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FREE! METAL GEAR SOLID + RIDGE RACER TYPE 4 GUIDE

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ISSUE 16 April '99



EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!

GEX: DEEP COVER GECKO

THE LIZARD KING RETURNS IN HIS BEST ADVENTURE YET!

FINAL FANTASY VIII

FULL REVIEW OF SQUARE'S BLOCKBUSTER RPG

PSX 2 UNVEILED

SONY'S EARTH-SHATTERING NEW CONSOLE – FIRST EVER SCREENSHOTS OF IN-GAME GRAPHICS

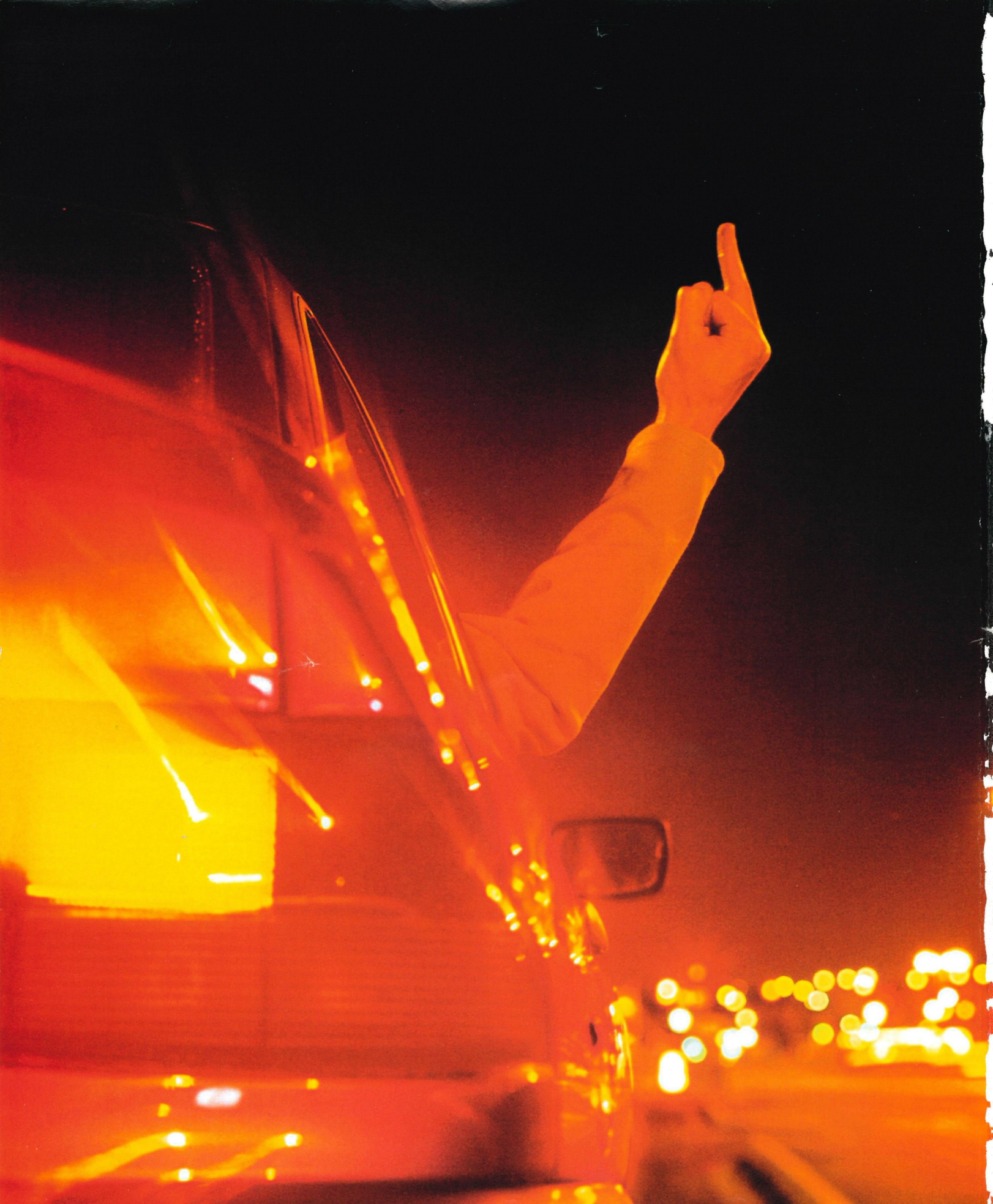
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ROLLCAGE
SWING
STREET FIGHTER COLLECTION 2
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FINAL FANTASY VIII

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ROLLCAGE MIND-BLOWING FUTURE RACING ACTION!



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

MAX POWER RACING

THE ULTIMATE RACING GAME

Editorial

Russell was on holiday for half the month, so a few more contributors join the team for this issue. Welcome back, Doug Williams and Richard Melville, and hello Paul Winslow, and Jon Shaw.

The long-awaited Final Fantasy VIII is with us at last, but you can't play it without a Japanese machine. Software companies dislike grey imports, but they could wipe them out if games were released simultaneously in all territories. With translation and a PAL conversion to undertake, though, is this too much to ask? Either way, we seem set for an endless cycle of protection system updates and new chips to bypass them, making endless money for chippers.

Ian Osborne
EPM Editor

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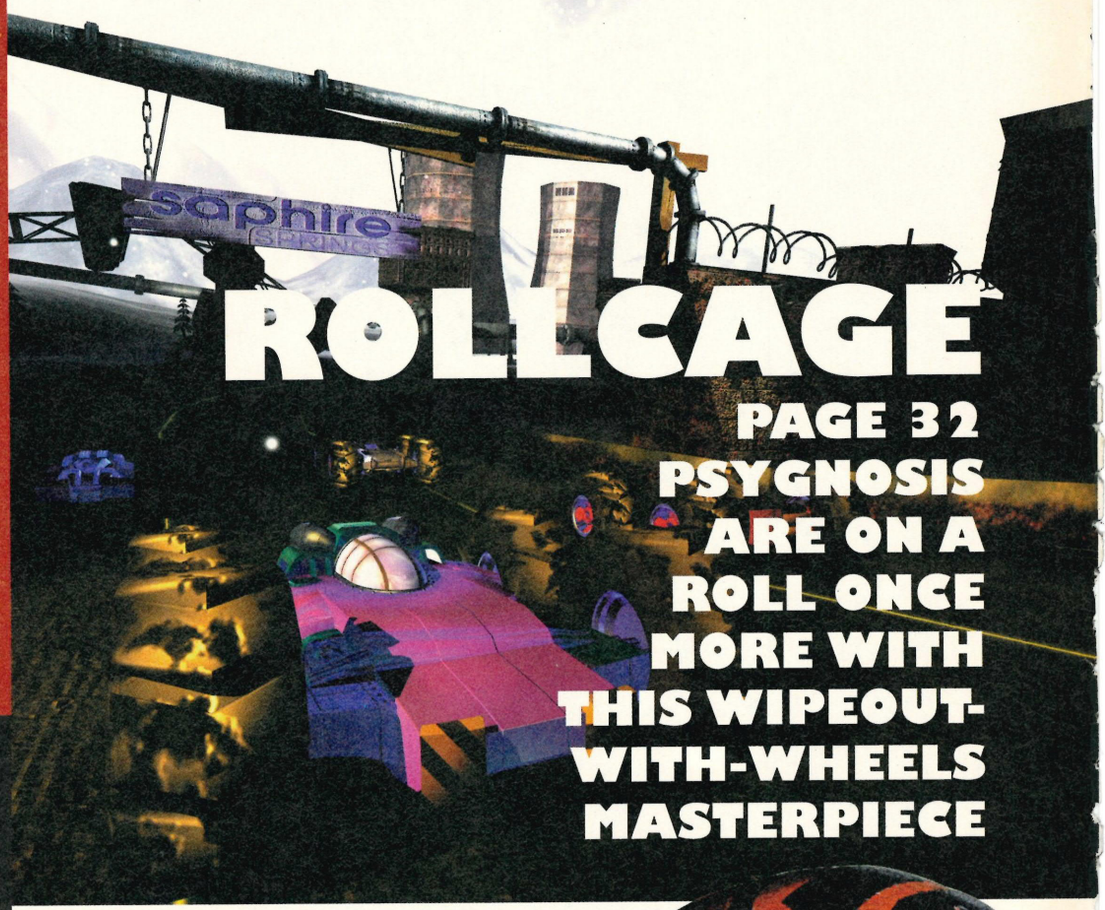
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ROLLCAGE

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PSYGNOSIS ARE ON A ROLL ONCE MORE WITH THIS WIPEOUT-WITH-WHEELS MASTERPIECE

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.



T'AI FU: PAGE 42
IS IT GRRRRREAT, OR JUST NOT OUR CUP OF TEA?

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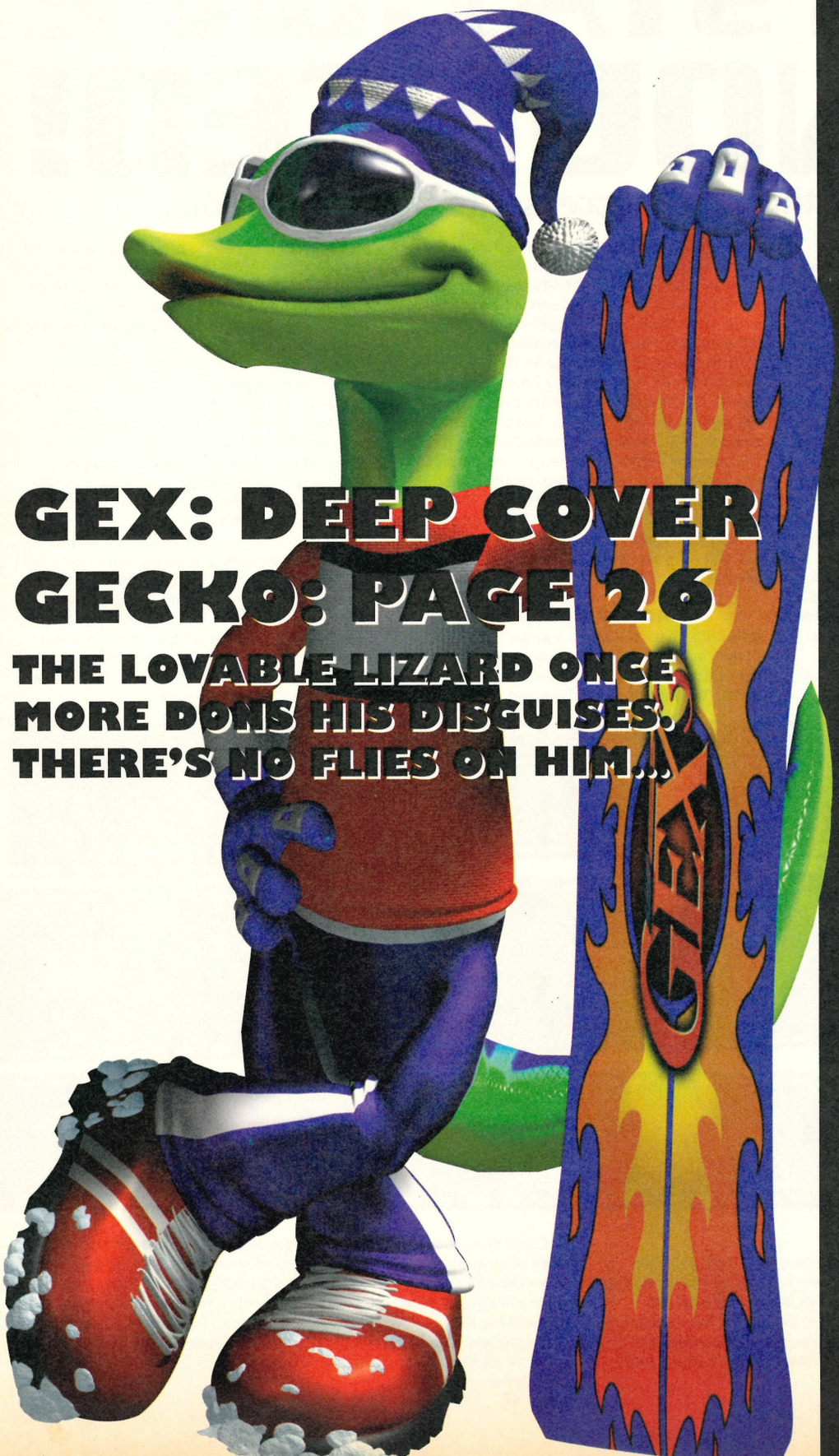
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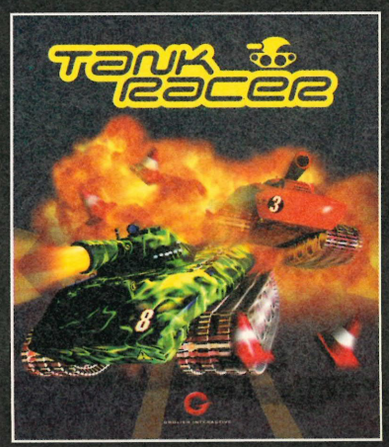
import

Final Fantasy VIII 62



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THE LOVABLE LIZARD ONCE MORE DONS HIS DISGUISES. THERE'S NO FLIES ON HIM...



PLAYSTATION 2 ANNOUNCED!

Sony unveil their forthcoming successor to the PlayStation...

After months of speculation, Sony have at last lifted the lid on the tech specs of their next PlayStation console. The new machine, yet unnamed but known as PlayStation 2, boasts huge advances on the current machine but will be fully backwards-compatible - you can play your favourite PlayStation CD games on it as well as the forthcoming PlayStation 2 DVD discs.

The new console is to use the latest multimedia system, DVD-ROM (Digital Video Disc). This has a much greater storage capacity than the traditional CD-ROM, and allows compressed graphic files to be streamed from the disc, enabling more intense 3D environments without glitching and pop-up. The machine will also incorporate a CD drive. This, Sony believe, is more appropriate for certain games. PlayStation 2 has also been designed to be compatible with the current PSX, so owners to play any of the 3000 currently-available PlayStation games. At last - you can upgrade your system without having to throw away your entire games collection. It has yet to be announced, though, whether the new PlayStation will also be able to play DVD video movies.

As one would expect, the PSX 2 has outstanding graphical abilities, with superior textures and an incredible ability to create worlds, characters, behaviours and complex physical simulations. This will help programmers develop increasingly realistic games, with environments behaving as they would in the real world. Imagine a 3D Doom-style blaster where every missed shot resulted in damage marks on the walls. Imagine a driving game with 40 racers and roadside objects that crumpled or flattened if you ran into them. PlayStation 2 can do it. Finer details that enhance the game can be added too. For example, characters' clothes and hair can be blown around by the wind, its strength and direction calculated in real-time rather than 'faked' as it often is now.

Emotion Synthesis

Naturally, there's more to a game than just graphics. Using a revolutionary gaming concept called Emotion Synthesis, PlayStation 2 allows the system to analyse and reproduce how objects and people behave, think and act as well as how they look. Thus real-life physics and artificial intelligence are a cinch to reproduce in games, allowing programmers to explore all sorts of possibilities. The machine's Central Processing Unit (CPU) is better than the most powerful PCs, and it has a graphics rendering processor second to none. Thus the PSX 2 is more powerful as a games machine than anything currently available, including ultra-expensive PCs with all the latest sound and graphics add-ons installed. 'Imagine', says Sony's spokesperson, 'walking into the screen and entering a movie - this is the world we are about to enter'.

The new Sony console has yet to be named - PlayStation 2 is just a working title. There are no pictures of it in existence either, though several 'artist's impressions' (read 'fakes') have been circulated. It's currently pencilled in for release early next year, arriving in Britain in the Autumn of the year 2000. These dates could, of course, still be put back, but here's keeping our fingers crossed...







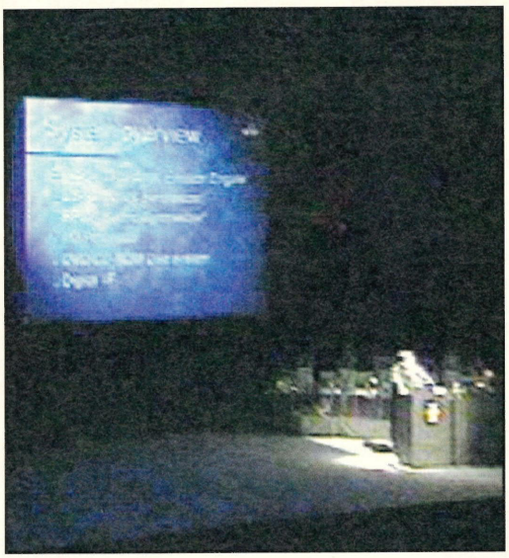


GAME FOR A CONSOLE?

Naturally, there's no point releasing a hot new games console unless you've some cool games to play on it. There are no playable versions of PSX 2 titles yet, but a handful of video clips illustrating what the machine's graphics engine can do were shown at the launch. The illustrations here aren't actually in-game shots - no game demos have been produced yet, but they use the graphic modes we can expect from the final games - these are NOT intro FMVs.

Crash Bandicoot, ever a familiar figure on the PlayStation, is seen at the head of an army of penguins. The ballroom scene from Final Fantasy VIII is given the PSX 2 treatment, and drivers Gran Turismo 2 and Ridge Racer Type 4 were featured, though the latter offered only a cameo of the gorgeous R4 girl walking and winking. All games offered near-TV-quality visuals, especially the Tekken offering, a fight between Paul Phoenix and Jin Kazama. The in-game graphics are of the same quality as the current PSX's rendered intro sequences.

THE PRODUCERS SPEAK...



What are the games companies doing for PlayStation 2? Let's ask them...

I nearly fell off my chair when Sony started pitching the 'Emotion engine' and provided the raw horsepower to do this work that games today just don't have the time to do. The game will watch you like a hawk. It knows every experience you are feeling and will make your character and the world react accordingly. That means if you seem stuck the game will help, if you are kicking ass, the character you are playing will change his emotional state and really get into what he is doing. Just wait until you experience it for the first time...
Dave Perry, President, Shiny Entertainment (Earthworm Jim 3D, Wild 9, MDK)

JVC will be 100% behind the new console. We reckon PlayStation 2 will be more amazing than anything we dared dream about before the technical announcements
were made, and will blur the boundaries between the games, music and film industries; With graphics so real you'll have to blink twice to make sure you're not watching a movie! We really wouldn't want to be in Sega's shoes...
Tom Hedges, Head of Promotions, JVC (Victory Boxing 2, WingOver 2, Yoyo's Puzzle Park)

With PlayStation 2, Sony will once again revolutionise games and the gaming industry. Due to the system's incredible design and power, gamers will get to experience state-of-the-art gameplay and graphics never before seen in a console system.
Jim Barnett, Chairman and CEO, Accolade (Test Drive series, Big Air)

We are really excited about the PlayStation 2. Games are just going to get more and more realistic, both visually and on the AI, physics side. Realistic physics are now one of the most important parts of games, and gamesplayers expect everything to move and react realistically. With the capabilities of this platform, there will be no excuse for shoddy, unrealistic character behaviour.
Jonathan Court, Studio Manager, SCi (Carmageddon, Live Wire!)

PlayStation 2 is for more than just gamers - it's a whole entertainment system. I'm sure it won't be over-priced for what you can get, but pure gamers may find Sega's Dreamcast more suitable for their wallet.
Andy Campbell, Managing Director, Red Lemon Studios (Aironauts)

COMPETITION

WIN A LARA © JACKET OR A STUNNING TOMB RAIDER T-SHIRT!

Eidos' Lara © clothing range has proved such a phenomenal triumph they're looking into expanding it, with several new products in the pipeline. Exactly what they are has yet to be decided, but to celebrate its ongoing success, we've a Lara © jacket and ten T-shirts to give away.

The jacket, worth £70, is a stylish black number with a subtle Lara © logo on the breast and another, larger one on its tail. There are two styles of T-shirt on offer; we have five of each. The Tomb Raider III design features game artwork from the London level, and the Expressions number has a single picture of Lara on the front and nine on the back.

What must you do to win one of these amazing prizes? Find the fabled Dagger of Xian? Take on tigers, multi-armed statues and evil criminals? Bribe the editor? No; just answer this simple question:

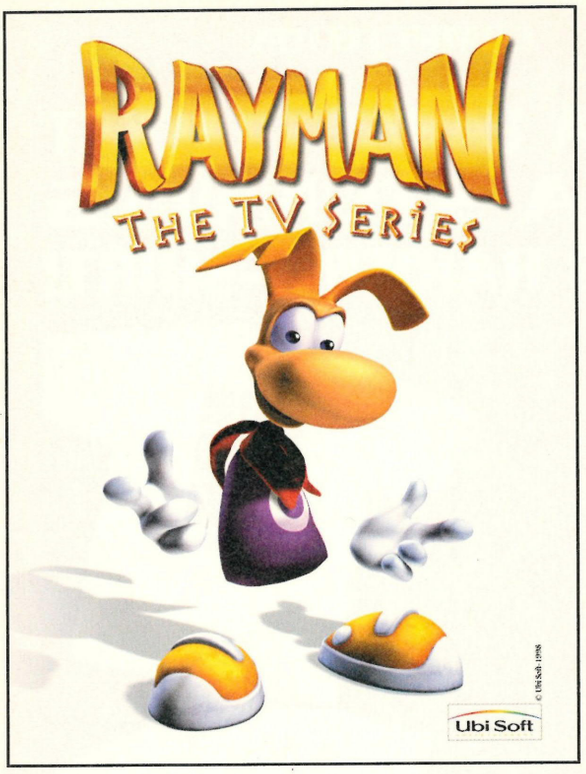
If it were up to you, where would the next Tomb Raider game be set?

Answers on a postcard to:
It's Lara, See? Competition,
extreme PlayStation,
22 Strand Street,
Poole,
Dorset BH15 1SB

Entries that arrive after 28th April will be seriously laughed at.

To order a free Lara © merchandise catalogue, phone 01525 381808 or check out the website at www.eidos.co.uk/larac/





RAYMAN HITS THE SMALL SCREEN

Cartoon series in preparation

Not content with having his own platform adventures, Ubi Soft's Rayman is to star in his own 3D cartoon TV series to be screened late next year.

The series is set in Aeropolis, a huge city where everything runs on air. As well as his old friends, he also meets 'funny and loveable' new characters such as Betina, Cookie, Lac-Mac and Flips. The 13 series' episodes, created in France and Canada, run for 20 minutes each and feature (according to Ubi Soft) 'excellent design, a variety of characters and fine modelling'. A two-minute pilot episode has already been put together.

According to François Pétavy, Production Manager, "The emotion we used to find in animated films wasn't present in TV series. With the Rayman TV series we show that it's possible to do 3D that has real warmth".

Ubi Soft's Chief Executive Officer Yves Guillemot continues, "Strong synergies exist between the games and the TV series. Thanks to 3D technology, many elements such as animations, settings and characters can be recycled and used in Rayman game sequels. The storylines are a great source of inspiration for designers of future Rayman games".

Rayman 2, the game, is currently being developed in China, and should benefit greatly from the coverage and material the TV shows will generate.

BANDAI CUT A FINE FIGURE

Toys based on PSX heroes released

Bandai UK are to release action figures based around some of the PlayStation's best-loved characters. Crash Bandicoot, Duke Nukem and the Quake marines all get the Bandai treatment, as do many of their friends and foes. The cast of the forthcoming movie/PlayStation game Virus are also featured. Figures in each collection are sized in proportion to each other, so the 4.5-inch Crash figure is dwarfed by the 7.5-inch Tiny.

The Crash Bandicoot series includes enemies Tiny and Dr Neo Cortex as well as sexy sidekick Coco and, of course, two versions of Crash himself. All figures come with accessories - look out for Crash's hoverboard, bonus crate and mask, with Cortex enjoying a rocket sled and ray gun.

There are also two Duke figures, the standard over-muscled guy with the Devastator and FreezeThrower weapons and a Night Strike version, who carries an array of guns and knives. He needs them when battling the Battlelord, Octabrain and Pigcop figures.

The forthcoming Quake II is served by male and female marines and Tank and Iron Maiden baddies, while the Virus collection includes several characters from the film and a huge monster called Goliath.

The Bandai action figures are already on sale in the States, and should hit these shores any day now. They cost a reasonable £9.99 each. Look out for more Bandai action figures later in the year too...



FRENCH CENSOR VIDEOGAME VIOLENCE

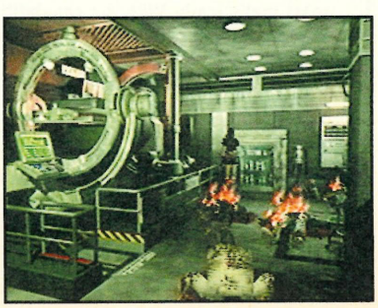
Stores forced to drop PSX titles...

The self-appointed guardians of our morality are on the march again, this time in France. Right-wing pressure group Familles de France has taken court action with the aim of getting six top-selling games banned, including the PlayStation's Resident Evil II, Wild 9 and Grand Theft Auto. Several retailers, including Virgin, have already withdrawn the titles in question.

According to Familles de France Vice President Dominique Marcilhacy, "We're trying to protect children; it's a sort of moral ecology". Hervé Pasgrimaud, a representative of the French videogames body SELL, disagrees. "Violence in videogames is a way of purging aggression - people are calmer after playing. Videogame violence cannot be linked to violence in the streets".







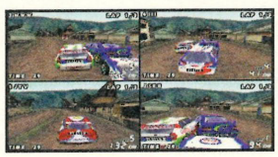
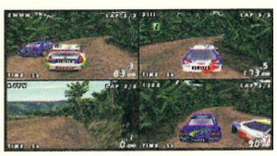
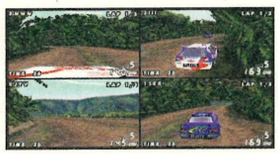
V-RALLY 2 CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION

FOUR PLAYER FRENZY

Four-player mode in V-Rally 2

Not only does Infogrames' forthcoming V-Rally Championship Edition 2 include an amazing 92 tracks and a course editor that lets you design your own, but it will now incorporate a four-player mode as well as a two-player game with horizontal or vertical split-screen. Infogrames also boast two secret pieces of technology never before seen. These are currently under wraps, but we'll let you know what they are as soon as we're able.

V-Rally Championship Edition 2 is set for a June release.

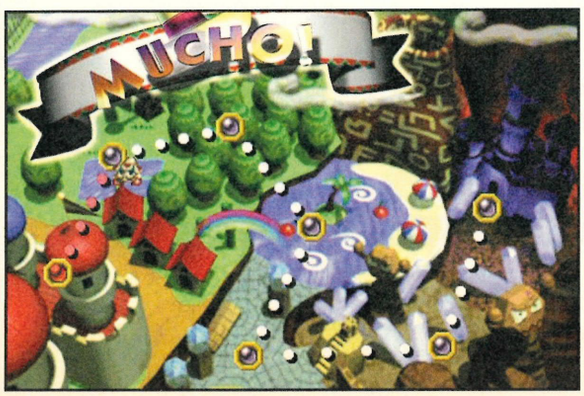





MUCHO MADNESS

PSX puzzler on the way...

Titus Software, latecomers to the PlayStation scene, are working on a 3D puzzler called Mucho. Choosing one of five characters, the layer must tackle ten levels of increasingly difficult mazes. Each level consists of four rounds, culminating in a battle with the boss.

To solve a maze the player must create a path by moving maze blocks, freeing guardian angels en route. All the expected power-ups and hazards are there. Titus promise the game, which goes on sale in June, is all about fun. Let's hope so...



MORE SOCCER GAMES IN PIPELINE

As well as Puma Street Soccer, previewed this issue, Infogrames are also developing two other football titles. Ronaldo Brazil Soccer features motion capture by the great man himself but also several other stars from the Brazil national team, meaning the players on the pitch all behave differently. Lots of attention has been paid to footwork and ball control too. Also in the pipeline is UEFA Striker, which features the UEFA league teams.

Both Ronaldo Brazil Soccer and UEFA Striker are due for release in the Summer.

THE EAGLE HAS LANDED...

Fans of arcade-style flight blasters can look forward to Infogrames' Eagle One Harrier Attack, an aerial shoot-'em-up featuring several camera perspectives. Although this includes an in-plane view, the game is definitely not a flight simulation, and instead focuses on seat-of-your-pants blasting action.

Eagle One Harrier Attack is due for release in around two months' time.

MGS BREAKS SALES RECORD

Konami's Metal Gear Solid has set a new record for first-week sales. In its first week on the shelves, the game sold 84,200 copies, beating the previous record holder (Resident Evil 2) by over 10,000.

PSX GAMES FOR £9.99?

With top titles like Tomb Raider II and Crash Bandicoot 2 going Platinum and Sega's Dreamcast console due for a UK release, demand is growing for Sony to introduce a sub-budget range selling for £10-15. Likely titles would include the ageing Destruction Derby, Ridge Racer and Tomb Raider, all of which have sold on the Platinum label for some time. Several retailers consider this a likely move, offering a new lease of life to old classics and giving the gamers some seriously cheap titles, but Sony have no plans to act just yet.

NEW FORMULA ONE GAMES

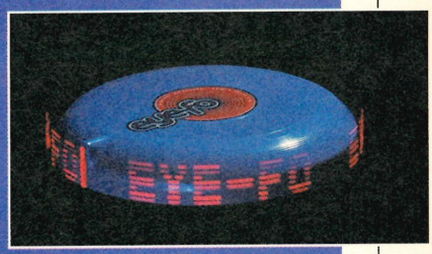
Both Electronic Arts and Eidos have signed non-exclusive deals with the FIA, and are working on Formula One titles for the PlayStation.

EA's currently-untitled game features all the cars, drivers, tracks and teams from the sport. No release date has yet been set. Eidos game is called Official Formula One Racing and goes on sale in the next couple of months.

POSTMAN TAZ?

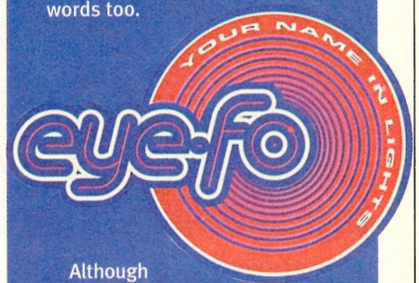
Infogrames, ever fond of their cartoon creations, are working on an arcade platform adventure called Tasmanian Express. Starring Taz and several other Warner Brothers characters, Taz' wife gets him a job as a courier. The player must help him

GADGETS



If there was ever a toy you wouldn't expect to be dragged into the electronic age, it's the frisbee. However, Eye-Fo have done just that with their space-age saucer, also called the Eye-Fo.

Using LED lights which flash at different frequencies, the Eye-Fo can spell out words of up to eight letters, leaving its message trailing behind it as it skims the sky. You can program any word you like using a three-button control panel set underneath the frisbee - and yes, that means swear words too.



Although heavier than a normal frisbee, the Eye-Fo flies really well. The LEDs work brilliantly too, offering crystal-clear word trails which are especially effective at night - at last you can have your name in lights. Changing the batteries is a pain, though.

The Eye-Fo is available in many colours, and costs £9.99.

Competition

Not only have we got five Eye-Foes to give away, but they're also custom-built PlayStation specials. Instead of writing pre-programmable words across the night sky, these offer the PlayStation symbols. To win one, just answer this simple question:

The Eye-Fo uses LED lights. What does LED stand for?

Answers on a postcard to:
One in the Eye competition,
extreme PlayStation Magazine,
22 Strand Street,
Poole,
Dorset BH15 1SB

Entries which arrive after 29th April will be folded into paper aeroplanes and thrown, along with the Eye-Fo.

EXPECT THE IMPOSSIBLE

Infogrames to release Mission Impossible on the PlayStation...



Infogrames are to convert their N64 title Mission Impossible to the PlayStation. The game, based on the Hollywood blockbuster, is due for release in June.

Although Mission Impossible received mixed reviews on the N64, Infogrames are to make changes for the PlayStation version, taking on board criticisms of the Nintendo game. Expect a full preview soon.

METAL GEAR SOLID WIRED FOR SOUND

Konami release Metal Gear Solid soundtrack at a bargain price...

The soundtrack from Konami's blockbuster Metal Gear Solid is now available as an audio CD. The album, available in all good record stores as well as video games outlets, contains 20 tracks taken from the game, such as the Metal Gear Solid Main Theme, Intruders 1&2, Mantis' Hymn and Hind D.

The music is crystal-clear and stands alone pretty well, but being incidental music from the game it works better when played as background music - go for it while doing something else. Style-wise, it could almost be taken from a 1960s TV spy thriller or cop show, but if you've played the game, you probably know that already.

Metal Gear Solid Original Game Soundtrack costs £7.99, and is in the shops now, and also available as part of the Metal Gear Solid Premium Box Set.





WHOLE NEW BALL GAME

Speedball to hit the PSX...

Legendary development house The Bitmap Brothers are back with an update on an old favourite. Speedball 2100: Ultra Violence is the latest in the bloodthirsty future sports sims. The original Speedball game hit the home computers and consoles in the late Eighties to instant critical acclaim. Speedball 2: Brutal Deluxe expanded and improved on the original, adding a management section and beefing the violence to the max. Speedball 2100 gives the original 2D outing a fresh breath of life with 3D graphics, enhanced features and polished gameplay. No publisher has yet been signed, but several are extremely interested.

Says Mike Montgomery of the Bitmap Brothers, "Our ultimate goal is to give the player more than just a game. Speedball 2100 will become a passion and an obsession".

NEW TOMB RAIDER GAME

Core Design are rumoured to be working on a new Tomb Raider game. Whether this will be Tomb Raider IV or a spin-off from the forthcoming movie has yet to be announced, but it is likely to appear on PlayStation 2 as well as the current machine.

NEW TETRIS GAME

Hasbro Interactive are to produce a new version of Tetris as part of its Atari range. The game, called The Next Tetris, is developed by Blue Planet Software.
Hasbro promise a new twist on the old classic, with new graphics, extra game modes and an innovative multiplayer offering.

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY AT BLOCKBUSTER

Interested in buying a game but want to try it out first? Check out your local Blockbuster Video store. Here you can rent a game from a selected range and try it out. If you decide to buy it within a month of renting, Blockbuster will refund the original rental fee.
The offer isn't available on all games, but Blockbuster update their selection every week. For more information, check out your local store.

FINAL FANTASY VIII

Square lock out importers

The Japanese version of Final Fantasy VIII, released in February and reviewed on import this issue, will not work on 'chipped' PlayStations. Developers Squaresoft have developed a 'lock-out' system that means the game will only work on genuine Japanese PlayStations, not UK and American machines professionally modified to play import games. Final Fantasy VIII sold an incredible 2.5 million copies in just four days in Japan, and because of the long delay before the release of the UK version (pencilled in for 'later this year'), it was feared that grey imports and pirate copies could seriously damage sales of the UK version.

Says Simon Etchells of Square Europe, "We think this is the most sophisticated anti-piracy software so far. We hope to make a real difference for European retailers".

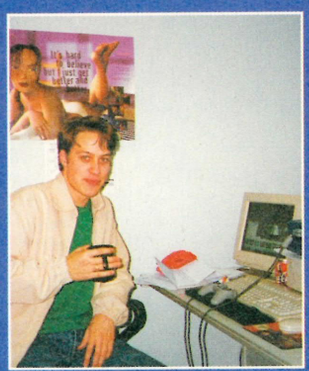
Naturally, the game will still work on an imported Japanese PSX.

MEET THE TEAM

It's April again - time for dodgy weather, Easter eggs and ridiculous April Fool tricks. The team suffered greatly last year - every one of us fell victim to a silly joke. But what happened? Read on...



IAN
Some plonker put a mild sedative in Ian's coffee. Two sips and he was out like a light, and spent the rest of the afternoon snoozing happily while the rest of the team spent their lunch hour down the pub and did bugger all work when they got back. Some might say this happens every day...



RUSSELL
While Russell was on the bog, we spread super glue on his mug. He then spent all afternoon drinking endless cups of tea and didn't get much work done (so what's new?), but at least it stopped him picking his nose.



CLAIRE
Remember the fart machine we covered in Issue Seven? We taped it to the bottom of Claire's chair, and she spent the rest of the day denying she was blowing off. By the end of the day even she wasn't sure - that's why she's wafting away the smell here.

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Bloody Roar
Bomberman World
Brahma Force
Brian Lara Cricket
Bubble & Bobble
Bubsy 3D
Burning Road
Bushido Blade 1 & 2
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Casper
Carnage Heart
Cheesy
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Command & Conquer: Red Alert
Command and Conquer: Retaliation
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Contra Legacy of Wars
Coolboarders 1, 2 & 3
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Crime Killer
Critical Depth
Criticom
Croc
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Dead or Alive
Death Trap Dungeons
Defcon 5
Descent &: Maximum
Destruction Derby 1 & 2
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Diablo
Die Hard 1, 2 & 3
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Duke Nukem: Total Meltdown
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Felony 11-79
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Firo and Klawd
Firestorm
Formula 1, 97 & 98
Formula Karts
Forsaken
Frenzy
Frogger
Future Cop: LAPD
Gex & Gex 3D
Ghost in the Shell
Goal Storm
G-Police
Gran Turismo
Grand Theft Auto
Gunship & :2000
Gu-Sun Oyoyo
Hardcore 4x4
Hexen & Hexen 2
Hyper Formation Soccor
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J. Mcgarth Supper Cross
Jersey devil
Jet Moto & Jet Moto 2
Jet Rider
J-League Winning Eleven
Jonah Lomu Rugby
Jumping Flash 1 & 2
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Klonoa
Knockout Kings
Krazy Ivan
Kula World
Kurin-Pa
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Loaded
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Madden 97, 98 & 99
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Magic Gathering Battle Mage
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Road Rash & Road Rash 3D
Rockman X3
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Runabout
Samuria Showdown 3
San Francisco Rush
Shadowmaster
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Skull Monkey
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Soul Blade
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Space Jam
Spawn
Speed Racer
Speedster
Spice World
Spider
Spot goes to Hollywood
Spyro the Dragon
Star Fighter
Star Gladiators
Star Wars
Steel Harbinger
Steel Reign
Street Fighter Alpha 1, 2 , 3 & Ex Alpha
Street Racer
Suikoden
Super Buster Brothers Collection
Super Puzzle Fighter 2 Turbo
Swagman
Tekken 1, 2 & 3
Tempest X3
Tenchu
Tennis Arena
Ten Pin Alley
Test Drive 4, 5 & Off Road
Tetris Plus
The Incredible Hulk
The Lost World
Theme Hospital
Theme Park
The Raiden Project
Three Lions
Tiger Shark
Tiger Woods
Time Comando
Time Crisis
Tobal No. 1 or 2
TOCA 1 or 2
Tokyo Highway Battle
Tomb Raider 1,2 & 3
Tommi Makinen Rally
Top Gun
Toshinden 1, 2 & 3
Total Drivin
Total Eclipse Turbo
Total NBA 97
Treasures of the Deep
Triple Play 97, 98 & 99
Tunnel B1
Twin Bee
Twisted Metal 1, 2 & 3
Victory Boxing
Viewpoint
Vigilante 8
VR Baseball 97
VR Powerboat Racing
V Rally
Vs
V Tennis
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War Gods
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War Hammer: Dark Omen
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WCW Nitro
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Insider info on future games...

While battling international terrorism as if 5.7 Billion lives depended on it, Russell Barnes slowed as he passed a mirror and straightened his beret. 'Who's da man!?', he commented with a wink. But what was meant as a rhetorical question soon had a shattering reply; 'not exactly famous last words' he thought, as his brain burst through his eye socket...

Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	RELEASED
Take 2 Interactive	Rebellion	July '99





That's a lesson to anyone who isn't prepared to give 110% while playing Take 2's remarkable 'covert operation simulator' Rainbow Six. Your mission, if you are prepared to accept it, is to guide your deadly team of elite operatives through terrorist-ridden buildings in your efforts to stamp out the enemy threat and free innocent hostages. There are 12 completely unique and realistic locations for you to bust wide open using completely authentic weapons and tactics as advised by the man himself; author Tom Clancy.

Planning your mission is key to success. Hand-pick your team from a group of the world's most deadly killing machines, checking their credentials to make sure they are suitable for that particular mission. Select the insertion method which offers your men the advantage from the 'off' by picking your entrance to the building and the tactics involved therein. Study in-depth plans of the buildings and fine-tune your plan carefully. Remember, these are real-life situations where one bullet is all that's required to put a man down and out of action. It's entirely up to you how the mission is performed. Storm the building with bullets flying every which way in an effort to surprise the enemy, or stealthily pick off the terrorist threat one by one in a spookily-familiar rendition of Bruce Willis in Die Hard.

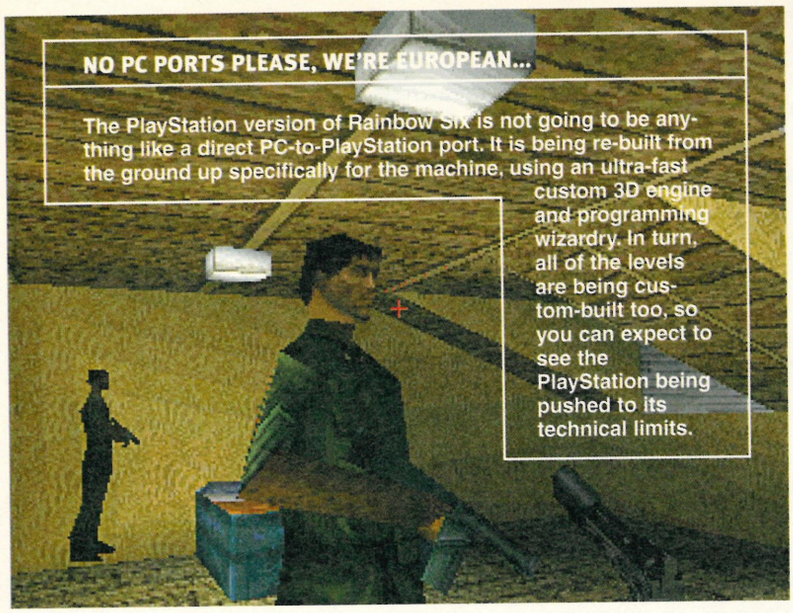
It's For Real...

The entire team currently working on the title are devoted to the idea of pure realism and real-life scenarios, and this is reflected excellently in the early code we had the privilege to view. The original PC version of the game has sold an incredible 500, 000 copies worldwide and has worked to revolutionise the combat, action and strategy genres.

The PlayStation version allows the player to control three operatives through each mission, so it's possible to set up flanking manoeuvres and cover exits and stairways. Changing your controlled character requires you to pick a vantage point so that he (now computer controlled) can stand his ground and pick off the odd terrorist should they cross his path.

It's important to realise, though, that the two non-controlled operatives don't carry on through the level and complete half of it for you. You're required to swap between your characters and position them rather like pawns on a chess board. When you finally meet a hostage, you're given two choices; tell them to stay where they are until you've checked your escape route for terrorists, or order them to follow you from the rear. It seems attractive to get them to follow, but one shot is all it takes to lose your man (or woman). It's obvious that throwing caution to the wind isn't wise, as the AI utilised for the terrorist characters is already more than good enough to catch you out.

As the game stands at the moment, there's still a long way to go before it's ready to hit the shelves. It seems that most of the 'tweaking' will be carried out on the graphical effects and animations as the final step. Things are looking pretty promising from the look of these screenshots, but expect to see much more polish and next to no glitching when it's released in July.



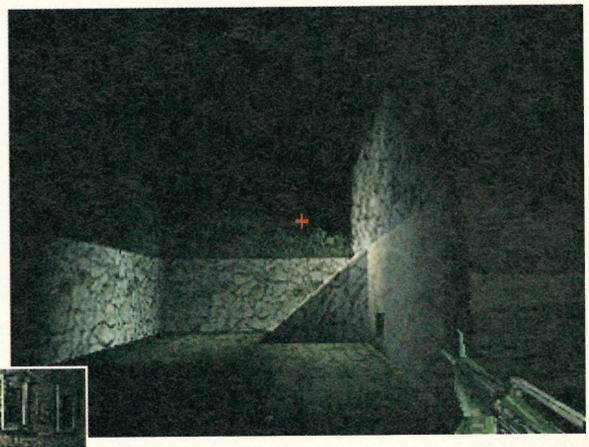
NO PC PORTS PLEASE, WE'RE EUROPEAN...

The PlayStation version of Rainbow Six is not going to be anything like a direct PC-to-PlayStation port. It is being re-built from the ground up specifically for the machine, using an ultra-fast custom 3D engine and programming wizardry. In turn, all of the levels are being custom-built too, so you can expect to see the PlayStation being pushed to its technical limits.



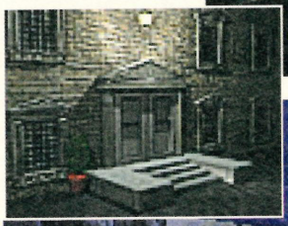


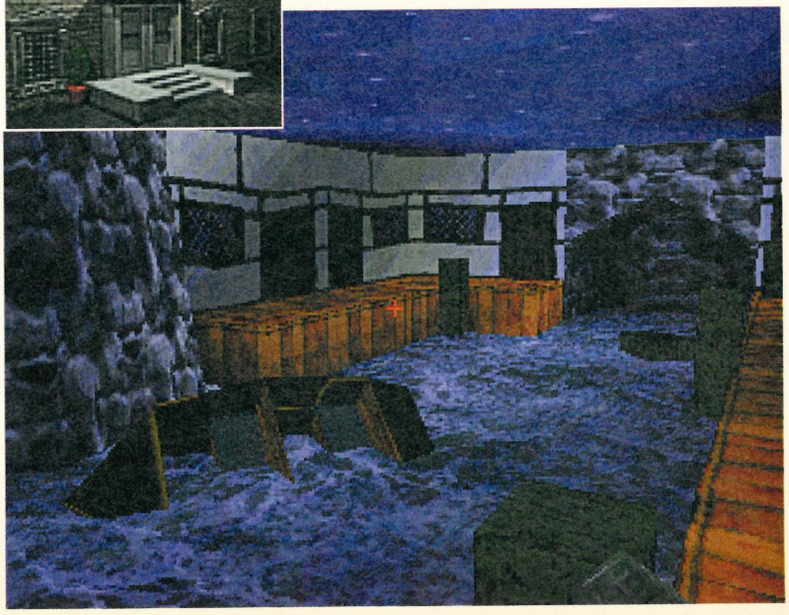


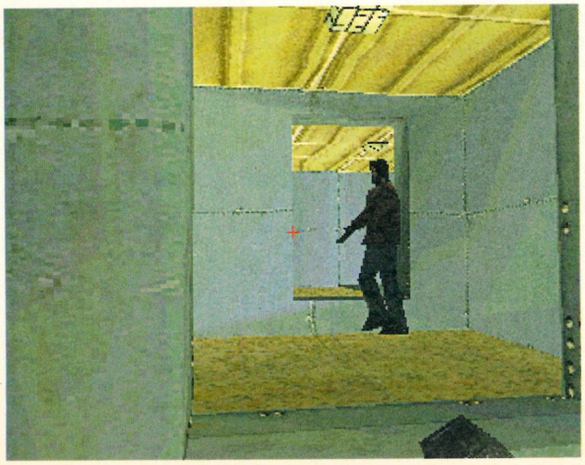


REAL HARD...

The PlayStation version incorporates three difficulty settings that effect several parameters of the game. On Easy, it's possible to take three bullets before you die, Normal allows two shots and Hard requires only one bullet to take you out of the picture.







PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive

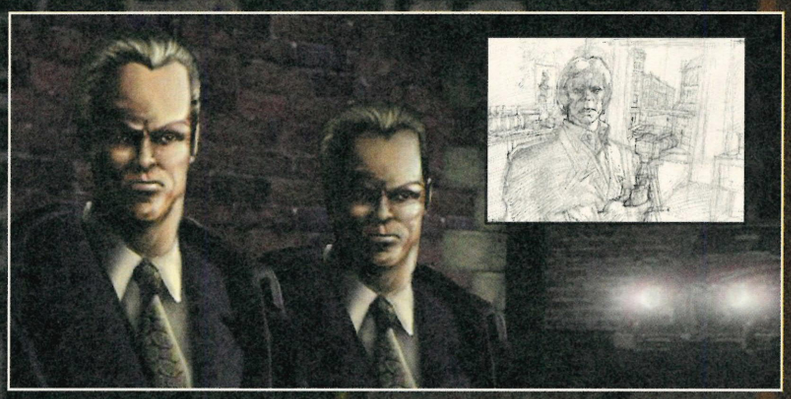
DEVELOPER Rockstar Games

RELEASED Summer '99

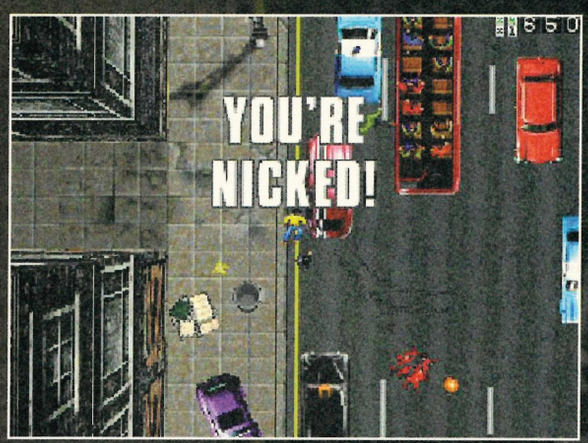
It's no awkward ponce...

Grand Theft Auto London











Well, it definitely had 'attitude' the first time round, wouldn't you agree? So what could be better than to create another helping of GTA set in our capital city? The streets were not only paved with gold in the 60s, they were also paved with loads of cars to nick. To find out what's in store, we though we would fire a few probing questions at the developers, Rockstar...

Why are you developing GTA London?

The opportunity to make a game which calls the player 'a right awkward ponce' was too good to miss. Grand Theft Auto is a great game that was immensely successful in the UK. Partly to please its huge UK fan base and partly to please ourselves, we decided to do a version set in London. The only possible time to set the game was at the end of the 60s, focusing on one of the coolest periods in the London underworld, and British film.

GTA: London has more attitude, and is more quintissentially English than any game I can think of. The game is a mission pack built specially for the fans of Grand Theft Auto, and requires the original game to play it. It's the first time a mission pack has ever appeared on PSX. That said, because we are releasing this specifically for fans of Grand Theft Auto, we didn't want to disappoint anyone, and have given a huge game for the price of an add-on pack.

What is GTA London?

In short, it is nothing more than an add-on pack with bells and whistles. But it is huge, with over 30 newly-designed, multi-stage missions, a massive new garage of period cars, an incredible 60-minute soundtrack featuring some amazing reggae tracks from Trojan Records and a lot of period film score music, all played out across 1969 London, packed with famous landmarks and all the famous faces and themes of British life at the time.

Why London?

What? What's wrong with you? Where else could we set up a follow up to GTA? The game is set in London at the point when the swinging Sixties collide with the gritty realism of the Seventies, an incredible period in English history which seemed perfect for a slightly tongue-in-cheek re-appraisal at the hands of the Grand Theft Auto engine.

Why was the original GTA such a success?

Why is any game a success? Style, originality, attitude, an attempt to make a game that was like a film or using technology in a more sophisticated way than simply concentrating on graphics are all possible reasons for GTA's success. It's a game that gives people an unparalleled amount of freedom and control over how they play the game, which dovetailed perfectly with the sense of freedom people experience cruising around a city doing exactly what they want.

How many levels will the game have?

The game is divided into four chapters. The first one is very brief, designed to draw the player off the straight and narrow and into London's underworld. As the user plays through the chapters, he rises in importance, and eventually answers only to the legendary Crisp Twins, a pair of psychotic East End gangsters who are beginning lose control. Each of the three main chapters has ten multi-stage missions, along with a series of secret missions, as you steal the cars of well known secret agents, desperate to save the world from nuclear apocalypse, lewd photographers and famous disgraced members of the aristocracy.

Why should we be looking forward to GTA London?

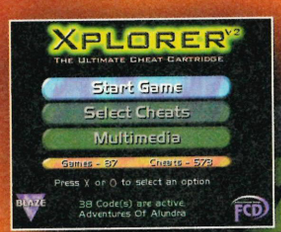
Because it is, uniquely, a game set in England, because it has attitude and style in abundance, because it is a game that calls a slag a ponce. Because it has a music soundtrack with just a little bit more funk than a couple of dodgy album fillers of the latest Housemartin of the moment. Because it advances the use of technology from GTA. But mostly because it is a huge, incredibly fun game, full of content, being released at the price of an add-on pack.

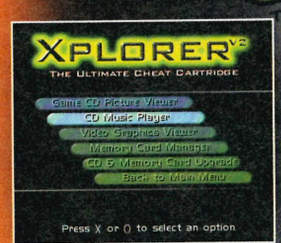
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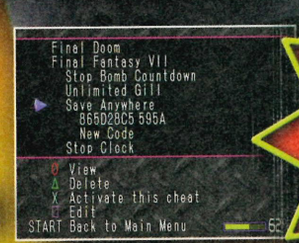


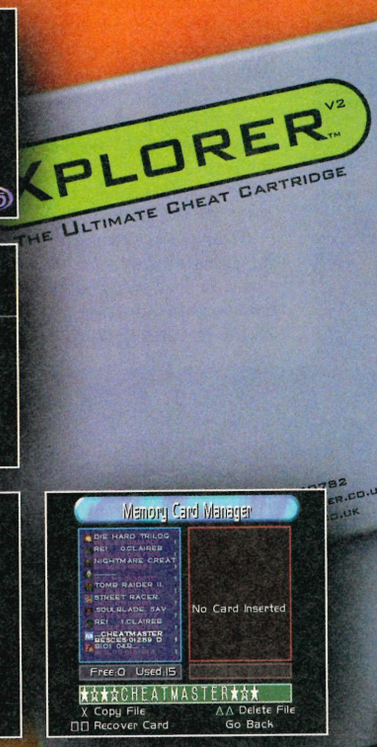
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PUBLISHER Sony CEE

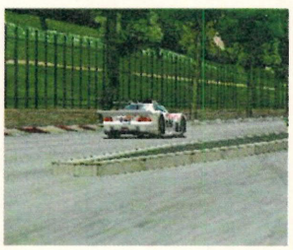
DEVELOPER Polyphony Digital Inc

RELEASED August '99

Gran Turismo

Probably the most anticipated racing simulation of all time is currently in development, but what we all want to know is how it proposes to overtake its highly successful predecessor...





It's the dawn of a new age for racing simulation games for the PlayStation. How can things possibly get any better than Max Power Racing, Colin McRae and the first GT? Well, keep watching this space folks, because things are about to get a whole lot better!

The first Gran Turismo has become legendary. Even The Cardigans named their album after it, even dedicated one of their songs to it, and, like the game, the record was a smash hit. Hours of fun have been had here in the EPM office trying out the new steering wheels on what is currently the best driving game EVER. Or maybe not....

GT2 has got some big shoes to fill, and everyone is expecting something special. Only 75% of the PlayStation's capabilities was used by the original, and with its sequel, our friend Mr Yamauchi is intending to go the full one hundred to bring out all the features of its predecessor at a higher quality.







Crazy Cars

The makes and models of the cars in the new game are still under wraps, as paperwork is still being produced and waiting to be signed. However, if take a look at these screenshots you get a fair idea of what to expect. But what we do know is that there's going to be around 400, yes 400, of them to choose from, and all of them have been developed in greater detail. The car physics are improved so the models behave more authentically, making them drive like real cars. You can tweak the car's torque, gear ratios, suspension stiffness, brake balance, alloy size; the list goes on. However, you're mistaken if you think GT2 is being developed solely for the car enthusiast, who loves a good tinkle under the bonnet. Gamers will love it too.

One of the few bad points about GT was the sound. Polyphony and Yamauchi concentrated entirely on making the graphics and other features as sophisticated as possible, and as a consequence, were unable to produce any sophisticated sounds. But







2



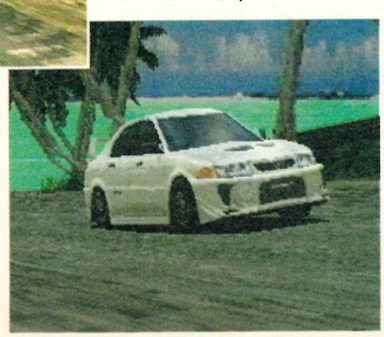


you won't find that problem while you're playing the sequel. The AI was also one of the lowest achievements in GT, so again, this has been vastly improved. For example, the opponent cars behave as if there really are human drivers racing them, which is rarely seen in any racing sim.

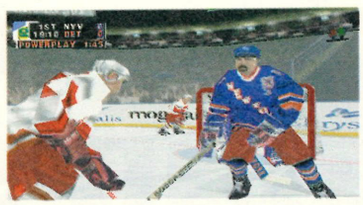
The tracks are still under-going the design process, but it's rumoured that there will be twice as many, most of them set in new and different country locations. So you can expect to find yourself racing along the seafront in Tahiti, doing handbrake turns on a Seattle Street circuit or driving at excessively high speeds through the ancient streets of Rome. We'll also be treated to some rally driving, much like you would see in Colin McRae Rally, which we weren't offered in the original Gran Turismo.

Gran Turismo may have taken around two months for your average game player to complete, but for GT2, the developers hope it will take more like a year. Just imagine, a whole twelve months of non-stop racing! Next to Metal Gear Solid, this has to be the most awaited game for 1999. It will be released in Japan in the Spring, but not to worry, as we won't have to wait long for our very own copy; it's supposed to be on the UK shop shelves in August, so keep your fingers tightly crossed.













PUBLISHER
Gremlin Interactive

DEVELOPER
Gremlin Interactive

RELEASED
Spring '99

Go on, give it some stick...

Actua Ice Hockey 2

Ice hockey is one of the most passionately followed sports in the world' screams the press release. In America and Canada maybe, but what does Actua Ice Hockey 2 offer us Brits?

The game uses a 3D engine co-developed for Actua Soccer 3, and that scored 91% in Issue 12 - things are looking up already. The players were motion-captured with the aid of the Sheffield Steelers, and every player is texture-mapped. You can battle your way through Friendlies, Cups and a Championship, with 31 teams and 770 players providing the opposition. Pull off a blinding strike and you can watch a replay, using slow motion if you wish.

The camera, according to Gremlin, follows play intelligently, giving the game a real TV atmosphere, assisted by a unique puck tracking system and interactive crowd and commentary sounds. On-rink fights lead to realistic injuries, which affect the way the players perform. There are three speeds of play, ranging from Authentic to Frantic, and a practice mode to hone your skills too.



At the time of writing, Actua Ice Hockey 2 is almost complete, so look forward to a full review in the next issue of extreme PlayStation.





PUBLISHER
Activision

DEVELOPER
Tamsoft

RELEASED
April '99

Go forth and adventure, young knights, the monsters await you...

Guardian's Crusade

We covered this one in the last issue, but since then we've seen a playable version of the game, so here's loads more info before you get a full review. It's always the same; the more details we receive about the games, the more updates you get!

Just to recap, this is an action-RPG where you take the part of a young knight who must take the journey through many different villages and towns to take your monster to the mysterious Tower of God. Along the way you discover just how difficult your quest will be and uncover many secrets about both the mystical world and the baby monster.

Developers Tamsoft have tried to make the game accessible to everybody by making the controls simple to use and by producing a very user-friendly interface. However, they're not going to be spoon-feeding us as the gameplay is already quite challenging with a strong storyline, so even the most experienced RPG gamers may run into some trouble.

Baby Boomer

The further you progress through the game the more features become apparent. For example, you can train your baby monster to fight your battles for you and you can also make it take on various personalities. Out of each of the 14 different characters you can train the monster to be, all give it some unique fighting abilities; you could say it's like having a Tamagotchi.

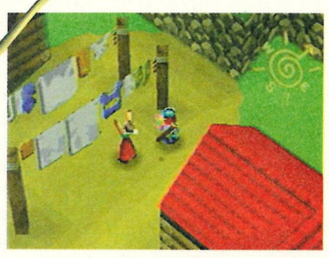
There will also be over 100 intriguing characters to meet and quite a few menacing monsters and bosses to attack, either by using magical spells or just with your vast array of weaponry. And as with all RPGs, you must also look in every single barrel, box and house for hidden extras and food.

Tamsoft have paid a lot of attention to the graphics in this game so far. There's lots of bright colours and feature-film quality Japanese-style anime, which creates rather a colourful fantasy atmosphere. There's also some special effects thrown in there for good measure. It looks as though we're in for a treat with Guardian's Crusade, which should be released in the Spring. Hopefully we may have a review for you next issue...



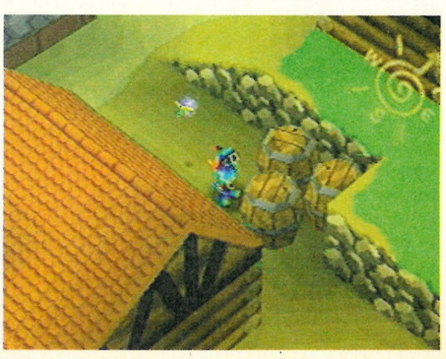












PUBLISHER Infogrames

DEVELOPER Infogrames

RELEASED Easter '99

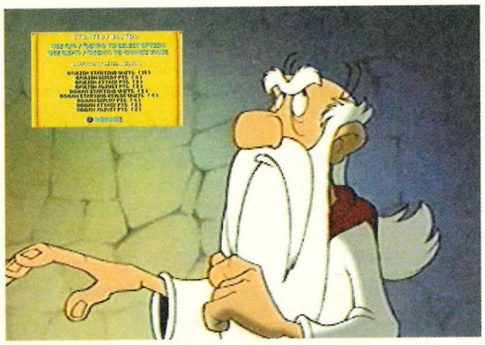
Stepping back in time to do battle with the Romans...

Asterix





It's 50 BC, and Gaul is being overrun with those pesky Romans. However, there is one tiny village that seems to have remained untouched by battling it out against Caesar's men. The inhabitants didn't use their fists, they used the magic potions made by their old druid, Getafix (no comment). But he is rapidly running out of the vital ingredients, and if some aren't found, fast, then the village will surely be taken over...



It's our job to go on an expedition to go and find these important ingredients which are scattered throughout the four corners of the land of Gaul. To help you, Asterix and Obelix keep you company. The only way to uncover the ingredients is by exploring all of Gaul and conquering all of the territories that belong to Caesar's legions.

At the start of the game, the Romans have control of all the territories in Gaul, and you only have one, so it's some mean feat to come out the winner! Initially you have a certain number of magic potion units which help you on your quest. The strategy game goes according to a system of rounds, during which you can give a fixed number of orders; deploying, attacking and adjusting, and you must use each one wisely because if the Romans attack the village and win, you've lost the game!

To say this game is be for kids isn't exactly true; it's not just a case of sending in the troops and victory is yours. It's like a game of chess - think carefully about your next move and be defensive as well as brutal in your attack.















PUBLISHER Titus

DEVELOPER Yukes

RELEASED June '99

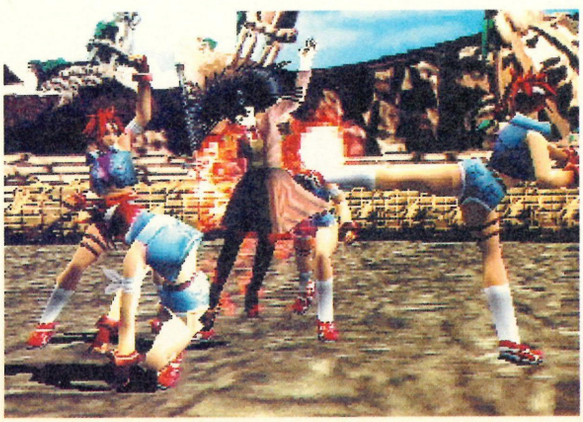
Packing a powerful punch...

Evil Zone

Developed by the Japan based company Yukes, Evil Zone intends to offer an unrivalled Anime perspective on the 3D fighting game. It's said to combine high-speed combat with clear and fluid Manga-style animations, set against a backdrop of unique camera movements and different fight perspectives during gameplay.

Apparently, it's already a massive hit in Japan due to its devastating special effects and awesome special moves. Its emphasis is firmly placed on projectile-based combat and defence tactics. Players can choose from ten different fighters, five female and five male (equal rights remember), including the classic Japanese hero complete with Gyver-like robo-armour and the not-so-innocent fighting schoolgirl.

Each fighter has some of the most original Anime weapons at their disposal and special fighting effects, namely they suddenly split into multiple fighters, laser beams shoot out of the sky and atomic explosions appear from nowhere. The game also allows players to choose from six different game modes including Story mode (like Bloody Roar 2), Single Player, Versus, Survival and Practice, in 11 realistic background settings. Looks like we may have a contender to beat the unique qualities we saw in Bloody Roar; we'll just have to wait and see.







PUBLISHER Infogrames

DEVELOPER Sunsoft

RELEASED 30th April '99

Soccer in the streets...

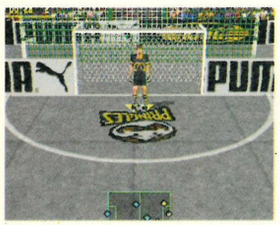
Puma Street Soccer

Puma and Sunsoft have joined together to try and produce what they like to call, 'The ultimate virtual football experience'. Puma Street Soccer is the only four-a-side football game produced up to now. This already makes it one of the most unique football sims ever, and it's not even out yet.

Just some of its features include fast physical gameplay, where you can perform some evil tackles, body checks and fake shots. It has precise and responsive control and five different play modes. There are 32 teams to choose from and each of the players has a unique set of individual physical and technical attributes.

As well as venues such as a port, airport, parking lot and a city street, there are also hidden pitches to find. And don't think that you're playing with any old football player, as you can choose from any of the 13 international football stars, like Sidier, Le Tissier, Deschamps and Gon Nakayama.

Up to eight players can take part so there can be some real competition and dirty play going on. We're looking forward to getting our hands on a copy for review, so be sure to look out for a full, detailed look soon.









Nothing's up with me, Doc...

Bugs Bunny: Lost in Time

PUBLISHER Infogrames

DEVELOPER Behaviour International

RELEASED 30th April '99

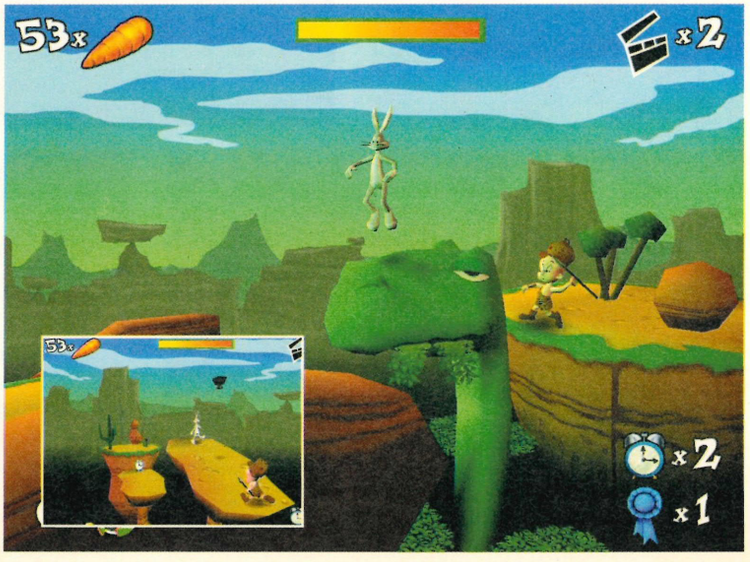
Many a happy hour has been had by all watching our mate Bugs over a cup of tea on mid-afternoon TV. It's funny, because rabbits don't actually look that smart when you're watching them in their hutch nibbling at a carrot. But Bugs, on the other hand, never misses a trick, sticking up for his rabbit rights against the not-so-bright Elma Fudd. It was only a matter of time before a game was to be made staring the buck himself.

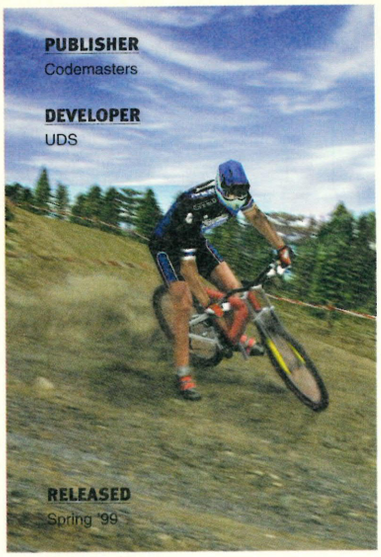
Yet again, we've been told the upsetting news that Bugs Bunny: Lost in Time is only for those between the ages of eight and 16. Don't you just hate it when they break news like that? But hey - we don't care, nowadays we take details like that with a pinch of salt, as some kid's games are more fun than those for us big kids.

Lost in Time is a 3D platform-stroke-puzzle game where Bugs accidentally comes across a time machine and decides to go travelling. As Bugs, you're propelled back over five eras and you have to try and find your way back to the present day - what could be simpler?

The game features 3D environments with a 360 degree camera rotation, as well as 12 of the Warner Brothers' most popular characters. And any fan of cartoons will be able to recognise the original voice-overs of the Looney Tunes characters. From the screenshots the graphics look outstanding, but as for the gameplay - well, you'll just have to wait and see until we review it in a later issue.







I want to ride my bicycle...

No Fear

Downhill Mountain Biking

We've never had the pleasure of having a full-on, realistic mountain biking game for the PlayStation; until now, that is. And it looks as though we're not going to be disappointed.

Players participate in a number of different game modes, going up against each other, computer-controlled opponents or the clock. Dicing with the other competitors forms an important aspect of this game, as jostling with your opponent increases the chance of a bone-crunching accident.

The races take place on highly-detailed tracks (as you can see from these screenshots), set in various locations around the world. From the deserts of Morocco to the volcanoes of Japan, each provides a new set of challenges. To contribute to the game's realism it incorporates accurate bike physics and, at the same time, has maximum playability achieved through very intuitive controls.

Other features currently being planned are strong and distinct characters with each having their own strengths and weaknesses, but all of them have the ability to perform spectacular tricks such as wheelies and 360 degrees. The whole experience is conveyed with vivid graphics and superb sound effects and enhanced by music that reflects the attitude of the sport (whatever that may be). Let's hope that UDS misses out the uncomfortable feeling that your saddle creates when you're riding on a bumpy track in their 'realistic' effects!







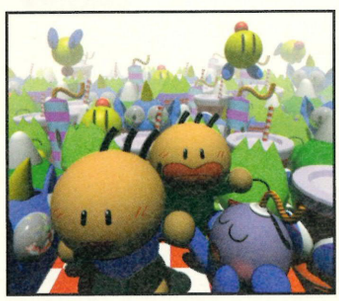
PUBLISHER
JVC

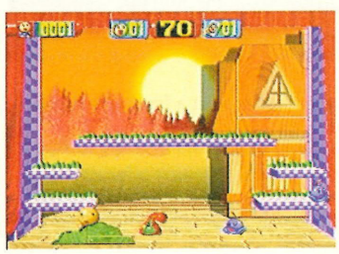
DEVELOPER
Irem

RELEASED
Spring '99

It's bomb-blowing good fun...

YoYo's Puzzle Park







Even in its early stages YoYo's Puzzle Park has been described as a cross between Bubble Bobble and Super Bomberman, and we would be inclined to agree. We've also managed to get our hands on a preview copy, so it's been hard work to drag ourselves away to write this for you.

The general principle of the game is to clear all the enemies from the rotating 2D platforms within a specific time limit by exploding them. The two main characters are Chibi and Deka and both of them are bombs. You play a little character who has to explode Chibi and Deka by hitting or kicking them at the enemy without making contact with them, as it results in losing a life. It sounds quite easy, but as you become more of an expert, so do they - at following you all over the stage in an attempt to make you walk into them.



Each attraction area in the Puzzle Park has ten stages, 124 in total, and there's also the option of playing in two-player mode where you can play as a team or against each other. To make it a real battle, there's an abundance of power-ups and gadgets to help blast each other into little pieces. We're not going to give too much away at this early stage, but we're certain that it will certainly be a favourite with all of you who love a good puzzle game.



PUBLISHER JVC | **DEVELOPER** JVC | **RELEASED** May '99

Wing Over 2

Flying by the seat of your pants...



Make sure that your ejector seat is working and you've got a firm grip on your joypads, as you're about to enter the thrilling world of air flight combat school. In this new flight sim from JVC, you start by learning the basics of flying; a loop here, a dive there and then you head onto more complicated air-to-air combat manoeuvres by way of a series of flight school exams.

You should really pay attention to your teachers in this game, as the more exams you pass, the greater your hanger access is, opening up a whole airbase of top-end fighters and jets for you to use. However, going to combat school is expensive and you have to earn some hard cash by flying errands for the academy.

You begin, like everyone else, as a rookie. But the more errands you run and the more flying and target practice you get, the more money you can earn - anything from flying tourists on a trip around the island to escorting the Presidential 747 through hostile territory.

Wing Over 2 also features some all-new flying conditions such as thunderstorms, cloud level, sunspots and night flights. Looking at the provisional manual, the controls look quite complicated, but on the bright side, it's been announced that it's flight stick compatible. Of course, we won't know every detail until we get our hands on the game, but it's looking rather promising!









Hoorah; it's a UK version...

Street Fighter Alpha 3

PUBLISHER Virgin Interactive | **DEVELOPER** Capcom | **RELEASED** Spring '99

In Issue 14 we reviewed Street Fighter Zero 3 on import, but now it seems we won't have to part with around 50 quid after all, as it's now over here under a different name.

Russell did a smashing job on filling you in on all the details then, but we thought we should give you some info on it's UK relative.



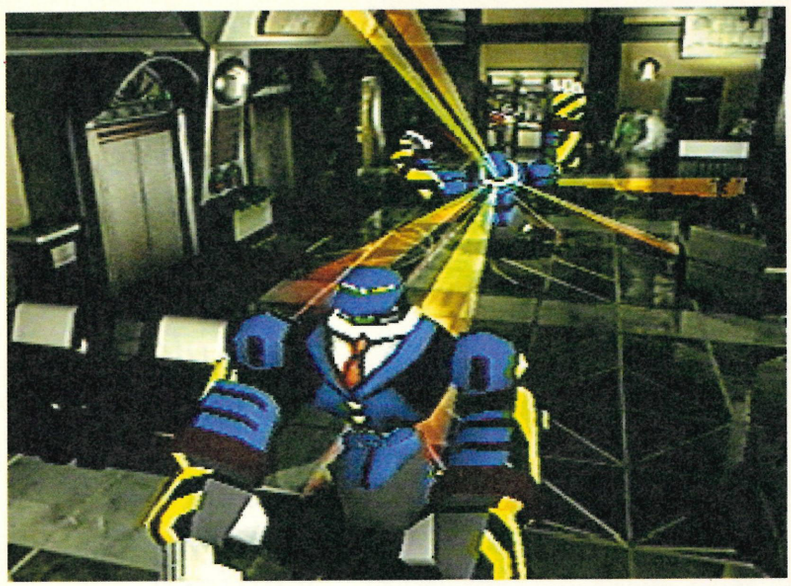
The shear number of characters and their use of special moves was clearly one of the main reasons the Street Fighter series was so popular in the arcades. There are a massive 30 characters in this version, and some of them literally are 'massive'. They all perform the same moves with a few more thrown in to add some extra originality.

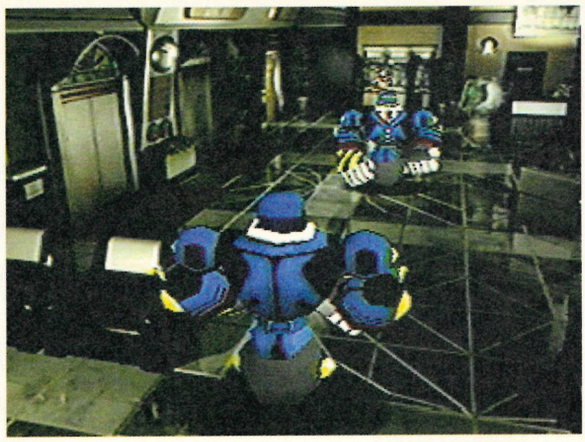
It also still includes the same graphics engine and mechanics, and looking at the copy we received from Virgin they look as stunning as ever. But does it offer anything new? That's what you obviously want to know. For starters, you won't be eagerly tapping your fingers waiting for the game to load as it takes no time at all. The options menus have also been revamped, so they're looking a lot more attractive, and there's new background music to boot.

More game modes become unlocked as you expertly progress through the game, so there's hours and hours of gameplay to be had. We've also noticed it's going to be compatible with the Pocket Station, and the list goes on. Street Fighter fans will be overjoyed to get their hands on this; look out for a full review soon.









Bruce Willis style hard hitting action...

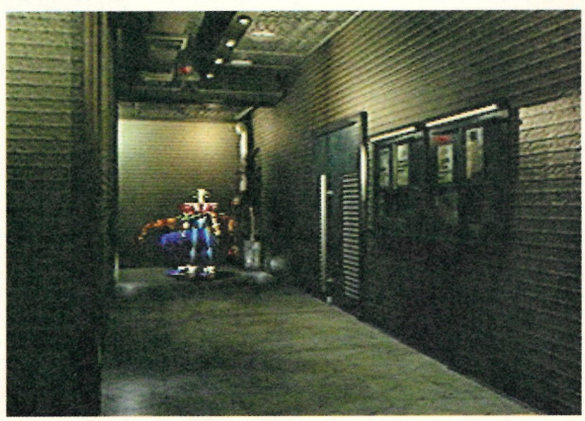
Hard Edge

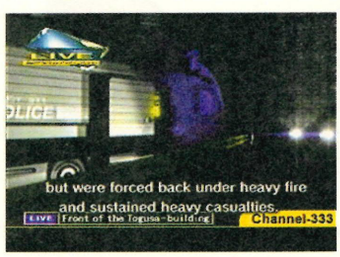


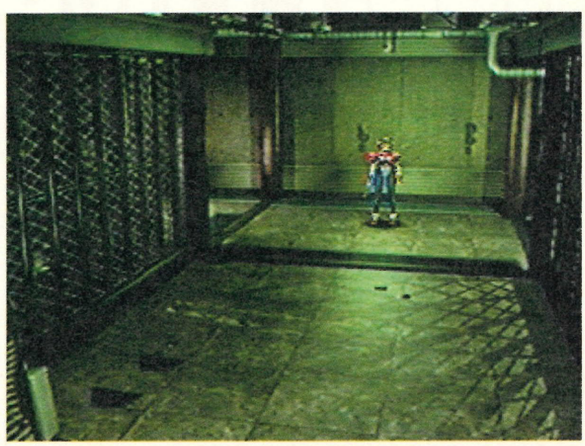
PUBLISHER
Sunsoft

DEVELOPER
Sunsoft

RELEASED
Spring '99







The year is 2046 and the information highway encompasses the globe. Humans are slowly being replaced by robots, particularly for military purposes and whoever gains full command over this technology will become controller of the planet. In the early dawn, the metropolitan police force has been alerted to a situation by a distress signal from the owner of a corporation called Machinery Gear who said that the evil terrorist, Crowfoot had taken over the office building. A swat team is rushed to the scene in order to rescue the hostages and restore order to the area.

You are part of that swot team, your mission is to quash Crowfoots fiendish scheme and save the day using whatever means possible. You'll have to overcome some deadly traps that the evil gang has left to ensnare anyone who tries to stop them. You have to unravel the countless mysteries awaiting you, if mankind is to continue to live free and in harmony. A heroic battle to the death is about to occur, in which you play the leading role.

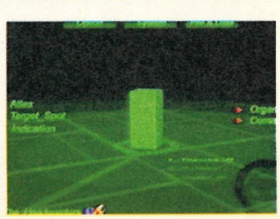
If you hadn't guessed from the story, this is an action adventure game in which you play either of the two remaining survivors, Alex or Michelle. You must guide your character through the Togusa building trying not to fall victim to the booby traps and angry terrorists that await you.

Brucey baby

There are loads of puzzles for you to solve while you explore the various floors and you'll also do some beat 'em up style fighting along the way. It all sounds and looks like the Die Hard movies, where our mate Bruce fights against Hans Gruber and then in his third mission goes up against his brother 'Simon'-you remember, the guy with the deadly concoctions for bombs.

The graphics look beautifully detailed at this preview stage, and the characters are created in an authentic Japanese Manga style. Futuristic world imagery and cinematic camera angles will contribute something that looks vaguely like Metal Gear Solid. But don't get your hopes up, as there are a few glitches, such as the controls, which are letting the game down at the moment. But as usual, there's no final decisions until we see the polished version, and if you're lucky, it may be ready for review in the very near future.

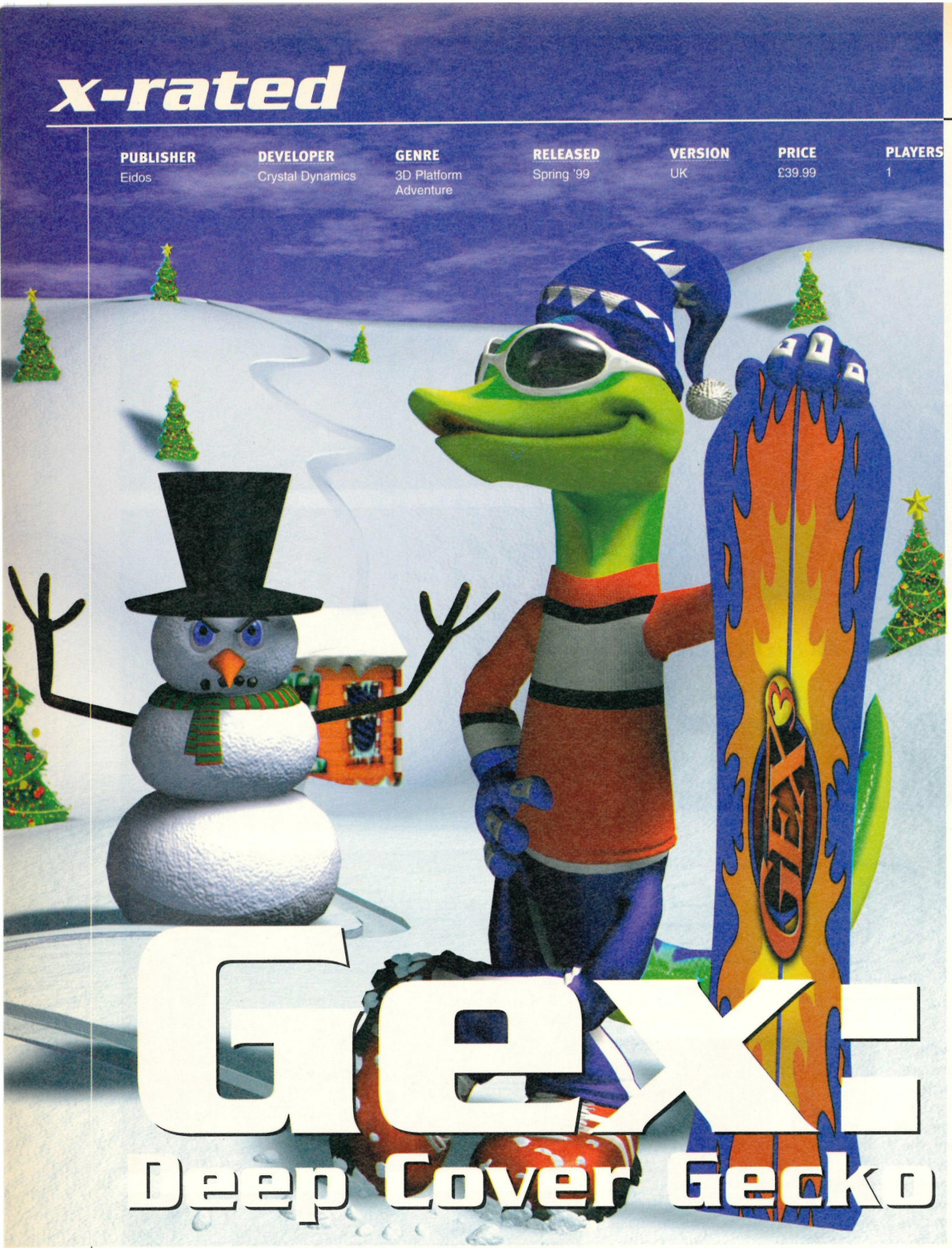




x-rated

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS
Eidos	Crystal Dynamics	3D Platform Adventure	Spring '99	UK	£39.99	1

PERIPHERALS
Memory Card Analogue Pad



Gex
Deep Cover Gecko

The master of disguise is back, but there's no mistaking the good old lizard up to his usual tricks. Claire Webster isn't exactly Marliece Andrada, but she sure has given Gex a good going over...

It's a case of fourth time even luckier for our lizard friend, Gex. And he's progressed somewhat from his 2D games to what is now, in Deep Cover Gecko, a beautifully animated 3D platforming adventure for all us highly-blessed PlayStation owners. Even those of us who aren't so au fait with the platform genre were probably sucked in by the cuteness of Spyro the Dragon. And

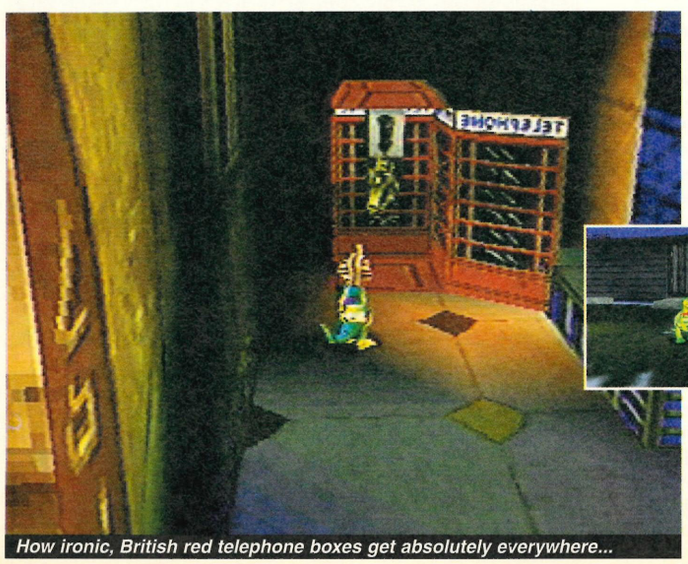
What this game may be lacking in is bad guys

when we picked up our pads to get down to some gaming, we were even more enthralled.

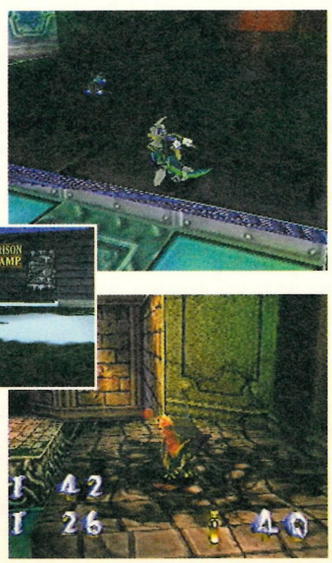
Maybe the fire breathing dragon should get together with the tail-flipping, tongue-lashing gecko. Now that would be a good game. However, as we all know by now, Spyro was for kids (yeah right). But Gex, now that's a different kettle of lizards altogether. As you shall see, some of the challenges in this latest helping are a tad tricky to say the least.

Under the Covers

As the title of his new game suggests, Gex stars as an international secret agent for hire. Now it must have been SOME bright spark that came up with that idea! What more of an excuse do you need to get Gex dressed up in all



How ironic, British red telephone boxes get absolutely everywhere...





Gex takes some time out from being a secret agent and decides to read a good book

MASTER OF DISGUISE...

There are 25 disguises at Gex's disposal in DCG, all of them appropriate to the level you're on. Only a few of them are shown here



PHARAOH GEX



PIRATE GEX

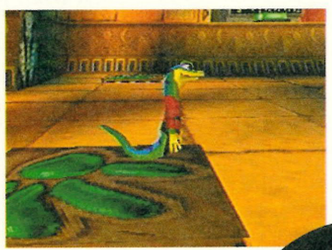


SHERLOCK GEX

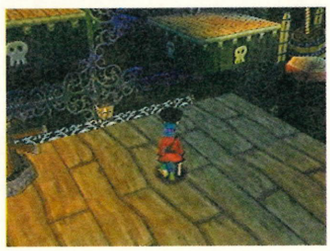


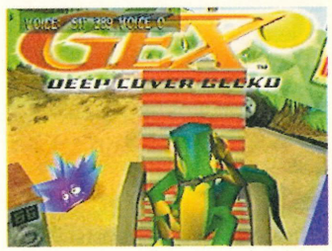
SPACE CRUSADER GEX

Deep Cover Gecko is definitely the best of the series to date











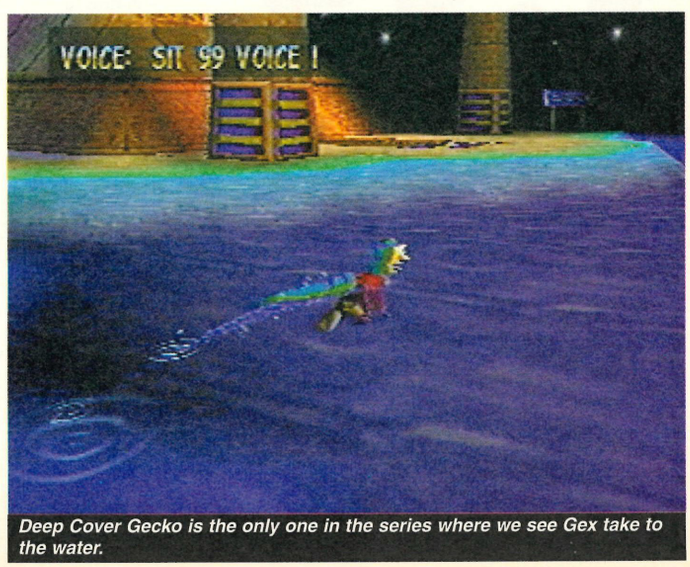
kinds of clobber? His mission, or your mission, Is to find the beautiful Agent Xtra who has been captured by Gex's arch nemesis, Rez. Nothing could be simpler for the master of disguise. And just wait until you recognise the voice for Gex, as for DCG they've roped in Danny John-Jules, The Cat from Red Dwarf. There are over a thousand one-liners, wisecracks and celebrity impressions to laugh yourself silly over, though it's unfortunate he's not more like The Cat, but then again, it would be slightly inappropriate seeing as a lizard is the star of the show.

If you hadn't guessed by now, a Baywatch babe also stars in DCG, namely Marliece Andrada. I'm all bitter and twisted as you would expect after seeing the Meet the Team photos. Marliece is a bit of a girly girl in the game, although the new full motion video sequences she stars in are rather nice. You men will be able to drool over her quite a few times actually (when you're not staring at our front cover), as she regularly communicates with the sexually-frustrated Gex via her government-issued video watch.

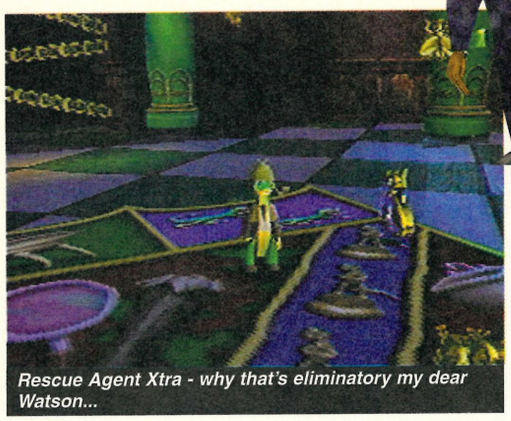
Right, less about the dames and the famous voice-overs and more about the quality of the game. Well, the first thing you notice are the improvements in the graphics. None whatsoever have been reused from Gex 3D, and it generally looks a lot crisper. All the worlds are brand-spanking new, and they're all based on new media and pop culture parodies such as Pirates of the Caribbean gone extreme, Twisted North Pole with Santa's evil twin Satan and Saving Private Gex in military missions, to name just a few.

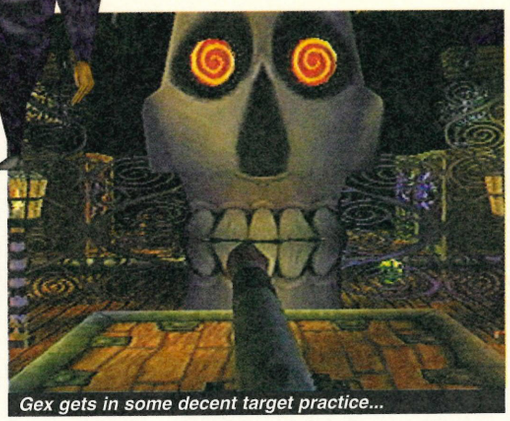
Let's talk about Gex

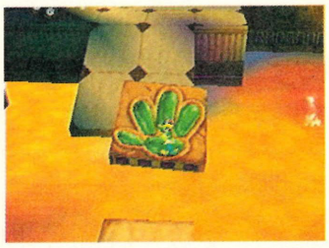
The adventure begins in Mission Control, and after a few flirtatious words with Agent Xtra (Marliece) he's off to The Pole. Here you have the choice of which task you choose first. Just for an example, you can opt to create five ice sculptures, whack the snowboarding elves or defeat evil Santa. When you complete each one you find the appropriate television, grab the remote control and dive back to the beginning to start all over again on another mission. Gex has still got his usual moves; the extending tongue, mostly used for eating flies, the tail flick, and a ninja-like

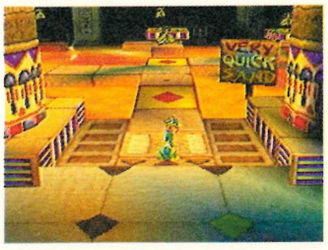


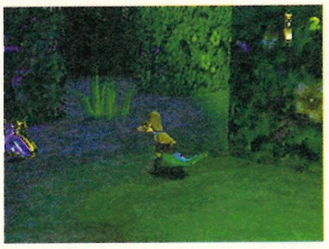
Deep Cover Gecko is the only one in the series where we see Gex take to the water.


Rescue Agent Xtra - why that's eliminatory my dear Watson...


Gex gets in some decent target practice...







karate kick which also makes him jump quite a fair distance.

And of course, on every level there are loads of items to collect and power-ups to use. The Remote Controls are one of the most important of the lot, as you must gather them all to open the boss levels. You also see plenty of paws scattered around, and if you pick up 25 you receive an additional paw hit point. Coin Flies are also in abundance and when you pick up 50 of them you gain an extra life, find 100 and you earn an extra Mission Remote Control.

Carrying on with the broadcasting theme, there are loads of TVs to be found as well. Entrance and Exit TVs let you enter and leave a level, Bonus Level TVs are turned on by collecting a specified number of Bonus Coins, Secret Level TVs can be found hidden away in caves and finally Checkpoint TVs bring Gex back to that particular point if he accidentally dies.

There certainly is no shortage of items to look out for and collect, but what this game may be lacking in is bad guys. Take the first level for instance; the only enemies are Santa's little elves who throw snowballs at you. I think I counted a whole two of them while I was eagerly exploring the level, which meant all I could swing my tail at was Christmas presents which contained loads of Coin Flies. So when I undertook the challenge of whacking the snowboarding elves I was prepared to do some serious flicking.

The first thing you notice are the improvements in the graphics

But shock, horror, there were only three or four to hit. Never has gaining a remote control been so easy.

And it doesn't get any harder either,. Every now and again there may be a television to destroy or an angry bear to contend with, but there just aren't enough of them to get really stuck in to. However, there was one enemy that was a little more challenging. When Gex is playing Sherlock Holmes he has to find his way out of a maze, in which there are one or two bear hunters. For some reason they get you mixed up with a furry beast and start shooting at you, but it's not just a case of dodging the bullet. It actually homes in on you and follows you around until you can out-run it - quite a nice touch I'd say.

Intrepid Exploring

The levels take a long time to complete, so if you imagine that there are 12 main levels, four secret levels, three boss levels and five bonus games (24 in total) there's going to be quite a few of you out there playing DCG with matchsticks holding your eyes open. And there's a new disguise for each level as well (could this get any better?). There's Private Gex, Gex Eastwood, Long John Gex, Gladiator Gex, Sherlock Gex, and my own personal favourite, Little Red Riding Gex. I won't drone on and on about the rest.



The levels become more difficult where the challenges are concerned, and you can spend most of the time trying to find where you have to go. Thankfully you can alter the camera angles as negotiating jumps can be a bit tricky, but at least you are sometimes given clues on where hidden objects and alike are situated. I don't think I played this game long enough really; you really could write a book on it (and we probably will). It can sometimes be infuriating, but then the next thing you know Danny John-Jules makes a wisecrack and all is forgiven.

Deep Cover Gecko is definitely the best of the series to date, and will more than likely become another candidate for your potential buys list.

Claire Webster

STARTING A COLLECTION...

Below are just some of the things Gex can collect on each of the levels:

COIN FLIES
Coin Flies are scattered around on all levels. When you pick up 50 of them you gain an extra life, find 100 and you earn a Mission Remote Control.



CHRISTMAS PRESENTS
These are only found on the first level. If you flick a present with your tail lots of coin flies come flying out. There are also presents that you can use as springboards to get to high places.



GREEN PAWS
You also see plenty of paws scattered around, but you have to look carefully for them. If you pick up 25 you receive an additional Paw hit point



GREEN COLOURED TV
If you flick these televisions with your tail then a green fly appears. This makes a tasty meal, so tasty in fact you replenish any health you previously lost.



SECOND OPINION

You never know what to expect when playing a Gex game. He truly is the master of disguise, with more costumes and personas than David Bowie. Perhaps he should be a chameleon! This is definitely his best game yet, and a worthy purchase for platform fans everywhere.

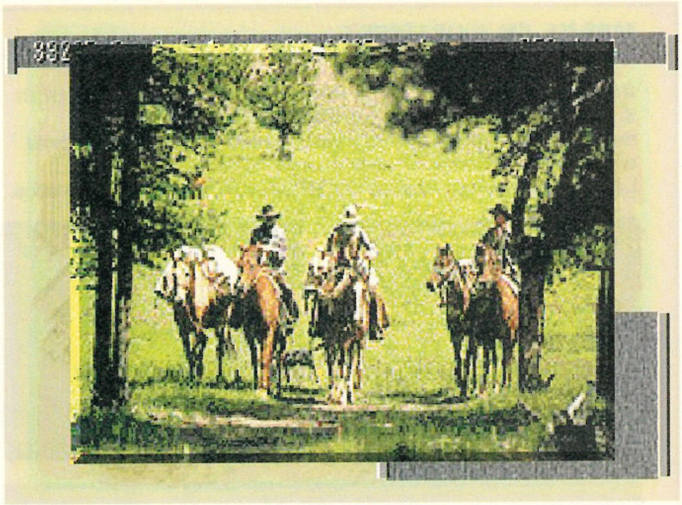
Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	9
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	9

91%





PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Activision	Activision	Strategy	Spring '99	UK	£39.99	1	Memory Card	Mouse

Can you chart the progress of mankind from the Stone Age to the space race? Richard Melville plays god...

Civilization II







It's a laudable concept that has met with much success...

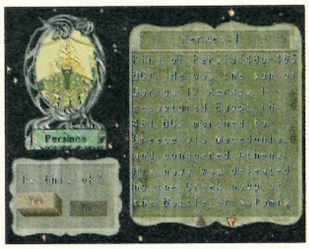
Please, don't be afraid. No, really - I know it looks like we've grabbed a PC game for a review, but it's on the PlayStation. Civilization II is the first Civilization game on the PSX and is a conversion of the Sid Meier series often lusted over by PC gamers.

The original Civ, as we like to call it, made its debut on the PC in 1991. Eight years on and we've basically the same thing here, more or less. Mr Meier is somewhat of a PC genius as his work, combined with a handful of other programmers such as Peter Molyneux from Bullfrog the PC strategy market would be a hollow place without them. What Sid didn't count on, however, was his complex world creation game being released on the PlayStation. Onwards, however, we go.

The basis is to build and maintain your own civilisation and then try to rule it. Play God and Gandhi, effectively. It's a laudable concept that has met with much success on the PC and it's a brave step indeed to push the massive game into the small confines of the PlayStation. How much of a world can our dear grey box cope with? The pointy-

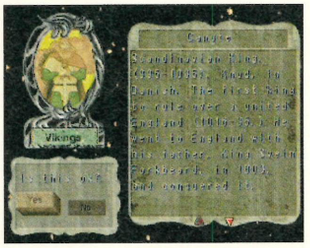
TAKE ME, I'M YOUR LEADER...

According to Gandhi, "If you are in a minority of one, the truth is still the truth". How apt for Civilization II, eh ? Anyway, depending on which country you choose you're given details of the most influential leader of said domain. Maybe Stalin, Lenin or Ghandi, or how about Mr Lincoln of the United States of America? Thrill as you wade through the text and the dodgy character portraits. It's like a multimedia CD ROM in school; you could easily impress a tweed-wearing teacher by scribbling down the details encased within. And fall asleep at the same time. You'd rather be playing Metal Gear Solid, I reckon.

















clickety-based gameplay means it's fairly easy to get to grips with from the start, especially with the Beginner's Mode which eases strategic isometric virgins into place without hassle. You start by picking the variations of tribes, time and the size of the game map before delving into the frankly daunting quest of organising your hordes of people.

Populous with Morals?

It's like Populous with morals, if you've ever played or seen Bullfrog's self termed 'god sim'. Here there are plenty of actual civilisations to evolve, from Russians to the Chinese, including assorted leaders from Mr Lincoln, Gandhi and Lenin. It's all a bit educational as well, y'see, and unless you've really got a vested interest in history or the advanced development of primitive society, this may not spin your propeller. It's not standard PlayStation fodder that's for sure, and for this we should be grateful.

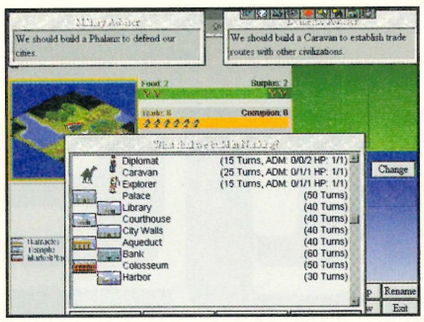
Starting on a single square, you advance into the unexplored, building cities, making discoveries and trying to amble onwards and

Civilization II feels too much like an interactive history book

alter things like taxes, roads and the like. If Theme Hospital or Sim City 2000 have been placed in your PlayStation, you'll understand the joy of seeing minions scuttle about something that has been solely created by you. This is where good, old-fashioned Civilization stalls slightly because whereas the former have the humour of a hospital full of patients with inflated heads and 'Elvisitis' or rampaging aliens, Civilization II feels too tame. I've seen a person pursue a town planning degree after mammoth stints on Sim City, and I'm sure Theme Hospital and Theme Park have inspired through their business and fun ethic. Civilization II, on the PlayStation, feels too much like an interactive history book for my liking.

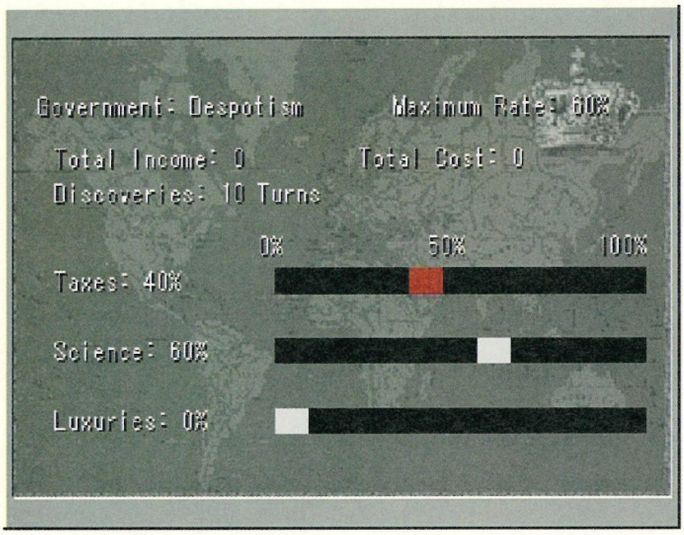
CIVILIZATION - NOT PC SHOCKER!

Just to show you the type of depth and experience that makes Civ on the PC such a dream, here are screens of the 1996 PC version of Civ 2. Looks at the menus, enhanced options and ask yourself whether you really want to play a game that has not only been cut down because of the memory confines of the PlayStation, but because of assumptions made by marketing men on your behalf. You use a PlayStation and not a PC, so you must be slightly thicker than a PC gamer. They know this for a fact; obviously.



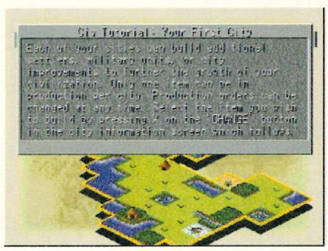




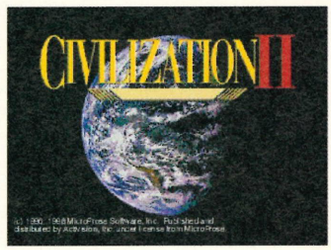












It's dumbed down more than a CNN broadcast...

We're fans of the series here, don't think that we're labelling a classic as a piece of arse, God forbid, but it isn't at home on a console and thanks to its deliberate consolidation of the complex nature of the game - it's dumbed down more than a CNN broadcast.

Take Me to Your Leader...

For example, there is a fairly extensive description of the leader of each country or continent, which is fair enough, but whether you have the patience to wade through the scrolled text is another matter. In the game, similar explanations are offered for everything from patches of turf to restructuring after government revolts. It's more fun than it sounds, but it just can't light the elusive blue touchpaper that makes its counterparts on the PC and PlayStation so strangely compulsive and, ultimately, compulsive. Sure, you can control tribes from different time frames from present day back to primordial soup, and it's enjoyable, but one secret ingredient is mysteriously absent. What? It's hard to tell, but something has definitely fallen through the bottom of the box when the programmers carried the code over from PC to PlayStation. Perhaps it's the menu system has been over-simplified, or maybe it's the slightly linear feel of the early stages that puts you off. Whatever the case, unless you are a cast-iron fan of the series when you had a defunct 386 PC years ago, you won't be very enthralled by this. Perhaps worth a gander if you've got the patience of a saint to actually progress through the boring bits to get into the real strategy-making decisions. By then, you could've made a cuppa and beaten Revolver Ocelot, couldn't you ?

It's a crying shame to say that a classic game has been changed rather than ruined but it's taken out the magic the it's original team once put in and it just isn't half as enjoyable. Civ 3 for PlayStation 2, then? Oh, and if you're wondering why we spelt 'Civilisation' with a 'Z', it's because it's an American game, and that's how they spell it...

Richard Melville

SECOND OPINION

I liked this a bit more than Richard did. Sure it's a little slow in places, but the strategy element is sound. The historical elements aren't for everyone, but it's good they're there if you want them, and let's face it - what game does appeal to everyone?

Claire Webster

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	6
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	6

61%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Psygnosis	Attention to Detail	Driving	Out Now	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card	Analogue Pad

As cool as WipEout and faster than GT - sounds like the perfect racing sim. Even so, Claire Webster is becoming rather bad tempered this month; maybe it's all that Rollcage road rage she's been having...

Rollcage







Drive over the blue arrows for power-ups...



Lothar parks up for a quick spot of lunch...





If it's possible, I would say that there are just too many good games out this month. It's going to get to the point where we run out of our budget for buying games in April. With Running Wild, Final Fantasy VIII on import and this one, there's just too much choice.

Last issue we previewed this game, and if I recall, it was me who was singing its praises already, even before seeing the final version. ATD certainly live up to their name; they haven't missed anything out. It's quick, explosive and huge amounts of fun. Just pick a car from the six on offer, strap yourself into your seat and you're away. Speeding up to over 250 mph, only letting your finger slightly off the accelerator as you take the corners. But don't worry if you think you're not going to make it round without smashing into a wall, because you probably drive up it instead.

Clawing the Walls

This is just one of the unique features in this game. Whenever you go through a tunnel, you can drive on its ceiling or along the sides, and to encourage you to do so, ATD has included turbos to make you gain more speed and sometimes to even completely throw you off the course. I had flashbacks of watching the Batmobile shooting through tunnels in the Batman films - no, it really is like that! Don't worry if you turn your car over, either - their huge wheels and hi-tech cockpits mean they drive just as well upside-down.

I spent a whole half hour trying to find its weak points, but I couldn't find any...

Instead of just choosing a car, in Rollcage you also choose the driver that goes with it. Their names are Lothar, who looks like a monkey, Leon, a cool-looking dude, Jet, a girl who lives up to her name, Ria, a busty, prim-looking woman, Tony the DJ and finally Lenny, a rough-











ahhh...nothing beats life on the open road...



Be careful of huge jumps - you may end up facing in the wrong direction.

ROAD RAGE RIVALS...

There are only six drivers and their cars to choose from in Rollcage. Below are portraits of them all (some looking weirder than others) and info on how good each person's vehicle is:



LOTHAR
Acceleration: 6/10
Top speed: 4/10
Strength: 6/10
Grip: 6/10



LEON
Acceleration: 4/10
Top Speed: 6/10
Strength: 7/10
Grip: 8/10



JET
Acceleration: 5/10
Top speed: 3/10
Strength: 2/10
Grip: 10/10



RIA
Acceleration: 6/10
Top speed: 8/10
Strength: 2/10
Grip: 7/10



TONY
Acceleration: 8/10
Top speed: 7/10
Strength: 9/10
Grip: 4/10



LENNY
Acceleration: 2/10
Top Speed: 8/10
Strength: 10/10
Grip: 4/10

and-ready, bare-chested mechanic (my kinda man). Each of the cars have different levels of acceleration, top speed, strength and grip. If you're taking part in a league, it's best to go for an all-rounder, as the tracks have different surfaces and some may have particularly bad corners and obstacles.

There are four different game modes to master; League, Time Attack, Two-Player and Practice. In League, you begin racing on the Gemini tracks. There are three of them and you must race three laps of each. If you don't manage to come in at least third place, you won't win the Gemini League and you also won't be able to get onto the next three races in the Scorpio League, and then onto the Taurus Cup.

The difficulty setting is automatically set to Easy, and when you eventually win all of the Leagues, the setting is set to Medium, and then Hard. You're opponents get progressively more difficult to beat on the harder tracks, and if it's possible, you also seem to be moving a lot faster. This means your head inevitably starts spinning while you're trying to concentrate on where you're going.

Coming Around Again

Staying with the space-age feel to the game, in Time Attack you choose to race in one of the four worlds; Neoto, Harpoon, Saphire or Outworld on three different tracks in each. As you burn round the track it all seems a little pointless at first. All you do is one lap of the track after the next, trying to beat your previous lap time. Once you've got bored, or you're happy that you've completed the track in under 20 seconds (not likely), you can view each lap time in your own special table at the end. It even tells you which was your best lap. This is the only thing that seems pointless in the game; you might as well use this mode to have some practice on as well as the proper Practice mode in which you do exactly the same.

It's quick, explosive and huge amounts of fun

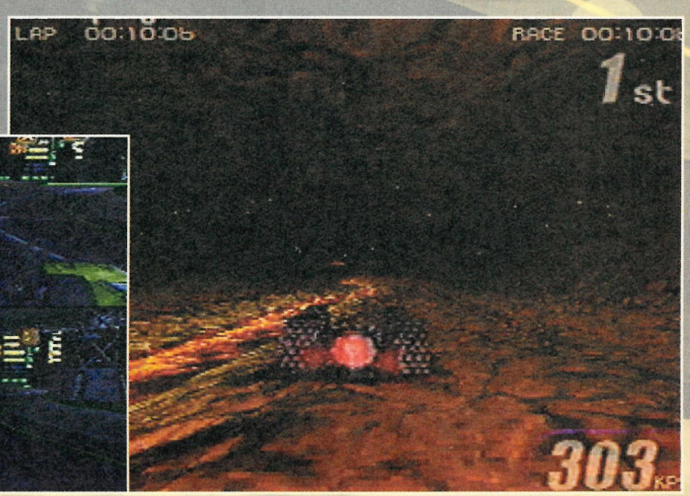
In the two-player game you can battle it out over any of the 15 tracks available between the four worlds. Obviously the aim is to win



Look out for the huge hair dryer - probably belongs to Ria!





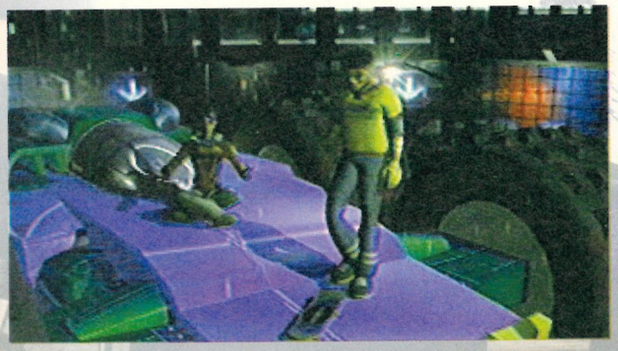


GORGEOUS GRAPHICS...

For a change, the actual game itself lives up to the quality of its intro where graphics are concerned. Watch carefully and you notice two of the drivers having a fight even before they've got into their cars...









Who says you have to stick to the roads when you can drive along the walls?

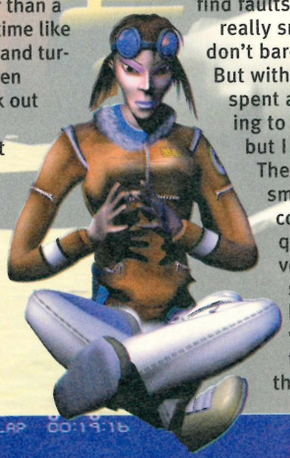


How on earth are we all going to fit through that tunnel in this formation?

I'm scraping the barrel by saying it could do with a few more cars to choose from

the race, but you can have plenty of fun along the way by picking up weapons and trying to destroy your opponents. There are also lots of different routes to take around each of the courses, so sometimes you may find yourself racing over roofs of tunnels or even on a beach.

There aren't any Mario Kart red turtles or bananas here though, we're talking some hard-core, heavy-duty ammunition to blast at the player in front. There are harpoons, time warps that slow the other players down, electric lightning bolts that damage any other driver who gets too close to you, a shield that lasts for a certain amount of hits rather than a specified amount of time like in other racing sims, and turbos which make it even more difficult to work out where you're going. However, if you're not satisfied with just those then you can always knock down pillars, posts and small buildings so that they fall into the road or on top of another driver - not nice I know, but fun none the less.



I've never found it difficult to find faults in a game, even really small ones which don't bare much significance. But with Rollcage I literally spent a whole half hour trying to find its weak points, but I couldn't find any. The graphics are smooth, but a bit TOO colourful in places. It's quick and most of all, very addictive. I'm scraping the barrel by saying it could do with a few more cars to choose from as they're very interesting little vehicles that are impossible to damage. I wish you all luck standing in the shop with Running Wild and this game in your hands, pondering over which one is money better spent - if you can afford it, buy both!

Claire Webster

SECOND OPINION

It's great to see a seriously-original driver, and who better to do it than Psygnosis, who's WipEout games re-wrote the rulebook? It's fast, it's polished and it's a real challenge for speed-freaks who piddle over real-world offerings. In other words, BUY IT!

Ian Osborne

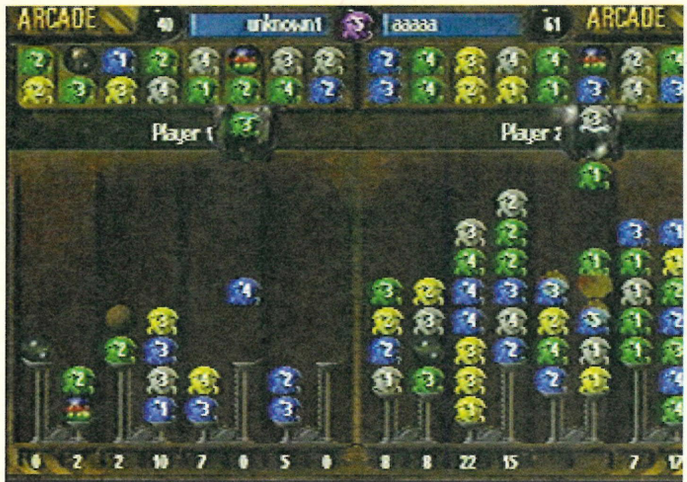




THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	9
LIFESPAN	9

92%



Unfortunately the two-player game adds nothing to the already-tedious gameplay.



There are over 30 extra balls which affect play in different fashions. How interesting...

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
PBH Systems	Software 2000	Puzzle Game	April '99	UK	£34.99	1-2	Memory Card Analogue Pad	Dual Shock

The oldest swinger in town, Doug Williams, sticks his car keys in a punch bowl and gets into the swing of things with a methodical puzzler from the home of logic, Germany...

Swing

It puzzles me (ahem) that German developers Software 2000 have even bothered to release Swing to a frankly uninterested public. If they could have come up with a whole new style of puzzle game, that resembles nothing out there already, then I could see the logic. As it stands, though, Swing is simply a variation on the tried-and-tested, match-the-colours-in-a-row theme.

Now, the best puzzle games tend to be simple. But in a vain attempt to make Swing a little different, a number of elements have been added which, I'm afraid, detracts from the simplicity that makes a good puzzler and actually makes the gameplay quite complex. Something that only the masochists in this world will appreciate, I'm sure.

Smoking your mum's dried kitchen herbs is more addictive than Swing

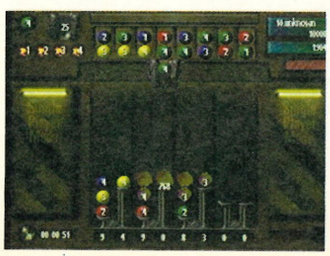
Swing, you see, adds maths to the equation. Which, looking at the current demographic of PlayStation owners, isn't about to get you all tearing off to the shops to buy yourself a copy. The coloured balls the game revolves around are all numbered in correspondence to their weight and rather than dropping them onto a solid plateaux, somebody has had the ingenious idea of using a row of scales. This makes lining up the colours, which makes the balls disappear to clear some space (how original), more luck than judgement as once a set of scales are tipped, all the balls move as the weight is shifted. This in turn sends the top ball from the upwards moving side of the scales into the air to land anywhere on the screen. Which upsets your strategy big-time and makes the gameplay very, very messy, and unnecessarily random.

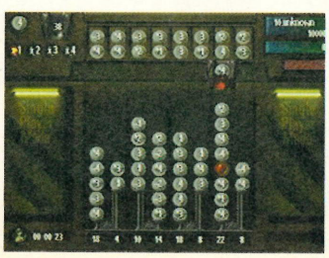
Heavy Balls

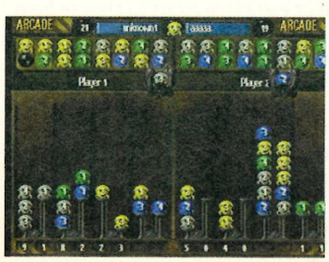
Of course, it's this that's supposed to make Swing different, more interesting and more addictive than the competition. You're supposed to allow for the different ball weights and their positions on the scales to help set your colour runs up. This, though, is absolute nonsense. Okay, most of us with a little upstairs can sit there and work out what will happen with different weights on the scales, but then again most of us couldn't care less. A puzzle game should be fast and fluid, but the design of Swing makes it a disjointed experience at best and mortifying at worst. Swing can be played without too much thought, but the randomness that occurs when you don't take into account the mathematical factors is so much of hindrance that all enjoyment is sapped from the game.

The makers of Swing state that if you play Swing for five minutes you'll wonder what all the fuss is about, but play it for half an hour and you'll be hooked for life. Well, I've been playing it for a couple of days now (out of duty) and I'm afraid to say that smoking your mum's dried kitchen herbs is more addictive than Swing. And a damn sight more fun too. Those not in Mensa, or who aren't turned on by the thought of an evening playing Scrabble, should leave Swing well alone.

Doug Williams







SECOND OPINION

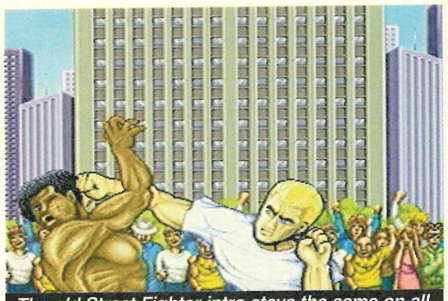
Swing has a lot going for it, but at the end of the day, it tries to be too clever for its own good. Watching the numbers on the balls becomes tedious after a while, and having them spring up and across the screen makes it difficult to plan ahead.

Russell Barnes

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	4
SOUND	3
GAMEPLAY	3
LIFESPAN	4

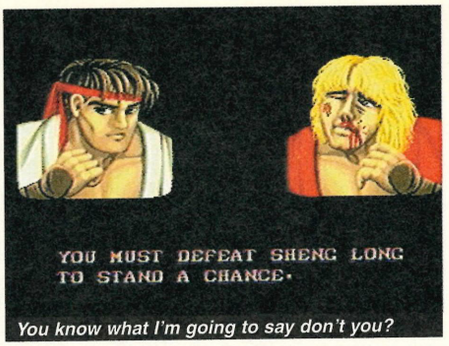
45%



The old Street Fighter intro stays the same on all three games. Surprise, surprise.



The old Street Fighter player select screen stays the same on all three games. Surprise, Surprise.



You know what I'm going to say don't you?

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Virgin Interactive Entertainment	Capcom	Beat-'em-up	23rd April '99	UK	£39.99	1-2	Dual Shock

As our man Doug sits in the sunlight reminiscing of lost days in a dusty arcade playing Street Fighter 2, he's rudely awakened from his daydream. By what, though? Well, that huge cash cow that just trundled past the window of course...

Street Fighter Collection 2

Scuse me mush, got ten pee I can borra'? I'm sure this annoying squeaky-voiced announcement has bugged many of you whilst taking on M. Bison on the latest Street Fighter incarnation to hit the arcades.

So the first thing that Virgin's Street Fighter Collection 2 has got going for it is that playing the classic beat-'em-up in the comfort of your own home means you don't have to deal with cheeky little beggars trying to tap you up for ten pence when you're trying to get a Perfect.

The 'no beggars' factor is about all this collection has going for it, though. Okay, there's no denying the three Street Fighter games included in the package are classic fodder and very playable games. The problem is that these games should have been left in the past so us oldies can look back and remember them fondly through our rose-tinted spectacles, and not be reminded that, as much as it pains me to say, this basic fighter format has long been eclipsed by superior, better-looking and frankly more playable games. Still, you get three different games for your money don't you?

These games should have been left in the past



Well, no, actually. There may be three different titles in this collection, but the basic gameplay stays the same throughout. So what you end up with is three games with just a few different characters, moves and backgrounds to tell them apart from each other. Still, in the tradition of collection reviews we'd better take each game one at a time.

Spot the Difference

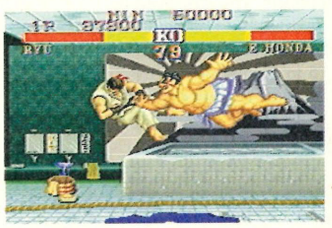
First up is Street Fighter 2: World Warrior, which basically gives you the eight original characters to choose from and fight against each other. The action isn't incredibly fast and the visuals don't exactly jump out of the screen and slap you round the face. But I have to admit the naive simplicity that oozes from the gameplay keeps you hooked, if only for the sake of the good old days.

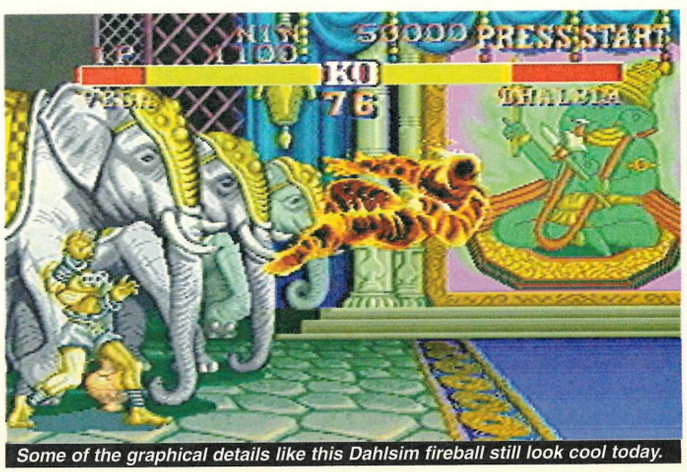
Moving swiftly onto Street Fighter 2 Champion Edition, and we see not a lot has really changed. There's four extra characters to choose from at the start, but the visuals and gameplay have only really been polished up a little. Still, it holds the classic Street Fighter gameplay which in turn should hold your attention. At least until you've completed it the once anyway.

The final offering is the elaborately-named Street Fighter 2: Turbo Hyper Fighting. Besides hav-









Some of the graphical details like this Dahlsim fireball still look cool today.

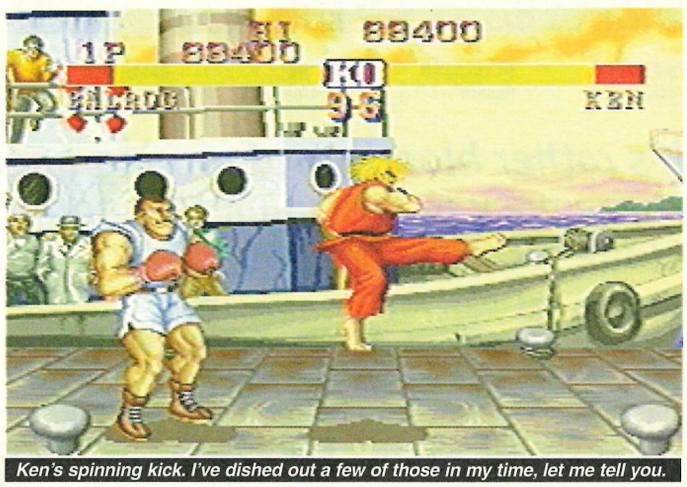
FEEL THE BLOWS...

The only thing that actually gives away the fact you're playing Street Fighter on a PlayStation and not a Mega Drive is the fact that all three games have been made Dual Shock compatible. This means every kick, punch and throw can be felt as and when they happen. Now, if the game had been a more realistic fighter in the first place, this could have been a worthy addition. As it stands, though, it serves for nothing more than a slight distraction that no doubt will be turned off within minutes of turning it on. It's commendable that Virgin have included the Dual Shock option, but I'm afraid it's simply wasted on a game of Street Fighter's style.





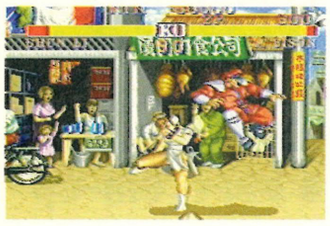
The hundred-hand slap. Could this be the greatest special move of all time?



Ken's spinning kick. I've dished out a few of those in my time, let me tell you.

Only the most devout Street Fighter aficionados should even think about splashing out on Street Fighter Collection 2







ing a ridiculous name, the only real difference from the other two games here is that the gameplay is faster. This makes it the most challenging of the three games on offer, but not necessarily the most enjoyable. The slightly slower pace of the first two games allows you to feel more part of the action whereas here, it seems to be nothing more than a button-bashing fest.

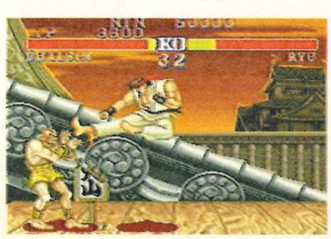
Good as it Got

All three games have the same basic graphical style which, for its day, was about as good as it got. But up against the smooth, rendered and light sourced, polygon based visuals that are common place in the late nineties beat-'em-up game, this classic 2D style is no more than quaint. Of course the idea of this collection isn't to dazzle us with visual impact, but you just can't get away from the fact that these games look exactly the same as when they were high technology on the old 16-bit machines.

Visuals aside (after all, this is a retro collection), I'm sure with the amount of sequels and updates the Street Fighter series has been graced with that Virgin could have put together a collection with three games that differ enough to make them worth playing separately. Each game may well be very playable in its own right, but on a disc with three slight variations on a basic theme, only the most devout Street Fighter aficionados should even think about splashing out on Street Fighter Collection 2. Not when it retails for forty quid anyway.

The beat-'em-up competition on the PlayStation at the moment is very hot, which is why your money is better spent elsewhere. If you're dying to have a blast on the old Street Fighters, though, my advice is to buy yourself an old 16-bit console and a Street Fighter cartridge - it'll probably cost less than this collection. The visuals and gameplay will be identical too. Oh, and you won't feel ripped off by the proverbial cash cow that woke me up from my daydream earlier...

Doug Williams



SECOND OPINION

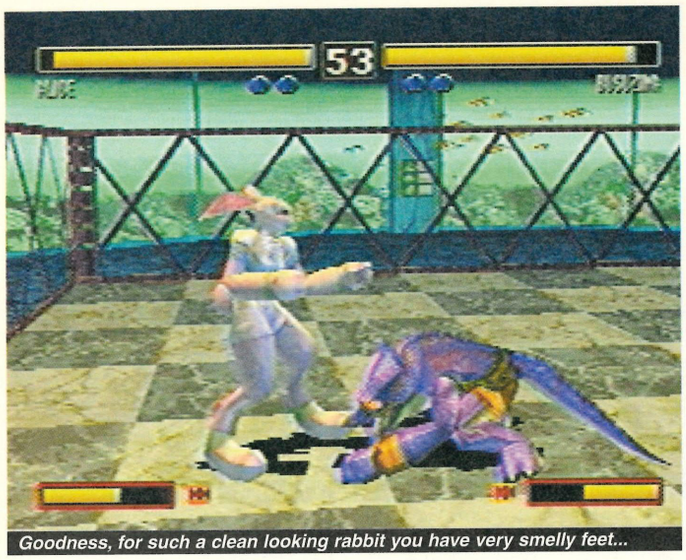
It might make sense to release retro packages of all-time classics which haven't grown into bigger and better games, but what's the point of this when there are so many excellent 2D fighters on the PlayStation? Their damned-near identical nature doesn't help either.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	5
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	4

60%



Goodness, for such a clean looking rabbit you have very smelly feet...



Any excuse for a bit of rough and tumble with Jenny...

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Virgin	Hudson	Beat-'em-up	30th April '99	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card	Dual Shock

It's rather bloody, and roaring good fun. Rabbits and moles fight for supremacy in the animal kingdom, but this is no Watership Down, as Claire Webster has found out...

Bringer of the New Age

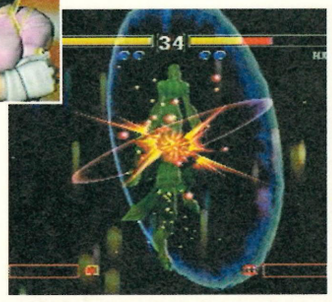
Bloody Roar 2:

Many a good beat-'em-up has come out of the woodwork recently, with Kensei, Rival Schools and now a second Bloody Roar. Its predecessor, subtitled Hyper Beast Duel, bought us the unique feature of the characters being able to turn into wild animals and getting down to some serious clawing and biting action. Bloody Roar 2 is, to be honest, a bit of a revamp, but you have to give credit where it's due. Nothing comes close to its originality, and just watching it reminds you of cowering behind the sofa during An American Werewolf in London. If they were characters in a movie, I'm sure they would all be frightened to death, watching themselves turn from normal human beings into fierce creatures. You can observe the women turning into animals such as a rabbit (though it's not very scary-looking, with big pink floppy ears and huge lolloping paws). And as for the men; well obviously they have to play the role of a more dominating entity, such as a lion or a tiger.











I can't imagine what else we could possibly want in a beat-'em-up

Animal Magnetism

The characters really are what makes this game what it is. They all have their own personalities. One I can't help but tell you about is Jenny, the bat. To say she's a little feisty is an understatement. She struts around the ring in a very short, tight-fitting leather dress and high-heeled shoes, flinging her fiery red hair around the place taunting the opposition with her feminine, erm; 'attributes'. Next minute she's mutating into a bat wearing a G-string. Makes you think that something strange is going on, don't you think?

There are ten characters to choose from in any of the four main game modes; Arcade, Story, Versus and Survival. Arcade mode is exactly as you would expect. Choose one character to fight with and complete all eight stages, with three rounds in each. As you progress through each level your opponents become increasingly difficult to beat, again as you would expect. There are two bars on the screen you have to watch, obviously the one indicating how much health you have and the other tells you when you're able to bring out your darker side. When this bar turns multi-coloured, you have the option to change, but you don't stay as an animal for long. The more the other player makes contact with you, the less time you have, so it's a good idea to choose the optimum time to change.

What's also quite impressive

A BIT OF AN ANIMAL...

All of the fighters have their own unique strengths and personalities. Here are just a few of their animal characteristics...



YUGO
For a man so handsome, he's not so good looking once he's transformed into a wolf. Big, hairy and scary is the best way to describe him, and one of the best at clawing his opponent to death.



LONG
Look out for his very fashionable shorts when he turns into a not-so-friendly feline. One of his best moves is seen when he picks the other player up using his teeth and then throws them onto the floor like a rag.



BUSUZIMA
This guy's a very colourful chameleon, who enjoys blending into the background and then lapping you up with his amazingly long tongue.



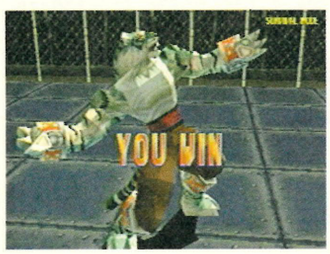
URIKO
The game describes her as a half beast, but we say she's a kitten, with her furry little ears and fluffy tail. You feel guilty when you hit her as she looks so weak, but don't let your guard down as there's a price to pay.



JENNY
As a human she loves to taunt male opponents by gesturing them over then kissing them when they fall to the ground. As a bat she does some cool flying tricks, that's when you're not staring at her G-string in disbe-



STUN
This is one of the better characters. When he turns into an insect he can hover above ground and push his opponents all the way across the ring whilst punching them at the same time.







When you produce a special move everything becomes a brightly-coloured haze.

Tekken 3 and the light sourcing has also been developed so that it calculates exactly how to shade each part of the character's body. You can also see the player's shadow on the floor of the ring which can stretch across up to half the arena if you're playing while the sun is setting.

I can't imagine what else we could possibly want in a beat-'em-up; The special moves are dazzling, the characters are refreshing and in Versus Mode you can have hours of fun watching replays and mocking while your friend pouts in the corner of the settee. It may not be as big as your Tekkens, but if you decide not to buy it solely because of that fact, you're missing out on a beast of a game.

Claire Webster



'If you don't surrender, you rancid reptile, I'm going to punch you on the nose'.

Bloody Roar 2 has got graphics as good as the gameplay

about this beat-'em-up is that the two sides of your character have completely different moves. When you're human you are only able to make the usual moves; punch, kick, block and so on. But when you're of a different species you have moves that you would normally find that particular animal doing. Let me give you an example. When you're Marvel's leopard form you claw at your opponent and then pick him or her up with your teeth and spit them back out like a piece of meat (lovely). Or, if you're Jenny's bat you can almost fly and kick your opponent in the head before giving him a quick snog. Your other half is a lot stronger and faster, with different special moves to figure out.

Other game modes include Survival, where you again pick just one character to use throughout and you only have one life to use. Depending on how many opponents you knock out with your limited amount of health, you're entered onto the high score screen; my best so far is five, but then the difficulty setting was set to One, of Eight! Story Mode enables you to get involved personally with your chosen character by listening to their life story and then fighting their battles against their enemies.

Bloody Roar 2 has got graphics as good as the gameplay. The flesh-coloured human body models are as outstanding as those found in

SECOND OPINION

Not bad - not bad at all. It's good to see a beat-'em-up with originality, and Bloody Roar 2's unique element (the beast transformations) is more than just a gimmick. As Claire said, it isn't up there with the Tekkens, but that doesn't stop it being a great game in its own right.

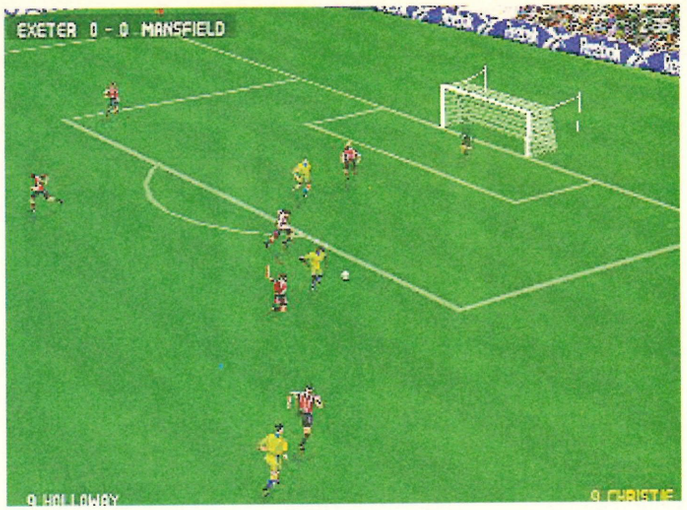
Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	8

87%





PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Infogrames	Anco	Sports Sim	May '99	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card, Analogue Pad, Mouse

Ever wanted to manage a footie team and take part in the in-match action too? Richard Melville picks his team and then takes to the field...

Player Manager Season 98-99

This wouldn't of happened if Gremlin's original Premier Manager game hadn't shot into the charts at Number One last year, y'know. Perhaps, though, in this potential onslaught of football management, Gremlin's game could be surpassed. The original Premier Manager game on the PlayStation wasn't all it could have been, and was more of a Fisher Price expedition into the land of management.

Anco's effort here is programmed by veteran Eighties coding bod Mr Steve Screech and, as the name indicates, allows you to feature as a player during the match as well as a sideline manager. I'll come clean and say that I'm no fan of football and although the odd big match does provide an excuse for some early afternoon drinkage, I'm amazed at friend who spend hours playing management games such as this. That's not to say I don't understand their appeal, but forgive me if I don't have a genuine thrill at the prospect of taking my home city to the Premier League.

Right, now that we've got that out of the way, we can venture into the game proper which, be warned, is very slow. The loading and processing times, that is; so much so that an increasing percentage at the top right hand corner of the screen is offered. It sometimes takes up to a minute for management data to be processed once you've selected your team from the English or Scottish leagues.

Look at the line-up and check your squad to make sure it's how you wish it to be. Setting up a match is relatively simple, but by this time you've realised this you may as well make a cup of tea between some of the screens, and you could be forgiven for thinking your PlayStation has all the number-crunching power of a Casio calculator.

Present and Correct...

The presentation is commendable, though, and all the screens seem to be presented in a high-res gloss which makes flipping through the wads of stats all the more interesting. It's best played with a mouse, though, because some of the items you need to click are just that little bit too small. It will be clear to management fans that the look of the game is quite similar to a PC equivalent, which is no bad thing, but makes it slightly more inaccessible than Gremlin's big-buttoned menus and bright colours.

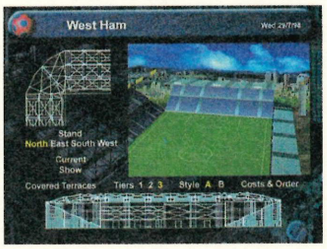
Once a team is picked and assembled, you can watch the whole match in detail and, surprisingly, this isn't as boring as you would imagine, although the lack of commentary does its best to go against this. The displayed football matches aren't as pretty as Premier Manager's Actua 2-cribbed depictions, but come a close second.

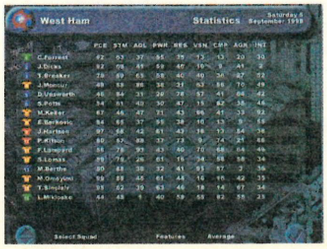
There is the urge to play the actual game of football, and even though you're in the team, there's not a real-time game included - it's all management. A disappointment given the title's name, but it shouldn't really stop you considering this just because it doesn't combine two games.

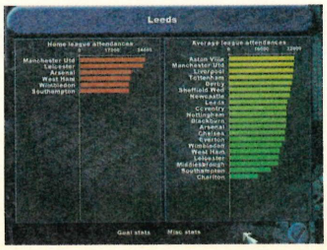
What the title does lack, howev-

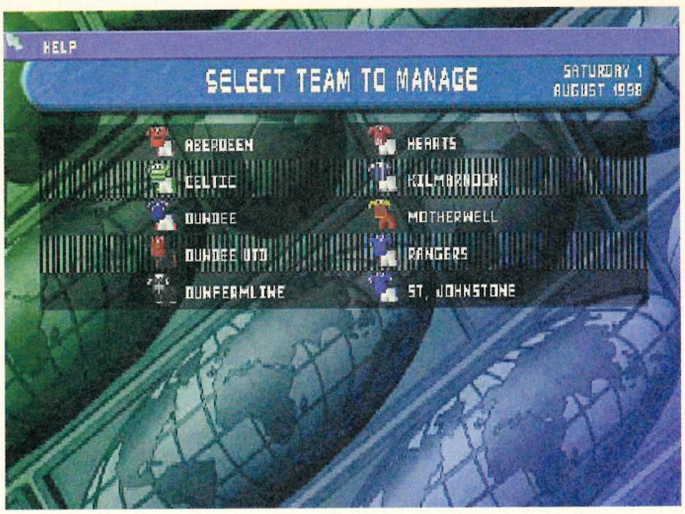
Buy a new memory card, as you need 15 blocks to save

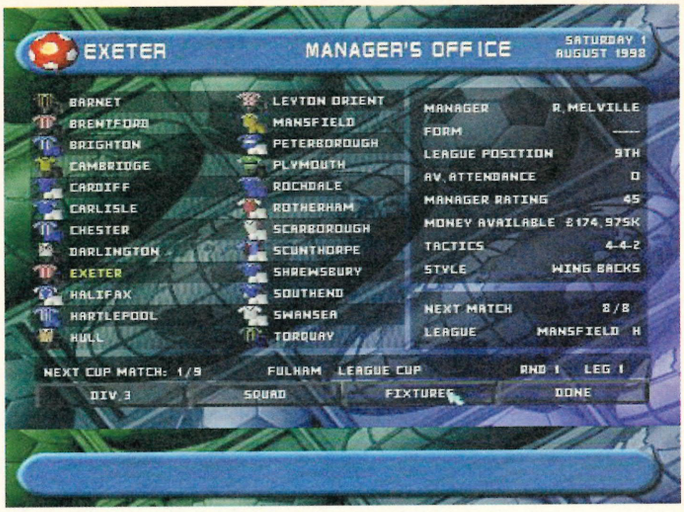












You'll probably age in years exploring the slug-paced stats line-up of buying and selling players



er, is the depth and overall realness of a PC management game where a mammoth hard drive and 64 megabytes of memory makes thinks a tad faster compared to the PlayStation's paltry two megabytes. It's a good attempt by Anco to cope with this genre on a console and will certainly satisfy those who enjoyed Premier Manager '98, and if you own this original Gremlin game, rather than buy the sequel, it's probably best to go for this differently-flavoured and somehow more grown-up management game. Even so, you'll probably age in years exploring the slug-paced stats line-up of buying and selling players, which is wrong. You forget about strengthening your team occasionally because you can't be bothered with the time-consuming task of buying and searching for the blighters.



Sunday Soccer

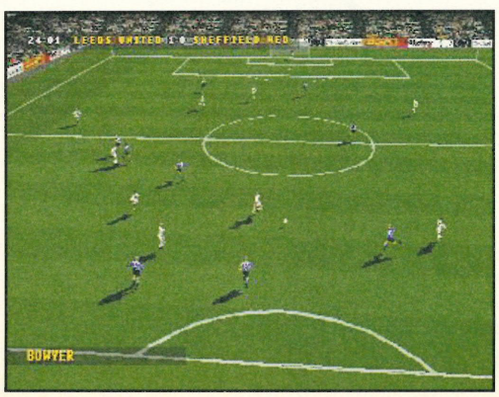
If you've got a spare Sunday, I'd have to say that unless you've already got a management game, Premier Manager '99 would be a far safer choice for entertainment due to all the extra touches it gives - its Barry Davies commentary, speedy menus and better looking matches exceed Player Manager Season 98-99 slightly. Ultimately it depends how fanatical you are. If you can turn a blind eye to the labour needed to play this game and glean joy where casual fans find boredom, you're sorted. Don't forget that mum said tea will be ready at six and you need to dry your anorak before you go out to collect your copy of the game, though. Oh, and buy a new memory card while you're there, as you need 15 blocks to save.

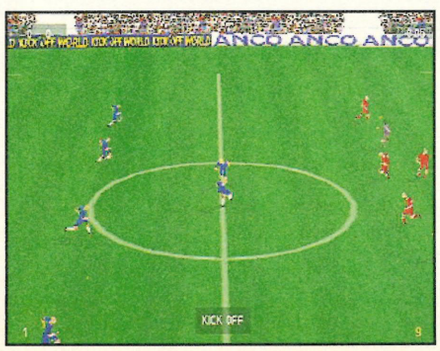
Richard Melville



A HIGHER STATE OF MANAGEMENT...

Here you can see the visual differences of Gremlin's second Premier Manager game and Anco's effort. The Actua Soccer engine in Premier Manager '99 is superior even in still screens, and as you'll be looking at their respective screens for hours on end, wouldn't you rather be looking at something beautiful rather than slightly average in the looks stakes ? That's what you said down the club last night, wasn't it ? Ho ho.





SECOND OPINION

It's obvious to see from the review that Player Manager Season 98-99 doesn't have the guts and playability of Issue 14's excellent Premier Manager 99. The user interface is too slow and time consuming to keep interest in the tasks you have to perform.

Russell Barnes

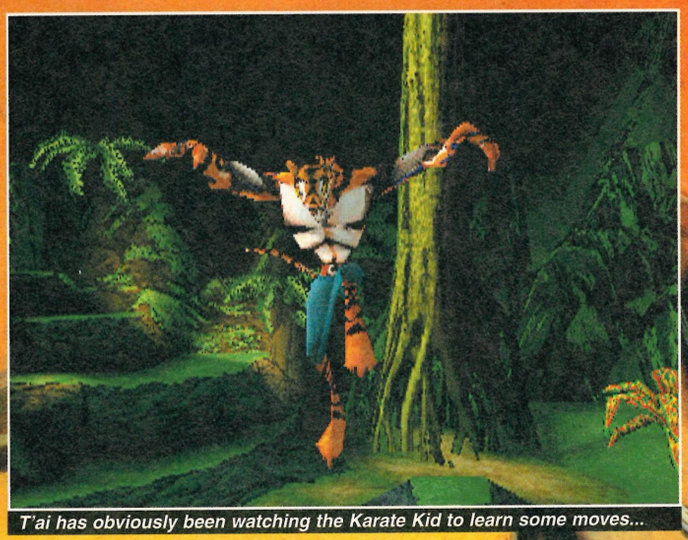
THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	6
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	6
LIFESPAN	6

64%



Choices, choices; shall I jump into the pit of deadly snakes or go and have a nice cup of Typhoo?

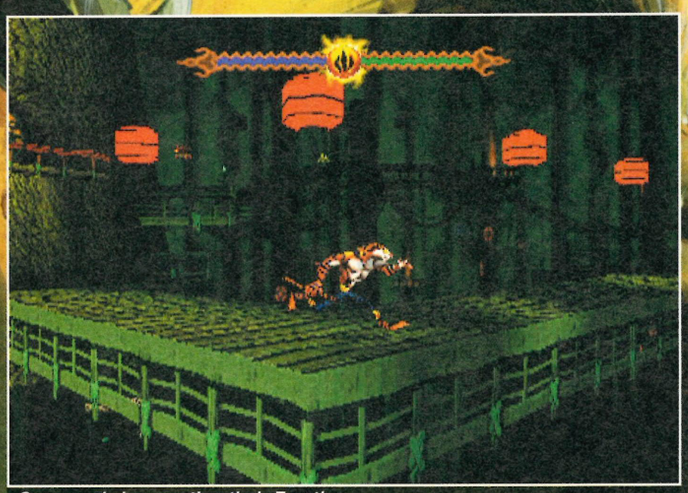


T'ai has obviously been watching the Karate Kid to learn some moves...

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Activision	Dreamworks Interactive	Platform Beat-'em-up	Out Now	UK	£39.99	1	Memory Card Analogue Pad Dual

Okay Tiger, it's time to unleash some deadly ninja moves and kill a few snakes and leopards. Claire Webster finds out if T'ai Fu is her cup of tea, or whether she would prefer a bowl of Frosties...

T'ai Fu: Wrath of the Tiger



Someone's been eating their Frosties...





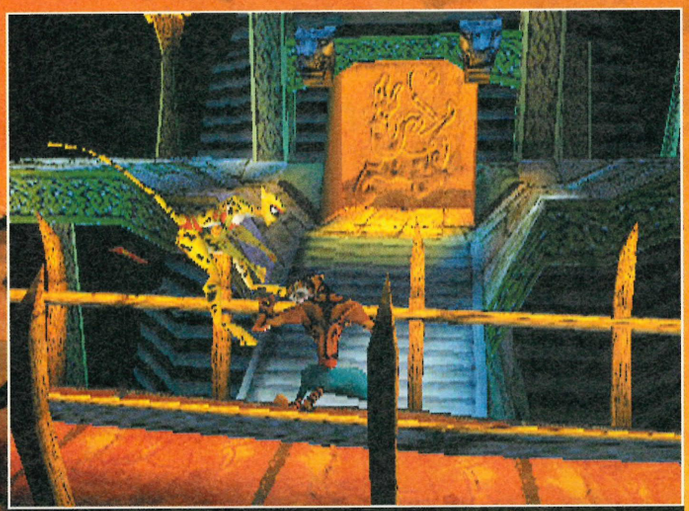
It offers a little bit of everything, so you can't go far wrong...

So that's about half of the puns I've got out of the way already. It's rather sad, but it simply has to be done. Activision can't bring out a game with such a name and then not expect a few jibes now, can they? Our friend Tony thought that he could get round anyone with a few bowls of cereal. T'ai, however, mixes combos with a bit of style and finesse to leave his opponents in such a state where they won't even see breakfast next morning.

So what's the story behind this fearsome fighting feline? Well, in ancient China, the creatures have begun an epic struggle against the evil Dragon Master. T'ai is the only surviving member of his clan and is sent to be raised in safety in the Panda Temple. His existence is discovered and the Dragon Master tries to find and kill him. In the struggle T'ai manages to escape, but is blamed for the savage murder of the Panda Monks and the destruction of their haven.

T'ai's quest is to clear his name, restore balance to the world and claim his birthright as Tiger Master. His challenge begins with a search for each of the Masters of the Kung-Fu Clans, where he must learn all of the Kung-Fu styles and discover the unique strength required to defeat the Dragon Master.

To succeed in this game you must be expert at both platform games and beat-'em-ups, as it combines both. It begins (how can I put it?) beautifully. The first thing you notice is the graphics. The bods at Activision and Dreamworks have produced seamless animation, compelling cinematic sequences (as seen in the intro) and stunning lighting effects driven by Morph-X technology, which was apparently used in Jurassic Park: The Lost World. I agree with all that they claim, but the only snag is in the lighting effects. Some of the levels are quite dark and it's difficult to see where you're going, so you can actually find yourself falling off the edge of a cliff or into



Scary leopard woman pins T'ai against the fence - oo-er!











COLLECTOR'S ITEMS...

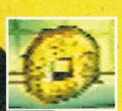
As with all platform adventure games, there are plenty of pick-ups to collect as you explore. Some of these listed below you can't do without...



GREEN JADE
Collecting this doesn't seem very important as there's so much of it lying around the place. But if you collect enough of it you gain an extra life.



T'AI FU SYMBOL
You find these hiding behind wicker baskets and on cliff sides; walk through them and you gain, yes, another extra life.



GOLDEN RING
You must collect these to advance to the next level. Normally you have to beat a certain of number of enemies all at once before it is available.



HEALTH
If you're running a bit low on steam, look out for one of these red symbols. They usual appear when you're just about to be ganged up on by the enemy.



INVISIBILITY
You want find this until you reach the third level. When you walk through this symbol you turn black as if you've been burnt, then just simply walk past the mean dudes without them noticing you.

The only thing wrong with this game is the really annoying camera angles

a pit of killer tar without seeing it.

Panda Pops

You begin in the Panda Temple and Master Ping instructs you on what buttons do what. Like in all beat-'em-ups, you've got the ability to block, pick up and throw your opponent and pull out some combos. As you continue through each of the 20 levels, you have to learn up to 100 moves. Each of these levels are themed with a certain type of animal and when you finally beat the end-of-level boss you earn his move, which depends on his species. Leopards offer the Pounce Attack, Cranes offer the Crane Hover and the Monkey Roll is gained by defeating the Monkey boss. And, of course, as you're playing T'ai, you can unleash 'the tiger in you' by using your natural, deadly defences of thrashing claws and razor-sharp teeth.

Then you enter into the Bamboo Forest where you get to make your first kill. The enemy on this level comes in the shape of deadly snakes that love giving you a quick bite. Whatever enemy you're facing has a heath bar; while you're fighting, it turns orange and then red before it dies. Also hiding behind wicker baskets and amongst bamboo shoots are extra pick-ups like jewels, health and extra lives. To complete a level you must kill all the enemies, who are sleeping most of the time, until you come along to cause havoc and gain the gold coin, which usually involves you fighting up to five or so enemies, sometimes all at the same time.

More enemies you're confronted with include monkeys, leopards, cranes and cobras, and as you reach the final part of the game they become almost impossible to beat unless you use special power-ups and Chi (magic) power. The final challenge is by far the hardest as you must defeat the Dragon Master himself.

This Way and That...

The only thing wrong with this game is the really annoying camera angles which move around like no-ones business. One minute it's in front of you so you can't see what is coming up next, and the next minute it's at the side of you. There's no means of altering it like you usually can by using the shoulder buttons, so you have no choice but to get used to it.

Activision say that they're targeting T'ai Fu at eight- to 16-year-olds, which I would say was about right. However, I certainly enjoyed playing it and I'm an old fogey at 22. It's smooth, suave and debonair, and T'ai himself is quite a cool character, with only one saying unfortunately; and it's not, 'they're grrrreat'. It offers a little bit of everything, so in that sense you can't go far wrong. Soon everyone will be kung-fu fighting.

Claire Webster

SECOND OPINION

The cartoony characters and cool animations will endear this game to the younger gamer, but offer even the hardened expert a challenge. The way T'ai learns his moves is original, and offers a great learning curve. Definitely my cup of tea.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	8

88%

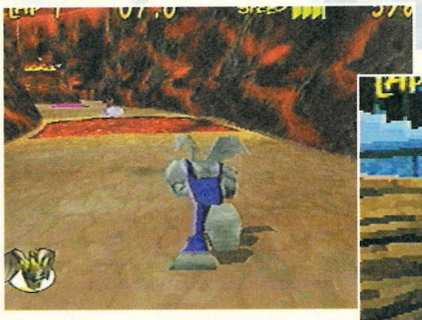
PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Sony	989 Studios	Sports Sim	Out Now	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card Analogue Pad	Dual Shock

A new generation of racing game is born, and why not race an elephant rather than a car? Claire Webster's been Running Wild in the streets...

Running Wild





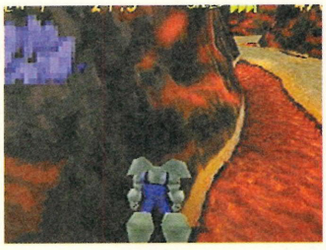






I thought Bull Run was a battle in the American Civil war (Anorak - Ed)





Don't you just love games that are a little peculiar? Those that have unique features or are completely off the wall, but fun nonetheless? Running Wild plays exactly how it sounds; it's a game where you run, but run very wildly, which isn't difficult when you're playing as an elephant.

Basically this is really just a racing game, but you're steering animals rather than a Jaguar XJ 220 around tracks, which have lava, thorns, ice or hot fireballs to slow you down. There are four different game modes; Challenge, Practice, Time Trial and Circuit. In Challenge Mode you start off on an Easy difficulty level, where you have to come first on all four tracks. You race your opponents through a Volcano, over the Arctic, around the Desert and through the City, collecting turbos and pick-ups as you go.

In Time Trial you race the clock on your own and race to put yourself on the leaderboard as the fastest player, whereas in Circuit Mode it's just like a championship league where you score points to try and win first place. However, if you have any sense about you, you would have a go at practising first.

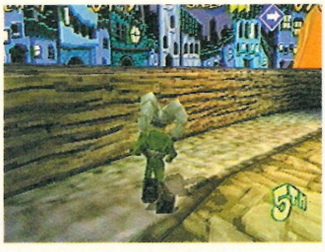
Part of the Herd

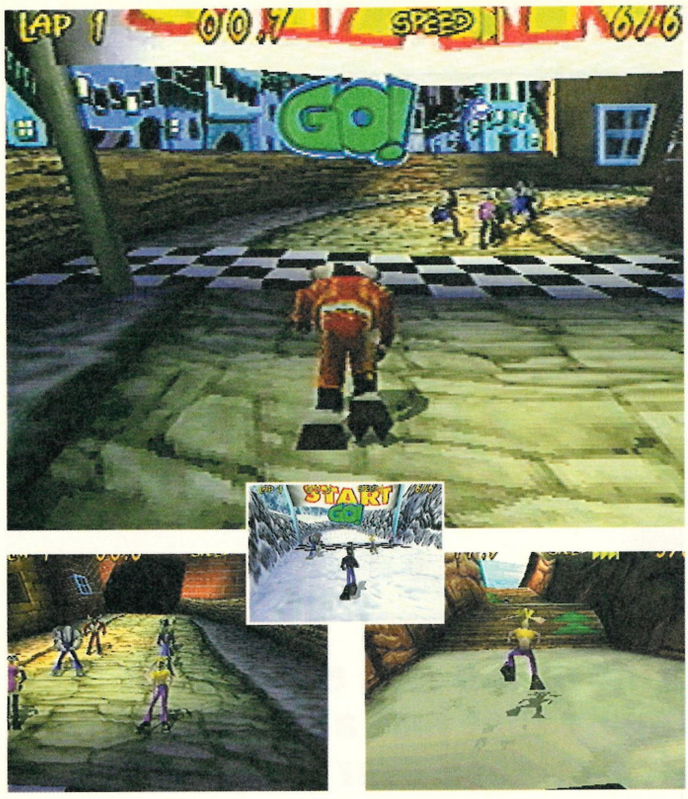
All of the characters in the game are animals (as you may have guessed). There's a zebra called Brazz, a rabbit called Gwynne, Boris the elephant, The General (a ram), a Spanish bull and a panda named Mei-Ling who sounds like a cat. Each animal has a different level of speed, strength, power, turning and jumping, but I've learned from playing the game that it's a lot easier to just choose one character and stick to using it, because all of them have the abilities to win a race.

You begin the game with a choice of four tracks; Desert, Arctic, Volcano and City and the difficulty is set to Easy (you have no choice). If you're playing in Challenge Mode, you must come first, as you only have three chances to complete all of the tracks. If you do manage it, you progress to Medium difficulty where you gain an extra course to compete on; a jungle to be exact. Your opponents become a lot faster and the courses contain more obstacles. And if you think that's bad, just wait until you reach the Hard and Expert levels - then you really know the meaning of impossible.

It's addictive, challenging, and best of all, loads of fun

Trying to get hold of the turbos and pick-ups as you run is also a difficult task, but they do prove useful, especially on the harder levels because your opponents run so quickly you have to do something to slow them down. If you pick up a target, you either gain a mud bomb which makes the others run slower, an ice bomb that makes them slide everywhere or the ability to make







Running over the green triangles gives you a boost of speed.

THE WILD ONES...

All of the characters in Running Wild are not only serious runners, but they also have friendly, out-going personalities with more interests than just taking part in championship games. We managed to get the following personal details:



Skills:
Air guitar, lip synching
Hobby:
Listening to rock music



Skills:
Big on endurance
Hobby:
Collecting stamps



Skills:
Jumping to conclusions!
Hobby:
Computer science



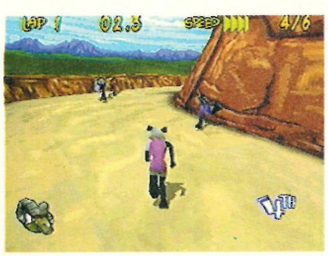
Skills:
Organising followers like sheep
Hobby:
Crossword puzzles



Skills:
Trampling, stampeding
Hobby:
Stopping to smell roses



Skills:
Sees things in more than black and white
Hobby: **Water-colour artist**



them smaller so you can trample on them (sounds a bit like Mario Kart). If you do manage to get some speed up without bumping into anything, it's also possible to launch yourself off a jump and land on their heads.

Going Insane

It takes quite a while to run at your fastest if you are one of the 'larger' characters such as the bull or elephant, but when you do manage it you see your smoke turning red; this is what we call 'insane speed', which means you're going so fast that you can almost run through anything that gets in your way such as whirlwinds in the arctic, thorns in the desert or hot pools of lava in the volcano.

And of course, there's a two-player mode as well, so you and a friend can race around jumping on each other's heads in an attempt to reach the finish line first. The split-screen is a little off-putting as you see your screen vertically rather than horizontally, and if you're like me, you're more used to racing games which are split the other way around. What can I say? I'm just a stickler for tradition.

Another slight glitch in Running Wild is the use of the analogue pad. When you're running at high speed it is extremely difficult to turn your character round sharp corners and most of the time you end up going backwards. Using the D-pad is a lot easier, but it takes some getting used to.

Apart from these couple of things, I have nothing else to moan to you about in this game. It's addictive, challenging (to say the least) and best of all, loads of fun. It's one of those that hasn't had a lot of hype, so nobody is too interested when they see it on the shop shelf. I just hope I've done it justice enough so you decide to buy it (honestly, this isn't an advertisement)!

Claire Webster

I hope I've done it justice enough so you decide to buy it

SECOND OPINION

As racers go it won't trouble Gran Turismo or Max Power Racing, but Running Wild is a neat little offering nonetheless. The younger gamer will love its cutesy characters and accessible gameplay. Perhaps 90% is a little high, but it's worth a look.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	9
LIFESPAN	9

90%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Sony CEE	989 Studios / Wild Game	Sports Sim	Out Now	UK	£34.99	1-8	Memory Card	Dual Shock

A game of finesse and skill, or an excuse for a punch-up? Richard Melville gets his skates on and takes to the ice with Sony's latest ice hockey sim...

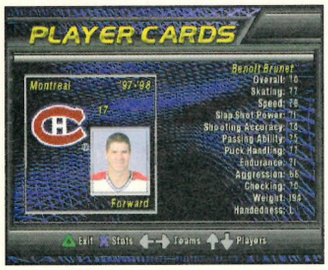
NHL Face Off '99



One of the rare examples of the sport that just about justifies it a release over here

Christ, It's another one. The National Hockey League must be represented by more games on the PlayStation over here than tennis, snooker and cricket put together which, as these are all fairly traditional English sports, is madness. Granted the fast push and jersey-tugging allure of ice-based puck-shoving is more suited to videogame format, but with Codemasters' Brian Lara Cricket doing great things in the charts, you have to ask why so many hockey games are released, especially when the amount we already have has gone past double figures.

The answer is simple - most videogame companies are huge multi-national conglomerates like Sony, and produce US hockey games because the yanks like them. When it comes to a European release, the huge firms have got nothing to lose by chucking out their game here to make some extra dough. Hence, Virgin, Sony, EA and anybody else that feels like joining the bandwagon make that little bit of extra dosh. Sony's new game at least looks a better prospect than most, coming from Cool Boarders 3 developers 989 Studios. Thankfully, we haven't got the mug of Wayne Gretzky gracing the front of the game packing either.



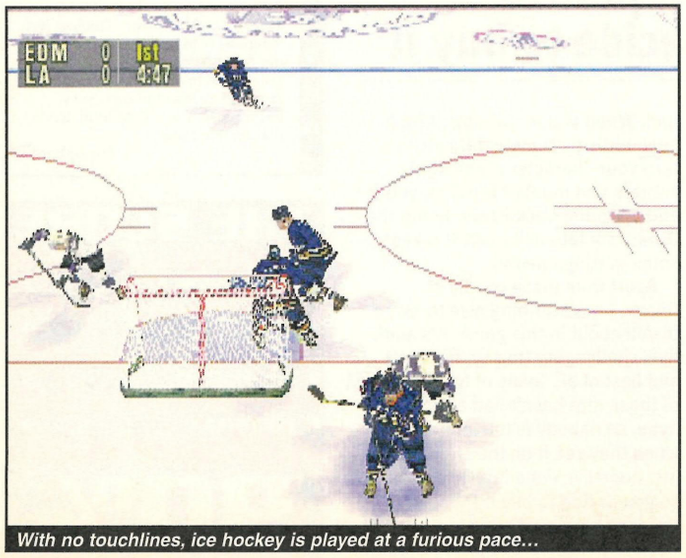
Born in the USA...

The intro before each match is familiar territory indeed. The panning stadium cameras give way to the babbling mike jockeys; 'Hi I'm a faceless yank who likes pucks and speaks like Forrest Gump'. Joy. Obviously the American glitz isn't that relevant here, but it's carried off well and the game wouldn't feel the same without it. We British will always reach for the mute option and reach for the Beth Orton CD, though (Beth who? - Ed).

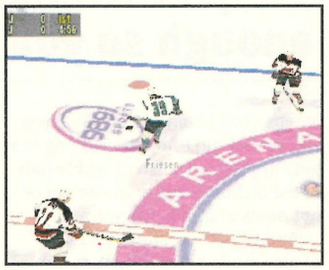
The interface to select matches is pleasantly arcade-like and is just as usable as a similar device from EA. In the game, it's clear that this is a 1999 hockey game rather than a 1996 update due to the player detail and deft slickness of the players slipping around the rink. Where Cool Boarders 3 merely improved the in-game visuals of its predecessor, leaving a slightly hollow experience, NHL Face Off '99 manages to be just about the best example of the sport in gameplay terms. The controls are simple, based around the big three - passing, shooting and speed-up. The familiar bane of this genre is reduced here too; the small goals and Cartmanesque goalkeepers previously left little room for accurate scoring rather than speed-ridden joypad fumbles as you ventured inescapably to the back of the rink.

NHL Face Off '99 features decent opportunities for you to aim and score because of your judgement rather than random chance. The game speed can and should be reduced before entering the game too, because otherwise it's like Tom and Jerry in a speed-influenced ice rink pursuit.

There are other Ice Hockey games with more stats. EA's dreadfully reliable and average hockey series is laden with the amount of times a player has helped in a multi-assisted backpass which didn't actually go in the back of the net, but stood a five-to-one chance based on the player that took the shot. Exciting for some, possibly, but boring tat for most of us, I

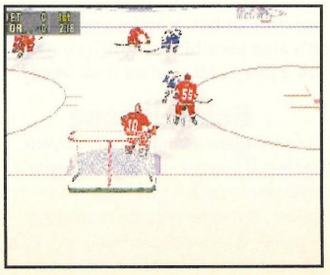


With no touchlines, ice hockey is played at a furious pace...



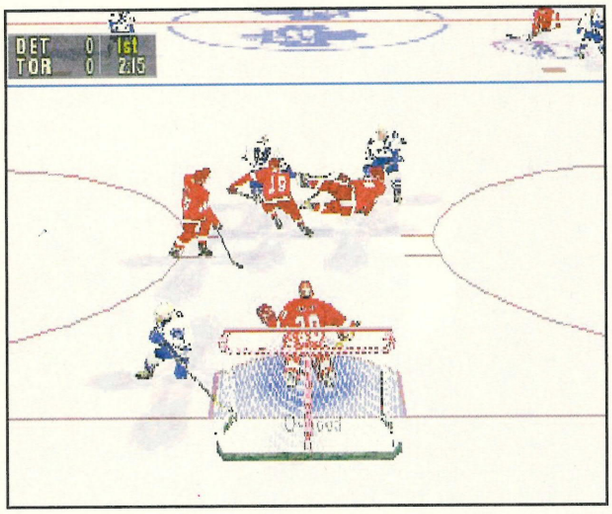


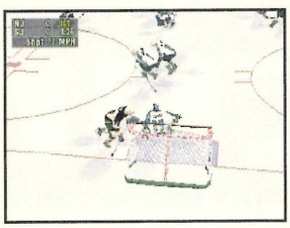


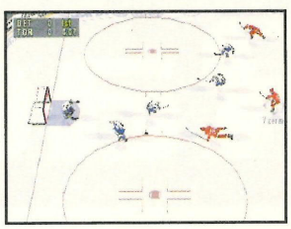


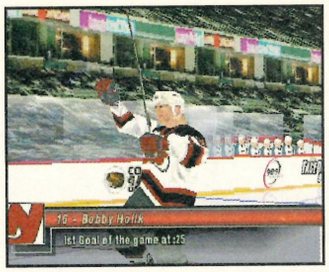
BORN SLIPPY...

From the spills here, it's obvious that whoever has the puck won't be on their feet for too long because you're either tripped up via a hockey stick, schoolboy-style, or punched in the head and fly, somewhat incredulously, about ten feet landing on your face. You then have to cope with the embarrassment of looking like those magnetic animal toy couplets which shuffle around on their bellies. A possible career move for Gascoigne and his pies, we wonder ?













The best example of the sport in gameplay terms

think. Player stats are present, but they're basic enough to not to force long loading sequences while your PlayStation groans under the weight of displaying half the world's leagues.

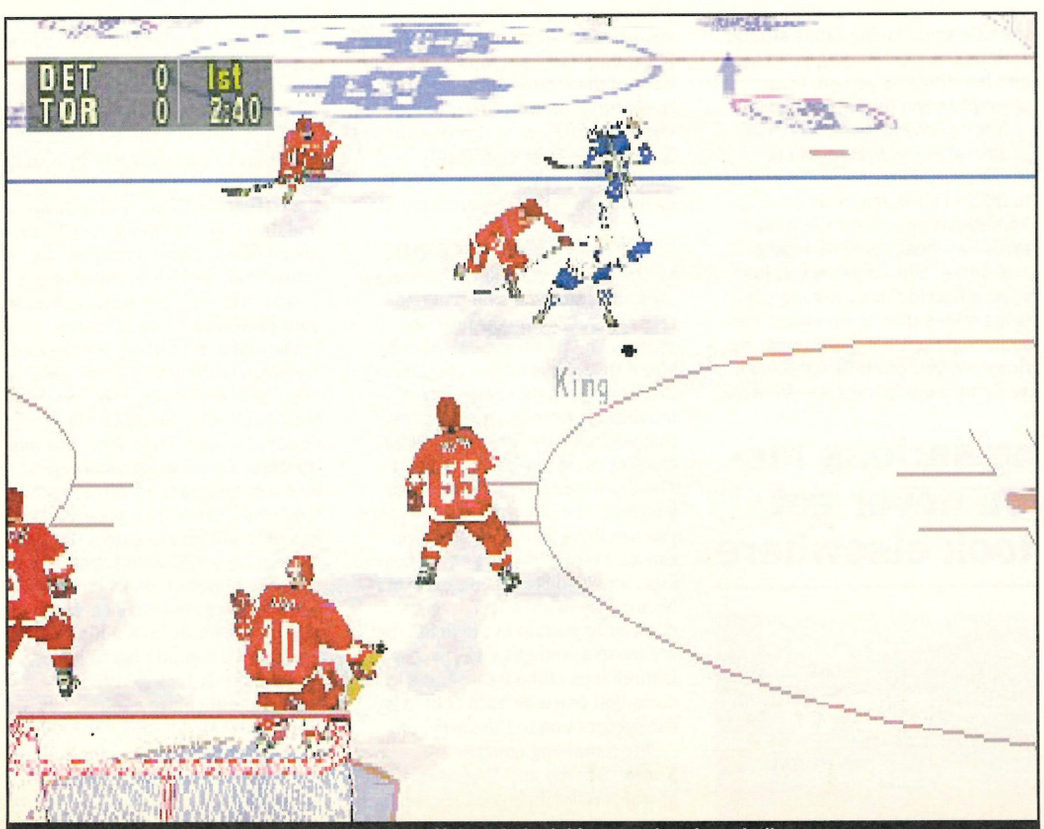
A Quick Fix

The quick start option is the best bet for most gamers, and allows you to delve straight in with up to eight players, giving each player a random team. On ice, rules are laid back and though arcade-like fighting rarely occurs, when it does the giant padded fellows can even do a beat-'em-up-style 'special', but there are no triple flaming Dragon Punches to be found here, alas. Which brings us to the point of sports-based fights - FIFA 99 lets you go and deck the hapless goalkeeper, but the considerably more violent contact sport on show here is tame in comparison. Push X to pull a jersey, or Square to slap a face - they all have more protection than NASA astronauts too! Silly beggars.

In all honesty, though, hockey games always benefit from being more current, if only so they can use the most friendly menu systems and enhanced graphics that the passing of PlayStation time offers. 989 studios have done a thoroughly convincing job here, and it's one of the rare examples of the sport that just about justifies it release this side of the pond.

That's not to say you'll get more enjoyment out of the game than FIFA or even a Platinum Konami sports game. If the rink sets your pulse racing and spins associated propellers, this is as playable as the sport has been on the PlayStation. Ever. But, at the end of the day, it's ice hockey and has limited appeal this side of the pond. Still, must avoid slagging hockey. If you like it, buy it. Go on then, hurry now - you wouldn't want to miss the Gretzky interview on Channel 4...

Richard Melville



Those red pyjama suits are very fetching, even if they do look big enough to lag a boiler...

SECOND OPINION

It's obviously designed for our American cousins, but NHL Face Off '99 is a good game in its own right, even if you've no interest in the sport. It's not quite up there with EA Sports' NHL 99, but perhaps it's a little more accessible. Good attention to detail.

Ian Osborne

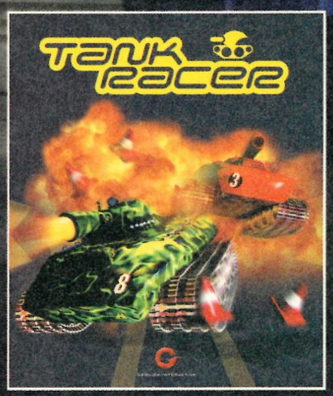
THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	6
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	6

73%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Grolier Interactive	Glass Ghost	Driving	19th March '99	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card, Dual Shock Analogue Pad

You're in the army now; only you've gone AWOL and decided to cause some mass destruction. Claire Webster's got herself decked out in her combat gear and is up for a few laps around the track...



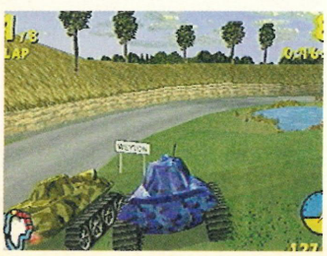
Tank Racer

Big, boisterous, and blasting good fun. There's nothing much else that adequately describes Grolier's new Tank Racer, so there's really not much point in me carrying on. But then again, I'd get into a bit of trouble if I didn't, seeing as I'm here to inform you, the valued reader, about the ins and outs of all the latest games, be they good or very very bad.

Tank Racer, definitely is not one of the bad ones. In the last two issues we've updated you on all its latest developments, just to keep you in suspense until it actually reaches the shop shelves. At last we've now, got it so we can give it the review that it deserves. The point of the game is exactly what the title says, racing tanks around various tracks, ramming into cars and buildings as you go, in an attempt to win first place - easy!

Not so easy actually, as while you're racing, your opponents throw everything they have at you to try and slow you down. Sometimes you might get blown away by a heat-seeking missile, and on the odd occasion you find yourself accidentally driving over some mines that an opponent has so lovingly left behind for you. However, you can return the favour by doing exactly the same to them.

If you're expecting serious racing, something you never get tired of playing, look elsewhere





This principle is the same whichever game mode your playing, of which there are three; Single Race, Cup Race and Multi-Player. In each of the modes there are also three cups; Bronze, Silver and Gold, and depending on which one you're playing, the level of difficulty varies, obviously Bronze being the easiest and Gold the hardest.

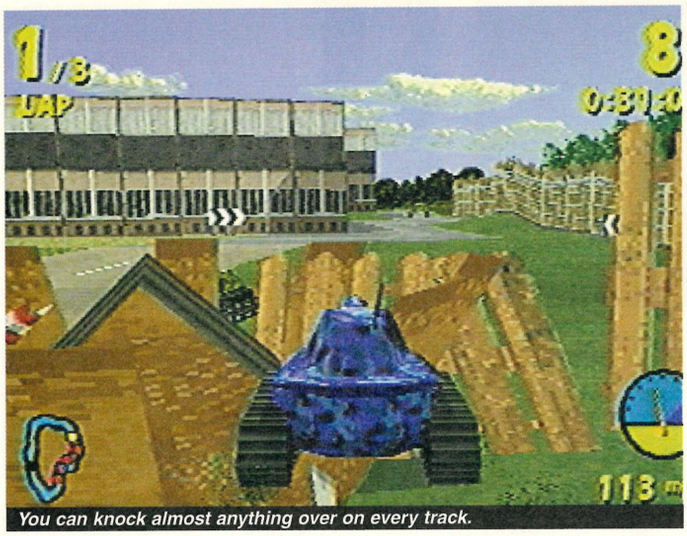
Mass Destruction

In Single Race you have a free reign on which track you would like to race around. Firstly there's the Village. The first thing you notice about this one is all the streets are deserted (probably because the inhabitants have been pre-warned that you're on the way and will be causing some severe damage). There are loads of stationary cars parked at the sides of the roads that you can drive your tank over. You can also ram into some of the buildings, and if you're feeling particularly cruel, there are a few animals innocently grazing in the fields that are unsuspecting as well. Each race is three laps of the track, and if you come first place on each course you can progress on to the silver cup.

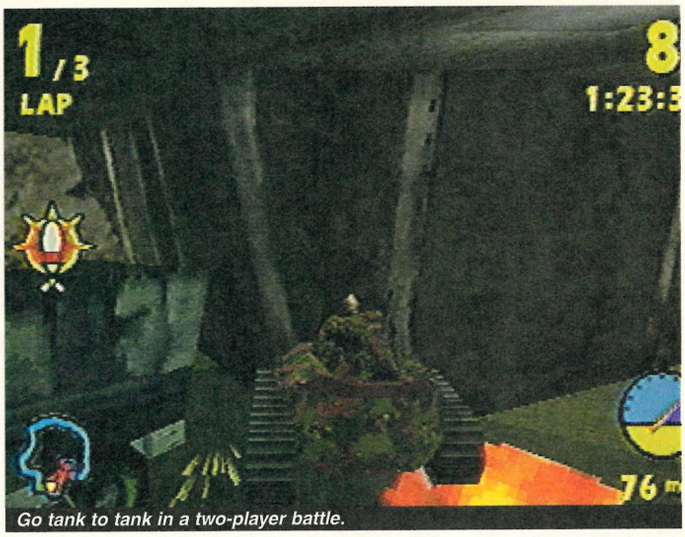
The remaining courses are Border, Swamp and Theme Park, all of which have their own obstacles, such as bogs (not of the toilet variety) or roller coasters. If you win first place on all the Bronze tracks you see that when you progress onto the Silver ones there are some extra courses; there's even one where you get to race on the moon (now how unrealistic is that? Just kiddin')! However, the graphics are nothing to shout very loudly about, the colours are quite safari-like and the backgrounds are pretty boxy and basic, but I suppose you're supposed to be concentrating on racing rather than looking at the scenery.

And of course you have to choose your tank before you race. The tanks that are on offer also depend on which colour cup you are playing. The Bronze Cup tanks are the MetaCat Radius Sri, EMZ 212 Coupe, the Kyoto Banditos 2.01 and the Mcoy Charger GL, and there's also a hidden tank to win at each cup level. You also notice each tank has different abilities from the rest - some have a higher top speed, others have better acceleration and handling and some have a stronger grip on the roads. Just a hint though; it's a good idea to just go for the fastest tank, as all of them are quite difficult to control, but you can notice the difference in speed.

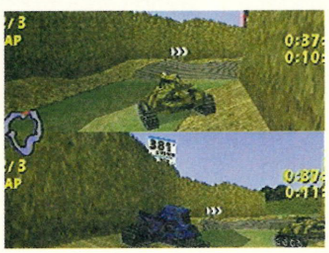
Obviously the main point to this game is to win first place, but more importantly, you also get the chance to blow a few people up using the power-ups found around the course.

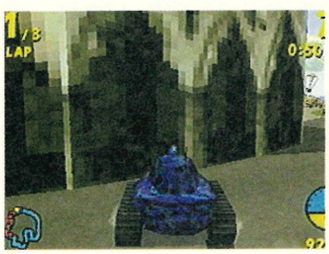


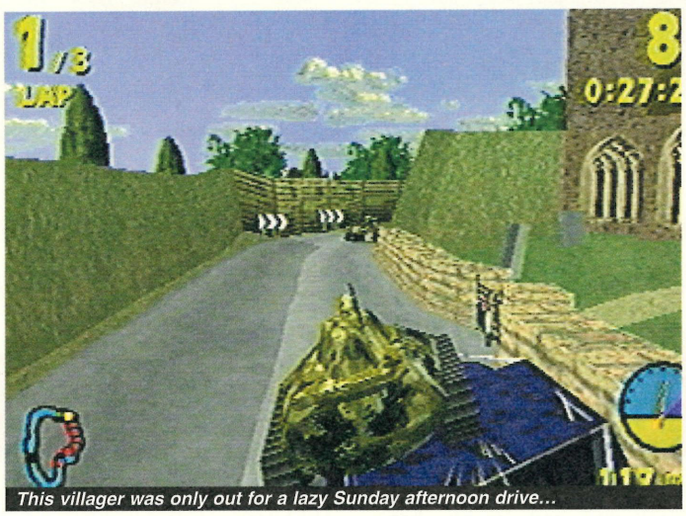
You can knock almost anything over on every track.



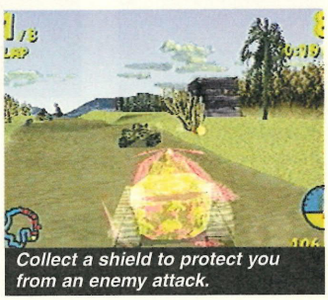
Go tank to tank in a two-player battle.

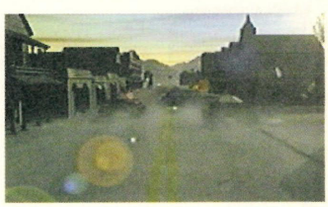






This villager was only out for a lazy Sunday afternoon drive...


Collect a shield to protect you from an enemy attack.



Grolier have produced a unique and relatively fun game

Homing missiles are the most useful, as even if your opponents are in the distance you still see them run wildly off the road and into a building. There are also concussion shells, turbos so you can zip quickly past the tanks in front, mines, shields and an alien abduction which beams up the tank in front and then places it a few positions back. If you haven't got any power-ups you still have your standard gun weapon which you can just keep firing to disable the tank in front.

Tanked Up

One of the nicest features in this game is the multiplayer mode where you can either have a versus race or a two-player battle. In Battle Mode you can choose from four arenas in each cup. Basically you both have an energy bar and you have to beat your opponent by collecting weapons and destroying them before they annihilate you. The only bad thing about this mode is the fact that the arenas are so big. Even though you are given a radar to show where the other player is, you end up driving around for hours trying to catch them up. This means the novelty does wear off a little after a while, but when you do manage to find each other it can be quite satisfying blowing up the tanks!

Grolier have definitely produced a unique and relatively fun game, and there are a few bonus games included as well, namely Pong and Combat, but I can't help thinking they're there for when you get tired of racing tanks, because the novelty factor does where off. If you're after a few laughs then this is the game for you, but if you're expecting serious racing and something that you never get tired of playing, I'm afraid to say you should look elsewhere.

Claire Webster

FIGHTING MACHINES...

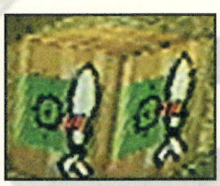
Below are just a few of the power-ups you can use against your opponents...



CONCUSSION SHELL
Causes a shockwave to come from the point of contact and causes any tank it hits to spin off.



SHIELD
Gives a shield for ten seconds, during which peoples' weapons have no effect on you.



HOMING MISSILE
Locks onto the tank you are aiming at and homes in on it.



TURBO
Gives you eight seconds of turbo acceleration.

SECOND OPINION

Perhaps Webby's being a little tight here. She's right when she says Tank Racer was never about high-speed one-player thrills. Instead it's a game to keep at the back of your collection for when your mates come round. As such, it works very well - give it 80%, I say.

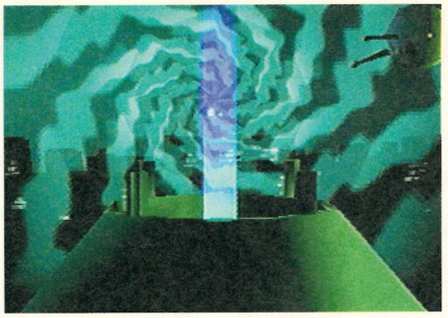
Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

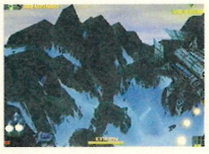
GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	6
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	6

70%


Aim at this centipede's head to destroy him...




It must be hard to trust a cat as a pilot.













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

It's time to get down to some space-invading action as Claire Webster rids the planets of the evil Kyati; oh, and may the force be with you...

Retro Force

Get your guns at the ready, pilot, as you're about to be forced into action in this 2D classic-style shoot-'em-up, played within a true 3D world. You form part of the elite flying squadron, Retro Force. As you blast your way through the levels, the plot unfolds until eventually you find yourself on a huge mothership which is intent on destroying the galaxy. The battle continues across space and time and the two opposing sides are transported across the millennia with the hope of reigning supreme.

Players have the choice of playing any of the four heroic characters, who all look quite strange; Hawkin Raydar, Paris Tetsuo, Pi, who is a three-foot blue cat or Sinclair, a robot. Each of the characters has their own unique spacecraft armed with six permanent weapons. None of them seem to fly very differently, the only thing that is unique to each one is its shape. They all have three types of bombs and three firing blasters, some being better to use than others. If you press the Triangle button when you're overwhelmed by firing enemy craft, you deploy what looks like a nuclear bomb which destroys all of them.

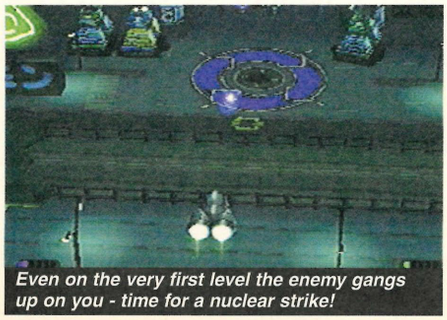
The first level is by far the easiest. The city is under siege by the enemy and it's down to you to exterminate as many of them as possible. Some of their ships are positioned on the ground and some come in groups of five or more, shooting at you from all directions. Careful targeting and some nifty manoeuvring is in order. The enemies target their fire at you rather than just randomly, so if you draw their aim you can predict where they shoot and then move out of the way (it's all highly technical, you know). You can also blow up buildings, satellites and shop signs, but be careful not to knock your ship into them as you sustain damage.

Once More Unto the Breach...

Level Two has been named 'Time Breach' and the Retro Force pilots have travelled back in time because the opposition has stolen the city's holy artefact - you must stop them! This is where you meet the first boss. In later levels there are quite a few bosses to beat in each challenge, though some are easier to beat than others. This level's boss comes in the form of a massive robo-spider who shoots lovely orange torpedoes at you. When you confront a boss, its energy bar appears at the bottom of the



For anyone who enjoyed a good game of Space Invaders, Retro Force is a version for the 90s


Even on the very first level the enemy gangs up on you - time for a nuclear strike!


The Robo Spider's one of the easier bosses to kill...



RETRO WEAPONS...

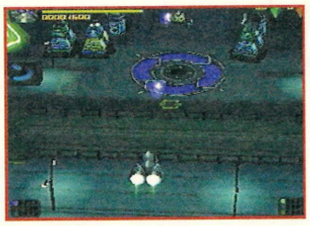
Your ship already comes with weaponry on board, but you soon run out. While in battle, look out for pick-ups which give you more ammo. Offered below are your primary weapons...



FAN FIRE
Probably the best weapon to use; it destroys a large number of enemy ships at once and is especially useful on the second level when you have to kill a swarm of alien bees.



NUCLEAR MISSILES
There are very few of these smart bomb weapons, but they do cause some heavy destruction. Your screen turns white from the explosion.



PULSE BEAM
This is the weapon you first begin the game with - it fires quite slow pulses at the enemy and you can only hit someone if you're head-on with them.



ELECTRIC PLASMA
This looks cool, but as a weapon it's not too effective. It takes a while to penetrate the enemy battleships and it covers a very wide area when fired.



screen and you have to aim at a particular part of it to kill it.

The meanest boss of all is on Level Three. He throws every weapon he has at you, but when you blow off his arms the pieces turn into gems - which brings me smoothly to my next point. For each level you have collect as many as these gems as possible and also destroy as many enemy ships and tanks as you can, because it all gets added onto your final score when you complete a level. Also taken into account is the number of lives you had left and how many smart bombs you managed to collect. If you get a good final score, you have the privilege of adding your name to the high scores table.









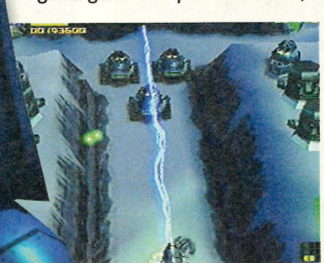
Winning Weapons

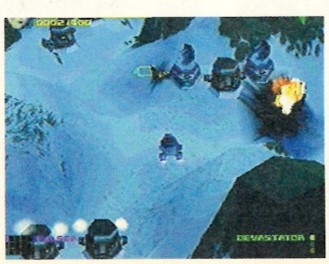
While you're flying you should also pick up different weapons. These include a Lonsier, which is a long string of blue electrically-charged plasma, Fan Fire, a string of red death orbs and a front-firing pulse beam. Personally I would say the orbs are by far the superior weapon, as they fire at angles rather than a straight line where you can only hit the enemy head-on.

For anyone who enjoyed a good game of Space Invaders, Retro Force is a version for the 90s. It's simple and quick, and has even got a half-hearted attempt at a storyline. Graphically, this game doesn't have a lot to wow at; the levels are very dark and the only brightly-coloured object is the enemy fire! I will give it good marks for its addictiveness, though, especially if you're fighting a boss and you keep losing so often to him that you just have to keep playing to avoid embarrassment. It's not worth spending 40 quid on, if that's really what you want to know. If I was you, I'd just hold out until the sales are on as you're not missing anything much.

Claire Webster

It's not worth spending £40 on, if that's what you want to know...





SECOND OPINION

A blaster from the old school - Retro Force does well to capture the atmosphere of the arcades of yesteryear (without the prize bingo, chain-smoking change booth operative and permanent smell of chips), but isn't really worth the asking price in 1999.

Russell Barnes

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	6
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	7

67%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Konami	Konami	Action Adventure	April '99	UK	£39.99	1	Memory Card	Analogue

The sea is whispering to Claire Webster to play this new diving game from Konami. Search for treasure and discover the secrets of mysterious sunken ships, but is she up for a soakingly-good time, or is she just a wet blanket? Let's take the plunge...

Diver's Dream

It's like the Titanic all over again; sunken ships, hidden treasures and a bucket-full of mystery thrown in for good measure. This is about as close to a game about the Titanic as you're going to get. Okay, so there aren't any icebergs and Leonardo isn't around to save my life either. Still, there's a rather hunky-looking diver that does the job (of finding the sunken ship I mean)!

The glorious ship Matilda has been lying on the ocean floor now for hundreds of years, but nobody knows its exact location. Many divers have taken it upon themselves to search for all of its treasure, which has been spread all over the bottom of the ocean. Some have come back on shore with very little, and some have even died mysteriously.

In this game, you fancy yourself to be a bit of an expert at diving (even though you haven't got any money or equipment to begin with). Your main goal is to find the treasure and become famous due to your heroic efforts. But of course it's not as simple as all that. Before you even reach the Matilda you have to carry out some courageous tasks to gain money and people's trust.

At the start of the game, there's a lovely sequence where you enlist the help of an old captain in your quest to search for the ship. He gives you a brief history, but even though you're a little stand-offish at first, he soon persuades you to join him on his boat. Before you go, you visit a few shop owners at the harbour. In a diving equipment store a bloke called Basillio says that he will give you some flippers as long as you retrieve his sea camera he lost while diving in some caves. It gives you a choice on whether or not you help him, but, annoyingly, if you say 'no' just to be awkward the game isn't going to go anywhere.

Everybody's Free

This is where the action starts (apparently). Suddenly you find yourself trying to swim in the depths of a cave, and unless you had a go at practising the controls in the Free Mode, you find them very difficult. For starters, trying to get him to swim up or downwards is very frustrating, and on occasions you can literally be stuck and not be able to kick your legs to swim or even move at all, which means you soon run out of air and energy.

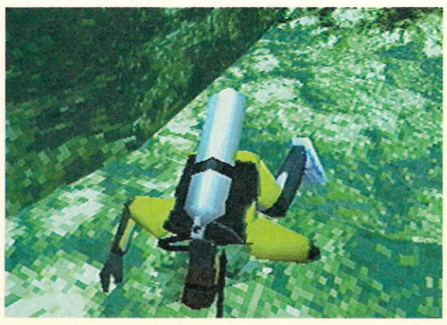
The health bars are at the bottom of the screen and when it indicates that you have 100% air, you

If you have a lot of patience, maybe you'll like it

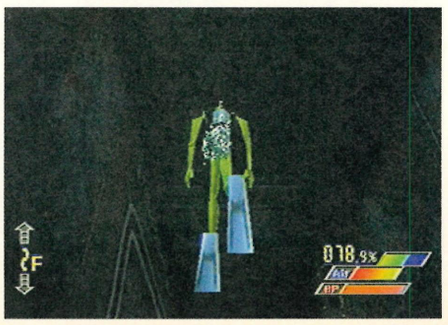


Pick up medi-packs to gain extra health just when you need it...







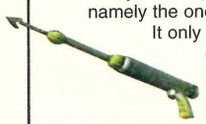


ARMED AND READY...

Some of the equipment you can buy from Basillio's shop is listed below. They are all expensive items, so make sure you have enough money...

PIZZICATO

This is your weapon that fires spears, namely the one you use to kill the shark. It only loads ten at once, so ensure you buy some before you enter the Paradise level.



FLIPPERS

There are lots of different kinds of flippers you can buy. The more expensive ones are much better made, and you can tell the difference when you're diving.



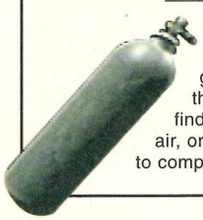
WET SUIT

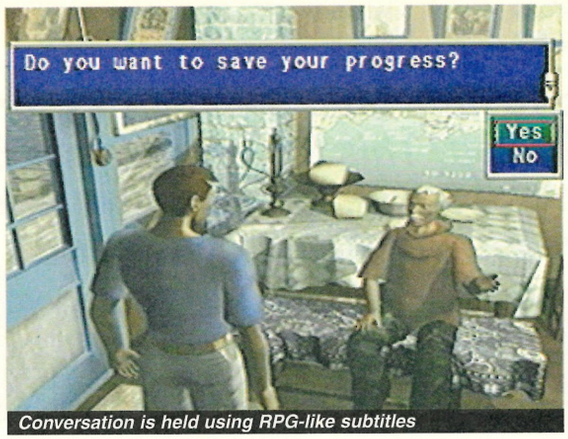
There's also a wide range of these to buy, again the more expensive they are, the better. It makes a lot of difference while you're swimming.



S-TANK

This contraption stops your energy bar from going down so fast. On the third level you have to find it before you run out of air, or else you won't be able to complete your task.





Conversation is held using RPG-like subtitles



Keep a look out for huge mutant lobsters...







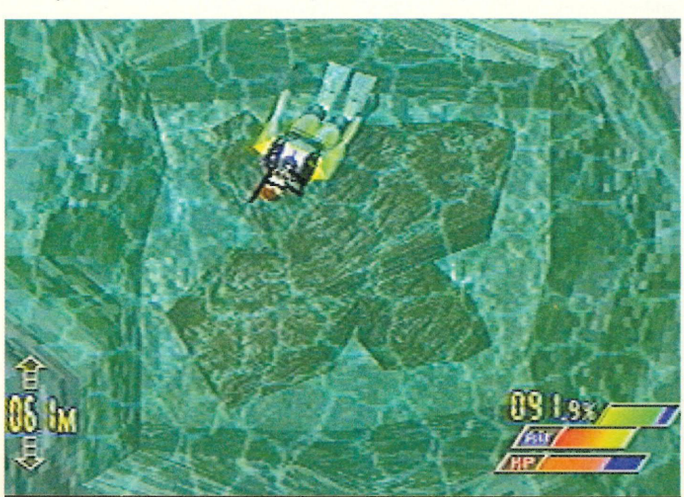


You find yourself saying, 'they could have made that game much better, it has so much promise!'

probably have about two and a half minutes (real time) until you run out. You also lose energy if you use a particular swimming stroke too often, knock into walls or get stung by a fish, so swim carefully.

This game's learning curve isn't very curvaceous. It even begins at a hard level. It's very easy to get lost around the caves and shipwrecks, and in some places air pockets aren't very easily found, so there's no opportunity to replenish your air supply. The first challenge you undertake is quite simple, but once you advance to the next task, you have to deal with killing a man-eating shark which has been munching on local swimmers and divers. If you succeed you receive a nice wad of cash, but trust me when I say your money does tend to dissipate quite quickly.

You have to kill the shark by repeatedly shooting spears at it. It takes many good shots and a lot of energy to get rid of it, and in-between shots you have to collect more spears for your gun, which makes it a rather tedious task. The following levels are along the same track, but there are extra puzzles to solve while you're underwater. Rescue divers, find specific treasures and pull a few levers and you've just a summed it up - well almost.



Find the air pockets to replenish your air supply...

Buried Treasure

As you're swimming through all the levels, you must also pick up stones and bottles, or just whatever's lying around really, because you can sell them to Enrico for Lucipeta (the local currency) and buy more equipment and medi-packs. Sometimes you haven't got a hope of completing a level unless you have a particular item, such as an air tank. The only problem is, that you only find out these things once you've died - in other words, make sure you have a memory card handy.

This is one of those games where you find yourself saying, 'Blimey, they could have made that game much better, it has so much promise!' Konami had a really good idea, but didn't use it to its full potential as they spoilt it with bad controls and tasks that become very frustrating; so much so, that you just lose interest . The only good point is the graphics as they're quite like Tomb Raider. I fell almost upset to complain about this one so much. If you have a lot of patience, maybe you'll like it, otherwise, you'll be as disappointed as I am.

Claire Webster



SECOND OPINION

It could have been so much better. Forcing the player to guess what piece of equipment to buy, the stage being insoluble if he gets it wrong, is just plain stupid. There's so much the game gets right, though; if only they'd spent another month polishing it.

Russell Barnes

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	6
GAMEPLAY	5
LIFESPAN	5

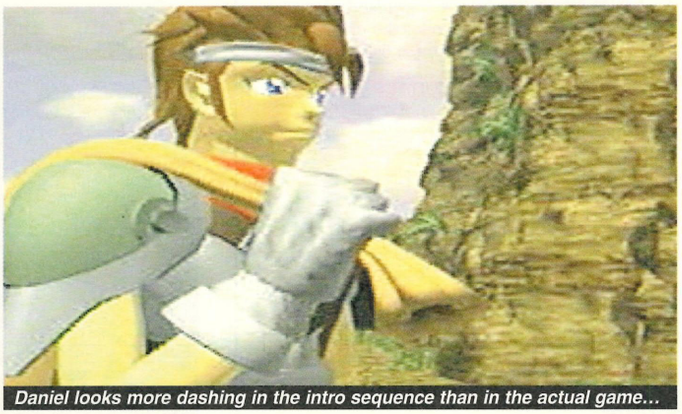
70%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Sunsoft	Sunsoft	RPG	Easter '99	UK	£39.99	1	Memory Card	Analogue Pad

What do you need to fight your own battles for when you've got a monster to do it for you? This RPG entails the propagation and rearing of you're very own evil beast...but just how wild is it? Claire Webster spreads her Monstrous Seed...

Monster Seed





Daniel looks more dashing in the intro sequence than in the actual game...





In last month's issue we wrote a preview on this new RPG, and I have to admit, it was me who wrote it. Like in all previews we don't make any judgements as it wouldn't be fair to until we play the final version - in other words, we normally give the game the benefit of the doubt. So now it's Monster Seed's turn to go under the spotlight, and I can't make any promises as to whether you'll like what I'm about to write...

The storyline is quite sweet in that it makes you want to say 'ahhh' and then skip around the room in a floating kinda way (if you know what I mean - probably not!). So as you're now waiting with baited breath, are you sitting comfortably so I can begin?

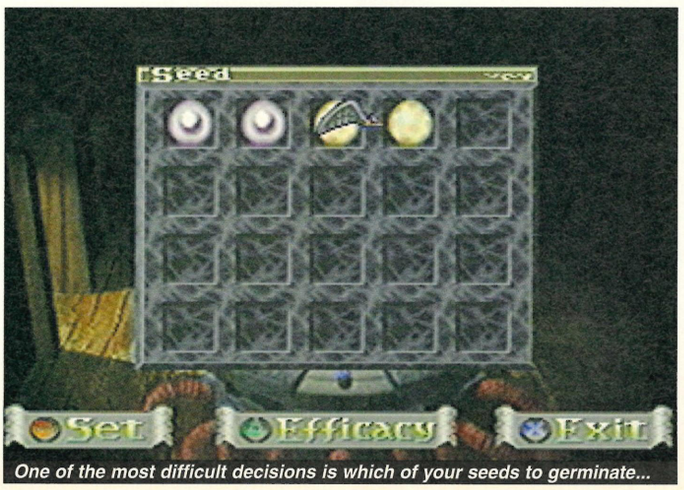
Once upon a time in the little town of Rempearl, excavators found a huge quantity of monster seeds. The seeds are ancient relics which are most commonly found in the Fourth World, buried in the Jedis Mountains. This discovery led to the town's sudden revitalisation, but no-one thought about their potential to be used as lethal weapons. Opposing gangs have now been carrying out even more devilish activities to discover, nurture and eventually control the most powerful monsters and destroy their enemies.

Sewing the Seeds

The eggs can be genetically altered during their incubation process by carefully controlling the environments in which their germination takes place. It's rumoured that the rival factor has created some fearsome mutants and the resulting breakdown in public order has become of great concern.

Law enforcement hasn't been able to get the situation under control, but things could be looking up, as a stranger called Daniel has just come to town. He too has found the secret of incubating monster seeds and has decided to fight back against the evil gangs to try and restore harmony to the once-peaceful town.

But Daniel really isn't as courageous as he sounds, because the first thing that happens as soon as you begin the game is a sudden ambush by one of the gangs. When it happened, I thought it was 'game over' and was just about to switch the PlayStation off in disgust, when low and behold, I was alive again - now I believe in reincarnation! The fight itself was, as you can imagine, very one-sided. Two hard-nuts walked up to me and decided how much fun it would be to kick me where it hurts and then knee-cap me for good measure. Before I knew it, I was lying on the floor and the words 'You Lost' were scrolling lovingly across the screen.



One of the most difficult decisions is which of your seeds to germinate...

This game doesn't have anything special to offer...



FIGHTING YOUR OWN BATTLES...

Attacking the enemy in Monster Seed is a long and arduous task. Here's what you have to do each time you're confronted by a bad guy...



Firstly, you must choose your opponent (only in the monster-fighting scene). The lowest-ranking monsters are obviously the easiest.



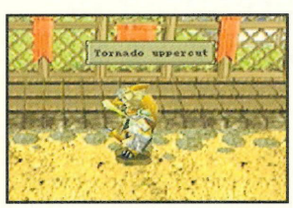
Next, the screen goes dark and you're on a grid with only a limited number of spaces to move to; approach the enemy and then choose your action (Attack is preferable).



Once you've made your move, suddenly another monster appears.



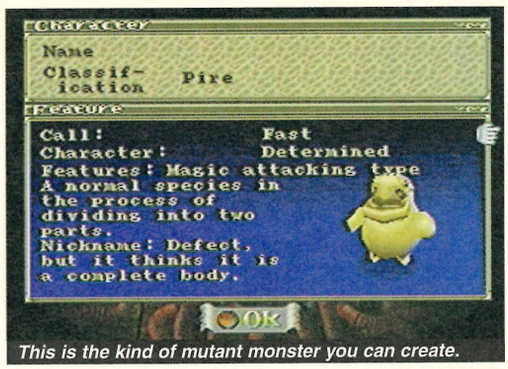
And then it's their move, which usually involves some serious injuries.



And again, it's your turn to attack. Don't forget there's always the option of running away, but if you're thinking of advancing onto your next challenge I wouldn't advise it.



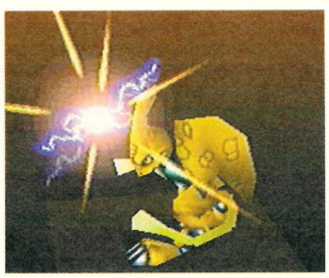
Even the monsters can hold a conversation - kind of...

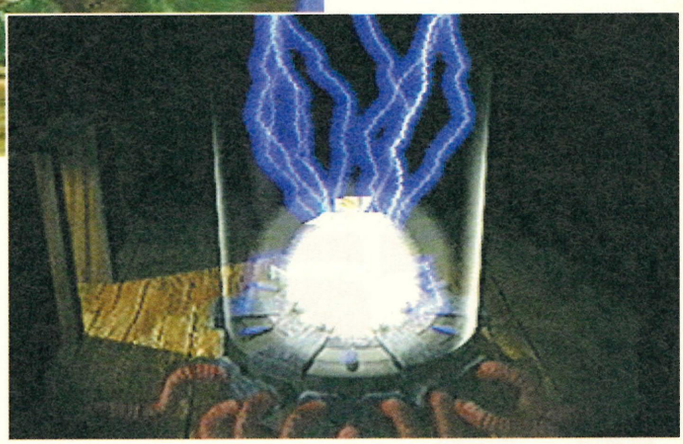


This is the kind of mutant monster you can create.









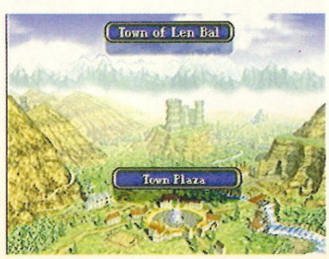
You wake up in a cute little cottage in the centre of Len Bal, where an old man tells you to get up off your lazy butt and find a job. So off you go into town to find the Town Chief, which isn't very difficult as he's the only person around to talk to. And it's a pity the game doesn't follow on in such simplicity as from then on you must go to the Soulin Fighting Monster Item Store to conjure up your first monster. And what fun that is. You have absolutely no idea about how to do this. First, you must pick which seed you want to germinate, which involves you just selecting one without knowing what will happen or what kind of monster it may produce. Then you must alter the environmental temperature, which again you have to guess. All I produced was some mutated gerbil that looked about as useful as a waterproof tea bag.

The rest of the game drags on at a snail's pace. The conversations seem to last forever and some of the dialogue boxes contain nothing but dots and badly-spelt words such as 'granddad' (it's true, I tell you)! You would think that seeing as RPGs rely on these dialogue boxes for storylines and instructions, Sunsoft would at least be capable of spelling things correctly!

The fight scenes are nothing to write home about either. In Granstream Saga we had some 3D action, and even though there was only one attack move it was still relatively impressive. In Monster Seed, however, the characters move around like penguins and when you make an attack the name of the move flashes up on the screen, like Tornado Uppercut for instance, and Daniel does a little jump in the air - and that's it. No blood and guts or loud painful screaming, just silence.

This game doesn't have anything special to offer. No gorgeous graphics, no action and no real in-depth storylines. It just takes far too long to advance, so if you have very little patience (like me) you soon become tired of getting nowhere fast. Stick to Granstream Saga and Final Fantasy VII for some serious RPG fun and avoid this one at all costs.

Claire Webster





SECOND OPINION

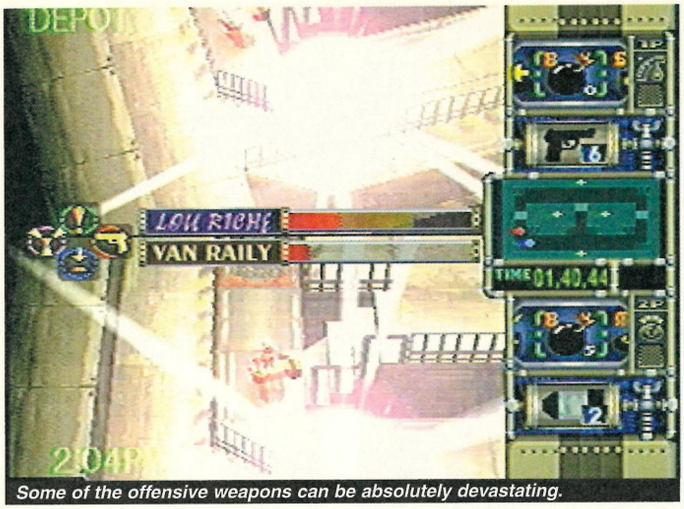
This one's tedious in the extreme. It makes the same mistakes as Konami's Azure Dreams, in that it tries to do something different with the RPG genre but leaves the gameplay behind at the same time. Ten out of ten for trying, though...

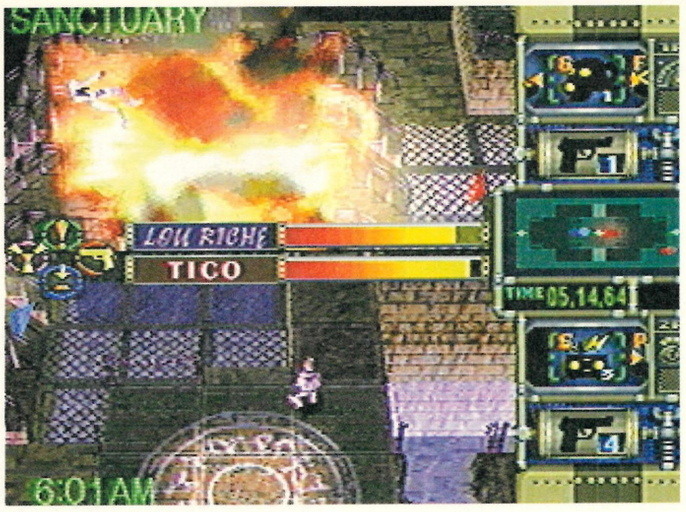
Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	5
GAMEPLAY	5
LIFESPAN	7

48%





Some of the offensive weapons can be absolutely devastating.

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Konami	Atlus	Action / Adventure	Out Now	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card Analogue Pad	Dual Shock

Doug Williams gets caught in a trap as he enters a high-tech world of extreme violence in Konami's Spy Vs Spy-influenced Trap Runner. Can he be bothered to get himself out, though?

Trap Runner





Shooting your bolt too early can cause all sorts of problems, especially if you haven't a repeat performance in your trousers. There's no such worries at Konami HQ - Metal Gear Solid has already devastated the charts and the terrifying Survival Horror outing, Silent Hill, looks set to do the same on its release this summer. Looks as though 1999 is going to be Konami's year, but it can't all be sweetness and light - can it?

Trap Runner casts you as one of six special agents, all experts in assassination, demolition and espionage. The game is set in the future, and surprisingly (ahem) this future is a dark and corrupt place, where evil nestles around every corner and Jerry Springer has his own 24-hour TV show. Well, we added that bit, but you get the picture. As one of the agents, it's your job to take on the others in a battle of wits and gadgetry that's directly influenced by one of my favourite games of all time, Spy Vs Spy. A good starting point, I'm sure those that remember the classic pointy headed espionage game would agree. But as we all know, PlayStation conversions of old formats don't always turn out to be what we expect, or would like them to be. Often, massaging visuals, adding characters, voice-overs and a banging soundtrack detracts from the original gameplay, and I'm sorry to say that this is the case here. Spy Vs Spy was simple and fun. Trap Runner, however, blatantly attempts to launch the format into a setting that's just too obvious, which in turn strips the magic that Spy Vs Spy once held.

The basic idea is a simple one - just enter a perilous arena and make it even more perilous for your single opponent by setting, at worst, traps that merely maim them and, at best, wipe them out completely. This of course is an immediate and obvious twist on the one against one battles that many games offer. Instead of attacking your opponent face-on, you have to use your noodle, think, plan ahead, and ultimately use your cunning. Those who like to stand and fight are still catered for, though, as all the agents have an array of hand-to-hand moves and offensive weapons that can be aimed directly at the enemy. This, however, detracts from the idea that cunning is the way to win, as it's possible to simply keep going after your opponent with your gun.



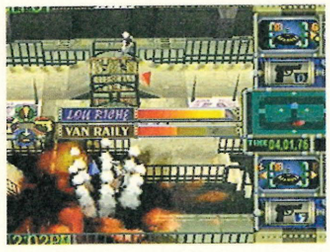
Rule 1: If you lay a devious combination of traps, don't stand around in the middle of them when they go off.

It's just not as engaging or addictive as it could've been

Possible, but not easy - this isn't a one-sided battle and the surprisingly-intelligent computer-controlled players have a few proverbial tricks up their collective sleeves.

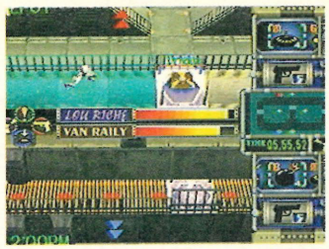
The game takes a split-screen approach, whether playing against a human or CPU opponent, but watching the opposing half of the







Forget traps when you get in this close. just go for the old smack in the head.







There are loads of different types of traps. Here I've managed to get myself caught in a forcefield, allowing the opponent to do what it wants with me.

This isn't a one-sided battle and the surprisingly-intelligent computer-controlled players have a few proverbial tricks up their collective sleeves

screen isn't helpful as you can only see your opponents traps when you enter Search Mode. Here your player crouches down and a small area lights up to reveal any traps that may be waiting to take your legs off. If you find an offending device, you can either take the route of cowardice and do a runner or join the bomb squad, attempt to deactivate the trap and keep it for yourself. Doing this is easier said than done, though. When you walk onto the square containing the trap, a box containing a code flashes up. You then have to repeat this code on the joypad as fast as possible. If you don't succeed, it's 'goodbye legs, hello wheelchair'. Some codes are easier than others, but when you first start playing, more often than not you find yourself going up in a ball of flames as your opponent sits there laughing.

Caught In A Trap

Playing a human opponent is where Trap Runner really comes to life. The CPU players may be intelligent, but where's the fun in goading a silicon chip? Heckling a friend after they've haplessly stumbled into a combination of traps that you've lovingly laid in wait is very satisfying. No less satisfying is actually watching the action on-screen.

The visuals are commendable and some of the animations often raise a smile, although never the type of beamer that Spy Vs Spy could coax out of the player. The arenas themselves are all drawn to a high standard, and although full of nooks and crannies, the camera is able to track the speedy action with ease. The graphics, although not astounding, are faultless, and do the job they're intended for.

Trap Runner, however, does not rely on visual impact. This style of game depends entirely on the gameplay and I'm afraid it's just not as engaging or addictive as it could have been. If you haven't played Spy Vs Spy, this feeling won't be as strong and you should find a moderately enjoyable and addictive game.

Trap Runner is a case of an opportunity missed in my book. Spy Vs Spy is an obvious classic that I'm surprised hasn't already been taken apart and revived PlayStation-style. It's a shame Konami couldn't do it justice then. Still there's always Metal Gear Solid and Silent Hill, isn't there?

Doug Williams



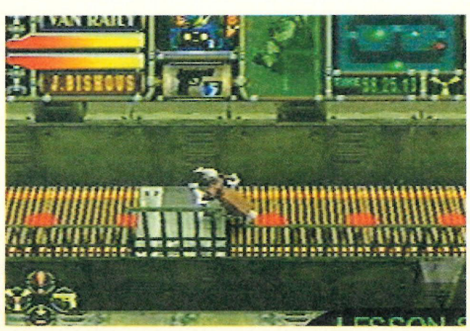
SECOND OPINION

Doug has been pretty fair giving this 70 per cent. I played it for about half an hour but I definitely wasn't hooked. The best thing about it is the smooth graphics, but that isn't enough to keep you hooked. Better luck next time, Konami.

Claire Webster

LEARNING THE TRAPS...

Starting out on Trap Runner is a little daunting, as there are many moves and trap combinations for you to use and abuse. Luckily, then, there's a tutorial that takes you though every aspect of the game from simple hand-to-hand combat to setting out complex and devastating Domino Rally trap combinations that not only leave your opponent humiliated, but a world of hurt too.





THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	6

70%

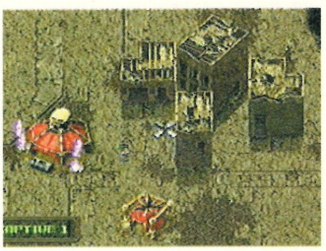
PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Infogrames	Melbourne House	Strategy	Out Now	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card, Dual Shock, Analogue Pad

Another PC 'point and click' wargame is finally converted to the PSX, and challenges the benchmark Command & Conquer for the right to be the best! So has KKND got what it takes? Simon Hill investigates...

KKND: Krossfire

Anyone who has played Command & Conquer (and if you haven't, why not?), knows exactly what to expect from KKND. You're the commander of an army with one objective; to take over the world while crushing you opponents as you do so! The story goes pretty much as you would expect; the world destroyed by a nuclear holocaust and while half of the population took refuge underground (Survivors) the other half stayed up-top and mutated into alien-like creatures (Evolved). Now, years later, the cave-dwellers have decided it's time to take back the Earth. However, the mutated aliens have other ideas. Also, to add spice to the proceedings (and this is something that the PC original did not have), a third army have entered the battle. These are agricultural robots (Series 9) who have also decided it's time to take over.

Once you start the game you first must choose a side to stand on, and the army you choose to control determines how difficult you missions are. The Evolved missions are for beginners, the Survivor missions for the intermediate player and the Series 9 tasks are for bloodthirsty nutters. From there it's a case of working through the missions, following the orders and basically destroying everything that stands in your way. In order to build up an army you need cash, and this comes in the form of oil. This gives you cash to develop buildings, vehicles and other such death-dealing weaponry.







The range of buildings and weapons on offer here is the standard fare you'd expect, with small fast bikes and ATVs, more powerful tanks, airborne vehicles and then the top-of-the range ass-kickers, but these are not accessible until the latter missions, which is a shame but it does give you an incentive to keep playing. However,



Some of the fighting forces here look like they were built in a game of Beetle Drive...

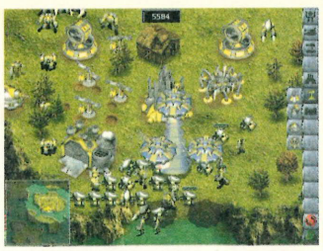
Do we have a Command & Conquer beater here? Not really...

pretty-much everything on offer in KKND has been done before. there's nothing that makes you sit back and say, 'wow that's cool' as you've seen it all before!

Graphically KKND is slightly above average. The animation is functional but nothing heart-stopping and the sprites are well drawn but rather small for my liking. If you're sending a tank into attack, you'd like it to look like a bloody tank not a tiny Matchbox toy. In terms of scenery, KKND isn't bad. Battles take place on a good selection of backgrounds, but as I've said, nothing new. However, there are a few nice features dropped in which are worth a mention. For example, on one mission you're able to see the remains of the Empire State Building popping through the terrain, and while this is a minor point, it's still damn cool. Another thing worth a mention are the FMV cut sequences













KKND isn't a crap game, but isn't overly innovative

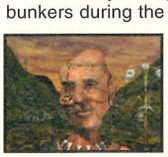
THE WORLD AT WAR...

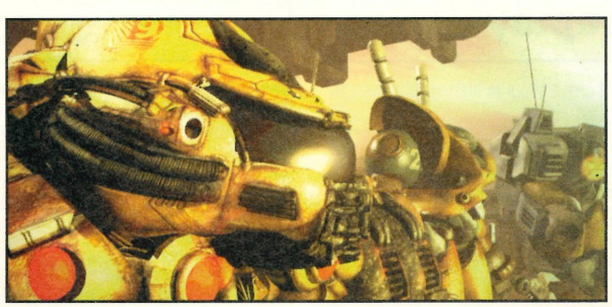
In 2179, 100 years after the nuclear holocaust, three factions do battle for supremacy. These are:

SURVIVORS
The Survivors are the descendants of the humans that went underground before the nuclear holocaust, emerging 40 years later when the radiation had died down. As they were mostly politicians and military types (the masses were left 'upstairs' to fry), they're warlike and aggressive.



EVOLVED
These are the humans that weren't lucky enough to enjoy bunkers during the war. Due to radiation problems, they're now twisted and mutated beyond recognition. They eschew technology, believing the war was caused by the gods wreaking havoc on the Earth because humans had turned their back on nature. They now consider it their duty to stop the hi-tech Survivors bringing down the wrath of the gods once more...





SERIES 9 ROBOTS
The former agricultural robots want revenge on the humans who destroyed their crops with their hideous war. After destroying robot Series' 5-8, they've now turned on the Survivors and Evolved. Don't underestimate them - they've developed hot new weapons.

that join the battles together. These are nicely animated and really help to convey an atmosphere as you play through the game. On the other hand, show me a PlayStation game that doesn't have cool FMV, but it's sill nice none-the-less!

Clash of the Titans

Do we have a Command & Conquer beater here? Not really, but this isn't really because KKND does anything really wrong, it's just all been done before. Command & Conquer was released years ago, and we're still looking at its sequel, Red Alert, as the best game of the genre on the PlayStation, which cannot be a good thing! How can a game that's three years old still be the best? Surely this style of game has moved on? Well yes it has on the PC, but by the time a conversion made the PSX it's damn-well out of date! Now this isn't KKND's fault, but it doesn't stop it falling into the same trap. One other thing that annoyed me is the fact that KKND doesn't seem to be compatible with the PlayStation mouse, which with a game of this style is unforgivable. If you've ever tried using a joypad for this style of game, you know all about this problem. You just can't seem to move around the scenery fast enough to keep up with your enemy, and on the harder levels this problem becomes even more apparent. This leads to big time frustration and drains a lot of the fun out of the game.

All in all, KKND isn't a crap game, but isn't overly innovative even in this rather limited genre. However, if you're a PlayStation owner who likes point-and-click wargames, this will go down a treat, and to be honest, other than C&C and its sequel (a game that most fans of the genre will have played and finished), its pretty-much all you've got to choose from. If you like C&C, this is a good purchase. If not, it may well still be worth a try; just make sure you check out the superior C&C at the same time!

Simon Hill

SECOND OPINION

What's there's good, but it's 'borrowing' from a classic and doesn't offer enough to justify going for this instead of the Platinum Command & Conquer or the now-cheaper Red Alert. If you've completed all the C&C games and still want more, though, look no further.

Russell Barnes

THE SCORE

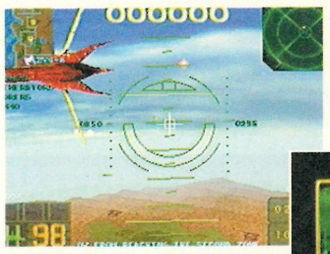
GRAPHICS	6
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	8

73%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Microids	Microids	Flight Sim	Out Now	UK	£39.99	1-2	Memory Card Analogue Pad	Dual Shock

This one's already in the shops. I wonder why they didn't send us a review copy? Ian Osborne thinks he knows...

Invasion







Back in Issue 11's Exchange, JD Humphries of Leicester said he hoped to see a flight sim-type shoot-'em-up with a two-player option where the gamers co-operated, one flying the craft and the other operating the guns. Wait no longer, JD, for Invasion is such a game. Don't buy it though - the co-operative two-player mode is its only redeeming quality.

When you see the half-hearted, semi-animated intro sequence before each mission, you know you're in for a rough ride graphically, but nothing could prepare you for the packing-crate scenery and sub-1995 pop-up inflicted on you during the game. The enemy fighters look like they were put together by school kids watching Blue Peter and your basic laser shots look like ping pong balls - hardly state of the art. The sound offers little improvement, with rudimentary effects and a dreadful looped drum beat.

Where the game really falls down, though, is in the gameplay. Invasion is an attempt at a thinking man's shoot-'em-up, with a head-up display, in-craft and chase perspectives and a series of objectives to complete for each mission. Laudable aims, but the whole thing is let down through shoddy execution. The flight physics, for example, are woeful - the developers seem to have programmed a game engine that basically works but failed to refine the aircraft's controls, giving a stiff, awkward ride which doesn't offer any real feeling of flying.



Seek & Destroy

The level and enemy design also leave a lot to be desired. If you fly too high or too slowly, you're a sitting target for the flying foes. Fair enough, but your targets take too many hits to kill and are often surrounded by desperately unimpressive buildings and constructs. You can either hit the brakes and have your armour ripped to pieces by the enemies, or make several strafing runs and get bored to tears continually turning your craft around (no easy task) and flying over the same area time and again.

While we're on the subject of enemies, the airborne baddies generally attack from behind, but when in front of you they wander around with no real sense of purpose, making dogfighting unsatisfying.

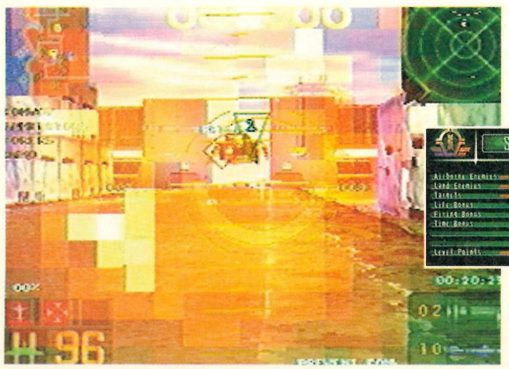
To cap it all, the radar and on-screen map are absolutely dire. It's a major pain in the arse to find your way around, which is a real disincentive to fly fast and strafe - you often lose the target as you turn your elephant-like craft around for another sweep.

Visually Invasion looks like a game from the dawn of the PlayStation, and it seems no thought whatsoever has gone into the gameplay. It's the videogame equivalent of a painting by numbers - derivative, soulless and, compared to the real thing, technically inept. Indeed, the only thing it's got going for it is the two-player co-operative mode, and even that doesn't compensate for the lack of a split-screen deathmatch. Ho hum.

Ian Osborne



Where the game really falls down is in the gameplay





SECOND OPINION

How embarrassing. The PlayStation is begging for a good flight sim, yet no one seems able to deliver! It's as if you're destined to fail at your tasks and you become depressed and bored flying around the place getting nowhere. Do as Ian so rightly suggests and steer clear!

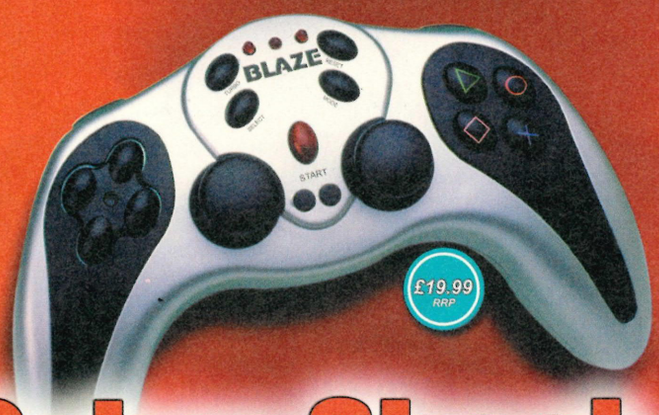
Claire Webster

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	3
GAMEPLAY	4
LIFESPAN	3

27%

TOTAL CONTROL



Cyber Shock

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PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Squaresoft	Squaresoft	RPG	Out Now	Japanese	£50-60 (varies)	1	Memory Card	Analogue Pad

Has the best just got better, or is FFVIII just a money-making rehash of the old version? Paul Winslow grabs his gunblade and finds out...

Final Fantasy VIII



The gameplay is smooth, the graphics superb and the game as a whole is one of those you can play for hours without noticing the time pass...

Final Fantasy has had more sequels than Nightmare on Elm Street, but with one notable difference. Whereas the Nightmares are all much of a muchness, Final Fantasy just keeps on getting better and better.

Not that you'll get much joy out of this import unless you are fluent in the language of our Japanese friends. It's all very well playing racing games with Japanese titles, as once you've worked out the controls that's pretty much all you need. Unfortunately, playing an RPG that has more dialogue than Ben Hur can be a tad difficult to say the least. It's very difficult to get into a game of this nature when you can't understand what you're saying, never mind what other people are trying to tell you. But enough of ignorance spoiling my enjoyment of the game. Let's get down to brass tacks and see what you can expect to enjoy when the European version comes out.

The plot of the game revolves around a young man by the name of Squall Leonhart, a 17-year-old who seems to be surrounded by attractive women - lucky fella. The object of his affections is a young lady named Rinoa Heartilly (where do they dream up these names?).

Squall was educated at The Garden, where we first meet him, which is a military school for six-to 19-year-olds. He is a member of SeeD, the special forces group of The Garden.

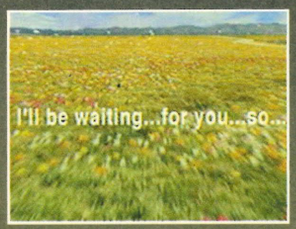
Cunning Clues...

The stunning opening sequence offers a few vague clues as to what may happen in the game, and culminates in a great fight sequence as Squall has a training dual with fellow SeeD member, Seifer Almasy. This ends with Seifer 'accidentally' turning on his gunblade and drawing blood from the face of Squall, who returns the compliment.

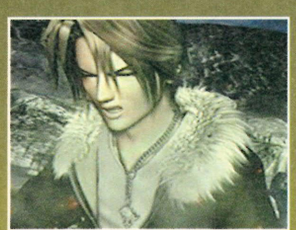
From this, the game opens in the hospital where Squall is recovering. We won't ruin your voyage of discovery by telling you anything

WONDERFUL BEGINNINGS...









If you're not already excited about the release of FFVIII, the opening sequence of the game should be enough to get your pulse racing. It begins serenely enough, with rolling land and seascapes. A mysterious-looking woman appears and offers the following words:
"I'll be waiting..."
"Why..?"
"I'll be waiting... here..."
"For what?"
"I'll be waiting... here... so..."
"If you come here"
"You will find me"
"I promise"
All very intriguing (all the more so since it's written in English when everything else in the game is in Japanese). After this peaceful beginning, the sequence materialises into a battle scene, which sees our hero Squall fighting his nemesis, Seifer. Both draw blood and the stage is set. The details are almost superfluous, though. What captures the imagination is the stunning animation and sheer impact the sequence has. I'll say no more, but you will be impressed...



If this is a school, the uniform must have been designed by a kinky sod...

GET LOST IN THE TRANSLATION...



So you just can't wait for the European version to come out and yet you don't speak Japanese. What are you to do about it? Well not a great deal, but there is some help on the Internet. Of many sites try out Final Fantasy: Worlds Apart, at http://www.ffnet.net where, amongst loads of other help and information, there is a translation section so at least you can understand some of what is going on.

This isn't so much a roleplaying game as a saga

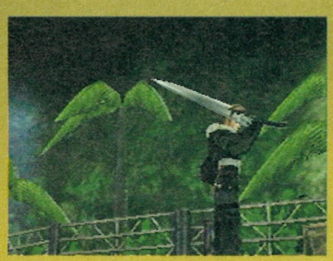
else, but suffice to say that young Squall roams around futuristic lands, chasing women, doing battle with various nasties and swinging his gunblade around - although the nuances are obviously far more enticing than that summation. Apart from the new plot, however, the actual gameplay all sounds very similar to FFVII, so what are the differences that will make Version Eight stand out from its predecessors?

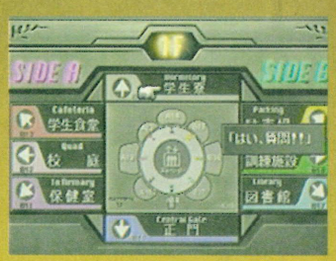
Firstly, the animation is vastly improved, looking more and more like a cinematic production than a computer game. The characters' movements are stunningly realistic and the effort that has obviously been put into designing the world itself has so obviously borne fruit. Although there can be no complaints in this department, it's interesting to note that the characters have been 'westernised', causing a bone of contention as many people preferred the Japanese influence obvious in previous versions. The accompanying music hasn't changed much - still very moody, melodic and immediately recognisable as pure Final Fantasy.

But enough of aesthetics - although you could wax lyrical about them for ages - what about the gameplay? As you'd expect, it's not the fastest-paced game in the world. Much of your time is spent roaming around the virtual world, bumping into various people, chatting away and generally living a normal life. The world is a big place, so you need transport to get around. There are rumours of some special modes of transport later in the game, but cars and trains probably still remain the most utilised ways of getting from A to B. And to calm your fears, the beloved Chocobos make a return as well. When you aren't moving around the place living your everyday life, you're in battle, which is where it all gets interesting.

Fantastic Fights

There are four basic moves you can make in the heat of combat: Attack, Magic, Draw and Item. The only real change here is Draw, which has replaced the Materia system of FFVII. It allows you to take magic spells and power from your opponent for use against them, or to be stored and utilised at a later date. This can take a bit of getting used







IT TAKES CHARACTER...

The basis of any great RPG is the characters and there's an interesting bunch here.



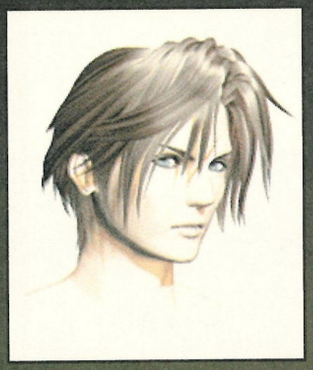
Squall Leonhart is the 17-year-old hero of the game. It's his love interests and battle actions that you have to control.



Rinoa Heartilly is young Squall's love interest. A fellow member of the Garden, she has a major part to play in your fantasy.



Every good story has a goodie and a baddie. Enter Seifer Almasy, one of those people you just never get on with.



Laguna Loire, a sort of brunette version of Fabio, who has made the improbable career change from ex-soldier to journalist.





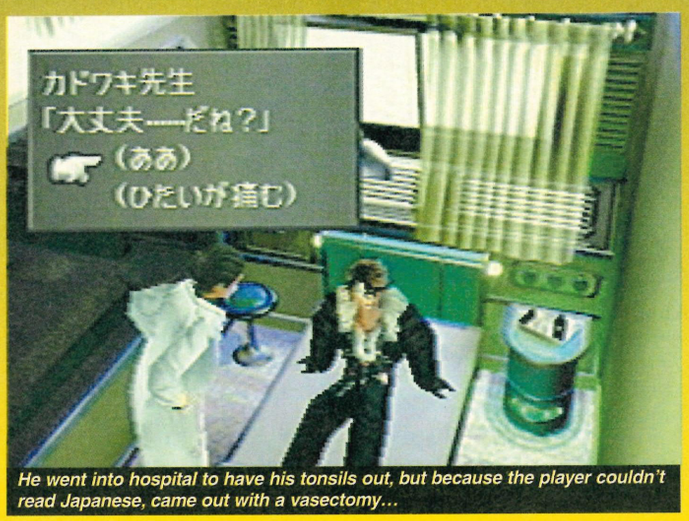
Privatisation forced rail companies to invent bigger and better customer-grabbing gimmicks...



to, but should be a more enjoyable way of getting your magic spells than previous games that have seen characters buy magic, learn it, or used Materia.

Limit Breaks in the battle sequences have changed subtly. They cannot be saved up, so must be used as and when they become available. As your character performs the Limit Break there's a limit bar with several markers on it. Pressing R1 at the markers adds a bonus attack. Hitting R1 during a normal attack also increases damage.

The animation is vastly improved, looking more and more like a cinematic production than a computer game



He went into hospital to have his tonsils out, but because the player couldn't read Japanese, came out with a vasectomy...

Unfortunately, when you first start fighting you don't have access to all these fancy abilities - you can only use the Attack option. To increase your powers you need the Guardian Force (GF). This is a series of monsters that can be summoned to help you in battle and they all have different powers. They also hold the key to your magic spells. To make use of the GF, you usually first have to defeat them in battle. Early on in the game, for example, you come across Ifrit, whom you can add to your GF when you've beaten the living daylights out of him. Once you start to defeat the GF, the game gets really interesting. The key to playing the game particularly well comes with Junctioning. This enables you to 'junction', or join together, Guardian Forces with your characters, to improve their magic skills, abilities and powers. This sounds complicated and it isn't an easy concept to get your head around, never mind thinking up good strategies, so don't expect to be great at it straight away.

There are a couple of other new features that are worth noting here as well. There is no armour to be had, so it's now completely down to the characters own skill and ability to get through the game. Money plays a part as always. After all it makes this world go round just like any other. The more money you've got the better weapons you get and so on. In FFVIII, cash is provided by a wage that is paid to each member of SeeD. The higher your rank, the higher your wage.

Obviously, your rank is going to improve as you move through the game and achieve more and kill more bad guys. While we're on this subject, here's a little clue to help you as you start out. When you first visit the classroom, fire up your computer and select the Test option. If you pass the test you





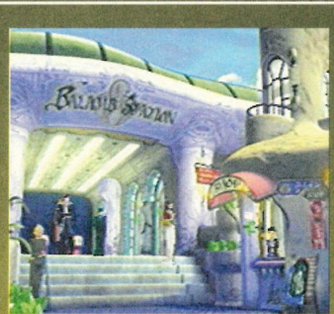
LOVE IS IN THE AIR...

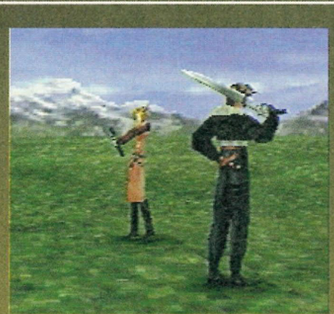
Squaresoft went on record as saying that in FFVIII, the romance angle is more important than saving the world from the bad guys. Whatever your feelings about this, there are a number of glamorous female characters to make Squall's heart skip a beat. If you haven't yet found yourself fantasising about the girl in the Finlandia ads, or salivating about Lara Croft, you might yet find yourself attracted to these animated beauties.















FFVIII - it's a walk in the park...

Final Fantasy just keeps on getting better and better

should improve your ranking straight away.

Another thing to do before getting too far into the game is to familiarise yourself with the status boxes that let you know exactly how your character is faring. If you've played Final Fantasy before this should not be too much of a problem, but if you haven't then take time out to have a good sort through the various dialogue boxes.

Language Barrier

This isn't so much a roleplaying game as a saga. Like any RPG it takes some time to get into (although obviously it will be easier when the script is written in English), but this looks like it could suck you in to the extent that you might as well take a jar of coffee and a pack of Pro Plus into your bedroom and tell the world you see them in a few weeks. 'Addictive' is a dangerous word to use, but it could well be the most apt.

I'm not the greatest fan of RPGs, but I have to admit that even in Japanese this can be enjoyable and I would love to get hold of a copy of it when it comes out in English, if only to fully understand what I am doing. The gameplay is smooth, the graphics are superb and the game as a whole is one of those you can play for hours without noticing the hands of the clock go by. It's as time consuming as your real life, but a lot more fun.

If you're a fan of the genre, I'm afraid your social life is going to come to a sticky end come November when the European version is due out. If you're lucky enough to speak the language of our Sony chums, buy an imported copy now as you have the chance to get a hell of a head start (but heed the warning in our Signals section - Ed). Otherwise, begin saving your pennies and make sure you get hold of a copy when it hits the shelves.

Oh, and a little aside. If you've been sweating on the release of this game for ages after playing FFVII to death, there is some good news. FFIX is already under development. Isn't it about time they took the word 'Final' out of the title, then?

Paul Winslow



SECOND OPINION

The only problem with this is it's hard to tell what's going on with all the text in Japanese. It's clearly four CDs of outrageously-involved gameplay, but anyone with any sense will wait for the translation. Remember, it won't work on chipped PAL machines either.

Ian Osborne

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	9
GAMEPLAY	9
LIFESPAN	9

96%

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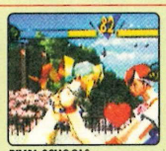
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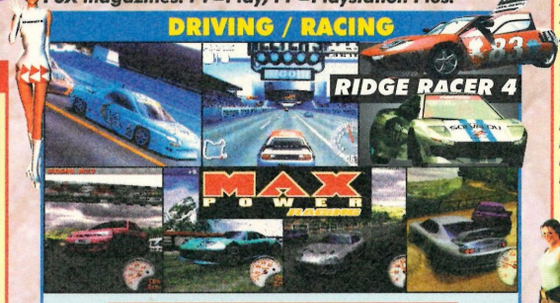
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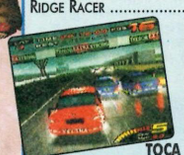
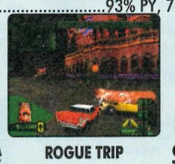
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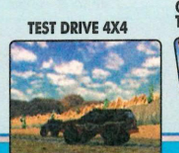
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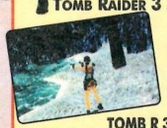

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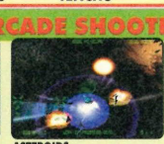
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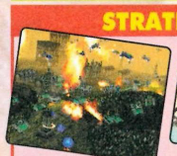
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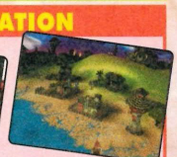




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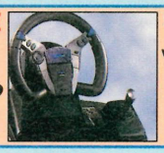
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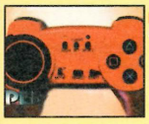


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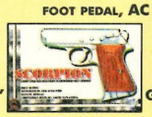
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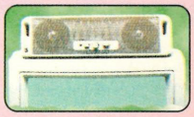
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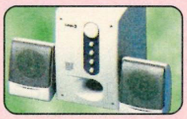
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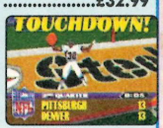


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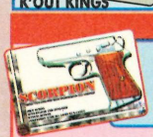
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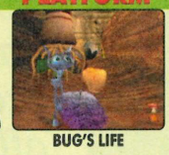
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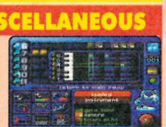

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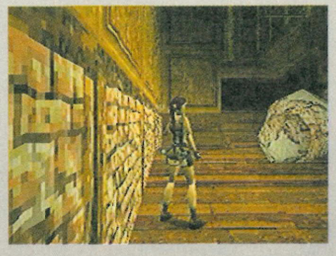
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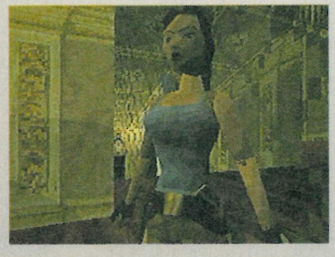
PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Eidos	Core Design	Action Adventure	Out Now	UK	£19.99	1	Memory Card	Analogue Pad



Now it's the turn of Lara's second adventure to reach the prestigious Platinum range. We all know it's worthy, and most of us know why, but Russell Barnes is going to refresh our memories nevertheless...

Tomb Raider 2







Another adventure of gargantuan proportions, but what's changed? Another adventure that pushes the players to the edge of their seats, then down on their arse, but what's changed? Another adventure to uncover treasures, truths and treachery, but what's changed? Okay, I think I've made my concerns clear. Sure, it's another great game incorporating everything you'd expect from a sequel - hang on, that's it; that's the problem!

It is indeed everything you would expect from a sequel. It incorporates better graphics, better sound, tweaked gameplay and an enhanced overall playing area. The key words here, of course, are 'better', 'tweaked' and 'enhanced'. It's an improvement over the original, but doesn't think to explore the endless possibilities the genre is capable of. Its main selling point (and one that's heavily stated in the blurb on the back of the box) is the incorporation of other human characters that have a 'seemingly fanatical interest in the dagger' (of Xian). This is used to produce the twists and turns of the plot very nicely, but at the same time it also produces one of the game's biggest bugbears. There is far and away too much interaction with human characters (a problem solved in TRIII), taking you away from the mystery and wonder that the original produced and putting you in 'another adventure game' featuring boring character parts instead of monsters and mythology. Don't get me wrong, TRII is a fantastic achievement and a game not to be missed, but it really strayed away from the grass roots of Tomb Raider while not utilising enough new elements to keep everyone happy. Lara's got a couple of extra moves, but what seemed more important to Eidos is the extra costumes, which we all know don't enhance the playing experience (unless you're name's Billy NoMates).

There are many things on offer in TRII that shouldn't be missed for the world

Value For Money?

On a lighter note, there are many things on offer in TRII that shouldn't be missed for the world. Venice, for example, is one of the best-designed levels I've ever had the pleasure to play. The sun's reflection on the water makes it look fresh and inviting and the architecture is spot on, as is the level design. This carries on well through the later levels and gives you that little extra incentive to go and see what else is waiting for you.

At the end of the day this is a pretty tough review. Tomb Raider II has got its faults, but it's still Tomb Raider. It's got a great new price-point on the Platinum label, but how should that affect the score? It should score almost as highly as Number Three due to its price, but I feel the lapse of time is showing a few cracks in the otherwise excellent graphical feel. Let's be honest; it's got to be worth twenty quid, hasn't it? Even if it isn't a patch on TRIII.

Russell Barnes

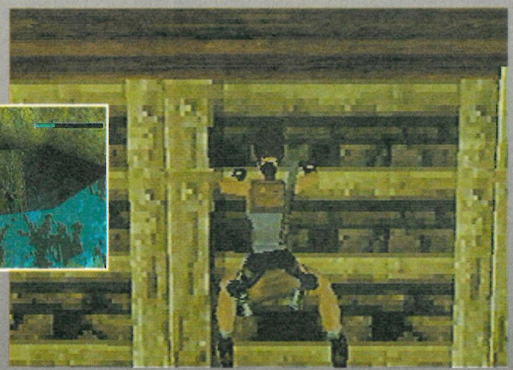
SECOND OPINION

Some people, well blokes anyway, buy Tomb Raider because of Lara's heaving bosoms, but other enthusiasts play it for its great gameplay and outstanding graphics. It's not as amazing as number three, but hey... let's spend our last twenty quid on it anyway!

Claire Webster



Before the game, practice her moves in Lara's gym...



THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	9

95%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS
Electronic Arts	Delphine	Driving	5th March '99	UK	£19.99	1-2	Memory Card

It's back and it's now Platinum. Rev your engines, people, and get ready for some serious on and off road action with Claire Webster...

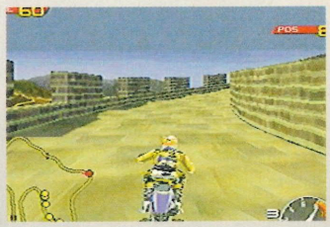
Moto Racer

Okay, so it's not exactly D.I.R.T. where realism is concerned, but it certainly broke new ground in its heyday as a fun arcade-style racer. Whether you're a keen scrambler or a sports bike enthusiast, Moto Racer has appeal. There are plentiful tracks, ranging from riding along the Great Wall to taking a scenic trip along winding coastal roads, and once you've completed them all, you can have a bash at racing on them in reverse before trying out the 'secret' circuits.

But what Moto Racer hasn't got graphically, it's sequel more than makes up for, and I'm sure it won't be long until I'm here reviewing Moto Racer 2 on Platinum as well. The graphics in the first game are very basic and there are a few glitches in the backgrounds, particularly when you're taking sharp corners at high speed. It's the same in two-player as well, whether you split the screen horizontally or vertically.



It's hard being a motorcycle dispatch rider on the moon...

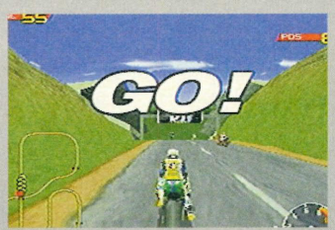




The Good and the Bad

There are as many bad factors to this game as there are good ones, unfortunately. One of the nicest things is the turbo feature, though it's best to only use it on a straight as if you try it while negotiating a hairpin bend, you more than likely find yourself lying in the middle of the road with a trashed bike.

The game already runs quite fast, so much so that on occasions the PlayStation has trouble keeping up with you and the backgrounds become very glitchy. Also, it is rather easy to crash your bike, as if you as much as scrape a rock face or detour slightly off the road you end up in eighth place.



Like the PC version, it does seem a lot easier to win a race when you're taking part in an off-road competition on a scrambler. The bikes seem to control better and the courses also seem easier.

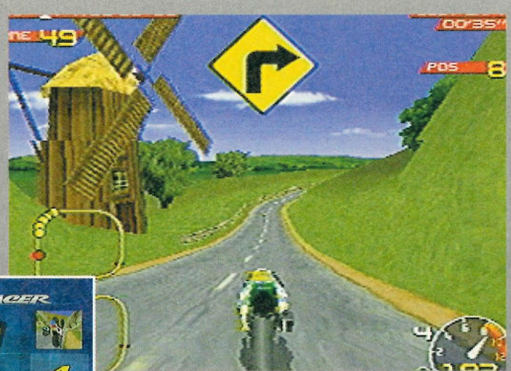
If you so much as scrape a rock face you end up in eighth place

Gaining a good distance between yourself and second place doesn't take a long time, and if you do make a small mistake, you can still sustain your lead. This, however, is not the case when having a race with the sports bikes. If you slow down even for a second you see all of your opponents zoom past.

However many small oddities there may be with Moto Racer, it obviously hasn't made any difference where sales are concerned. It's basically just like playing it in the arcade, though you haven't got the facility of sitting on a mock-up bike and leaning it round corners. It makes you think that if this game has done this well, just what will happen when we get our hands on a finished copy of D.I.R.T?

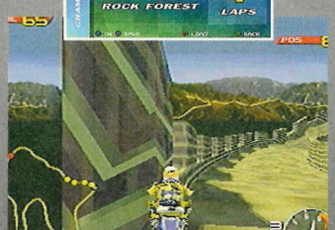
Claire Webster













SECOND OPINION

For £20 the original Moto Racer isn't a bad purchase. It's both got street and dirt racing, but is slightly let down as the game engine doesn't change at all to accommodate it. More varied courses would have given this one a bit of a boost, but it's not at all bad for the money.

Russell Barnes

THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	7
GAMEPLAY	7
LIFESPAN	7

73%

PUBLISHER	DEVELOPER	GENRE	RELEASED	VERSION	PRICE	PLAYERS	PERIPHERALS	
Sony CEE	Naughty Dog	Platformer	April '99	UK	£19.99	1	Memory Card	Analogue Pad

The marsupial's second adventure gets the Platinum treatment, but is it up to today's high standards? Jon Shaw takes a running jump and spins on the spot...

Crash Bandicoot 2: Cortex Strikes Back



It's no surprise that Crash Bandicoot 2 enters the Platinum hall of fame, having achieved impressive sales of over 1.5 million worldwide. The Disney-style platformer surpassed its predecessor in almost every way. It offers an exciting new range of levels, each one beautifully rendered with accurate and enjoyable gameplay, a truly atmospheric environment for the enthusiast and hours of nail-biting suspense as you leap, jump, spin and squeeze your way past the many obstacles often while pursued by menacing-looking bears and giant boulders (real Indiana Jones-style).

The levels are diverse to the extreme. You can be taming and riding wild beasts one minute, and the next, scuba-diving for your life through underwater tunnels. The objective is always the same; a hectic scramble to the end without being electrocuted, squished, burned, spiked or eaten by an immense array of somewhat harmless-looking creatures, and believe me, if they don't get you, the sore thumbs will in the end.

Although the game comes across in a somewhat childish manner, the levels soon dictate a high level of gameplay with little room for error at any point during a level. The objective of collecting a crystal on every level may seem a simple one, but the superb camera angles, sound and many wacky creatures and their excellent animation make all 25 levels an exciting challenge.

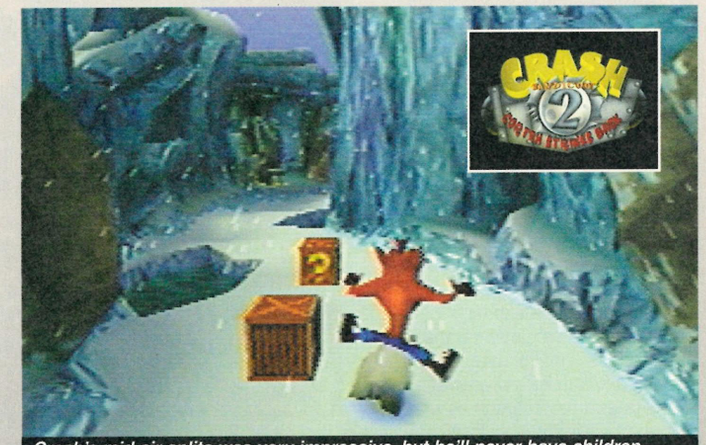
Marvellous Marsupial...

Crash, the somewhat scatty character, is brought to life perfectly with his goofy run and giant grin as in the first Crash Bandicoot, and without a doubt leaves you gasping at how he manages to effortlessly avoid the dangers around him.

The concept of Crash 2 is not a particularly new one, with the plot consisting of Crash the obedient brother going off to find new batteries for his sister's lap-top and then, on the way, being stupidly roped in to help the evil Dr Cortex who lives in the temple in which the levels of the game take place (don't ask yourself why he decides to help, just remember he's pretty stupid and is too helpful for his own good!). Once inside the temple, you're confronted with five floors, each containing five levels, each of those hiding one crystal. Before you can jump on the jet-lift and ascend to the next floor, you must collect all five crystals and defeat the end-of-level boss, who unless you have a few extra lives, quickly ends your game.

To sum up, a great game, even if you're not a platform enthusiast. The sound, colour, graphics and animation have really made Cortex Strikes Back a memorable game to play, and now at £19.99 it's a superb buy that brings many a smile to your face. Especially when you meet your doom in the many animated ways available - and believe me, you will; many times.

Jon Shaw



Crash's mid-air splits was very impressive, but he'll never have children...







It's a superb buy that brings many a smile to your face...

SECOND OPINION

Crash's cartoony exploits won him a legion of fans, despite him looking like a deformed version of the Honey Monster. The levels are cleverly designed, the skills curve challenging and the characters amusing. It's everything a platformer should be.

Ian Osborne







THE SCORE

GRAPHICS	9
SOUND	8
GAMEPLAY	8
LIFESPAN	8

90%

This month we take a close look at the sports games arena. If you're a fan of the genre, we'll put you on the right track...

IT'S IN THE GAME...

So what do we look for in sports games? Accuracy, fun, playability? Check this out for your guide to how we've rated the titles...

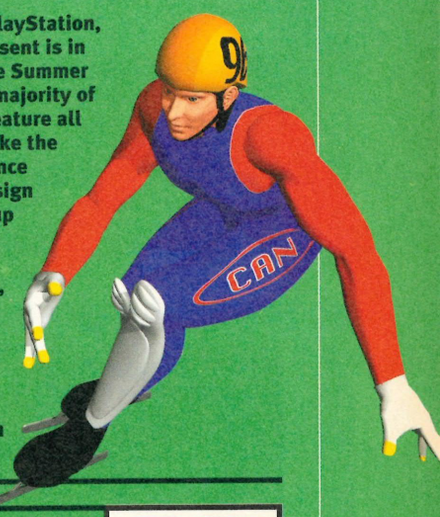
ACCURACY
There's a real fine line between making an accurate but playable sports game and a title that's so accurate it's rendered unplayable. If a software house decide that some graphical animations have to be foregone in an attempt to keep the speed up, then so be it, but changing the rules of a sport to suit the programmers is a huge no-no!

GAMEPLAY
There is no more important factor than the gameplay involved in a sports game. Without a structure that even vaguely represents the sport in question, the whole point of the game is lost. If a game is made to cater for fans of a sport, surely the product should represent it properly? If it doesn't, the creators are simply biting the hand that feeds them.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
There's nothing worse than CPU opponents playing catch-up. This means that if you gain the lead, the computer gets better and catches up. When they're ahead, they become weaker to give you a chance, and the loop repeats. We want more realistic behaviour from CPU players that emulates the playing capability of the teams and athletes they represent.

Super Sports

Sports games are very popular on the PlayStation, particularly when the game they represent is in season. Tennis peaks in a couple of the Summer months, while football is in season for the majority of the calendar year, and that's why it had a feature all of its own back in Issue #10. Other events like the Olympics and Winter Olympics only occur once every four years, so it's rare that games design houses pay them much attention. To make up for the lacking numbers, we decided that some of the futuristic titles on the PSX deserve to be included. You may also notice, as you flick through these pages, that American sports have been excluded from the feature as well as wrestling which we see as a beat-'em-up. It's not a dig at the Yanks, or their various sports; it's just we feel that they deserve a feature of their own some time in the near future...



V-Ball — 58 PERCENT



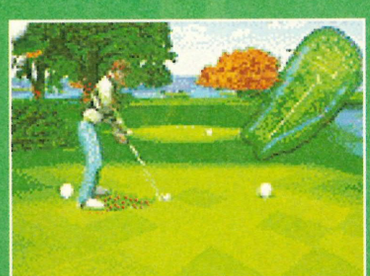
Quite simple this one. It's basically beach volleyball with two players per team and ten teams to choose from. Each team has different characteristics, strengths and weaknesses as well as a small selection of special moves. The graphics are fun but functional at best and the gameplay is not much more than hitting the buttons constantly until you win or lose. It's original asking price of 40 quid was too much, but you might be able to pick it up for a tenner second hand now (which is probably about right). It's okay for a while, but don't expect any real long-term playability.

Victory Boxing 2 — 85 PERCENT



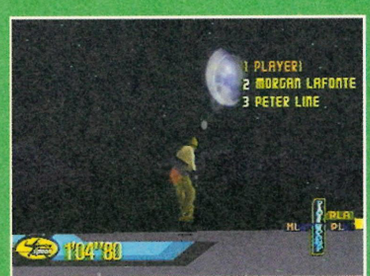
Throughout the years many software companies have tried to represent boxing in their video games, some having more luck than others. Not relying on luck alone, though, JVC took the scientific route in the production of both Victory Boxing and its more recent sequel. The game definitely takes the simulation approach to produce by far the most accurate representation of the sport ever. All the moves, rules, rounds and rituals are there for you to enjoy and the control is pretty-much spot-on. If you're into boxing, this is the game to buy.

Virtual Golf — 75 PERCENT



It seems that the title of this golf game is somewhat misleading. With a name like that surely you'd expect it to be a simulation-type game as opposed to just a game, wouldn't you? Well it seems that Virtual Golf is in fact the latter and reasonably playable as a result. It's nice to see an effort to make a game that's playable as well as reasonably accurate; we see far too many games that lose the plot due to their efforts to be a realistic as possible.

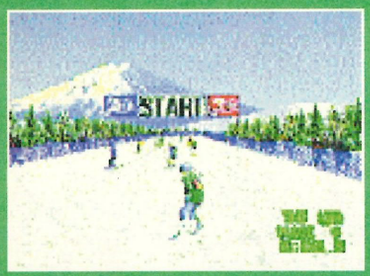
X Games Pro Boarder — 75 PERCENT



Quite a surprise from Sony this, considering it was released at the same time as Cool Boarders 3. Also quite a surprise too, because what there is of the game is in fact very good. It allows much more freedom of movement than even CB 3 and the stunt possibilities are through the roof. The control method is clever and intuitive and the graphics are sharp and well drawn. It sounds really good until you consider the lastability, where it unfortunately falls flat on its face. The challenge is good while it lasts, but you'll have it cracked far too soon; shame really...

2 Xtreme

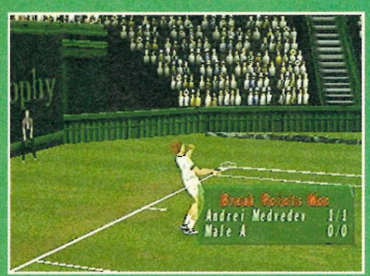
30 PERCENT



Unplayable, predictable, graphically dull, unchallenging and frankly shite; 2 Xtreme is all of these things and many more. The gameplay consists of little more than steering the snowboards, skateboards, rollerblades and mountain bikes around graphically naff street courses that are more than capable of sending you into coma thanks to their unimaginative design and layout. Split-screen two-player is only a small rebate in this tax bill of a game. Stay clear: it's crap 2 the Xtreme!

Actua Tennis

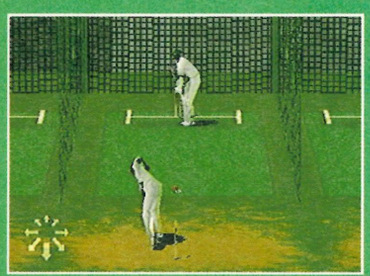
31 PERCENT



It's difficult to imagine how they got Actua Tennis so badly wrong. Football games have to animate up to 22 motion-captured players and they often look beautiful, so why does Actua Tennis foul up so badly with only four? Their wet-knicker walk is hilarious, and their shot animations often totally out of sync with the shot. Opponents make devastating returns, then miss an easy one - success is a matter of belting everything over the net and hoping he makes a mistake. Several less serious flaws also hamper the game, making it a desperately unsatisfying experience.

Brian Lara Cricket

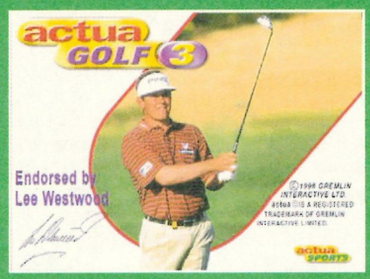
90 PERCENT



It's probably not the wisest thing to say, but Brian Lara Cricket is just like watching the real thing on the BBC. No, it's not boring pictures coupled with old fuddy duddy commentary that irritates to the point of destruction. Quite the opposite, in fact. Codemasters have done probably the best (and only) PlayStation cricket game a fan could ever hope for. The animation is spot-on, as it the gameplay and physics adopted. If you're into cricket and you've got a PlayStation, you're laughing.

Actua Golf 3

49 PERCENT



This series started off in quite a promising fashion, but the second offered only very minor improvements which were really neither here nor there. When it came to the third in the series, things turned right around. It's safe to say that Actua Gold 3 is one of the worst PlayStation golf sims on the market today. It features an embarrassing array of tragic (and repetitive) flaws in the gameplay that doesn't represent the sport accurately, thus making the game nothing short of redundant. If your looking for golf, try Tiger Woods 99 for size; it's a vast improvement.

All Star Tennis '99

80 PERCENT



It does indeed offer some of the world's best tennis stars including Michael Chang, Jana Novotna, Richard Krajicek and many more (some, perhaps, being less famous than others). The gameplay has some excellent accurate touches as well as some truly insane additions like the crazy Bomb Tennis in which a bomb is produced each time the ball bounces, and is capable of knocking you off your feet should you stumble onto it! The graphics do the job rather well and there is a good challenge available for a single player, but playing in two- or four-player is the cream on the strawberries.

Chill

46 PERCENT



We really had high hopes for Chill (Eidos) as it rode on the back of Tomb Raiders I and II, but who wouldn't considering their world beating success? Like most of the snowboarding games we see here in the office, however, it fell well short of the mark in some of the most crucial areas. The most obvious of the flaws (of which you don't have to be playing to spot) is its slow speed, especially when compared to its main rival of the time, Cool Boarders 2. Your 'dude' also becomes stuck in the snow for no apparent reason! Steer clear, man...

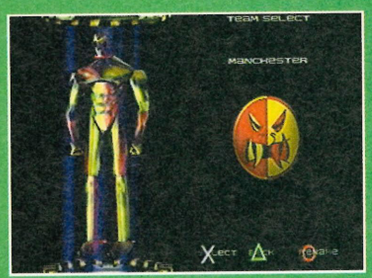
Cool Boarders 3

92 PERCENT

Sony have come up with an excellent trilogy with the Cool Boarders series so far. Each one has been a year or so apart and shows the confidence (and competence) of their programming abilities through the years. Each has offered fast and consistent gameplay, with an easy-to-use interface and an excellent selection of stunts. This peaks with the third in the series which offered the best challenge and most freedom yet. Snowboarding games don't get much better or have any more to offer than this.



Dead Ball Zone — 91 PERCENT



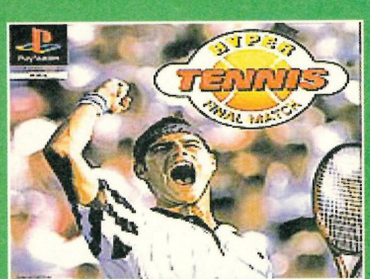
Those of you that can cast your mind back to the classic future sports game Speedball 2 will surely appreciate Dead Ball Zone's unearthly playability and lastability ratings. The style of the game is basically the same offering an American Football type challenge, incorporating tons of blood, guts and ball-breaking special moves that put your heart in your mouth. Grab the ball and run up field, beat the shit out of your opponents and score in the opposite goal. Simple, addictive and downright disgusting.

ESPN Extreme Sports — 20 PERCENT



This one's the predecessor to the cacky 2 Xtreme. You don't have to be a psychic to know that this is worse than the sequel in almost every respect, even though the two games are basically in the same format. The graphics are dire, offering a crappy frame rate, laughable backgrounds and awful gameplay. It wouldn't surprise me if the majority of the copies printed were buried somewhere in the Nevada desert along with the equally-abysmal ET Atari game from many years ago. The only thing going for this is the fact it was one of the earlier extreme sports games on the PSX.

Hyper Tennis — 34 PERCENT



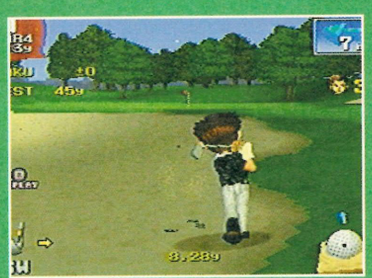
There's really nothing here to interest an honest gamer or a fan of tennis. The graphics are inferior to most of the games in this month's feature by a long shot, featuring dodgy animations, an obviously low frame rate and a real lack of detail. It is a multiplayer game but they decided that a four-player mode wasn't important, thus it wasn't included; doh! We would have expected more from Gremlin, to be honest, but it seems quite obvious that it was either rushed out or no one was too concerned about its quality. Give Smash Court or Sampras a go if tennis is what you're after.

Dodgem Arena — 85 PERCENT



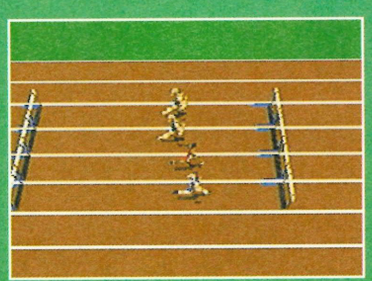
This one's definitely a member of the future sports category, but it's definitely a sports title nevertheless. The gameplan is simple; guide your vehicle around the arena to gain control of the 'puck'. Once you have it, shoot it into the mobile goal port that travels in a pattern around the playing area. The player with the most goals wins, bearing in mind the various weapons and tactics that can also be employed. It looks a bit like WipEout, while playing like a Destruction Derby/Speedball hybrid. It takes a while to gain full control of your craft, but it's well worth the effort.

Everybody's Golf — 65 PERCENT



Just as the title implies, the idea here is to make the game more accessible to gamesplayers other than just those who like a round themselves. To do this, the graphics are cute, the gameplay is simple, the game is very addictive and up to four players can take part. The only real problem here is the fact that golf games are already incredibly easy to play on the PSX. Your club is already set, as is the angle of your shot, so all you have to do is press the Swing button at the right time. Making something that simple even easier leaves you very little challenge at all.

International Track and Field — 70 PERCENT



Now available on Platinum, this sport-a-thon incorporates (believe it or not) all the track and field events from today's Olympic Games. The concept for this type of compilation game hasn't change one iota since the Spectrum. Basically you hit the button as fast as you can so your little man on the screen runs, jumps, throws as well as possible. The graphics are pretty crap and the gameplay causes repetitive strain disorder but pit a few human competitors against each other and you're laughing.

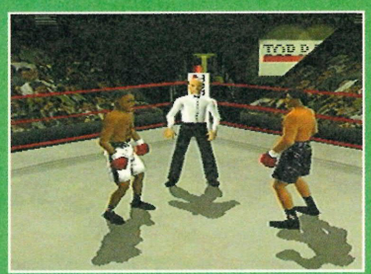
Jonah Lomu Rugby — 89 PERCENT

Codemasters could make silk out of shite! I mean, who ever would have though that anyone would actually make an outstanding game on the PlayStation out of rugby? Everything's in there; it's got great graphics, fair sound and top accuracy, but most of all it's got the gameplay and the control method balances out evenly to produce a fair old simulation of the sport. It's easy to get into and get to grips with even if you don't know all the rules and (I'm reliably informed) it has more than enough to make even the most avid rugby fan grin.



Knockout Kings 99

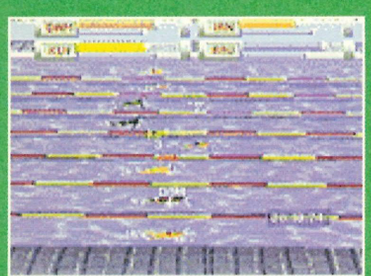
42 PERCENT



EA Sports bit their own ear off with this sad fighting affair, thinking that it would stand up to the likes of Victory Boxing 2. Its control method offers slow, unpredictable moves when what you really need is speed and accuracy. The animations are few and far between, making any move or action look piss-poor. It's so rough around the edges that the ref (who brings both fighters together before a round) disappears like a magician as soon as the action begins. To top it off, the girls that walk around the ring between bouts use the same animations as the boxers. Naff!

Olympic Games

61 PERCENT



This one was actually the official game of the Atlanta Olympics, 1996. It offered all of the events in their button-bashing glory, but to be honest it's all a bit much after a little while. Admittedly there were a few other events when the control method altered but at the end of the day mind-numbing bashing is the order of the day here. It's not quite as good as the average International Track and Field, but then these games are all pretty much the same. Probably best to give this one a miss.

Phat Air Extreme Snowboarding

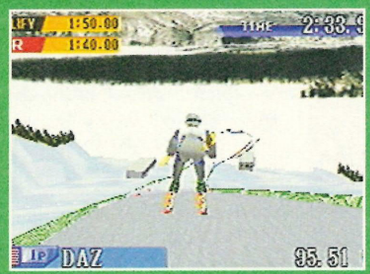
31 PERCENT



Oh dear. Excellent graphics, solid gameplay and brilliant longevity - Phat Air has none of these. The graphics have a terrible habit of breaking up, popping up and generally c@!$ing up all over the place. It only has 12 possible stunts available for the player to pull off, and offers very little in the way of a lasting challenge. The courses aren't totally terrible; it's more down to the bad collision detection and ropey controls that make it pretty much unbearable to play.

Nagano Winter Olympics 98

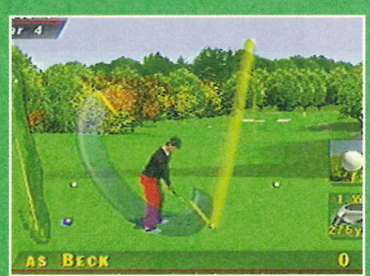
50 PERCENT



Great things were expected from Konami's Winter Olympics spectacular, but it fell short of the quota when released about the middle of last year. There's a wealth of events at your disposal (13 in all), the best of which is, rather amusingly, the curling event where you chuck weights along the ice and brush it's path to aim it towards the target area. I suppose that shows how dull the overall product is! Graphics are probably its strongest point, but even they're not all that great.

PGA Tour 98

69 PERCENT



Graphics are the strongest point behind each of the three PGA Tours, each one keeping up with the times in their graphical prowess. Of course graphics don't make good games in themselves, and this is where they all end up in the bunker. Generally there aren't enough courses to satisfy a real player (unless you buy all of them) even though what's there is pretty accurate and realistic. The gameplay doesn't offer a similarity in the controls to that of the game, so it feels oddly disjointed which really doesn't help much. Tiger Woods 99 is a vast improvement, though.

Pitball

44 PERCENT



Another future sport extravaganza which has some spooky resemblance to the classic Speedball 2. The action between the two sporting teams takes place in a large selection of 'pits' on different planets around the galaxy. The idea, of course, is to score goals and beat the bejesus out of your opponents. The graphics are forgivable but limp in places, while the sound goes by unnoticed in the background. The playing area dwarfs the four contenders drastically, and the control method and speed of play is just too slow and custard-like to make up for it. Try Dead Ball Zone instead.

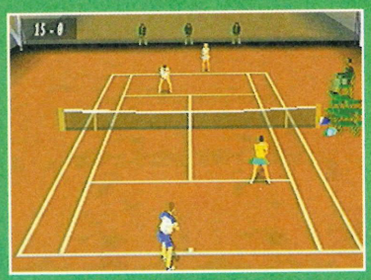
Riot

71 PERCENT

More future sports here, and you've guessed it, it's a dead ringer for that old favourite Speedball 2. Yes, hack your way to the goal and score points to win the match (it's got a Football/Basketball type feel) and make your way though all the teams to complete the game. It isn't as immediately playable as Dead Ball Zone but does offer slightly 'closer to the action' camera angles and graphics. It is also incredibly hard which, in this case, is a bad point as your opponents are relentlessly superior no matter how long you play it. Not bad though if you're after two-player frolics.



Sampras Extreme Tennis — 91 PERCENT



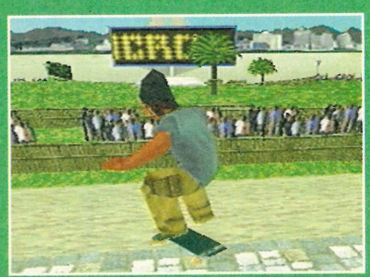
The first thing that strikes you about this Sampras-licensed tennis fest is the gorgeous motion capture and colourful graphics. It's quite an accomplishment, but I know what you're thinking; 'I bet it's slow and cumbersome'. You would be sadly wrong, because even though there are tons of animations for lush moves, it doesn't hinder or slow down the gameplay in any way. It's a smooth and playable game that richly deserves your attention, even if you're not a big fan of the sport. The best thing, of course, is the four-player Multi Tap support; make the most of it.

Snow Racer '98 — 90 PERCENT



Something of a surprise hit from early '98. It offers both Alpine Skiing and freestyle snowboarding that was classed at the time as being on a par with the excellent Cool Boarders 2. Both segments of the game were programmed differently as to create more of a simulation feel for the two sports. All the characters offer full motion capture (for both playing modes), the best of which is the snowboaring, thanks to the excellent tricks possible. If you're into both winter sports it's worth a look, but stick with CB 3 if you just want the Snowboarding.

Street Skater — 54 PERCENT



Oh, what a shame! A good idea as there isn't another skateboarding game available on the PlayStation, but it underachieves in a big way and leaves a lot to be desired. It's used a pretty much identical gameplay engine to many of the (bad) snowboarding games that have recently surfaced, so it's immediately obvious that they haven't gone to much trouble to produce it. It plays just like a naff snowboarder (with wheels) and isn't by any means an essential purchase. Let's just hope Sony pick up the reins and make a skateboarding game worthy of your collection.

Smash Court Tennis — 93 PERCENT



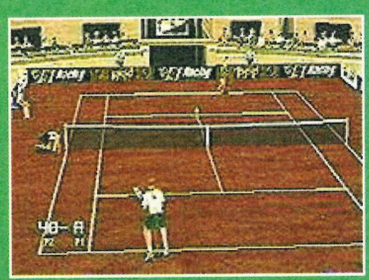
If it was my decision, I would honestly make this game compulsory playing as part of the National Curriculum. It's remarkably easy to pick up and play but try and stop playing and put it down and you feel like the pad is literally super-glued to your hands - it's just impossible! The graphics are cute and sweet, the gameplay engine is one of the most perfectly formed I've ever encountered and the challenge is seemingly endless as long as you have a friend who can play. You'll find it really hard to get hold of a copy, though; it seems there are very few flying around - boo!

Streak — 94 PERCENT



Finally, something with fast and smooth gameplay that's actually got a few new ideas and touches knitted tightly to produce quite a original game. It's a bit like hover boarding (like Back To The Future 2), where anything goes in a race to the finish line. Streak incorporates real physics into the games engine so there are a completely unlimited number of stunts available to you instead of a limited number of button combinations. The courses are original to say the least and the challenge is hard and well balanced.

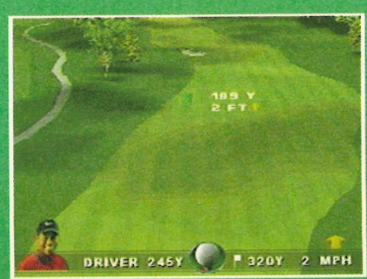
Tennis Arena — 77 PERCENT



One of the better tennis simulators available on the PlayStation, Tennis Arena offers top-notch motion capture for six distinctly different controllable characters. Each has their own style and techniques as well as excellent 'extra curricular' animations like chucking their racquets, spinning them on their fingers and tapping the clay off their trainers. The developer's have tried to make the game as accurate and fun as possible. Both Smash Court Tennis and Sampras Extreme are basically more technically perfect. A good game nevertheless.

Tiger Woods 99 — 89 PERCENT

EA Sports' previous series of PGA Golf games left me with a slightly sour taste in my mouth so I wasn't too sure that Tiger Woods 99 was going to suit my golfing palette. Happily, thanks to all the brand-new additions and gameplay tweaks, TW is in a totally different league to its predecessors. The new swing meter gives your shots more accuracy and the fade and draw is the easiest control of any golf game I've played. Add this to the excellent motion capture thanks to Tiger himself you've got quite a winner on your hands; it's definitely my favourite to date.




RIDGE RACER TYPE 4


ROLLCAGE


FINAL FANTASY VIII

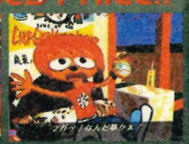

FIFA '99

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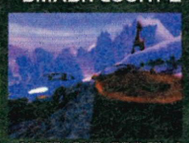

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tips & cheats

Dr Claire's back with all the very best hints and codes. Now you need never get stuck in a game again...

This is my second month in my new job as the Tips and Cheats writer and also the tips clinic doctor. It seems every issue the number of you writing in asking for cheats just gets more and more, so this month we've really had to pack 'em in! But that doesn't mean you should stop sending us requests - the more the merrier. Don't forget, though, address your letters to Claire, or I'll get very upset!

ROCKMAN X3

Final stage
Go to the stage select screen and highlight the 'X' logo. Quickly press ↓+■+✖. The cursor then moves to the bottom of the screen to confirm that you have entered the code correctly.

All enhancements
Enter 6414,4155,6872,3356 as a password to start the game with the special capsules (Double Air-Dash, Hyper Charger, Super Armour, I. Tracer) already obtained.

Zero's Light Sabre
Enter 7357,7533,6462,7835 as a password to start the game with that weapon.

Hint: Defeating Byte
An alternative method to defeat Byte is to intentionally run into him when he shoots his pod across the screen, right before he dashes. He dashes across the screen and leaves Megaman with a small amount of damage.

RUSH HOUR

Heavy metal cars
Press L1, R1, L1, ■, R1, ↑ when Start appears on the title screen. You will hear a sound if you have entered the right code.

Super cars
Press ↑, ←, →, ✖, ●, ■ when Start is on the title screen. You hear a sound if you've entered the right code.

Reversed tracks
Press ←, ▲, R1, ●, L1, ↓ when Start appears on the title screen.

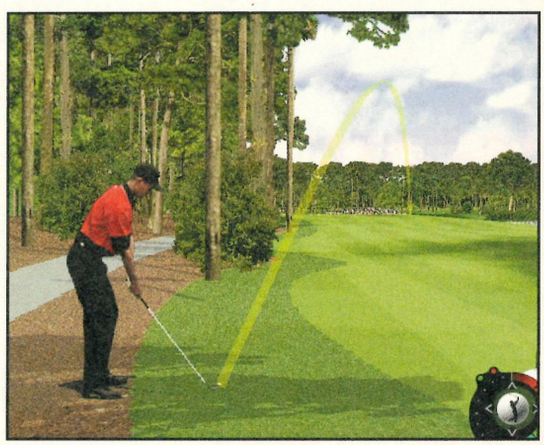
Bonus track
Press ✖, ↑, ▲, ↓, R1, L1 when Start appears on the title screen.

Super championship race
Press →, ■, ←, ●, ↑, ✖ when Start appears on the title screen.

SHELLSHOCK

Invincibility
Begin a game, then press Start+Select to quit. Press ↑, ↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ↓, →, →, ▲ at the main title screen. You hear the sound of a chime if you have entered the right code.

'Payback' mission
Enter the briefing area and find the locker on the left hand side of the screen, open it and enter 4L2CZC-QKDAABACQDB at the password screen. A mission to destroy the Crimson Blade training camp in the Masirah Mountains begins.



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Dr Claire's Tips Clinic

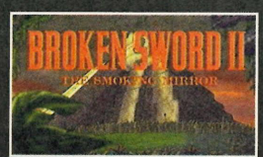
Your problems solved...

DIAGNOSED AND CURED

The following problems have been solved by the Tips Clinic:

JW from Newcastle (please send us your full names in future) is stuck on BROKEN SWORD 2 where he (or she) has to get past the security guard and the dog.

Well JW, you know you can't climb the fence as the guard dog doesn't want to be disturbed. Look into the hut and chat to the night watchman. You can get the bottle by using the hook, which is in the water down the stairs. use the bottle with the chimney in order to get the cone. Leave the bottle in the chimney pot. The hut will fill with smoke. You can enter the hut through the trapdoor underneath once the man leaves. Get the dog biscuits and feed the dog from under the hut. You can get rid of the dog by using the hook on the platform under the dog.



Climb over the fence and up the ladder. Use the hook on the fan by looking through the window. Go back and knock on the door. Go back and grab the pulley. Knock the boy into the water and enter the warehouse.

Jordon Hornblow from Timaru would like some cheats for OVERBOARD. Well it was hard work, but I managed to find a few:





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

Scott Bannon from Coventry says he's been reading EPM since the very first issue, and do you know what we do for such dedicated readers? We answer their letters and give them all the cheats they want for WORLD CUP '98...

Classic games
Win the World Cup using any team, then select the World Cup Classics option from the main menu. Win the World Cup again using either classic team to unlock the next classic match. The classic games are unlocked in the following order:
Uruguay vs. Argentina (1930)
Italy vs. Hungary (1938)
Uruguay vs. Brazil (1950)
West Germany vs. Hungary (1954)
England vs. West Germany (1966)
Brazil vs. Italy (1970)
West Germany vs. Holland (1974)
Italy vs. West Germany (1982)

Special goal sounds
Press ▲, ■, ●, or ✖ after a goal is stored by either team.

Daniel McKay from Preston is obviously a big fan of WWF WARZONE as he'd like some cheats as well. Happy body slamming:

TIGER WOODS '99

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

Change voices
Hold ↑ or ↓, then press ✕, ■, ▲, ●, L1, L2, R1 or R2 to increase or decrease the pitch of the comments made during the game.

VICTORY BOXING

Secret boxers
In Open Style, fight until you become the champion to access a Jack-In-The-Box boxer. Defend the championship title five times to access Snake.

In Peek-A-Boo, fight until you become the champion to access Kiki and Mimi. Defend your champion status five times to access Edward King.

In Peek-A-Boo, fight until you are champion again to access Roboxer. Defend your title five times to access Carrie (the girl that carries the cards).

MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY

Frosty
To hear Dan Forden say 'Frosty' instead of 'Toasty', you have to freeze your opponent when he or she is in danger.

Pit fatalities
Do the following for some spectacular fatalities:
Pit 1: uppercut
Pit 2: perform the stage fatality
Pit 3: perform the stage fatality
Dead pool: hold LK, LP and ↓ then press HP
Kombat tomb: perform the stage fatality
Shao Kahn Tower: perform the stage fatality
Subway: perform the stage fatality

Play as Chameleon
Choose either Human Smoke, Ermac, Classic Sub Zero, Scorpion, Noob Saibot, Rain, or Reptile, and before the round starts, hold ←, R1, R2, ▲, and ■. Chameleon will now have the abilities of the same colour Ninja that he morphs into.

Random select
While the default players are highlighted, press ↑ and Start at the select screen.

Shao Kahn's Treasure Chest
Once you have beaten Shao Kahn you can select a symbol:
Box 1: character endings
Box 2: fight chameleon
Box 3: MK1 classic endurance kombat
Box 4: MK2 classic endurance kombat
Box 5: random prize

Ye Olde characters
To reveal the two MK1 and two MK2 characters, on the Character Selection screen, press Select on the relevant character and you discover their previous incarnation. The characters are Kano, Rayden, Kung Lao and Jax.



FIFA '98

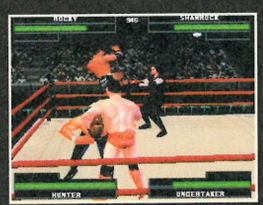
Unlimited player attributes
To receive infinite points to allocate to your players, go to the Player Edit screen and press L1, L2, ✕, ■, and ✕

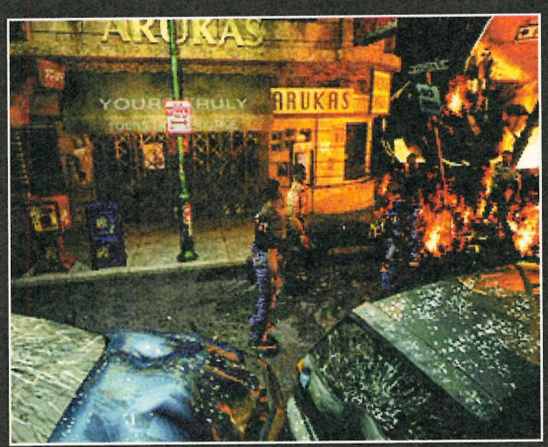
Alter floodlights
At the In-Game Options screen enter the code ■, ▲, ✕, ■, ▲, ▲, ✕, ✕, ■, ■, ■, ■, ■, ▲, ▲, ▲, ▲, ▲

Special moves
Double tap ●: Lob
R1: Flick
R2 or L2: Shimmy to left or right
L2+▲: 360 spin
L2+■: Flick up for overhead kick
L2+●: Jink

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Stone Cold Stunner
If you're Steve Austin and are in a tie-up and your opponent's health meter is in the red, press ←, ←, tie-up or →, →, tie-up to do the Stone Cold Stunner.

No Wimps Mode
To get the 'No Wimps Mode', which turns off all blocking, win the title with Ken Shamrock on medium or hard modes.

Dizzy Wrestler
At the Create A Player screen, hold down ■, and when the wrestler starts to sway, let up and he'll be dizzy. if you keep doing this he'll act as though he's about to throw up.

Bonus Wrestlers
To play as Dude Love and Cactus Jack, win the title with Mankind in a one player vs. game.
To play as Sue the ring girl, win the World Title with Bret Hart or Owen Hart on Medium difficulty.
To play as the Trainer, enter Training mode.

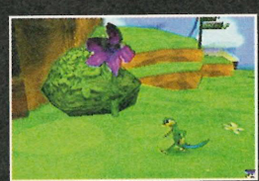
Start created character with 40 attribute points
First, load any character that has 40 points. Now rearrange the character however you want to (looks, wardrobe, etc). When you've finished, change the character's name, theme music and moves to whoever you want for that character. When you check the attribute points, you notice they have 40 attribute points without all the hassle. Now save the created player

I had a letter from a gentlemen the other day and he asked me a question concerning the red book in RESIDENT EVIL. I couldn't give him an answer at the time, but since then I've found some information on it. Here goes...

Once you're in Room 71 and you have a V-Jolt, use it on the roots in Room 79. Then get the mixed herbs, bazooka rounds and shotgun rounds and put the red book in the empty space in the cupboard in Room 76. Now face plant 42 in Room 77. Stay around the edge of the room, otherwise it grabs you. Avoid the acid droplets and when you get chance, fire off the bazooka using exploding rounds as preference. After a while, Barry should come and help.

Mr Rigby from Morecambe has lost his Xplorer code for GEX: ENTER THE GECKO, the only one I've been able to find is for infinite energy, and here it is:

865DDDIC5956

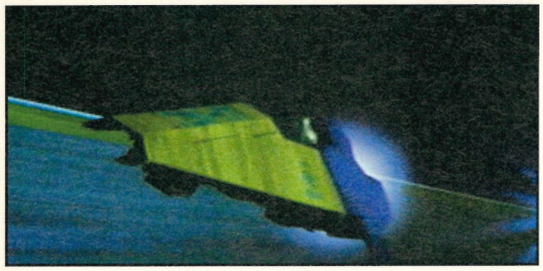


Jonathan Hall from Shropshire would like some cheats for KENSEI. What? Already? Oh all right then, here you go..

Extra mode
Unlock all 22 characters.

Fight as Akira
Successfully complete the game under Normal Mode as Yugo.

tips & cheats



WIPEOUT 2097

To access the Ship and Track cheats go to the opening options menu and hold down L1, R1 and Select. Then enter the following:

Piranha Ship
Press ✕, ✕, ✕, ✕, ●, ▲, ■ on the team selection screen you will find the supership

Phantom Class
Press ▲, ▲, ▲, ●, ●, ●. The Phantom class is now selectable from the track selection screen.

Vector Cheat
Press ■, ●, ▲, ●, ■. You can now race every track in the Vector class.

The following cheats must be entered during play

Infinite energy
Pause the game and hold down L1, R1, Select. With those held, enter ▲, ✕, ■, ●, ▲, ✕, ■, ●

Infinite time
As before, Pause the game and hold down L1, R1, Select. Still holding them press ▲, ■, ●, ✕, ▲, ■, ●, ✕

Machine Gun
Pause the game and hold down L1, R1, Select. Still holding them press ■, ●, ✕, ■, ●, ✕, ▲

NEED FOR SPEED 3

Extra cars
Jaguar XJR 15: Win a tournament in Beginner Mode
Mercedes CLK-GTR: Win a tournament in Expert Mode
Bonus Car: Win a knockout contest in Expert Mode

BUSHIDO BLADE 2

Fight as sub-characters
Complete decisive Battle (story) Mode and keep both sub-characters alive. The sub-characters may now be used in any other game mode.

Slash mode
Complete Boss Mode without using any continues. An option for Slash Mode appears on the main menu.

Fight as Katze
Select a Shainto fighter and complete slash mode in under 15 minutes. Katze is now selectable under Versus, Group Battle, and Link modes.

Fight as Tsubame
Select a Narukagami fighter and complete Slash Mode in under 15 minutes. Tsubame is now selectable under Versus, Group Battle, and Link modes.

Chanbarra mode
Defeat all 13 bosses in Action (Boss) Mode without using any continues. Highlight the Link Mode option on the main menu and press ↓, ↓ to access Chanbarra Mode.

Hundred slashes mode
Complete the game with the six regular characters.



EHRGEIZ

Alternate costumes
Hold ↑ while selecting a fighter at the Arcade Mode character selection screen.

Fight as Kouji Masuda
Successfully complete Arcade Mode using any male character

Fight as Clair Andrews
Successfully complete Arcade Mode using any female character.

Fight as Yuffie Kisaragi
Successfully complete Arcade Mode as Cloud.

Fight as Vincent Valentine
Successfully complete Arcade Mode as Tifa.

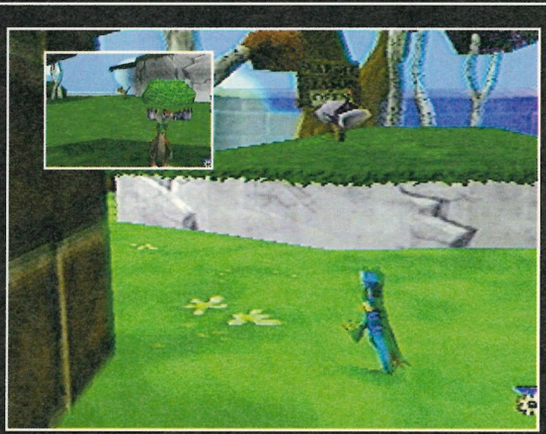
Fight as Django
Successfully complete Arcade Mode using the eight regular non-Final fantasy VII characters.

Fight as Zack
Successfully complete Arcade Mode using all Final fantasy 7 characters.

MICRO MACHINES

The following codes can be entered at any point during

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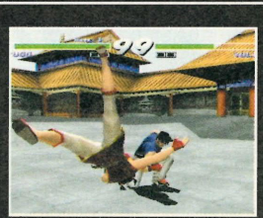
Fight as Zhou
Successfully complete the game under Normal Mode as all nine starting characters. Then, complete the game under Normal Mode again using any one of the nine starting characters.

Fight as Kaiya
Successfully complete the game in Normal Mode as all the nine starting characters. Then, complete the game again under Normal Mode once more using any bonus character.

Fight as Arthur
Complete the game in Normal Mode as Ann.

Fight as Genya
Successfully win the game in Normal Mode as Saya.

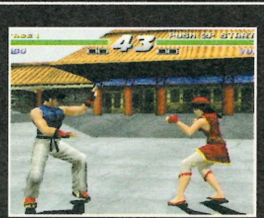
Andrew Gaskell in Merseyside is going to be this month's honorary doctor as he has solved Ian Dolan and Gary Tildsley's problems. A guy called Daniel Shaw also sent in a solution for this, so thank you to you as well Daniel. We don't do favouritism!



The only dog you have to get past that he can remember in BROKEN SWORD is in Spain. When the dogs scare George back into the hallway, left-click on the armoire to get out of their way. Then carry on up the stairs.

In RESIDENT EVIL, the Helmet Key is in the fireplace of the Plant Boss room in the Guardhouse. In the Director's Cut, the Helmet Key is in the Guardhouse basement's Arms Storage room.

Now maybe someone out there can help Andrew, as he's got a problem with RESIDENT EVIL too. He would like to know if there are any cheats to get unlimited weaponry without having to complete the game a set number of



times? If anyone can oblige he would be very grateful - write to me with the answer at the usual address!

THE CRITICAL LIST

Someone else would like your help as well. Mr Goldsorthy from Mid Glamorgan is stuck on TOMB RAIDER 3 in the city of Vilcabamba. he's got as far as the bridge crossing the underground river, and across it on the wall is a series of gears. He now wants to know what to do next. Does he have to pick up something in particular? he says he has got our Solutions book - I can't believe it's not in there!

If you need any help on any PlayStation game write to:

Dr Claire Ph.D,
The Tips Clinic,
extreme PlayStation Magazine,
22 Strand Street,
Poole,
Dorset BH15 1SB

Please remember to tell us which game you're stuck on and exactly what you want to know. The best letter we receive for the Tips Clinic wins a selection of Blaze PlayStation peripherals, so get scribbling...

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

the game. They can also be cancelled by re-entering the code:

Big Bounce:
■, →, →, ↓, ↑, ↓, ←, ↓, ↓

Change car into an object:
↓, ↓, ↑, ↑, →, →, ←, ←

Double Speed:
■, ✖, ●, ■, ▲, ✖, ✖, ✖, ✖

Lower Camera:
←, →, ■, ●, ←, →, ■, ●

Slow down CPU cars:
●, ▲, ■, ✖, ●, ▲, ■, ✖

Tanks on all tracks
To have all tanks on all of the tracks, enter TANKS4ME as a character name.

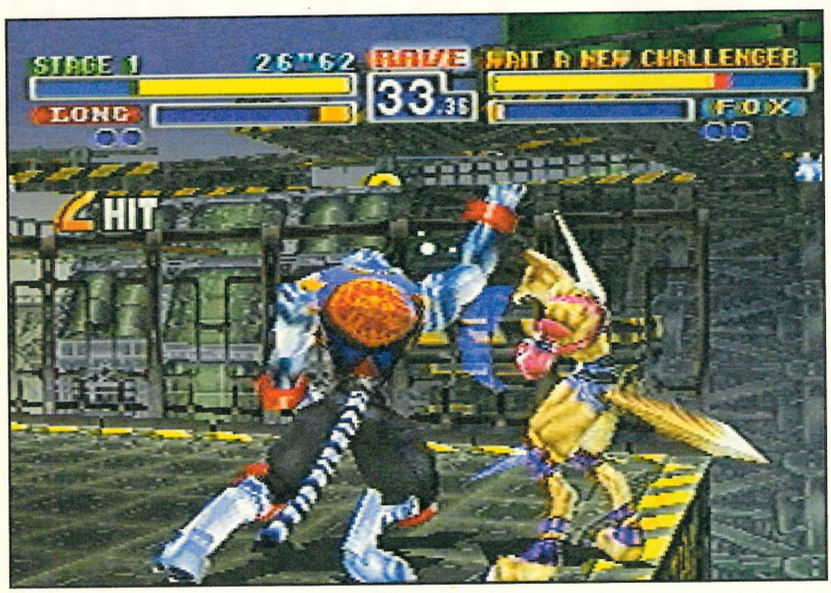
BLOODY ROAR

Big head mode
Go to the character selection screen and hold down L2 and press ● to select your fighter.

Kids mode
Go to the character selection screen and hold down R2 and press ● to select your fighter.

Big Ring
defeat ten or more characters in Survival mode to get a larger ring.

Small Ring
Finish the game with Greg at skill level 4+ to get the small ring option.





Healing mode
Complete the game with Yugo at skill level 4+ to fight without energy bars.

Long Arm of the Law
Complete the game at a skill level of 4+ with no continues used to get long arms.

SOUL BLADE

Alternative outfits
Use the following codes to find every costume for each of the characters:
Costume 1: ■
Costume 2: ✖ and ■
Costume 3: ●
Costume 4: ▲
Costume 5: ✖ and ▲

Play as Sophitia
To play as Sophitia you need to complete the Blade Master Mode with every character and get every one of the weapons.

Play as Soul Blade
Either play for 20 hours or complete the game with every character. Once you've done this you will find there is a picture of the fighters on the title screen, this tells you that the code has worked.

XPLORER CODES (FOR USE WITH THE XPLORER CHEAT CARTRIDGE) • FOR MORE CODES, CHECK OUT HELPLINE: (STANDARD RATE, 24 HOURS, 7 DAYS) 01302 325860 • WEB SITE CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.X-PLORER.CO.UK

ADVENTURES OF ALUNDRA

Infinite Money
$8674FED4785F

Infinite Gilded Falcons
$8674FEDC5917

Possess Sword
$8674FEE85959

Possess Fiend Blade
$8674FEEC5959

Possess Holy Sword
$8674FEF05959

Possess Hunters Bow
$8674FEF45959

Possess Willow Bow
$8674FEF85959

Possess Spirit Wand
$8674FEFC5959

Possess Legend Sword
$8674FE005959

Possess Iron Flail
$8674FE045959

Possess Steel Flail
$8674FE085959

Possess Ice Wand
$8674FE185959

Possess Fire Wand
$8674FE205959

Possess Spring Bean
$8674035C5959

Possess Sand Cape
$867403605959

Possess Bomb
$8674036C5959

Possess Infinite Herbs
$867403705961

Possess Strength Elixir
$867403745959

Possess Magic Elixir
$867403785959

Possess Wonder Esscence
$8674037C5959

Possess Aqua Cape
$867403805959

Possess Strength Tonic
$867403845959

Possess Earth Scroll
$8674038C5959

Possess Earth Book
$867403905959

Possess Water Scroll
$867403945959

Possess Water Book
$867403985959

Possess Fire Scroll
$8674039C5959

Possess Fire Book
$867403A05959

Possess Wind Scroll
$867403A45959

Possess Wind Book
$867403A85959

Possess Olgas Ring
$867403AC5959

Possess Oaks Ring
$867403B05959

Possess Silver Armlet
$867403B45959

Possess Navas Charm
$867403B85959

Possess Recovery Ring
$867403BC5959

Possess Refresher
$867403C05959

Possess Power Glove
$867403CC5959

Infinite Keys
$867403D45917

Get Agate Crest
$8671292C5959

Get Broken armour
$867129AC5959

Get all keys
$8671291C59BB

Get charm boots
$867129985959
$8671294C5959
$867129545959

Get Emerald Crest
$867129345959

Get Bouquet
$867129505959

Get Garnet Crest
$867129305959

Get Ruby Crest
$867129205959

Get Sapphire Crest
$8671290C5959

Get Secret Pass
$8671290C5959

Get Topaz Crest
$867129285959

Invinciblity
$867019BC59A0

Moon Jump!!!
$76712A40599A
$86701CA6595B

AIR COMBAT

Infinite guns
$86643E9C7861

Infinite missiles
$86643E9859BB

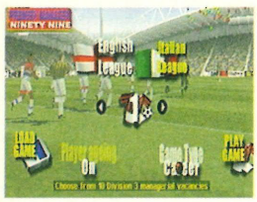
Infinite fuel
$86643E8CE04F

Unlimited damage
$86643DB85ADA

Is your team sliding down the table? Are your players demoralised, the fans screaming for your blood and the Board of Directors giving you that kiss-of-death 'vote of confidence'? You need our tips guide to Player Manager Ninety Nine...

Premier Manager Ninety Nine

Game Selection



Just who do you want to be? If you're in it for the long haul, go with the Career choice and choose one of the Division 3 minnows such as Barnet or Scarborough. Feel the strain as the rain lashes down, no money in the kitty, no one in the ground except one man and his dog and play with a team has more donkeys than Blackpool Pleasure Beach. Alternatively, you can select the Manager game. This allows you to run the team of your dreams. Fools be warned - this ride ain't no picnic.

Team Selection



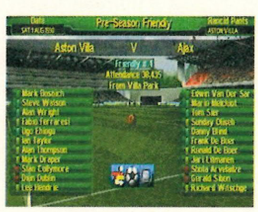
Follows on from above. If you want to 'Spend, Spend, Spend' select the obvious teams: Man Utd , Liverpool et al, or one of the Italian giants: Juventus, AC Milan. Warning! Even though the bank vaults are brimming, the heat is on from the directors if you fail to deliver after an elaborate spree. If you choose the Career path, your powers of wheeling and dealing must be deep-rooted in dodgy east London trading history. You start off with only a few hundred thousand in the pot; use it well.
You don't have to go for one extreme or the other; select middle-of-the-road Nationwide teams or average Premiership outfits. Club objectives vary from club to club as do the pros and cons. Remember - relish the task, relish the challenge.

Pre-Season

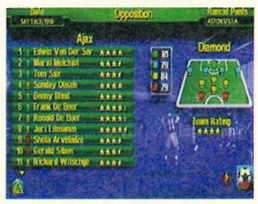


The key here is to attain a balanced four-match schedule. A heavy-duty program against the likes of Ajax, Man Utd and Inter could result in a serious injury list and tired players before the season as even started. Go towards the other end of the scale and a light schedule against the likes of Wrexham and Vicenza and you leave your team with the competitive spirit of a tortoise and in a very lackadaisical frame of mind.

Tactics



There are over 150 tactical combinations within the game. Use them to your advantage and adapt your style of play depending on the opposition. Use the Opposition icon (the magnifying glass) wisely. Check the team sheet and



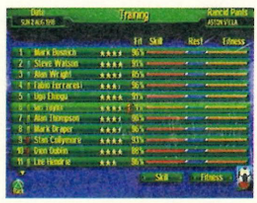
counteract it accordingly. Are your opponents playing five midfielders? you may want to play a sweeper to avoid the midfield's advancing runs from deep, breaking the offside trap. Away from home, against the champions or form teams, play five at the back and field a counter-attacking formation. This in theory should minimalise goals conceded and get your team the breakaway goal you planned for. However, if



you're a traditionalist and believe in fielding your strongest team week in-week out, use the pre-season to find your best available team and the most effective team formation.
Use the Play Ratings to analyse your opponent's strengths in various departments. These are colour coded as follows:
Red = Attackers
Yellow = Midfield
Blue = Defence
Green = Goalkeeper
These positions are rated out of a hundred, so try and select a team that outpoints your opponents in as many areas of the pitch as possible.

Training

A key part of any successful team is the training. A physically well prepared team is always one-up on the opponents before the game has even started.
Use the Customised Training option and design a training programme that is individually suited to each player at your club.



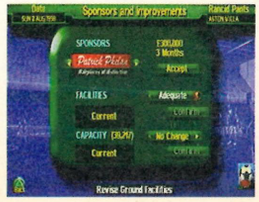
For example, with Paul Gascoigne you don't want a routine based on skill; instead concentrate on fitness. This improves the player's ratings and your side sees the benefit, as he has a greater influence on the team's performance as the weeks go by.
After a midweek European game you may want to rest Dennis Bergkamp, ensuring he is fresh and sharp for Saturday's potential title decider. Alternatively, your very limited centre-half from Wigan needs to improve his left foot. Put him into a skill-heavy routine; within weeks he will be dropping 60-yard passes on to a 2p coin.
If you sign a player with raw potential from the lower leagues, design a routine over the long term which concentrates on skill and power. After a couple of seasons you have a player ready for first team action or possibly even a £5 million prodigy on your hands ready to sell on to the highest bidder!

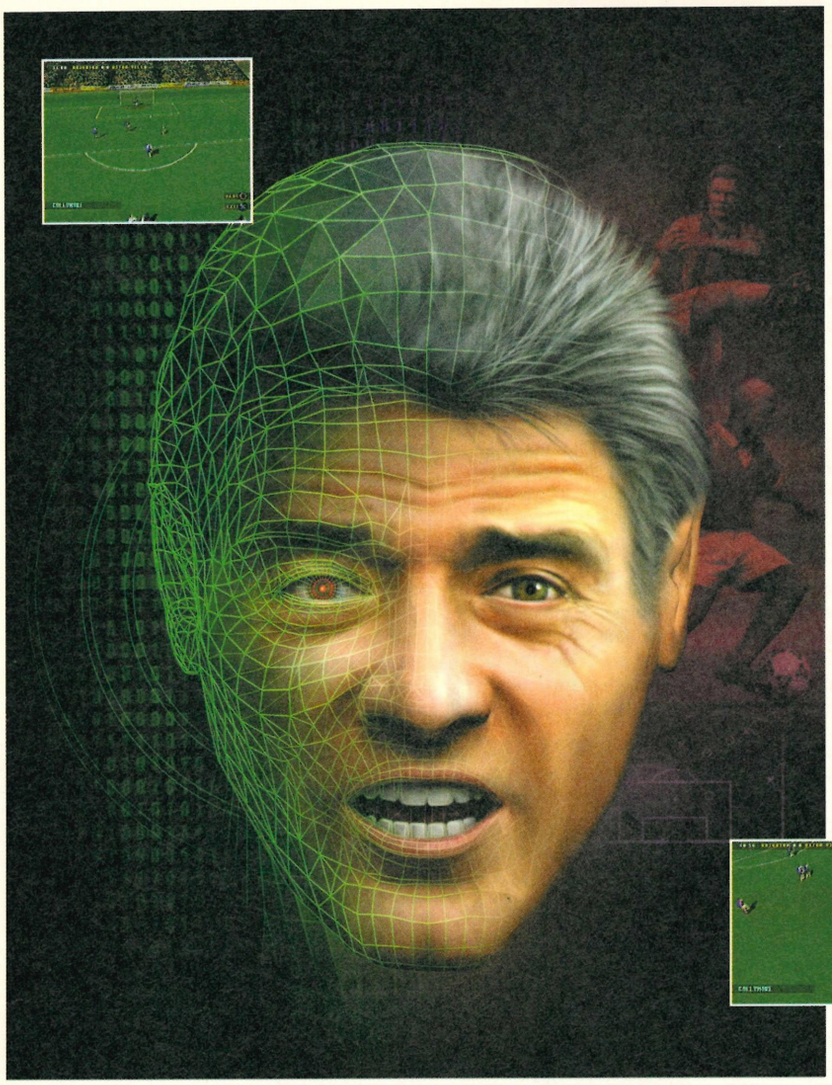
Finance

Use the Win Bonus effectively, not gregariously. Use it for the games where, traditionally, players need to be motivated, eg. The Anglo-Italia Cup. Also use it for event matches such as Cup finals and title or relegation deciders. Offer too much money on too many occasions and the players become demotivated and accept the bonus as a right rather than as a special extra.
You need to strike a balance with your ticket pricing policy. Charge too much and the fans stay away; charge too little and the club operates at a loss. Offer concessions for the fans to come - for Anglo-Italia and League Cup



matches, reduce the prices so you can draw the biggest gate possible for minor games. Remember, fans will pay to watch a winning team, so try charging a little extra. Don't take liberties or the fans stay away.
When commissioning ground development work (facilities or new stands), make sure you do it at a time when the income losses are at a minimum. Start work towards the end of





DO'S & DON'TS

Do

1. Keep players happy & content.
2. Get a strong in-depth squad - quality in every position.
3. Prepare squad thoroughly for all games - Preparation is vital.
4. Research the opposition - know what your up against.

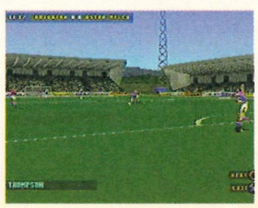
Don't

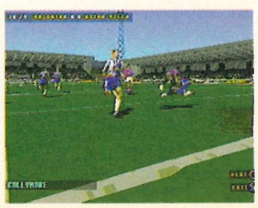
1. Alienate players in the squad - keep all players involved.
2. Let players dictate wages - make offer and stick to it.
3. Alienate the fans - charge too much and they stay away.







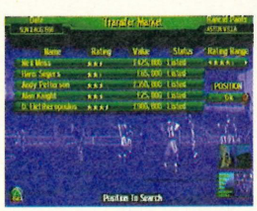




the season or during the Summer when the ground is out of action. This means more work can be done without distraction. Also, if you're certain to win promotion, increase your ground capacity as soon as possible, making sure it is ready for the sure-fire attendance boom of the forthcoming season.
Get your sponsorship deals sewn up quickly so you have income rolling in as soon as the season has kicked off.
An obvious tip this one - don't allow the finances to go into debt for too long otherwise the directors sack you. Keep the club operating at a loss and it's the deadly 'vote of confidence' for you.

Transfers

The database contains over 10,000 players from the UK and Europe. Use this to your advantage by sending your scouts to scour as many far-reaching countries as possible.
Search the hidden gem





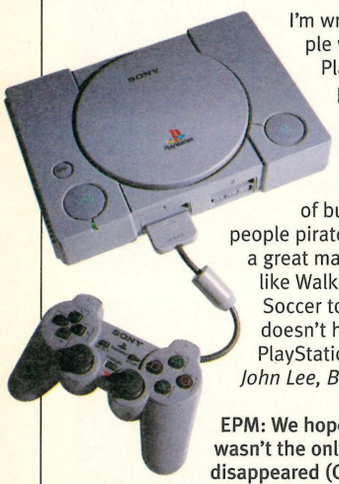
that potentially saves you millions and also earns the club few bob via a lucrative transfer.
Use the Top Team and Top Scorer options as a scouting tool. Monitor it carefully to see who is scoring/performing week in, week out. Spot any early form from a player, regardless of league status, and you may have a bargain on your hands.
If you're a newly promoted/established club, the best way to entice a superstar to your club is to offer the best financial package possible. The most inciting offer to place on the agent's table is a mid-length contract offering a lucrative weekly wage and a get-out clause if you get relegated. This way the player knows he is guaranteed top-flight football on a decent whack.
When tabling an offer for a foreigner, use the House and Car Bonus option. This makes Carlos Kickaball feel instantly at home, making it easier for him and his family to settle. Similar tactics can be used when trying to entice strikers - offer him a goalscoring bonus.
Trying to get the established ageing pro to your club? Easy - offer him a long-term contract, it's just what he's after. You see, the fella needs security for the wife and kids.
Snap up all players you can possibly get on the Bosman ruling and sell them on for a hefty profit. Warning! Sign too many player, and the wage bill goes ballistic.

exchange

EPM SAYS...

PlayStation 2, coming next year - what it will look like is anyone's guess, as is what it will be called (PlayStation 2 is just a working title), but if you've read the Signals section, you know what it performs like, and that's the important thing. Or should we say, 'one of the important things?' Of course, the other factor we've no idea about is the price. Be honest - how much would you be prepared to pay for a piece of kit like that? How much could you afford? Will all that DVD, (unconfirmed) video compatibility, backwards compatibility and multimedia capabilities make the machine a sure-fire seller, or will it just price the console out of the market and force gamers into the arms of Sega, with their inferior but sure-to-be cheaper Dreamcast? Let us know what you think at the usual address...

ARR, JIM LAD...

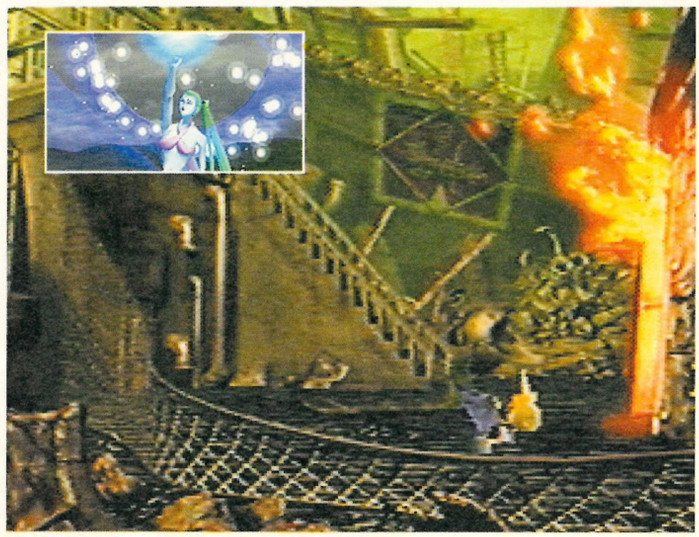


I'm writing regarding people who chip their PlayStations and buy pirate games. Can anyone remember what happened to the Commodore Amiga? It went out of business because people pirated its games. It was a great machine with games like Walker and Sensible Soccer too. I hope the same doesn't happen to the PlayStation.
John Lee, Battersea, London

EPM: We hope that too. Piracy wasn't the only reason the Amiga disappeared (Commodore's failings contributed big-style), but it certainly shortened the machine's life dramatically. Also, does having an enormous collection of pirated games really enhance your enjoyment of your console? Some people collect games like a trainspotter collects engine numbers, constantly looking for a copied version of the next title and never getting round to playing anything. Isn't it wiser to have a smaller collection, say, up to ten games, and only go for a new one when you've completed (or become sick of) one you've already got? This way you get the very most from your games. Sit on a collection of pirates running into three figures (and some people do), and you won't have the time to play any of them properly.

DAMAGE CASE

PlayStation CDs, that's my problem. I'm the sort of person who likes to take care of my stuff, especially PlayStation games (at £40 a game you have to), but I still seem to get the bloody things marked or scratched. After a month or two you can guarantee I'll find a nice big scratch on them. You only have to break wind near one and it gets marked **(only if you follow through - EPM)**. I remember many moons ago, when CDs were first featured on Tomorrow's World, the presenter put jam on them and dropped them on the floor to demonstrate their durability. Ha! What a joke that crap turned out to be. I'd be interested to see if other people have the same problems as me. If not, I'll have to be even more careful - I suppose I could keep them in the cases and never play them...
Carl Fletcher, Warley, West Midlands



EPM: Yes, even if you treat your disks with kid gloves (whatever that means), you still get tiny scratches on the surface of the CD. They shouldn't harm the disk's performance, though - the really big, game-crashing scratches are definitely caused by bad handling. Try not to touch the surface of the disk - hold it by its edges. If you need to clean it, use a proper CD cloth, not bog roll, which is very harsh. The thriving second hand market proves it's possible to keep your disks in good working order - who'd buy or sell a used game if it weren't? Being black, PSX CDs show up minor scratches more than a music CD too.
Finally, forget what you saw on Tomorrow's World. The programme in question was broadcast while CDs were still being developed. When they finally arrived, they proved far more susceptible to wear and tear than anticipated by the show. The indestructibility of CDs, audio or PlayStation, is a myth.

FINAL FANTASY FOREVER

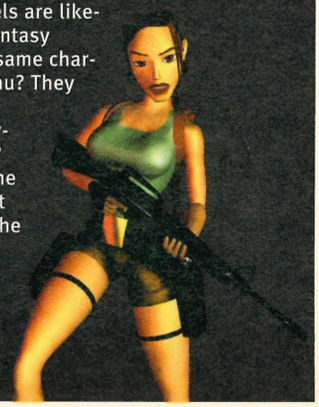
I'm more than a little pissed off by the comments of Mark Midgeley and Richard Bassford in Issue 15. Final Fantasy VII - crap? Shit! Are they thick or something? Its FMV 'not that good'? Are their optic nerves attached to the right parts of their feeble little brains? I don't mean to bitch, but come on; Final Fantasy VII deserves no less than

STAR LETTER

NO MORE HEROES...

We hear a lot about the next generation of PlayStation games and the next generation of videogames consoles, but what about the next generation of gaming heroes? Classic game characters have come and gone, but the present batch have been around for several years and there seems to be no one on the horizon to join or replace them.
Take a look at the last few issues of EPM. Lara Croft in Tomb Raider III, Crash Bandicoot for a third time, Gex in his forthcoming fourth outing, another Kain game in the pipeline; where are the next batch of videogame characters? Even last issue's Metal Gear Solid features a main man resurrected from aeons-old cart games, and the never-ending Street Fighter saga now introduces 'new' characters culled from other Capcom games (like Final Fight's Guy and Sodom). The only games to introduce new folk are licences such as Apocalypse (starring baldie Bruce) and various sports and film tie-ins.
You might argue there's no need for new heroes because the current batch are so strong, but they can hardly go on forever. Let's face it - old timers like Manic Miner, Monty Mole, Dizzy and Chubby Gristle were great in their day, but who would swap them for Lara, Crash or Duke Nukem? Great as our current gaming heroes are, unless developers continue to innovate and create, the gaming scene can only stagnate.
Andrew Wallace, Tyne & Wear

EPM: Duke Nukem's been around for donkey's years on the PC (he first appeared in platform shoot-'em-ups), but apart from that, we take your point. It's worth noting that the birth of a new machine inspires new characters - Lara and Crash, for example, were created for the PlayStation. Perhaps PlayStation 2 will inspire a fresh roster of talent. You're right when you say there are few characters on the horizon that seem capable of becoming valued gaming heroes. Akuji, perhaps? A great game, but the central character is hardly the saga material. Red Lotus and Chaindog from Deathtrap Dungeon? No, too derivative and sequels are likely to be adapted from other Fighting Fantasy books rather than continuing with the same characters. Rikimaru and Ayame from Tenchu? They were great at what they did, but hardly versatile - can you imagine them in anything other than another Tenchu game? No, we can't see any future heroes in the making either, but then it's hard to spot them in advance - back in 1996, when the first Tomb Raider game was released, who could have predicted how big Lara would get?
Have any other readers got any thoughts on this? Who do you guys see as the next big PlayStation character?



the 96% given to it in EPM. Sure, everyone has the right to express their opinions, but if you say the Earth is flat you'd still be wrong and someone would tell you you're talking out of your arse.
I have been a big RPG fan since long before FFVII wowed and before most magazines even looked at them. Back in '94 I played FFVI (known as FFIII in America). I was a 14-year-old gamer accustomed to beat-'em-ups and sceptical about RPGs, but I found the mixture of strategy and action superb. In my experience, those who don't like it are, shall we say, not very mentally agile. Yes, the random battles can be annoying while exploring, but you wouldn't expect a marauding gang of brigands to introduce themselves and take you home for tea and cakes before trying to kill you and take your gil?
'Boring'? 'Slow to start'? FFVII opens with you leaping off a train, fighting your way into a reactor and then escaping before blowing it to shit. The fact that it's not mindless button-bashing does not make it boring, it just means you, Mr shallow, unimaginative, one-dimensional jackass are, well; read what I just said. Final Fantasy VII is the ultimate in escapism (as are all RPGs). They're the gaming equivalent of Shakespeare or Kurosawa, and the closest videogames come to being cultural.
I do like standard games such as beat-'em-ups, but I and many like me have reached the level of near-total immersion that is the RPG and we wait with baited breath for FFVIII. If you can't stand RPGs just continue being one-dimensional. Stay on the outside, 'cos we're having a great time without you.
Dave Moss, Stratford, Warwickshire

EPM: We agree (especially Ian), but don't forget there are bad RPGs as well as good ones. Games with knob storylines and clichéd puzzles. Games with characters so shallow you hardly care about them. Games which offer no sense of progress and barely attempt to create a believable world. Games with user interfaces that make playing them an anal excercise in tedium rather than a pleasure. Thankfully, most PlayStation RPGs avoid these fatal flaws. Good point about random encounters while exploring, but handled poorly, this can get on your nerves - this is one of the few flaws apparent in Breath of Fire III. Also, while there's been loads of great monsters and magic-style role-players in the past and there will doubtless be many more, it's a pity developers seem reluctant to take a risk and try a new theme. Why not set an RPG in an alternative post-war Britain where Hitler won World War II, or in a prehistoric world where you must discover the secret of fire, your progress depending on 'inventing' new technologies such as the wheel and the hunting spear? RPGs on the PC aren't limited to Tolkienesque fantasies, so why are ours? Just a thought... Hope you enjoyed out Final Fantasy VIII import review this issue - it looks great. In the meantime, if you haven't played Konami's Suikoden yet, do so - it's great.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS...

I have three important questions that must be answered, like, yesterday.

1: Is the PSX VCD adapter worth the asking price?

EPM: It's the best part of £60 and effectively turns your PSX into a video recorder that can't record. Video CDs offer better quality reproduction, but unless you're a real tech-head enthusiast with a very good telly, probably not - just buy a standard VCR.

2: Why do you print tips and cheats in an otherwise well balanced magazine when you give away a free book every month that also contains tips, cheats and solutions?

EPM: According to our Reader's Survey, most people want more tips. The Tips and Cheats section offers all the latest codes, and the chance to ask for specific help with the Tips Clinic, and our Tips Focus gives you an up-to-the-minute players' guide. The free books build into an extensive library of tips and solutions. They thus complement each other very well.

3: I was under the impression only good games made the Platinum collection, but there have been a few recently that have scored under 70%. They shouldn't make the grade, or if they do, they should be updated like V-Rally to include a rumble feature or the playability could be tweaked. What makes Sony think the games will sell second time around if they didn't sell when first released?

EPM: You're barking up the wrong tree. Games can only get onto the Platinum label if they sold 100,000 copies in the first six months of their original release - it's sales that count, not quality. Perhaps this isn't a bad thing. Games that sell really well are usually the better ones, and quality is subjective anyway - who would decide which games were good enough? You're right about a few stinkers getting through though - hello, Croc and The Lost World.

If I win the Star Letter, can I have T'ai Fu or Vicky Lee (the girl)? I would like Vicky Lee a lot but T'ai Fu would do.
Francis Traynor, Glasgow.

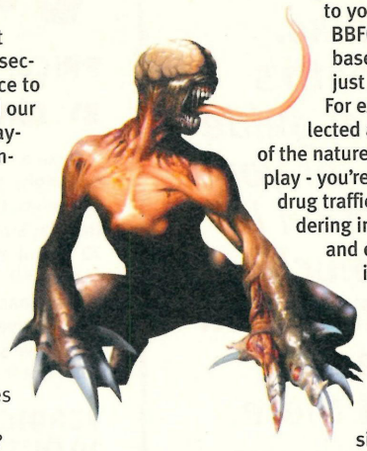
EPM: Alas, you didn't win.



PRICE POINT

I am concerned about the cost and age ratings of games. Take One, for example. £40 when it first came out, but much cheaper now. Why buy new games when most are eventually reduced or placed on the Platinum range?
Another point - GTA hasn't much gore but is an '18' certificate. When a pedestrian dies they're turned to a blob of blood with a bloke stuck in the middle. Resident Evil 2 is a '15' and it has more blood and gore than the controversial GTA. The GTA should sort out its ideas.
Finally, why do Nintendo steal ideas from us like Doom, Gex, V-Rally and Fighting Force? Is it because they have no ideas of their own or just to make us mad? Do something about it.
Daniel Harrison, Pontefract, West Yorkshire

EPM: All games eventually come down in price, and the best sellers go on to the Platinum range. Whether you buy them at full price or wait and get them cheaper is up to you.



BBFC ratings are based on more than just blood and gore. For example, GTA collected an '18' because of the nature of the gameplay - you're stealing cars, drug trafficking and murdering innocent cops and civilians. Despite its violent nature, Res Evil 2 casts you as the good guy, hence its lower rating. Some of the BBFC's decisions do seem a little bizarre, though.
Finally, what makes you think Nintendo are stealing our ideas? Doom was originally a PC game, Gex made his CD debut on the 3DO and Fighting Force first appeared on the Saturn. Of the games you list, only V-Rally was PlayStation-first. It's not uncommon for developers to produce games for more than one console, and if it means more games for everyone, so much the better.

PEARLS OF WISDOM...

• They [the Mortal Kombat movies] are very spiritual films, speaking as a very spiritual person.
Conrad John Clarke, New Zealand

EPM: Who ever said, 'God is dead'?

• I suspect Ms Morris [Star Letter, Issue 13] is an early teenager and should formulate her own opinions and not voice those of a her local lesbian butch feminist with a crew cut and dungarees.
Michael Mackinnon, King's Norton, Brum

EPM: And you, of course, wouldn't dream of stereotyping women, would you?

• The only reason that I am getting a chip is for Final Fantasy VIII and Gunbarl (Point Blank 2) which are the only games I can't wait for.
Mark Flanagan, Tunbridge Wells, Kent

EPM: Check out the Signals section - FFVIII won't work on chipped machines.

That's all for now. Send us a merry missive and you might make next month's Exchange. Send your letters to:

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

Remember to include your full address and your choice of game, should you win our coveted Star Letter prize.

stuff

Here we go again folks. This month's essential guide to stuff for your PlayStation is pretty-much dedicated to all you cheating gits out there. Personally we think it's disgusting, but we're not your mother...

V-MEMORY 1000

PRICE: £29.99

BY: DATEL

It's like a memory card right; but it plugs into the back of the PlayStation. It has 72 virtual memory cards on it, and each of them has 15 slots so you have a total of 1080 save slots available. Got it dude?



VERDICT: 10 OUT OF 10

Yes, it's totally true. There is a very impressive (and remarkably easy to use) interface in the form of a graphical management screen that shows all of your cards and how much space you have on each. It's an excellent way to store all of your most treasured save games safely for later use. No more bloody little cards finding their way under the sofa...

GAME CHAMPION KEY CARTRIDGE

BY: DATEL **PRICE: £6.99**

Why bother cheating when you can simply download game saves (from a Game Champion CD) into this cart and then onto a memory card (sold separately)? The Game Champion Key Cartridge offers all you need to pick and choose the saves that suit you instead of forcing a bunch of shite from games you don't have any intention of playing.



VERDICT: 8 OUT OF 10

It's clever and it's cheap, but most of all, it never needs replacing. It's simply a medium for transporting the information from the CDs onto your own memory card. Wicked if you ask us.

GAME CHAMPION CD COLLECTIONS

BY: DATEL **PRICE: £4.99**

These CDs are compatible with the Game Champion, Action Replay and Equaliser cartridges. Each one has dozens of saves for you to poach and there's even talk of having CDs devoted to single top games. Looks like Datel are onto a good thing with these babies...



VERDICT: 8 OUT OF 10

The Game Champion CDs are affordable, collectable and most of all, always have the latest and best game saves that are picked to suit everyone's collection. The first CD offered saves for top games like Resident Evil 2, Tekken 3, Command & Conquer: Retaliation and GTA, so you can be sure that all the following collections will be right on the cutting edge.

MGS GAME BREAKER

BY: DATEL **PRICE: £9.99**

Metal Gear Solid is one of the biggest games ever, so to commemorate this, Datel have created a memory card completely dedicated to this blockbusting title. For all intents and purposes, it's basically an ordinary memory card crammed full (all 15 blocks have been used) of different save positions taken from throughout the entire game. It allows you to get all of the six Key Cards with ease and kill all of the bosses without the struggle. It's also got all of the different ending available for you to view in the Theatre and lets you play the near-impossible Expert mode.

VERDICT: 5 OUT OF 10



Get all six Key Cards with ease and kill all of the bosses without the struggle? Isn't the whole point of the game being destroyed in the process? It's okay we suppose if you're completely at your wit's end, but the entire atmosphere of the game (and its enjoyment) is compromised. Those of little will power will be happy nevertheless...

COMPETITION

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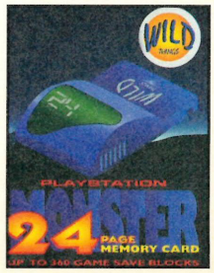
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Entries received after 29th April will be used to paper the bog.

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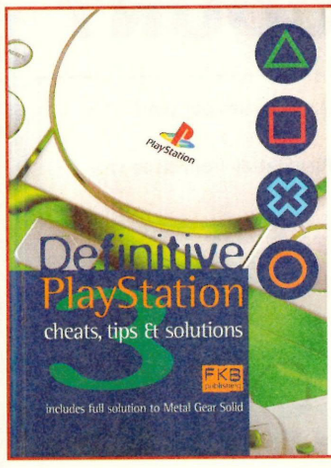
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Playstation link cable	£3.99

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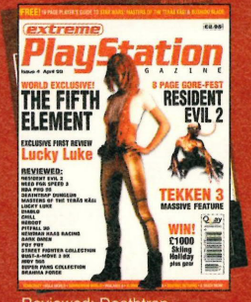
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Welcome to extreme PlayStation's round-up of every game we've ever reviewed. If we've covered a game more than once (eg. at full price and again on Platinum), we use the latest review.

• 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.**
A Bug's Life	Sony CEE	Platform Game	#15	88%	Fantastic graphics make this 3D platformer a joy to watch as well as play.
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.**
Brigandine	Atlus	RPG	#11 IM	74%	Solid but unspectacular RPG. Plays well, but offers nothing new.

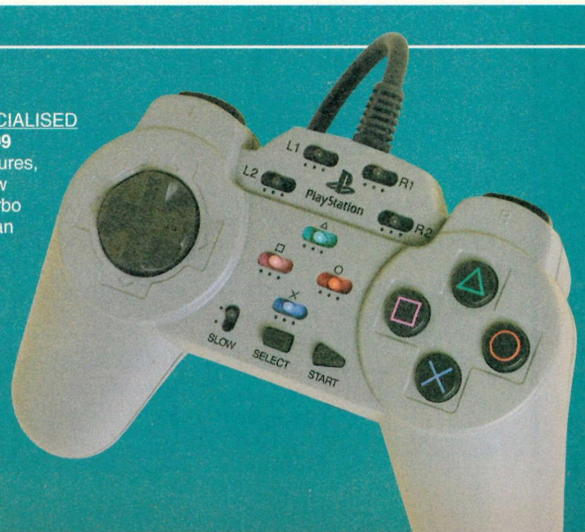
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By: ASCII, £15.99
Not a cheap piece of kit, but the 360° D-pad is wonderfully accurate and its unusual shape is entirely functional. It lacks bells and whistles like Turbo and Slow modes, but after the official pads, it's certainly one of the PlayStation's top performers.



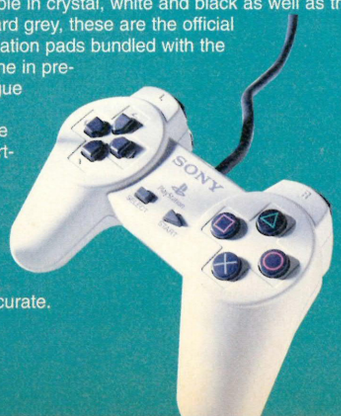
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By: ASCII, £29.99
Packed with features, this one has Slow Motion and a Turbo function which can be used on as many buttons as you like. It's not cheap (to say the least) but if it's turbo versatility you're after, it's the only digital pad for you.



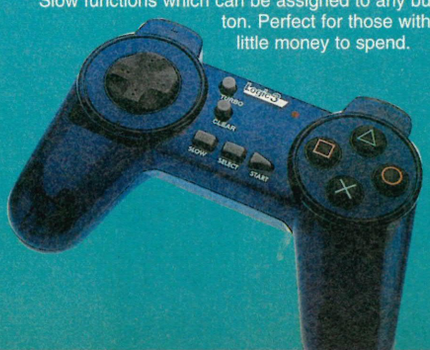
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Title	Publisher	Genre	Issue	Score	Comment
Broken Sword	Sony CEE	Adventure	#3 RU	80%	Great graphic adventure, but sampled speech takes its toll on loading times.
Broken Sword 2	Sony CEE	Adventure	#1	81%	In-depth but occasionally obscure graphic adventure. 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 Japan	Beat-'em-up	#15 IM	86%	Satisfying sequel that builds on the original. Speech in Japanese doesn't help.
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.**
Capcom Generation 5	Capcom	Compilation	#15 IM	77%	Three arcade-perfect versions of Street Fighter 2, with tips, art and info thrown in.
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.**
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.

SONY DIGITAL JOYPAD
By: Sony, £9.99
Available in crystal, white and black as well as the standard grey, these are the official PlayStation pads bundled with the machine in pre-analogue days. They're comfortable, hard-wearing and above all, accurate.



PS SPEED PAD
By: Logic 3, £7.99
Although a little small in the hands, this one's a bargain at a sub-£8 price point. It's a little basic (it is a budget pad after all), but it has Turbo and Slow functions which can be assigned to any button. Perfect for those with little money to spend.





GAMESTER OFFICIAL ENGLAND PAD
By: Gamester, £7.99
Released to coincide with World Cup '98, this one's a bog-standard digital controller in England white and with the famous three lions logo adorning the body. It's nothing special, but looks the business if you're a keen football fan.

directory enquiries

Title	Publisher	Genre	Issue	Score	Comment
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.
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.
Global Domination	Psygnosis	Strategy Game	#15	55%	Dull strategy war sim with poor controls. For die-hard fans only.
Grand Theft Auto	**Take 2 Interactive**	**Driving/Action**	**#10 PL**	**90%**	**Steal cars, bomb police stations, smuggle drugs; no wonder it's '18'-rated.**
Granstream Saga, The	Sony CEE	RPG	#15	72%	Slow storyline and easy puzzles, but not bad for beginners.
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.
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.

THE BARGAIN BIN...

DISRUPTOR (INTERPLAY)

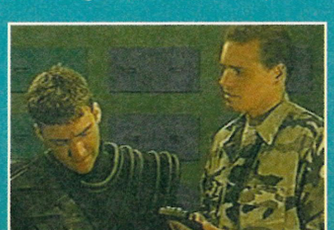
According to the box, Disruptor is 'the mother of all shoot-'em-ups'. If your mother is tiny but drop-dead gorgeous, they're probably right.

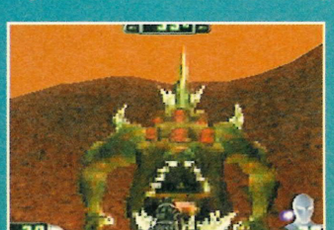
When it was released back in 1996, reviewers everywhere raved about its then-excellent graphics, exciting enemies and hot weapons. The atmosphere and level design were also commended, as were the spectacular cinematic FMV sequences that introduce each mission. However, the marks ranged from mediocre to poor.

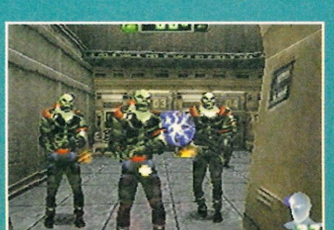
Why? Because the game has only 12 levels! To put in a credible performance it would need at least double this, but treble wouldn't be an unreasonable demand. What's there's great, but there just wasn't enough of it.

Three years on, the game's aged pretty well, though the graphics look a little dated now. The price has fallen spectacularly too - our local games emporium is knocking out second hand copies for £14.99. It's too short to be good value at its original £40, but at this price, it's a bargain.







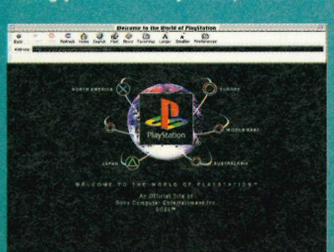


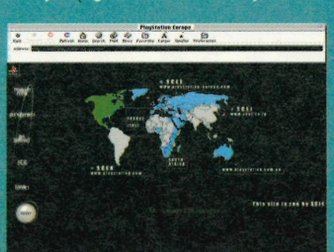
Title	Publisher	Genre	Issue	Score	Comment
Krazy Ivan	Psygnosis	Mech Game	#7 RU	43%	Mech game with graphics showing their age and simplistic combat.
Kula World	Sony CEE	Puzzle/Platform	#6	88%	Puzzle platformer where you guide a beach ball over some weird structures.
Kurushi: Intelligent Cube	Sony CEE	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.
Live Wire!	SCi	Puzzle Game	#15	73%	Fast and colourful, but ultimately too clever for its own good.
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**	**#15**	**96%**	**James Bond with knobs on - a fantastic 3D cinematic experience.**
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 2	Electronic Arts	Driving Game	#15 RU	68%	A poor update of the original - bad graphics and no real feeling of 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.
Off World Interceptor	BMG	Driving Game	#15 RU	31%	One of the first games on the PlayStation. Bad controls and sluggish movement.
Ogre Battle	Atlus	RPG	#11 RU	79%	Not a bad RPG/wargame hybrid, but basically just a SNES game with a makeover.
Olympic Soccer	US Gold	Sports Sim	#10 RU	82%	Arcade-style soccer played at break-neck speed. Includes good overhead perspective.

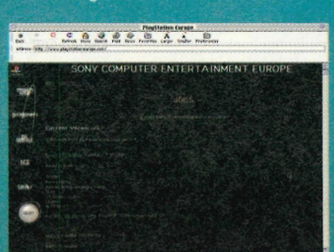
WEB SITE OF THE MONTH...

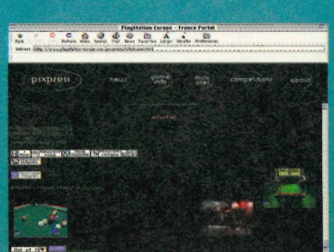
The Official Sony Site: http://www.playstation.com/global.html

Sony's official site is nothing if not versatile. It covers the entire globe, with each particular territory given its own sub-site. It's also accessible in a variety of languages. What the site doesn't have is any serious bells and whistles. It does a great job of telling you what Sony are up to, but it's obviously designed for the industry rather than the gamer. If you're looking for a job at Sony, look no further. If you want games information, you'll find it under 'PSXPRESS'. It's here you find games information, cheats, competitions and other such Sony-related information. The official Sony PlayStation site is packed with information, but not particularly easy to find your way around. It's worth getting used to, though, if only to get your facts straight from the horse's mouth...









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Title	Publisher	Genre	Issue	Score	Comment
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.
Peak Performance	JVC	Driving Game	#15 RU	25%	Embarrassing physics, wonky collision detection and abysmal AI. Rubbish.
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 Hustler	Activision	Sports Sim	#15	79%	Near-genius representation of the sport, but lacking in presentation.
Pool Shark	Gremlin Interactive	Sports Sim	#12	45%	Dreadful presentation and terrible graphics make this pool sim one to avoid.
Populous: The Beginning	Electronic Arts	Strategy Game	#15	86%	A wonderfully-accessible god sim, and a must for fans of the 16-bit Populous games.
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.
Poy Poy 2	Konami	Action Game	#15	78%	A wonderful multiplayer combat experience, but lacking in one-player mode.
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 Racer	Sony CEE	Driving Game	#15 RU	58%	Great visuals, but boring, samey course design lets down this powerboat sim.
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.
Rage Racer	**Sony CEE**	**Driving Game**	**#15 RU**	**90%**	**Conversion of coin-op Rave Racer, enhanced for the home console.**
Rally Cross	Sony CEE	Driving Game	#15 RU	36%	Too short and erratic difficulty level, but reasonable graphics and four-player mode.
Rally Cross 2	Sony CEE	Driving Game	#15	40%	Shite graphics and abysmal physics, and you hardly ever need to brake. 'Nuff said.
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.**
Ray Tracers	Sony CEE	Driving Game	#15 RU	70%	Chase HQ for the 90s, but not very challenging. Fun for a while, though.
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	Sony CEE	Driving Game	#15 RU	88%	Direct port from the arcade coin-op. Small, but perfectly formed.
Ridge Racer Revolution	Sony CEE	Driving Game	#15 RU	87%	Basically Ridge Racer part two, but with improved graphics, link-up and more courses.
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	Electronic Arts	Driving Game	#15 RU	80%	Graphics are a little 16-bit, but it's still a hot and violent motorcycle racer.
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.
Rock and Roll Racing 2	Interplay	Driving Game	#15 RU	21%	Lousy PSX update of a SNES classic. Terrible gameplay insults the original.
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?**
Rugrats	THQ	Action Adventure	#15	81%	Faithful to the cartoon, and great for kids. Controls awkward, though.
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.
Shanghai: True Valor	Sunsoft	Puzzle Game	#15	37%	Mah Jong conversion with awkward controls and an appalling skills curve.
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.

BONUS GAME OF THE MONTH...

Game: Tekken 3 Bonus Game: Tekken Ball

Everyone's familiar with the Tekken series of fighting games and the latest and greatest of them, Tekken 3, but did you know that you can also play a nifty game of beach volleyball?

The idea of the bonus game is basically the same as the standard outing - trash your foe by depleting his energy bar using your flashy fighting moves. Here, though, you don't swap punches and kicks, but instead blast the ball into your opponent's court. If he misses it, he suffers damage. Blast the ball with a special move and it becomes an 'attack ball' which floors your foe just by hitting him. You can access Tekken Ball Mode by completing the with all ten standard characters, but if you're too lazy or too crap to achieve this, Fire International's Xplorer cart and Tekken 3 Memory Card both have this cheat built in.









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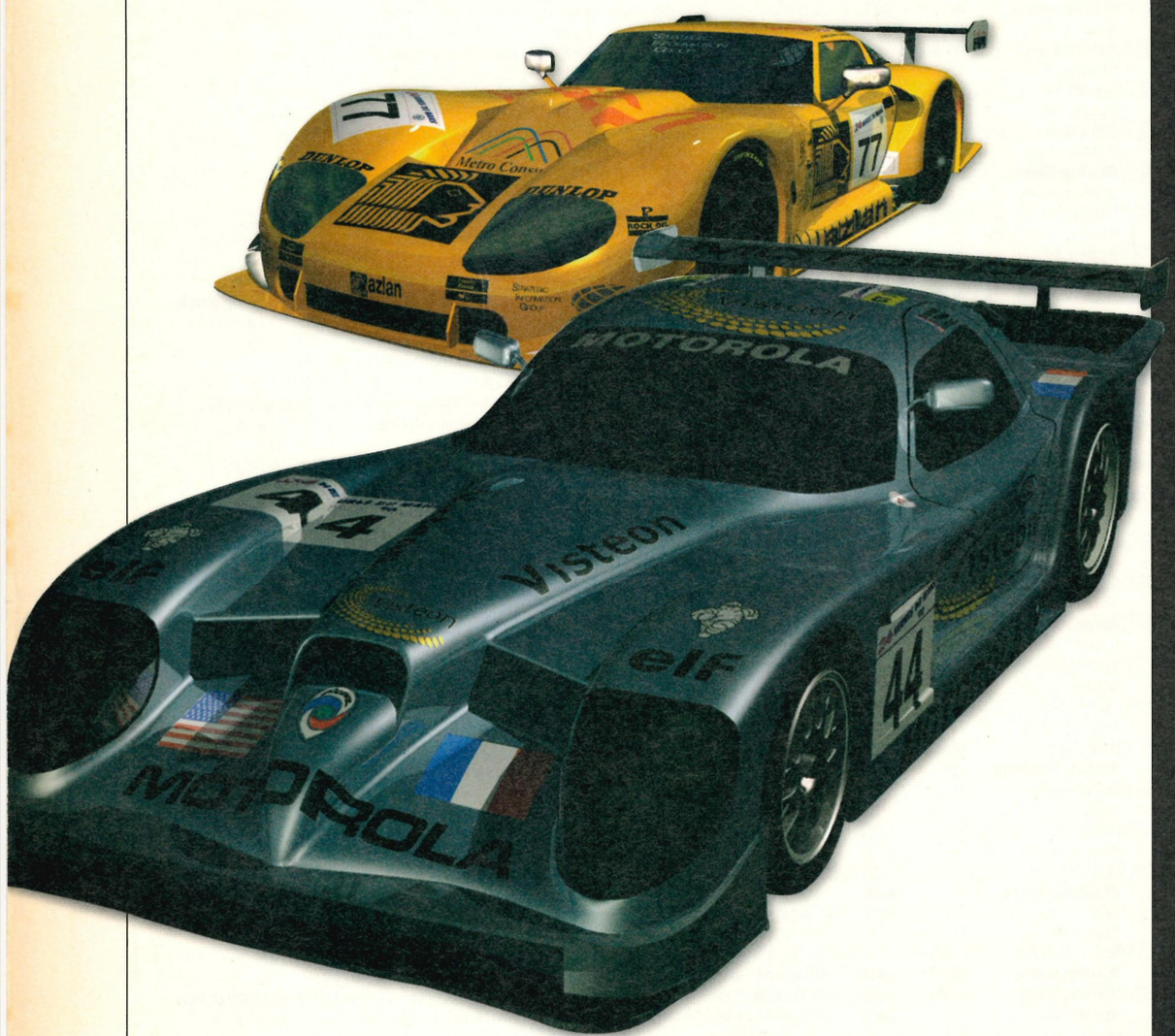
Title	Publisher	Genre	Issue	Score	Comment
Snow Racer '98	**Ocean**	**Sports Sim**	**#3**	**90%**	**Skiing and snowboarding simulation. Works well and offers good longevity.**
Soul Blade	**Sony CEE**	**Beat-'em-up**	**#15 PL**	**92%**	**King of the weapons-based beat-'em-ups. Great animation and top moves.**
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.
Star Winder	Mindscape	Driving Game	#15 RU	42%	Blatant WipEout clone, but nowhere near as good. Redundant.
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.
Street Fighter Zero 3	**Capcom**	**Beat-'em-up**	**#14 IM**	**92%**	**Unoriginal but brilliant 2D fighter with some neat touches.**
Street Racer	UBI Soft	Driving Game	#15 RU	42%	Cartoon kart racer with four-player mode and weird, wacky weapons.
Street Skater	Electronic Arts	Sports Sim	#15	54%	Dodgy physics make this game an insult to the sport of skateboarding.
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.**
Supersonic Racers	Mindscape	Driving Game	#15 RU	46%	Micro Machines V3 clone, but nowhere near as good.
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.
Tokyo Highway Battle	THQ	Driving Game	#15 RU	68%	Not a bad racer, but the controls are twitchy and early cars drive poorly.
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.
Twisted Metal	Sony CEE	Driving Game	#15 RU	75%	Drive and fight in this car combat game. Dated, but fun.
Twisted Metal 2	Sony CEE	Driving Game	#15 RU	88%	AKA Twisted Metal: World Tour. More of the same, but better executed.
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.
VR Powerboat Racing	Sony CEE	Driving Game	#15 RU	67%	Bog-standard driver on water, but looks a treat. Not bad, not great.
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.
WCW/NWO Thunder	THQ	Beat-'em-up	#15	34%	Shoddy wrestling sim that's too slow and too boring. Waste of a licence.
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	**Psygnosis**	**Driving Game**	**#15 RU**	**92%**	**Hi-speed future racing thrills. Superb, if unusual, driving physics.**
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.

next issue

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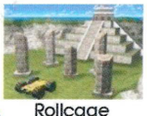
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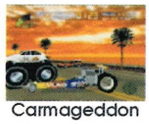

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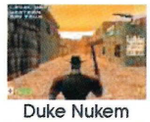

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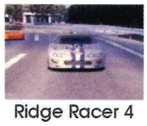

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U.S/JAP PLAYSTATION


Final Fantasy 8


Silent Hill


Ridge Racer 4

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U.S/JAP NINTENDO 64


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Castlevania


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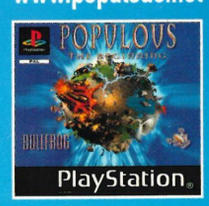


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