Owen's WLS '99	Eidos	Sports Sim	#13	70%	Awkward controls and unforgivable bugs bring down this otherwise-impressive game.
Mickey's Wild Adventure	Sony CEE	Platform Game	#12	69%	Another fun kiddie 2D platformer from Disney. A must for Mickey fans...
Micro Machines V3	**Codemasters**	**Driving Game**	**#3 PL**	**93%**	**Brilliant top-down racer featuring tiny vehicles and imaginative tracks.**
Midnight Run	Konami	Driving Game	#14 RU	60%	Conversion of a Konami coin-op. Lacks substance and longevity.
Monkey Hero	Take 2	RPG	#14	88%	Interesting action-style RPG for the younger PlayStation gamer.
Monster Trucks	Psygnosis	Driving Game	#14 RU	69%	Mediocre truck game with too much pop-up and poor handling.
Mortal Kombat 3	GT Interactive	Beat-'em-up	#4 RU	60%	Gimmick-riddled gameplay, but no depth. The series is getting tired.
Mortal Kombat 4	**GT Interactive**	**Beat-'em-up**	**#9**	**91%**	**Mortal Kombat enters the realms of 3D with its gameplay intact and even improved upon.**
Mortal Kombat Mythologies	GT Interactive	Beat-'em-up	#13 RU	20%	Platform beat-'em-up. Should've been good, but is riddled with flaws.
Mortal Kombat Trilogy	GT Interactive	Beat-'em-up	#5 PL	60%	All the characters from the first three MK games, but same flat gameplay too.
Moto Racer	Electronic Arts	Driving Game	#14 RU	70%	Motorbike game, but you might as well be on four wheels. Poor perspectives too.
Moto Racer 2	Electronic Arts	Driving Game	#10	86%	Scrambling and Grand Prix motorcycle action in this arcadey driving game.
MotorHead	**Gremlin Interactive**	**Driving Game**	**#5**	**90%**	**Great driving game, but bloody hard. Nothing to do with Lemmy and the boys, either.**
Motor Toon GP	Sony	Driving Game	#14 RU	70%	Great for the kids, and amazing considering it was coded in 1994.
Motor Toon GP 2	Sony	Driving Game	#14 RU	83%	Cartoon racer which makes significant improvements over the original.
Mr Domino	**JVC**	**Puzzle Game**	**#7**	**91%**	**Great puzzle game based on domino tippling. Excruciatingly hard, though.**
Music	Codemasters	Utility	#11	84%	Create your own music tracks, along with its own light show. Flexible and accessible.
Myst	Broaderbund	Adventure	#3 RU	55%	Ridiculous puzzles, lack of plot and slow pace ruin this adventure.
N2O	Gremlin Interactive	Shoot-'em-up	#8	60%	Great psychedelic visuals, but ultimately it's just another flawed Tempest clone.
Nagano Winter Olympics 98	Konami	Sports Sim	#3	50%	Huge number of events, but all are too shallow and unenjoyable.
Namco Museum Volume 5	Sony CEE	Compilation	#2	72%	Five retro reissues - three good games and a couple of fillers.
NASCAR Racing	Electronic Arts	Driving Game	#14 RU	43%	Half finished in almost every respect - avoid this four-wheeled flop.
NASCAR 98	Electronic Arts	Driving Game	#14 RU	61%	Better, but limited by the sport itself - for NASCAR nuts only.
NASCAR 99	Electronic Arts	Driving Game	#11	79%	Contains all the real-life teams and drivers, but driving round in circles doesn't excite.
NBA Fastbreak '98	GT Interactive	Sports Sim	#5	89%	Basketball sim - great graphics, shit sound, realistic gameplay.
NBA Live 99	Electronic Arts	Sports Sim	#13	73%	A basketball sim for true enthusiasts. Has all the 1998 season rosters.
NBA Pro '98	Konami	Sports Sim	#4	71%	A very user-friendly, though ultimately unremarkable basketball sim.
Need For Speed	Electronic Arts	Driving Game	#14 RU	79%	A cool game in most respects, but despite the title, lacks speed.
Need for Speed 3	Electronic Arts	Driving Game	#4	83%	An excellent driving game, with the added attraction of racing coppers.
Newman Haas Racing	Psygnosis	Driving Game	#4	60%	Disappointing race game based on the American Indy Car series.
NFL Blitz	GT Interactive	Sports Sim	#11	73%	Arcadey gridiron game. Cool as a two-player offering, useless on your own.
NFL Xtreme	Sony CEE	Sports Sim	#13	49%	Arcadey five-a-side gridiron game. Let down by dodgy perspectives and bad controls.
Ninja: Shadow Of Darkness	**Core Design**	**Action Adventure**	**#10**	**90%**	**Run around slashing things in this Tomb Raider-style epic of Japanese proportions.**
NHL 99	Electronic Arts	Sports Sim	#11	87%	Yet another update of the NHL series. Cool stuff, with up-to-date rosters.
NHL Face Off '98	Sony CEE	Sports Sim	#3	80%	Smooth controls, but overall it's a little too clinical.
NHL Open Ice	Midway	Sports Sim	#3	80%	Very arcadey ice hockey game, but none the worse for it.
NHL Powerplay '98	Virgin Interactive	Sports Sim	#3	82%	Exciting and packed with options, this one's got a great long-term challenge.
Nuclear Strike	Electronic Arts	Shoot-'em-up	#5 RU	89%	The EA helicopter-based thinking person's shoot-'em-up saga continues. Great FMV.
O.D.T.	Psygnosis	Shoot-'em-up	#12	82%	Awkward at first, but as you get into it, this 3D shooter improves.
Ogre Battle	Atlus	RPG	#11 RU	79%	Not a bad RPG/wargame hybrid, but basically just a SNES game with a makeover.

WEB SITE OF THE MONTH...

The Game Sages: http://sages.ign.com/

Although Game Sages has news and reviews sections, the site is most famous for its cheats. There's an amazing 14900 codes for 5241 games here, covering all formats from the Atari 2600 to the Apple Macintosh. Needless to say, there's a huge PlayStation selection. The very latest codes are highlighted on the title page, which also offers links to separate lists arranged alphabetically, making it easy to find your way around. Game Sages used to be called 'Sega Sages', despite covering virtually every console and computer gaming format known to man. Hopefully their more realistic title will gain them increased readership.





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Title	Publisher	Genre	Issue	Score	Comment
Olympic Soccer	US Gold	Sports Sim	#10 RU	82%	Arcade-style soccer played at break-neck speed. Includes good overhead perspective.
Onside Soccer	Telstar	Sports Sim	#10 RU	45%	Awkward footie game. Plays unbelievably slowly and the gameplay frustrating.
Overboard!	Psygnosis	Shoot-'em-up	#13	58%	Interesting ideas, but this ship-to-ship combat game is too smart for its own good.
Pandemonium	BMG	Platform Game	#5 PL	88%	3D camera, 2D action but a great platformer nonetheless. Better than its sequel.
Pandemonium 2	Eidos	Platform Game	#11 PL	52%	Dodgy sequel which retains the original's charm, but not its gameplay.
Parasite Eve	**Sony Japan**	**Action Adventure**	**#6 IM**	**94%**	**Great Resident Evil-style offering, but a nightmare if you can't speak Japanese.**
Parodius Deluxe	Konami	Shoot-'em-up	#5 RU	70%	Great Japanese-style shoot-'em-up, but basically a SNES port.
Pax Corpus	Cryo Interactive	Action Adventure	#9	19%	Woefully inept Tomb Raider wannabe - everything about it sucks.
Pet In TV	Sony CEE	Virtual Pet	#9	71%	Train your pet using rewards and punishments. Innovative and different.
Pitfall 3D	Activision	Platform Game	#13 RU	72%	A few flaws prevent this free-roaming platformer being a classic, but it's not bad.
Phat Air	Funsoft	Sports Sim	#13	31%	Dodgy snowboarding sim which 'rewards' winners with a new jacket.
Philosoma	Sony CEE	Shoot-'em-up	#5 RU	55%	This shoot-'em-up is cheesy, dated and visually unremarkable, but still manages to be fun.
Pocket Fighter	**Virgin Interactive**	**Beat-'em-up**	**#10**	**92%**	**Cutesy beat-'em-up featuring kiddie versions of the Street Fighter characters.**
PO-ed	Interplay	3D Shoot-'em-up	#7 RU	69%	A Doom clone based on a chef gathering ingredients. Is it meant to be funny? It isn't.
Point Blank	Sony CEE	Light Gun	#6	89%	Fairground-inspired light gun high-jinks. Superb depth and gameplay.
Pool Shark	Gremlin Interactive	Sports Sim	#12	45%	Dreadful presentation and terrible graphics make this pool sim one to avoid.
Porsche Challenge	Sony CEE	Driving Game	#4 PL	79%	A quality game, but with only one car and four tracks it's just too short.
Power Soccer 2	Psygnosis	Sports Sim	#1	65%	More uninspiring than outright bad, and made redundant by subsequent soccer sims.
Poy Poy	Konami	Puzzle Game	#4	89%	Great multiplayer brawling. Grab objects and bombs and chuck 'em at your mates.
Premier Manager '98	**Gremlin Interactive**	**Strategy Sim**	**#5**	**91%**	**Spectacular and in-depth football management sim. User-friendly too.**
Premier Manager Ninety Nine	**Gremlin Interactive**	**Strategy Sim**	**#14**	**93%**	**Top football management game, even for soccer haters.**
Primal Rage	Midway	Beat-'em-up	#4 RU	85%	Too few characters to be a real classic, but fun nonetheless.
Project: Horned Owl	Sony Japan	Light Gun	#6 RU	43%	Another import light gun game. Dull and boring enemies make it a thrill-free zone.
Psybadek	Psygnosis	Sports Sim	#12	46%	Boring, frustrating hoverboard game with colourful graphics but sod all gameplay.
Psychic Detective	Electronic Arts	Adventure	#3 RU	50%	Confusingly unplayable adventure, but with genuine innovation.
Raging Skies	Warner	Flight Sim	#9 RU	70%	This flight sim's not for beginners, but offers very realistic gameplay.
Raiden Project	Ocean	Compilation	#5 RU	49%	Two old coin-ops on one disc. Cursed by losing all your power-ups when you die.
Rampage World Tour	GT Interactive	Smash-'em-up	#2	72%	Updated retro game doesn't give you enough for your money.
Rapid Reload	Sony CEE	Platform Blaster	#5 RU	41%	Dated platform blaster in the Mega Man mould. Looks and plays like a 16-bit game.
Rascal	Psygnosis	Platform Game	#13 RU	50%	Dodgy platformer with a dreadful main character and flawed design.
Rayman	**Ubi Soft**	**Platform Game**	**#13 RU**	**91%**	**Brilliantly colourful 2D platformer. Endearing and exciting, if not totally original.**
Reboot	Electronic Arts	Sports Sim	#4	80%	Crap American TV show becomes good PSX hoverboard game.
Resident Evil	**Virgin Interactive**	**Action Adventure**	**#10 PL**	**94%**	**Blood-thirsty action adventure. Unbelievable atmosphere and sickening violence.**
Resident Evil 2	**Virgin Interactive**	**Action Adventure**	**#4**	**97%**	**Clever design, brilliant atmospherics, chilling plot - need we go on? A classic.**
Resurrection: RoR 2	Acclaim	Beat-'em-up	#4 RU	20%	Sluggish characters and slow loading times render this one almost unplayable.
Revolution X	Acclaim	Light Gun	#6 RU	31%	Rescue Aerosmith in this light gun blaster. Only for die-hard fans of the band.
Ridge Racer Type 4	Namco	Driving Game	#13 IM	85%	Wonderful to look at, drives like a dream but far too easy to complete.
Rival Schools	Virgin	Beat-'em-up	#14	86%	Colourful fighter filled with fresh ideas and Japanese totty.
Road Rash 3D	Electronic Arts	Driving Game	#8	82%	3D update of the respected 16-bit bike racing and combat game.
Robotron X	GT Interactive	Shoot-'em-up	#5 RU	70%	Update of ancient classic which retains the heart of the original, but lacks its addictiveness.
Rogue Trip	GT Interactive	Driving Game	#11	81%	Futuristic taxi driving game. Great car combat and some seriously crazy characters.
R-Types	**Virgin Interactive**	**Compilation**	**#9**	**90%**	**Retro at its best - two classic blasters in one. Sure they're old, but who cares?**
Rushdown	Infogrames	Sports Sim	#12	34%	Rushed Out, more like. A dodgy sports sim with some disastrous flaws.
San Francisco Rush	GT Interactive	Driving Game	#9	69%	Dodgy loading times and sloppy driving physics kill this arcade racer.
S.C.A.R.S.	Ubi Soft	Driving Game	#11	80%	Combat racing with futuristic cars and cool weapons. There's a four-player mode too.
Sensible Soccer ECE	GT Interactive	Sports Sim	#13	20%	Disastrous update on the 16-bit classic - the game has lost all its playability.
Sentient	Psygnosis	Action Adventure	#3 RU	78%	Absorbing adventure, but too easy to lose your way.
Sentinel Returns	Psygnosis	Action Adventure	#10	33%	...But we wish it hadn't. Ugly, confusing update of an old classic.
Shadow Gunner	Ubi Soft	Mech Game	#14	36%	Boring, frustrating mech offering with non-existent learning curve.
Shadow Master	Psygnosis	3D Shoot-'em-up	#7 RU	74%	Brilliantly executed 3D Doom-style blaster, but a bit too samey.
Skull Monkeys	Electronic Arts	Platform Game	#3	65%	Great animation, but very little gameplay. One to rent.
Small Soldiers	Electronic Arts	Shoot-'em-up	#12	72%	Woeful interpretation of the film which wastes the licence completely.
Snow Racer '98	**Ocean**	**Sports Sim**	**#3**	**90%**	**Skiing and snowboarding simulation. Works well and offers good longevity.**
Soul Blade	**Namco**	**Beat-'em-up**	**#6 PL**	**94%**	**Weapons-based fighter from the Tekken stable - no wonder it's so good!**
Soviet Strike	**Electronic Arts**	**Shoot-'em-up**	**#3 PL**	**91%**	**Spectacular strategic helicopter game - the thinking man's shoot-'em-up.**
Spawn: The Eternal	Sony CEE	Action Adventure	#5	59%	Dodgy 3D action adventure-cum-beat-'em-up - boring as hell.
Spice World	Sony CEE	Puzzle Game	#7	75%	This isn't what you want, what you really, really want. Geri's still there too...
Spider	BMG	Platform Game	#13 RU	75%	Platformer where you control a spider who can cling to the underside of platforms.
Spot Goes To Hollywood	Virgin Interactive	Platform Game	#13 RU	24%	...And we wished he'd stayed there. This game's crap, basically.
Spyro The Dragon	**Sony CEE**	**Platform Game**	**#11**	**90%**	**This 3D platformer's an unbelievable technical achievement. Great main character too.**
Star Gladiator	Capcom	Beat-'em-up	#4 RU	23%	You can complete this beat-'em-up on the hardest setting using only one move.
Steel Reign	Sony CEE	Shoot-'em-up	#2	68%	This tank combat game makes good use of the analogue pad, but is ultimately boring.
Streak	**GT Interactive**	**Sports Sim**	**#12**	**94%**	**Futuristic hoverboarding sim with stunts based on physics rather than button combos.**
Street Fighter Collection	Virgin Interactive	Compilation	#4	70%	A retro collection of three Street Fighter offerings, but two are virtually identical...
Street Fighter Ex+Alpha	Capcom	Beat-'em-up	#4 RU	89%	The first 3D Street Fighter game, but the action is largely 2D with a 3D camera.
Street Fighter: The Movie	Acclaim	Beat-'em-up	#4 RU	21%	Terrible beat-'em-up which features graphics digitised from the film.

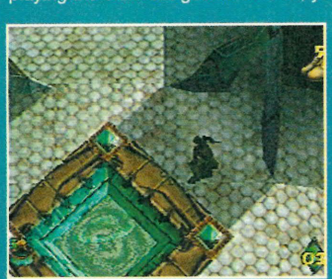
BONUS GAME OF THE MONTH...

Game: Pitfall 3D Bonus Game: Pitfall

Activision's 1998 update of their old classic Pitfall scored a respectable 81% in Issue Four. The game is an interesting 3D interpretation of the old Atari 2600 offering, but if you still yearn for the days of 2D action and bad graphics, you can access the original Pitfall game by entering CRANESBABY as a password. While playing the oldie-but-goodie version, you can also use the following cheat codes:

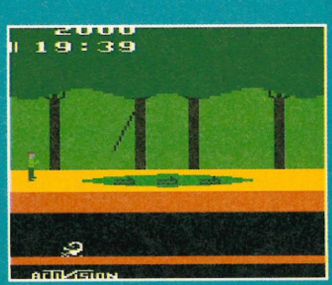
Unlimited Lives:	L1+L2
Atari 2600 Programmer's Head:	R1+R2
Programmer's Daughter's Head:	R1+●

Brings back memories? I'll say...









Title	Publisher	Genre	Issue	Score	Comment
Street Fighter Zero 3	**Capcom**	**Beat-'em-up**	**#14 IM**	**92%**	**Unoriginal but brilliant 2D fighter with some neat touches.**
Strike Point: Hex Missions	Elite Software	Flight Sim	#9 RU	50%	Flawed helicopter sim. Both perspectives both cause the chopper to obscure your view.
Suikoden	Konami	RPG	#11 RU	88%	RPG with 108 characters and a home base which grows as you go.
Super Pang Collection	Ocean	Compilation	#4	82%	Essentially three versions of the same game, but it's a very good game...
Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo	**Virgin Interactive**	**Beat-'em-up**	**#8 RU**	**92%**	**Puzzle game with the Street Fighter characters added for cosmetic appeal.**
Tactics Ogre	Atlus Software	RPG	#8 IM	78%	An RPG/wargame hybrid in the Final Fantasy Tactics mould. Samey after a while.
Tekken 2	**Sony CEE**	**Beat-'em-up**	**#4**	**94%**	**Second only to its sequel in the beat-'em-up stakes, this one's a cut-price killer.**
Tekken 3	**Sony CEE**	**Beat-'em-up**	**#10**	**93%**	**The king of all beat-'em-ups. A little sluggish compared to the Jap version, though.**
Tempest X3	Atari	Shoot-'em-up	#5 RU	57%	Boring retro update. For die-hard Tempest fans only.
Tenchu: Stealth Assassins	**Activision**	**Action Adventure**	**#10**	**93%**	**3D action game which demands stealth and cunning rather than speed and brawn.**
Test Drive 4x4	Electronic Arts	Beat-'em-up	#11	82%	Off-road version of Test Drive. Works reasonably well without being outstanding.
Test Drive 5	Electronic Arts	Beat-'em-up	#12	80%	Fun racing game, but let down by one or two minor niggles.
Tetris Plus	Jaleco	Puzzle Game	#8 RU	70%	It's Tetris; guide those falling blocks and fit them together. Classic puzzler.
Theme Hospital	Electronic Arts	Strategy Sim	#3	82%	Build and run a hospital? Sounds boring, but it's actually very rewarding.
Three Lions	Take 2	Sports Sim	#6	85%	Weird team set-up system, but delivers a good game of football.
Tiger Woods 99	Electronic Arts	Sports Sim	#13	89%	The golf sim's finest hour. The motion capture has to be seen to be believed.
Time Crisis	Sony CEE	Light Gun	#11 PL	89%	One of the most exciting light gun games ever. Almost arcade perfect too...
Tobal No. 1	Squaresoft	Beat-'em-up	#4 RU	85%	Dreadful one-on-one fighter saved by an excellent Quest Mode.
TOCA	**Codemasters**	**Driving Game**	**#1**	**93%**	**A great simulation-style racer. The driving physics are incredible.**
TOCA 2: Touring Cars	Codemasters	Driving Game	#12	89%	More of the same - another brilliant touring car racer.
Tombi	Sony CEE	Arcade Adventure	#8	55%	Interesting arcade adventure but spoiled by dated presentation and awkward gameplay.
Tomb Raider	**Eidos**	**Action Adventure**	**#4**	**96%**	**The 3D action adventure that launched a legend - Lara Croft.**
Tomb Raider II	**Eidos**	**Action Adventure**	**#1**	**98%**	**Makes significant improvements over the first game, but noticeably easier.**
Tomb Raider III	**Eidos**	**Action Adventure**	**#12**	**96%**	**By investing a little time and effort into the design, Core have come up with a top game.**
Tommi Mäkinen Rally	Europress Software	Driving Game	#7	41%	Disastrous rally game that drives like a brick. Technically inept and devoid of gameplay.
Top Gun: Fire At Will	Microprose	Flight Sim	#9 RU	59%	This flight sim suffers due to its complete disregard of inertia.
Total Drivin'	Infogrames	Driving Game	#14 PL	87%	Top driver with five styles of car and some great hidden elements to find.
Total NBA '98	Sony CEE	Sports Sim	#6	85%	It's yet another basketball sim. No more, no less.
Treasures of the Deep	**Sony CEE**	**Action Adventure**	**#6**	**90%**	**Underwater espionage at its finest. Unbelievable visuals and tactical gameplay.**
Tunnel B1	Ocean	3D Shoot-'em-up	#7 RU	68%	A driving mech game? Whatever it is, it doesn't really excite.
Unholy War	Eidos	Wargame	#10	69%	Wargame/beat-'em-up hybrid? Too much compromise to really work well.
V2000	Grolier Interactive	Strategy Blaster	#11	80%	This strategic blaster takes some getting used to, but it's rewarding in the extreme.
Vandal Hearts	Konami	RPG	#11 RU	82%	Battle-based RPG with incredible depth, but only 16-bit quality graphics.
V-Ball	Ocean	Sports Sim	#9	58%	Tongue-in-cheek beach volleyball sim. Okay, but threadbare as a full pricer.
Versailles	Cryo Interactive	Adventure	#9	59%	Reasonable edutainment adventure, but puzzles too obscure and info too intrusive.
Victory Boxing 2	JVC	Sports Sim	#10	85%	More of a sports sim than a beat-'em-up, this boxing game packs a heavy punch.
Viewpoint	Electronic Arts	Shoot-'em-up	#5 RU	55%	Diagonally-scrolling blaster in the Zaxxon mould. Boring sprites fail to excite.
Vigilante 8	**Activision**	**Driving Game**	**#6**	**92%**	**Car combat in the 1970s. Great fun, especially in two-player mode.**
Viper	Ocean	Shoot-'em-up	#7	61%	Dire shoot-'em-up with ridiculously dark graphics and a main sprite that blocks your view.
Viva Football	Virgin Interactive	Sports Sim	#14	89%	A cool game of footie with great ideas, but not without its flaws.
V-Rally	Infogrames	Driving Game	#8 PL	89%	Not a realistic simulation, but this arcade rally driver has stood the test of time.
VR Baseball '99	Interplay	Sports Sim	#12	45%	Average baseball sim with no real strengths or weaknesses - just so-so.
Vs	THQ	Beat-'em-up	#6	61%	Awful beat-'em-up you can complete by using the same move over and again.
WarGames	**Electronic Arts**	**Action/Strategy**	**#8**	**93%**	**Control multiple units in this great arcade/strategy hybrid. A 'must' for Strike fans.**
War Gods	Midway	Beat-'em-up	#4 RU	55%	Great 3D perspective, but very limited gameplay.
Warhawk	Sony CEE	Flight Sim	#9 RU	39%	The PSX's first flight sim. Well presented, but severely lacking in gameplay.
Wayne Gretsky's 3D Hockey '98	Sony CEE	Sports Sim	#5	55%	Competent but workmanlike - nothing disastrous, but lacking in sparkle.
WCW Nitro	THQ	Beat-'em-up	#6	55%	Wrestling game with huge roster of bone-benders but shoddy execution.
Wild 9	**Interplay**	**Platform Game**	**#9**	**92%**	**A platform offering with some really neat ideas. Gruesome ways of killing your foes.**
Wild ARMS	Sony CEE	RPG	#13	80%	Starts slowly, but unfolds into a compelling RPG. Not bad at all.
Wing Commander III	Electronic Arts	Shoot-'em-up	#9 RU	65%	Interesting cinematic experience, but too many cut scenes and too little game.
Wing Commander IV	Electronic Arts	Shoot-'em-up	#9 RU	76%	More of the same, but the in-game graphics are more sophisticated.
WipEout 2097	**Psygnosis**	**Driving Game**	**#3 PL**	**95%**	**Is this the fastest racer ever? Futuristic vehicles offer unusual driving physics too.**
World Cup 98	**Electronic Arts**	**Sports Sim**	**#7**	**90%**	**The official World Cup license comes up with the goods in this great soccer sim.**
World League Basketball	Mindscape	Sports Sim	#2	60%	This simulation-style sports game looks good but plays relatively poorly.
World League Soccer	Eidos	Sports Sim	#10 RU	70%	Average football game let down by dodgy power meter.
World League Soccer 98	**Eidos**	**Sports Sim**	**#6**	**94%**	**Bad commentary, but a superb game of soccer. Hard to score, though.**
Worms	**Ocean**	**Strategy Game**	**#8 RU**	**95%**	**Fiendishly addictive strategy puzzler, and one of the best multiplayer games around.**
Wreckin' Crew	Telstar	Driving Game	#7	58%	Poor combat racing game with lousy driving physics and awkward gameplay.
WWF Warzone	Acclaim	Beat-'em-up	#9	79%	Well executed, but lacking in depth. Captures the spirit of the sport really well.
X2	Team 17	Shoot-'em-up	#5 RU	81%	2D blaster from the old school, but with spectacular graphics and sound.
Xenocracy	**Grolier Interactive**	**Shoot-'em-up**	**#5**	**90%**	**Poor compared to Colony Wars, but fun for strategic blasting fans.**
X Games Pro Boarder	Sony CEE	Sports Sim	#13	75%	What's there's great, but this snowboarding sim is just too darned small.
X-Men Vs Street Fighter	Virgin Interactive	Beat-'em-up	#10	83%	Yet another Street Fighter game - it's good, but the cash cow's running low on milk.
Zero Divide	Ocean	Beat-'em-up	#4 RU	59%	Nothing disastrous about this beat-'em-up-with-robots, but there's no sparkle either.
Zero Divide 2	Sony CEE	Beat-'em-up	#12	52%	See above - this one's just more of the same. And it's still no good.

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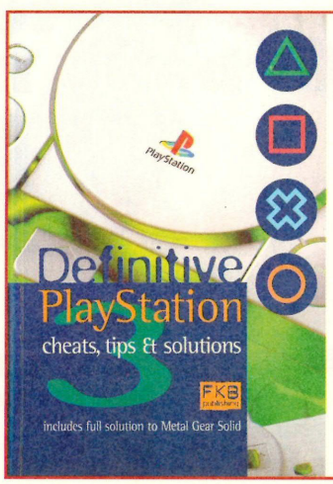
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Deputy Editor
Russell Barnes
russ@quaynet.co.uk

Staff Writer
Claire Webster
claire@quaynet.co.uk

Art Director
Nigel Harrington
nigel@quaynet.co.uk

Advertising
Jonathan Shaw
jshaw@quaynet.co.uk

Overseas Licensing
Dave France
dfrance@quaynet.co.uk

Managing Director & Publisher
Neil Harris
nharris@quaynet.co.uk

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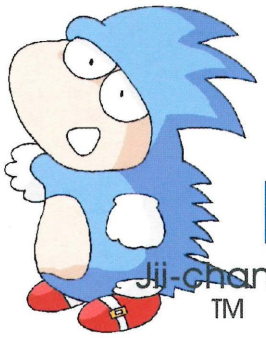
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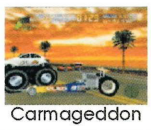

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