THE MAG FOR MEGA-CD!

SEGA

ISSUE 21 SEPTEMBER 1993 ONLY £1.95!

MEGATECH

MEGADRIVE AND MEGA-CD!



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REVIEWED!

- CHUCK ROCK II!
- SHINOBI III!
- POPULOUS 2!
- GOLDEN AXE 3!
- 2020 BASEBALL!
- HAUNTING!
- PUGGSY!
- WIMBLEDON!
- BLASTER MASTER 2!
- AERO BIZ!

ON MEGA-CD!

- ECCO CD!
- SHERLOCK HOLMES 2!

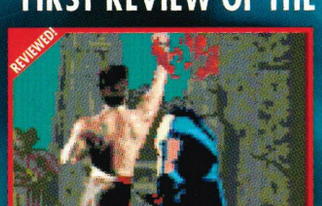
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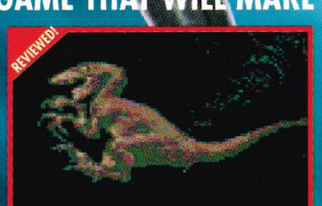
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● JURASSIC PARK!

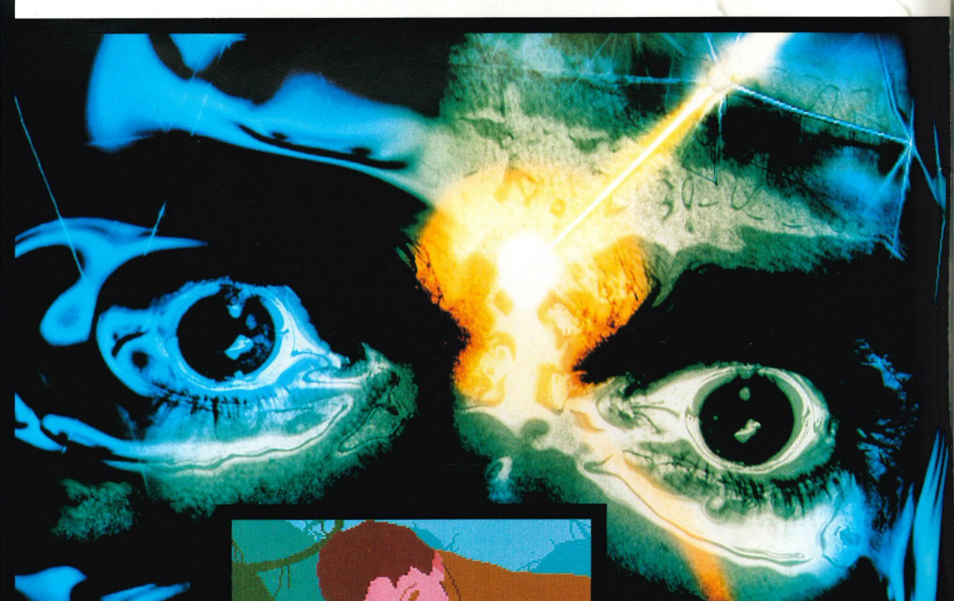


● GUNSTAR HEROES!

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super kick
flashba





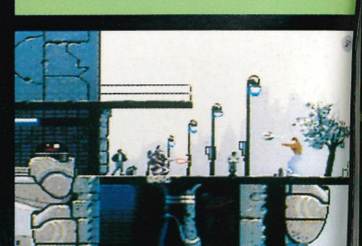


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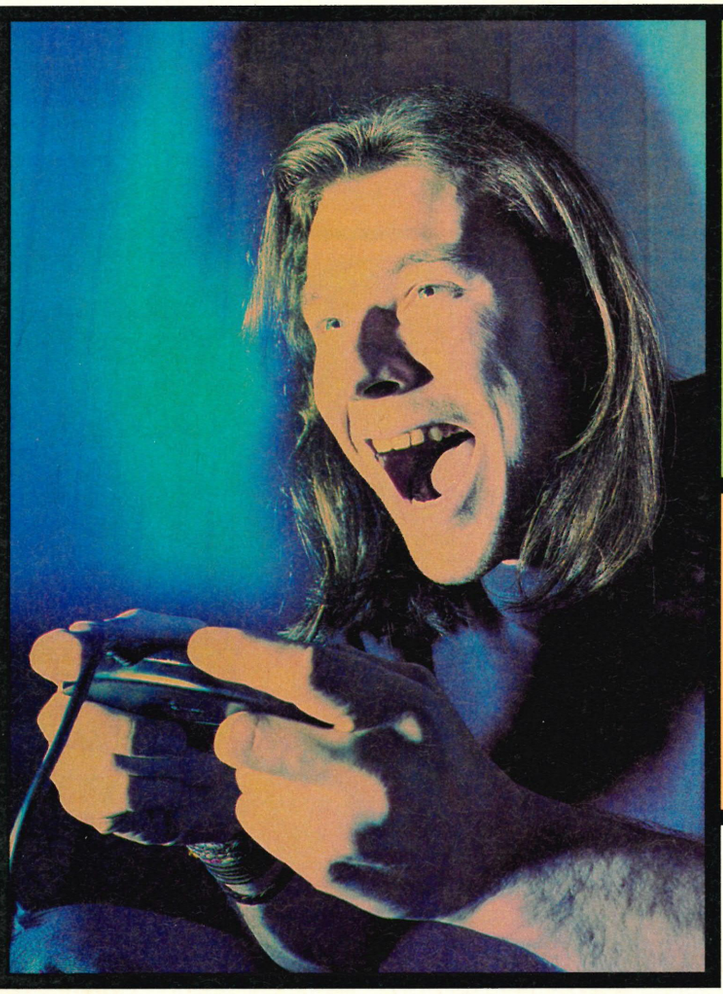
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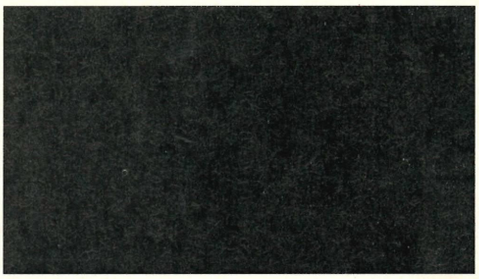
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This Month's Proverb:
'Light bulbs burn brightest before they blow'

MW MEGAWORLD

MEGATECH INTERNATIONAL NEWS NETWORK

- 32 BIT NEWS — MEAN BEAN MACHINE
- SONIC CD — CASTLEVANIA
- MULTIPLE COLUMNS — ROLLING THUNDER 3
- BARI-ARM — SENGOKU
- AX101 — SILPHEED
- DUNE ON CD — COSMIC SPACEHEAD
- MORE SEGA CENTRES — CHARTS

UK NEWS

SEGA: THE 32-BIT REVOLUTION IS ABOUT TO BEGIN!

It's true, the 32-bit ball is about to start rolling. Ever since MegaTech exclusively uncovered news of Sega's 32-bit console way back in June, rumours have been awash about the machine, known as the Saturn. Well, now we can reveal the full story, starting with the fact that the machine is not called the Saturn at all!

The true name of the console as yet remains a mystery, but specifications have already been leaked out.

The console runs on a 32-bit NEC main processor, which, rumour has it, was co-built by Hitachi. Of course, being able to process 32-bits of information isn't very impressive if can't be done very quickly. But that's not a problem with this CPU, because it's a RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computing) processor. What this means, is that unlike many CPUs which have to perform a lot of tasks, the RISC processor is a relatively simple number-cruncher. All the hard work is done by separate custom chips, leaving the main processor free to churn all the information onto the screen at a devastatingly high speed. At present the only other console lined up to use a RISC processor is the upcoming 3DO machine.

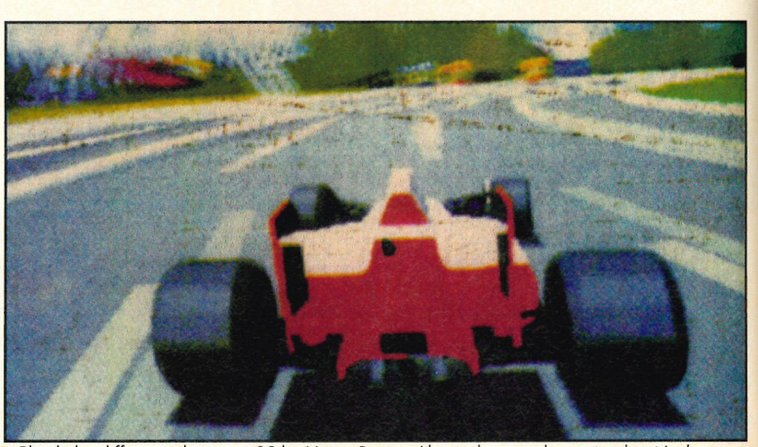
So what custom chips has Sega's 32-bit machine got? Well, for starters there's the 24-bit graphics processor. Able to display over 16.7 million colours, this chip also has a special graphics mode known as the 'Alpha Channel' which allows it to produce translucent layers of colour and texture mapping, a technique that can place different textures onto a surface, like bricks on a road for example. It is also able to perform a number of other colour palette modifications which have yet to be revealed!

However, most impressive of all is the incorporation of a special polygon generator, a chip can display of 16,000 moving polygons on screen at any one time. This means that it could generate the kinds of backdrops seen in Silpheed, but 'on the fly', as it were.

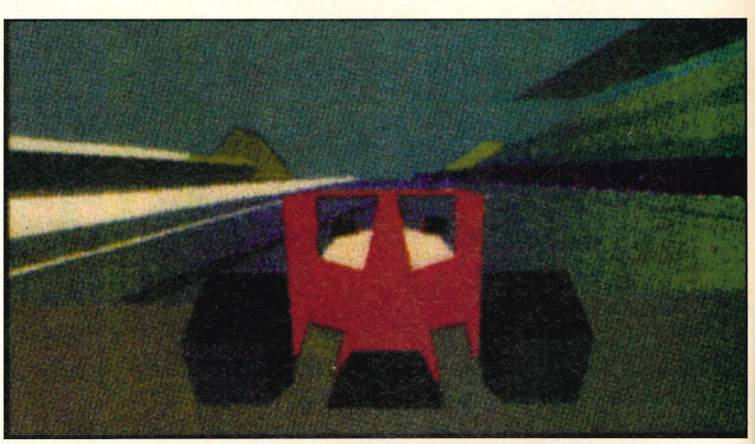
So, what sort of games can we hope to see on this awesome machine? Well, first on this list is Virtua Racing. Not a conversion of the game, but THE arcade game itself. It seems that Sega's awesome racing coin-op is actually a prototype game for their 32-bit machine. What you see, when you look at the coin-op, is in fact Sega's 32-bit machine up and running.

Now here's the bad news. The machine is not going to be backwards compatible with the Megadrive or Mega-CD. Even though it is CD-Rom based, it won't be able to play Mega-CDs and there isn't even going to be a cartridge slot.

Of course, a machine like this isn't going to come cheap. Current speculation puts the price at upwards of £350, but you've got plenty of time to save your money because it doesn't look like we'll even see the machine until some time around Christmas 1994, when it's released in Japan, and if past experience is anything to go by, it could take up to a year more for us to see it officially released over here. Naturally we'll keep you informed on this red-hot subject.



● Check the difference between 32-bit Virtua Racing (this is the arcade version but it's the same...



● ...And the 16 bit Megadrive version. Hmmm.

BEANS MEANS ROBOTNIK!







Sonic the Hedgehog, eh? He's always taking the credit for his games, but where would he be without his arch-foe, the evil Dr Ivo Robotnik? Nowhere, we can tell you. Well now Robotnik's finally going to get a taste of all that fame and fortune in his very own game, Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine.

A puzzle game similar to Columns, Mean Bean Machine consists of pairs of strange coloured blobs which drop down the screen. The aim of the game is simply to stop the pile of blobs from reaching the top of the screen. This is done by joining up four blobs of the same colour, which then vanish. Sounds all very simple and familiar, but as with all puzzle games there's a lot more to it than meets the eye. When in two-player mode, various lines of blobs can be made sending horrible transparent blobs onto your opponents screen with certain combinations causing an absolute mountain of beans to appear.

Actually, Mean Bean Machine has been around in Japan since November of last year, living under the name of Puyo Puyo, and has been at the top of their Megadrive charts since January. Strangely enough, we haven't been able to get hold of an import copy of the game as yet, but recently Tom happened upon a Sega Puyo Puyo coin-op at the Sega Metropolis in Hamley's and after much playtesting decided that it would be a great game if he knew how to play it. Typical!

Set for a pre-Christmas release, this 8-meg game looks like it could be one of the best console puzzle games around and of course we'll give it the full treatment as soon as we get hold of it.



CASTLEVANIA ON THE MEGADRIVE!

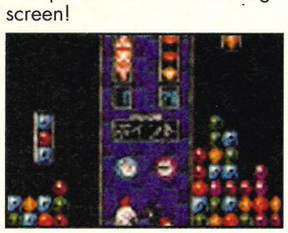
It's one of the greatest series of games to appear on the Nintendo formats and now it's coming to the Megadrive. It's Castlevania, Konami's whip-wielding platform extravaganza in which vampire-hunter Christopher Belmont traverses all manner of dark,dank levels battling against unholy creatures of the night on his quest to destroy the Prince Of Darkness, Dracula himself.

In this Megadrive version, entitled The New Generation, a new member of the Belmont family must take hold of the sacred family whip and take to the road once more. Foggy graveyards, zombie-filled caverns and of course, Castle Dracula itself feature throughout and all the whip-wielding action of the previous games is there There even seems to be an option where you can choose between two different members of the Belmont family.

Graphically, this 8-meg game looks easily as good as the smash-hit Castlevania 4 on the SNES and we can't to see how it plays. Stay tuned.

MULTIPLE COLUMNS

With Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine on the way you might think that there's no room in the world for Sega's previous flagship puzzle-game, Columns. Nevertheless, they're bringing out another instalment in their fine jewel-dropping, Tetris-clone series. Columns III is the name of the 4-meg game (although there was never a Columns 2 on the Megadrive) and yet again the aim is to drop coloured jewels down the screen and make rows of three or more for points. Nothing new there, but wait, there's more. For a start there's Columns World, a land inhabited by chickens where different games of Columns can be played. For example, there's a game where fruit falls down the screen instead of jewels. What's more, there's a number new handicap options like turning the jewels transparent and even making them fall UP the screen!



But the fun doesn't stop there, whereas the original Columns only had a two-player option, Columns III actually allows up to five players to join in a game through the use of the Sega-Tap. There's also the option to a play a special two-against-one game and even a two-against-two game where two players take part in a rock-paper-scissors match using hammers and pans as weapons.

It all looks like a real laugh, but how will it compare to Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine? Well, with a Japanese release set for October, we'll let you know pretty soon.

SONIC CD: NEXT MONTH!







Yes, Sonic CD is finally ready for public consumption the good news is, it ISN'T Sonic 2. An all-new game with all-new levels, Sonic CD is similar to its predecessors, taking the side-on scrolling platform game approach. As usual, Robotnik is back, only this time he's constructed a dreaded Sonic robot that is even more powerful than Sonic and almost as fast! Using this robot he's kidnapped Sonic's new-found love, a pink hedgehog called Rosy, and taken her to the Miracle Planet.

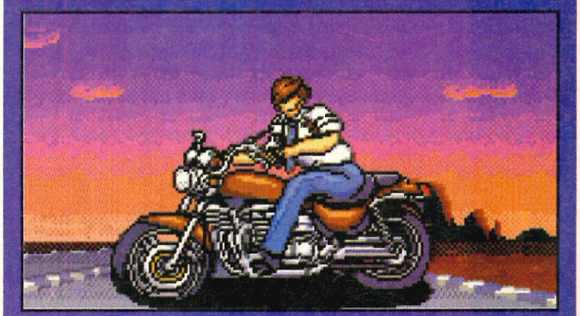
There are over forty-nine different levels of action split into seven major zones with names like Palm Tree Panic Zone, Tidal Tempest Zone and Wacky Workbench Zone. What's more, each level has three different time periods, a past, present and future each in different technologically advanced states This is more than just a novelty though, because whatever you do in the past can affect the future. For instance, save some little creatures from Robotnik in the past zone and there they'll be there in the present to help you. There's even a special 'Time Attack' option, where you can return to previously completed zones and improve your times.

As with all the other Sonic games, Sonic CD has a bonus level. This time it takes the form of a 3D race track which Sonic has to race around as quickly as possible. Using Mega-CD hardware trickery, the landscape scrolls around using the same techniques used in Batman Returns and Thunderhawk. The whole effect is very reminiscent of Super Mario Kart on the SNES.

However, most impressive of all is the range of superb dance tracks that accompany the game. Recorded by a Japanese band called Miki, they seem to have been influenced by just about every rave and dance anthem around.

The official release date is set for October and it looks like this is easily the fastest Sonic game around. But is it the best? Find out in next month's definitive MegaTech review.

THE THIRD CLAP OF THUNDER!



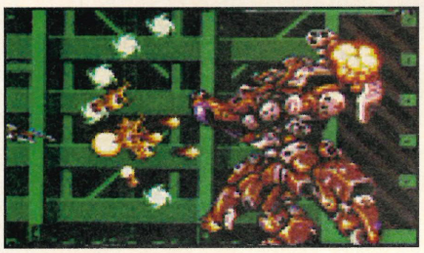




The third instalment of of Namcot's Rolling Thunder series is about to blaze its way onto the Megadrive. The 16-meg Rolling Thunder 3 follows in the same vein as its predecessor with more platform, shoot 'em up action, battling against the evil crime organisation that is Geldra. However, agents Albatross and Leila are no longer in the game and neither is the two-player option. Battling against the terrorist forces on his own is Agent Jay. Armed only with his hand-gun, Jay can make use of various weapons that he finds, such as flame-throwers, machine-guns and grenade launchers and there are even vehicles like jetskis and motorcycles to add to the pace of the game.

As yet, there's no firm release date for Rolling Thunder 3, but you can rest assured that we'll give the game the full MegaTech treatment soon.

DEVASTATOR RETURNS?



After the disappointment that was Devastator on Mega-CD last month, an all-new flying robot shoot 'em up has surfaced on the Mega-CD in Japan and it looks identical to Devastator. Going under the name of Bari-arm, this game by Human actually stars a red and white robot that, for all intents and purposes, could be Devastator with the exception that it turns into a space-ship on some levels. The big difference is, that Bari-arm looks like it could be pretty good. There are seven levels of horizontally-scrolling action, from the surface of planet Ganymede, to the inside of the giant Gravity Pagoda and even against the giant Zeus invasion fleet. What's more, some of the enemy bosses are huge! Massive, full-screen robots, giant battle-ships and wall-crawling mechanical spiders are just some of the guardians Bari-arm has to face. It certainly looks impressive.

But looks can be deceiving and we'll reserve judgement until we've reviewed the final article which will, of course, appear in an upcoming issue of MegaTech.

SENGOKU HOKI COKI!

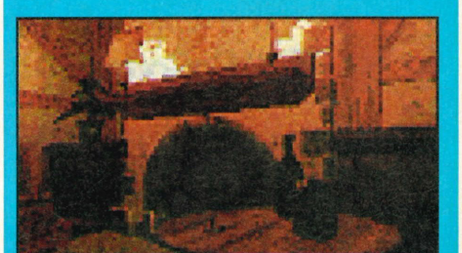


Coming soon to the Mega-CD is a conversion of Sengoku, the popular Neo Geo scrolling beat 'em up. An evil warlord who was destroyed over four hundred years ago has returned to conquer the world. With his Demon Castle hovering above Washington DC only two samurai can hope to save the world. However, these aren't your ordinary, everyday samurai. One wears a smart red jacket and bright yellow slacks and the other sports a nifty pink cowboy hat and pink-trimmed flares. Well whatever they're into, it's up to them to save the world.

Similar in style to Final Fight, either one or two players can join in the fight to destroy the evil shogun. Travelling from Washington through portals to other dimensions, before finally entering the Demon Castle itself, our heroes can use their swords or change shape into a more powerful samurai, a ninja or even a ninja dog.

At present the game is only fifty percent complete, but since it's scheduled for a November release in Japan we'll keep our ears to the ground for more info on this one.

SEVENTH GUEST. NOT!



Seventh Guest, the mind-blowing PC game that uses incredible 3D-rendered graphics, is on its way to the Mega-CD and when we saw these pictures from a forthcoming Japanese Mega-CD game that uses similar 3D-rendered graphics, we thought that it was Seventh Guest, but it's NOT!

Nope, this a completely different Mega-CD game using ray-traced 3D graphics. The thing is, we don't anything about it or what it is called. A shame really, because it looks completely stunning. Coming from Sega itself, the game follows a similar format to Seventh Guest, requiring the player to search the rooms of a house in order to solve a mystery. It's scheduled for a September release so if we can solve the riddle of the mystery game, we'll reveal all to you.

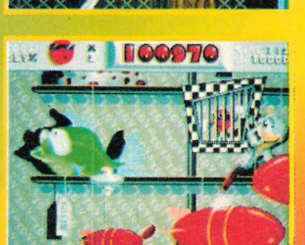
Look! Is it a bird? Is it a Plane? No it's..?!?!

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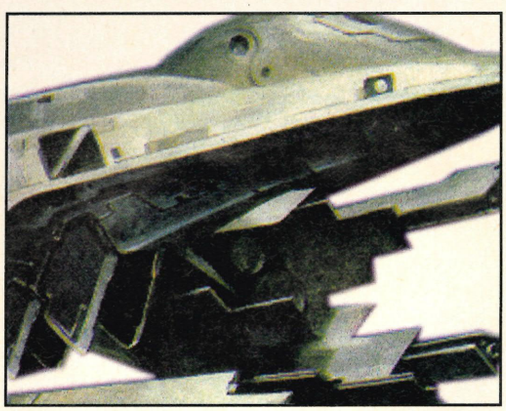
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AX101 — CODELIKE GAME TITLE REVEALED!



Another new Mega-CD game coming soon is a shoot 'em up called AX101. Programmed by Micronet (the people behind Black Hole Assault) the game takes a first-person perspective and looks very similar to Sewer Shark with a full-motion video display taking centre-screen. Flying through futuristic cities, asteroid belts and underground caverns it all looks very impressive, but exactly how playable it is remains to be seen. Let's hope it's not another Road Avenger-style interactive-movie game. As soon as we know more, so will you.

SILPHEED IMPORT ALERT!



Attention shoppers! Attention! If you're considering buying the v lovely Silpheed (reviewed on page 58) on import you may be interested to know that after we'd finished reviewing the game on the office Jap Megadrive/CD combo we later tried it on an official set-up with a CDX cartridge. Although it works with the CDX, the difference in processor frequencies (the Jap equipment runs at 60 Hz, the UK stuff at 50 Hz) means things get slightly out of sync, so the soundtrack tends to jump a bit, and the game seems to slow down, almost imperceptibly, but enough to make it easier to play.
So, the message is clear. If you have official equipment and want to experience Silpheed at its very best, we recommend you wait for the official version which is due out in October.

THE GHOST WHO WALKS!



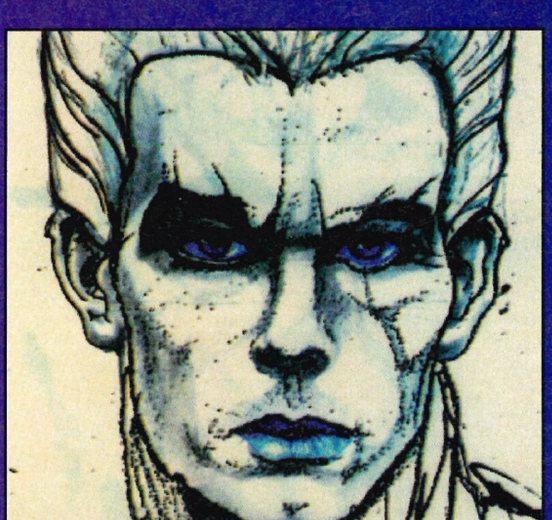
There's a new joypad coming out for the Megadrive. The Logipad from SpectraVideo sports the new six-button configuration for use with games like Streetfighter 2, although the layout of the buttons is similar to those of a SNES joypad The novelty of this controller however, is that it's the first joypad to sport microswitches. So if you like that clicky controller feel this could be the one for you, retailing at £17.99.



Another microswitched controller is the spookily named Phantom. Shaped like a joypad, this one actually has an arcade type control stick instead of a directional pad and also features six-buttons, although these ones are layed out in a far more practical configuration for Streetfighter 2. However, it's a tad more expensive at £24.99. Both controllers will be available in October.

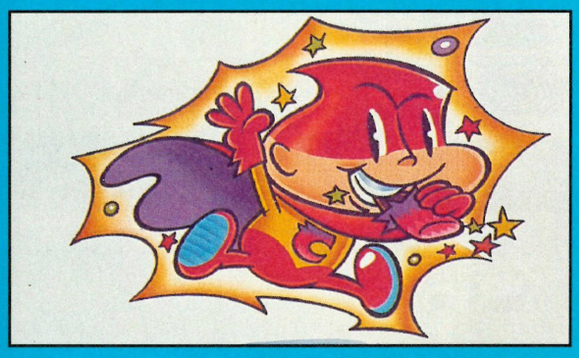
DUNE IN OCTOBER





Science fiction fans will need no introduction to Dune, the series of fat Frank Herbert novels which formed the basis for the rather incomprehensible David Lynch movie, and now, yes you guessed it, the Mega-CD game. For non-science fiction fans who DO need an introduction to Dune, we'll give you one.
The player is cast as Paul Atreides, a bloke of noble birth who has been sent with his family to the planet Arrakis by the Emperor of Caladen. Here, he and his family have to set about organising mining operations for a valuable mind-expanding spice called Melange. Unfortunately they somehow have to wrest control of the mining operation away from the corrupt Harkonnen family, who are also sworn enemies of the Atreides family. To make things even more complicated, the spice is actually manufactured, or rather excreted, by giant carnivorous worms which live in the planet's sandy landscape. The only way to do it is to win the military support of the native race of Fremen, by somehow proving that Paul is actually the great leader of the Fremen prophecies. Phew! Problems, problems! The player has to solve those problems and keep the spice flowing. It's all down to a bit of strategy, a bit of politics, a bit of ducking and diving. Mind you, for a strategy game, this one is certainly a bit flash. The Mega-CD version is packed with ever so smart graphics, synchronised speech recorded from live actors, fab music, 3D ornithopter flying sequences with fully ray-traced 3D graphics, and even full-motion video sequences from the movie.
Dune is out in October, but Virgin haven't decided on a price as we go to press. For the full SP read the review in the next issue of MegaTech.

UK NEWS COSMIC CODEMASTERS



From THE PLANET LINOLEUM to YOUR MEGADRIVE! It's COSMIC SPACEHEAD! Spacehead is the next delicious game to be churned out of the cartridge machine on the Code Masters farm in sunny Warwickshire. It's an arcade adventure in which you play the alien gentleman of the title, who is vacationing on Earth and needs some souvenirs for his unearthly friends and family. To get them he has to solve all sorts of oddball puzzles and participate in 32 different arcade games, such as astro-car racing and robot shoot-outs and stuff like that.

If you want to know more about the game, and it's production, and indeed the production of Megadrive games in general, Central TV are actually making a documentary about the making of Cosmic Spacehead which will be broadcast in October. Check your local TV listings for further details.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO WIN... THIS?

LMP GAMESTER



The trouble with Megadrives is that all those wires and cartridges and top-quality games mags really can get under your feet or into the nozzle of the vacuum cleaner if you're an untidy git. So what you need is one of THESE THINGS, an Arcade Video Game Control Centre to keep all your gubbins stashed safely and discreetly in comfort and harmony. Made from moulded plastic you just have to jam the pieces together and Bob's your uncle, hey presto, there it is! Simply spectacular! You need never lose track of those joypads again. And all for only £24.99 from LMP Gamester who are available for questioning on (0992) 503133.

But WAIT! There's MORE!

Always taking your Megadrive with you wherever you go? Well, how did you ever manage it without an LMP Gamester Action Case?! For only £19.99 you can cart your expensive Megadrive, a bunch of cartridges and all the necessary gubbins around to your mate's house with hardly any danger of it being destroyed in a freak accident.

Now instead of paying good money for these wonderful objects, we, your MegaTech friends have negotiated for 20 of our excellent readers to get a fab Arcade Video Game Control Centre and Action Case, ABSOLUTELY FREE! All you have to do is send us the answer to this question by August 20th and if we pull your postcard out of the bag, you win.

The question is: What is the name of the famous plastic building kit which originated in Denmark? Is it...

(a) Wood?

(b) Lego?

(c) Pre-stressed mild steel

UK NEWS MORE SEGA CENTRES!



After the success of their Hamleys Metropolis arcade, Sega are opening up more and more of their family entertainment centres all over the UK. A massive site was opened in Bournemouth in July, and next up in September is the Yaohan SegaDome which is set to open later this year in Colindale in north London. As in the other centres, the attractions will include the latest coin-ops from Sega and other manufacturers, such as Virtua Racing and R360s. There are also ten-pin bowling alleys and a brand new simulator ride, something like the old Super-X simulators but apparently much more realistic! Even better, there are no gambling machines inside the SegaDome so there are no age restrictions to entry.

To celebrate the opening of the SegaDome, those crazy Sega guys have decided to give away a smart Sonic baseball jacket (exclusive, not available in the shops, etc) to the sender of the first envelope out of the magic MegaTech mailbag on September 20th with the correct answer to this question on it.

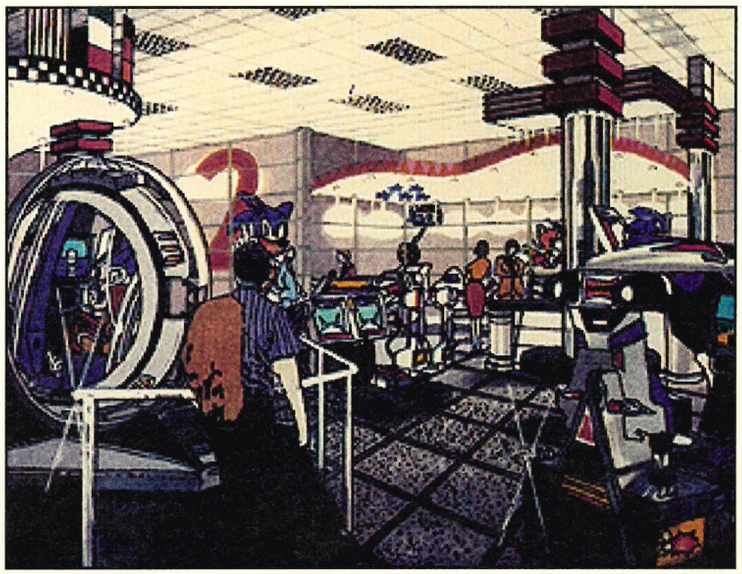
Q. What is the name of the Japanese dish which consists of little parcels of raw fish served with rice and sea weed? Is it...

(a) Mushi?

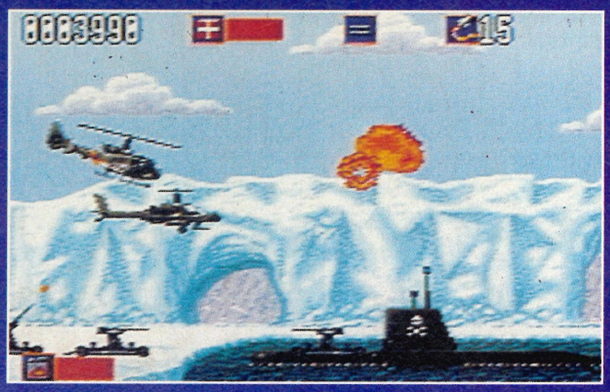
(b) Sushi?

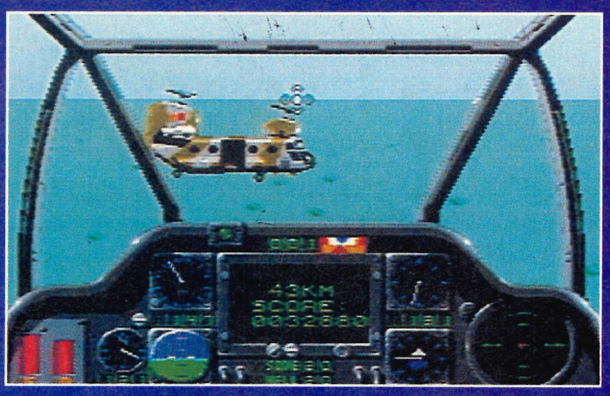
(c) Yukki?

Answer please, along with name and address to: THE ONE AND ONLY SONIC JACKET COMPO, MEGATECH, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.



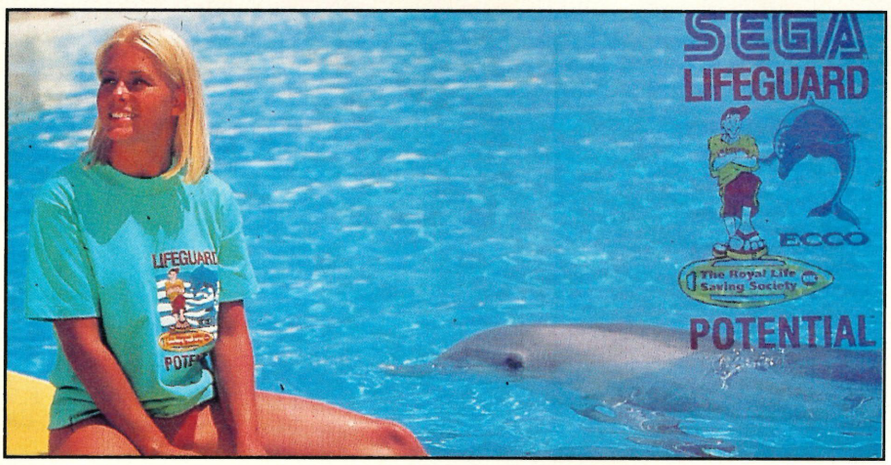
GUNSHIP FUNSHIP!





Next on US Gold's list of Things To Do On The Megadrive is Gunship, a shoot 'em up in a helicopter styley which is very loosely based on the old Microprose flight simulator. As you can see from the pics, this is much more your horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up, in which you have to pilot your Apache through four hostile locales (the Middle East, South America, Nasty Asian Warlord territory and the Arctic) armed only ('only'! Hah!) with rockets, homing missiles, cannons, sidewinders, hellfires and cluster bombs. There are a few bits of flight sim-style action in the game, but even these are all 3D shoot 'em up action rather than realistic Engage-The-Rotor-Clutch stuff. Gunship will be headed your way on an 8 M-bit cart in sunny November. Reviews in this space, soon.

SEGA AND BOY SCOUTS AND SWIMMING POOLS



After making their mark in the world of motor racing and international football championships, Sega's Philanthropy* Department are now dipping their finger in new pies. Having just put some sponsorship into the boy scout movement, they've now actually got the life-saving stars of Baywatch (and of course Sega's ecological swimming hero, Ecco) involved in a joint project with the Royal Life Saving Society UK for teaching primary school kids to swim. Isn't that great? Well, here's a picture of Nicole Eggert straddling a surfboard anyway.

*Look it up.

RATHER A LOT OF OUR MEGADRIVE 2S ARE MISSING!

The scene: sunny Southampton at the end of July. There they were. Thousands of brand new Megadrive 2s, just unloaded off the boat from Japan and sitting in the Sega Lorry on the dock. Then what should happen but some no-good thieving... thief drove them away! Quite unbelievable! Naturally Sega are keen to get their new, and as yet unreleased, consoles back and there is a reward going for info that leads to convictions so if you see anybody flogging Megadrive 2s at unlikely places and at unlikely prices (such as at car boot sales) let either Lawrence Brown at Sega know on 071 2442699 or the Shirley Police (who are investigating the matter) on 0703 581111, extension 5154. Remember everybody – crime doesn't pay!

THE OFFICIAL SEGA RELEASE SCHEDULE

Here's the latest release schedule for Megadrive and Mega-CD. This information comes direct from Sega Europe, and was correct at the time of going to press. Release dates may be subject to alteration, so you might have to wait a bit longer for that 'gotta-have-it' game.

SEPTEMBER
MEGA-CD
Terminator: Enhanced version of the cartridge game.
Wonderdog: Space dog platform game. MT12: 82%.
Thunderhawk: Hot helicopter action and state-of-the-art Mega-CD effects promised in Core's newie. Review next month.
Sherlock Holmes 2: Se review on page 63.
Make My Video: INXS, Kriss Kross, C&C Music Factory: Three new Make My Video titles.
Batman Returns: See 'MegaTech Recommends'.
Sewer Shark: Full-Motion Video sewer-exploring rat-shoot. MT 16: 87%.

MEGADRIVE
Jurassic Park: See review on page 42.
Ultimate Socer: Mediocre footie game. Sega Tap compatible. MT20: 70%
Shinobi 3: See review on page 46.
Wimbledon: See review on page 50.
Ranger X: See 'MegaTech Recommends'.
Gunstar Heroes: See review on page 36.
Haunting: See review on page 84.
James Pond 3: See preview on page 20.
Chuck II: See review on page 52.

OCTOBER
MEGA-CD
Ecco: See review on page 56.
Sonic CD: CD update of classic blue-hedgehog speed 'n' bounce fest. Review next month.
Heimdall: Viking capers from Core.
Dracula: Dire movie licence.
Chuck 2: CD version of the game reviewed on page 52.

MEGADRIVE
Asterix: French cartoon hero in Core Design game shock!
Landstalker: Massive and involved Japanese adventure.
Instruments of Chaos: New Indiana Jones game from Sega.
Ottifant: Licence based on a German cartoon character (!?)
Rugby: The first rugby union game for the Megadrive. MT19: 75%.
F15 II: See preview on page 24.
F1 World Championship: See 'MegaTech Recommends'.
Davis Cup Tennis: Excellent tennis game from Sega. MT 19: 90%.

MEGAWORLD CHART

THE UK MEGADRIVE TOP 20

Supplied by Special Reserve, the Sawbridgeworth-based purveyors of fine mail order games.

1	NE	JUNGLE STRIKE	EA
2	1	FLASHBACK	US GOLD
3	3	PGA GOLF 2	EA
4	2	SUPER KICK OFF	US GOLD
5	NE	MICRO MACHINES	CODEMASTERS
6	6	TINY TOONS	KONAMI
7	4	FATAL FURY	SEGA
8	9	COL SPOT	VIRGIN
9	5	ECCO	SEGA
10	7	ROAD RASH 2	EA
11	8	STREETS OF RAGE 2	SEGA
12	NE	SHINING FORCE	SEGA
13	RE	WINTER CHALENGE	ACCOLADE
14	10	LEMMINGS	SEGA
15	11	NHLPA '93	EA
16	14	POPULOUS	EA
17	13	REVENGE OF SHINOBI	SEGA
18	16	DESERT STRIKE	EA
19	12	SONIC 2	SEGA
20	15	BULLS VS BLAZERS	EA

MEGATECH RECOMMENDS

You want the best? Well this is the place to look – the essential buyers' guide to our top-rated games of the last few months.

JUNGLE STRIKE
EA's massive 16 Mbit sequel to Desert Strike is a mega anti-drug baron shoot 'em up, where you take control of helicopters, hovercraft, stealth bombers, motorbikes and jeeps.
MT RATING: 95%

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
Domark's official Formula One licence allows you to race on all this season's F1 circuits. It's the fastest four-wheel racing game for the Megadrive by miles – the turbo mode is virtually uncontrollable at full throttle.
MT RATING: 94%

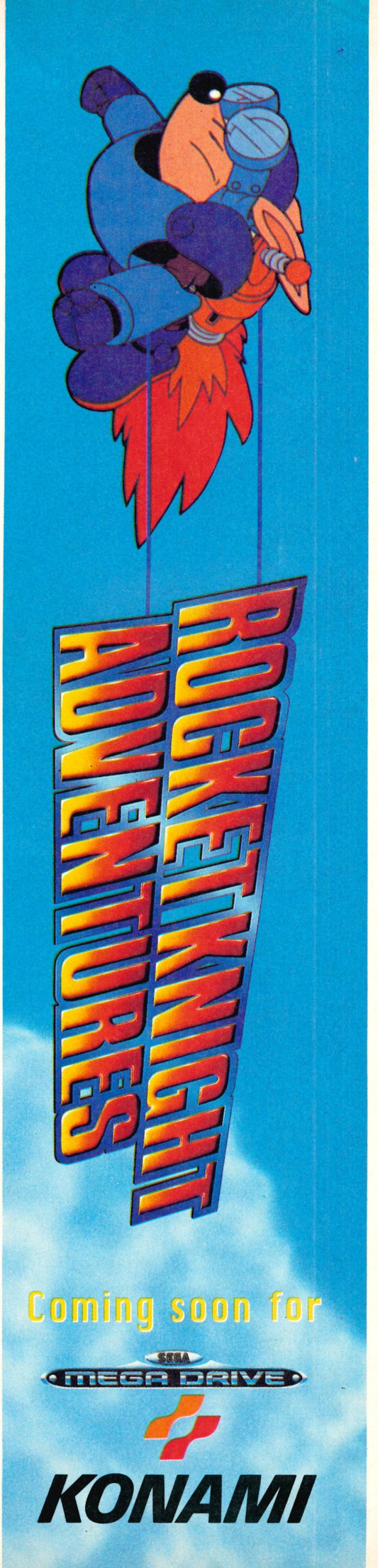
BATMAN RETURNS
The CD version of the dodgy platform game adds to the original with some amazing 3D driving/shoot 'em up sections. Still one of the best games on the CD at the moment.
MT RATING: 94%

RANGER X
Original gameplay and amazing graphics are the star components of this Sega shooter. Excellent special effects and blasting action give your eyes a thrill, but you'll have to engage your brain too!
MT RATING: 94%

J LEAGUE PRO STRIKER
The best-looking and most playable soccer game available for the Megadrive, although only available on import at the moment and full of Jap text. Fantastic fun, especially with four players using the Sega Tap multi-player adaptor.
MT RATING: 92%

ROCKET KNIGHT ADVENTURES
Konami's rocket-powered oppossum blows just about every other cartoon platform hero into the weeds! Brilliant characters and bosses, imaginative game design and supreme playability make this game a must.
MT RATING: 92%

MEGAWORLD
MEGATECH INTERNATIONAL NEWS NETWORK



PREVIEW





BY: ELECTRONIC ARTS

price: TBA
developers: EA UK/CANADA
release date: DEC 1993

Yeah, and about time too. After years of trying to indoctrinate us brave Tommies into the ways of their strange American sports, EA have finally seen sense and decided to turn their talent for first-rate sports simulations to our own national game. But has it all come too late?

A few months ago, all we had in the way of football games were the less-than-super World Cup Italia '90 and European Club Soccer, but now, well, there's Super Kick Off, Sega's Ultimate Soccer and of course, the non-stop extravaganza of football that makes MegaTech's lunchtimes go with such a swing, J-League Pro Striker. So what chance does EA's effort stand? Well, after seeing it in action we've got to say that EA SPORTS SOCCER looks like it's going to be hot, hot, HOT!

EA Sports Soccer is actually being programmed by a team of Canadian coders, but before you say, "What do Canadians know about football?", just shut your row. All the play-testing and stuff is being done by the real experts over at EA's headquarters in sunny Langley, Berkshire, where they're keeping a firm grip on quality and are dedicated to making sure that this doesn't turn out to be some loose, foreigner's interpretation of our fine sport.



▲ "Get back over your own side, we're waiting to kick off!"

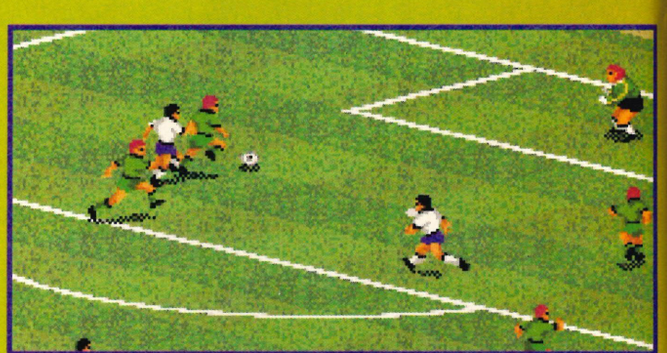
EA SPORT

MIGHTY REAL!

The first thing you'll notice from looking at these pictures is that, unlike all the other Megadrive football games, EA Sports Soccer is viewed in what experts would call a '30° Isometric Perspective View', which means what you get is a realistic, grandstand 3D, side-on, scrolling view of the action. Well, whatever, it looks pretty good in action.

Like J-League, one of this game's big strengths is the detailed and smartly animated player sprites. Over 2,000 frames of animation have gone into the little blokes on the pitch, so they can perform stunning bicycle kicks, sliding tackles, chest traps, diving headers and diving saves. Of course, the J-League sprites can do that as well, but the ace animation of Sports Soccer combined with the 3D view really does make everything look more realistic.

Further realism is added by changing weather conditions and even crowd noises. The supporters boo when your striker misses a sitter and go wild when he scores, and of course when they think the lads need some inspiration they start up some unintelligible song.



▲ The players move superbly, sprinting into the box.

A FINE TEAM PLAYER

There are 40 international teams programmed into the game, which apparently have all the stats, players and playing styles of their real-life counterparts. EA haven't included any famous tournaments, though, and instead the teams take part in a sort of 'round robin' competition in which everybody has to play everybody else. Of course, like all of EA's upcoming sports releases (NHL '94, Bill Walsh College Football etc), EA Sports Soccer will be compatible with their 4-Way Play adaptor, so if you can find three mates with joypads you can all have a go at a two-on-two match which, if our J-League experience is anything to go by, will add to the fun enormously.



▲ The graphics really capture the feel of grandstand football.

THE BOYS'VE DONE WELL

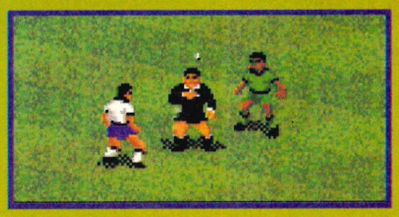
Like we say, EA Sports Soccer looks like it's going to be one of the top footie games on the Megadrive. When we saw a pre-production copy it was just going into the first stage of play testing and even though the player-switching routine was a bit ropey at the time, it was well impressive. Full review coming atcha ASAP!



▲ The game features incredible animation – an incredible 2,000 frames for the player sprites!



▲ Aim your throw-ins.



▲ Tossing for kick off.



▲ The action replay joypad.

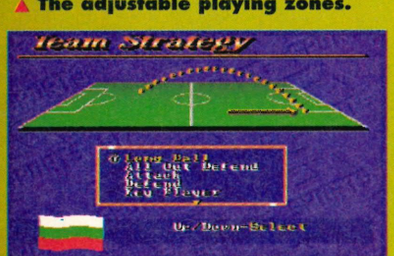
S SOCCER



▲ MC Ron Barr at the controls.



▲ The adjustable playing zones.



▲ Select your team strategy.



▲ Although it's just going into the play-testing stage, the game's shaping up to be a real thriller.



MEAN MACHINE RATING: 96% **MEGATECH RATING: 95%**

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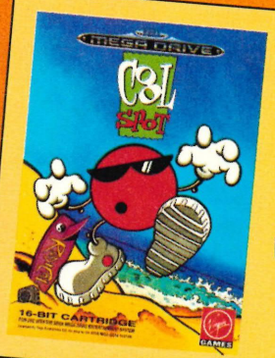
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NEW RELEASES



COOL SPOT

SEGA MEGADRIVE

RUMBELOWS PRICE £44.99

MEGA RATING: 93%
SEGA PRO RATING: 93%

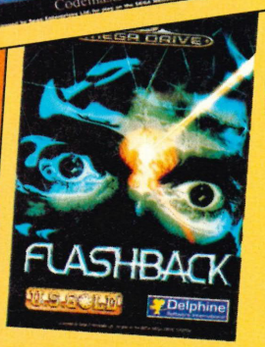


Micro Machines

SEGA MEGADRIVE

RUMBELOWS PRICE £34.99

GAMESMASTER RATING: 93%
MEAN MACHINE RATING: 93%



FLASHBACK

SEGA MEGADRIVE

RUMBELOWS PRICE £44.99

MEGA TECH RATING: 95%
C & VG RATING: 94%



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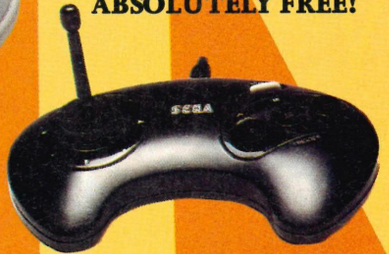
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CD AND CART

BY: KONAMI

price: TBA
developers: KONAMI JAPAN
release date: NOV 1993

LETHAL ENFOR

Big guns and major-league synthetic violence got Konami's Lethal Enforcers arcade game voted Best Coin-op of the Show at the prestigious AMOA '92 arcade show held in the USA. It's since collected heaps of cash in Japan, America and Europe, and now its creators are bringing it to the Megadrive and Mega-CD... just for you.

THIS HERE'S A .357 MAGNUM...

If you've been into an arcade of late you're bound to have seen one of these massive laser disc games, with two gaily-painted .357 Magnum light guns attached by metal cables to the cabinet. The scenario is Mad Dog McCree-meets-Operation Thunderbolt stuff. You and a partner join the Lethal Enforcers Division of the local police department, and, weapons unholstered, you have to enforce lead-powered justice on the streets of a crime-ridden city, depicted in digitised graphical realism on the big screen in front of you. Well-dressed bank robbers, terrorists in trucks with bazookas, they're all here, trying to ventilate your head unless you can do the same to them first.

Getting in the way as usual are the innocent bystanders who have been caught in the hail of gunfire and are trying to escape by running across the screen with their coats over their heads. Unfortunately for them, their coats aren't bulletproof so if you don't shoot straight you could end up plugging one of them, which would be bad, not least because you lose points.

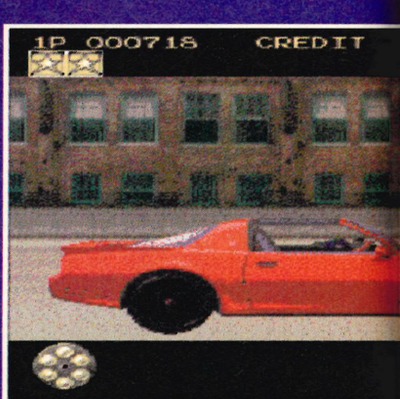
Konami have tried to make the conversion as faithful as possible and have gone as far as porting across the digitised graphics as well as the digitised gunshots, shouts and explosions. All the weapons are in there too, and as in the coin-op, you can't just keep blasting. These service revolvers are strictly six-shooters, and when those six shots are gone you have to stop and hit the reload button.

The programming on the Mega-CD version of Lethal Enforcers is nearing completion and this version will be the first released in November. The cartridge version, which, according to Konami, will be more or less the same apart from the lack of the super-real PCM sound effects and CD soundtracks, will appear shortly afterwards.

DON'T LET THEM GET AWAY!



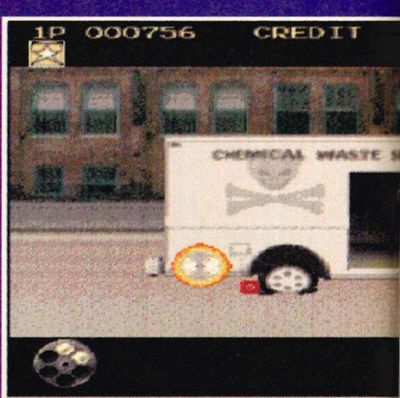
▲ Best get a bit of target practice in on the range first. 80% accuracy, eh? That's not too bad.



▲ These criminals and their fancy spor be so fancy with a couple of bullets in



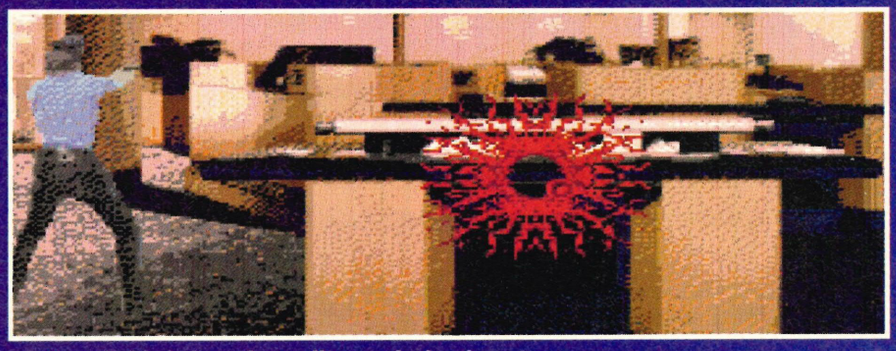
▲ Ooh! Look! A gun! Shoot the glowing Magnum and take delivery of six rounds of high-power bullets!



▲ 'Chemical Waste Service'? More lik Police Officers With a Bazooka Servi



▲ The scene is set for the bank siege. Let's be careful out there.



▲ UNGH! This is it... The walls are closing in... Say goodbye to my mother for me... Tell her... URRRK!

RCERS



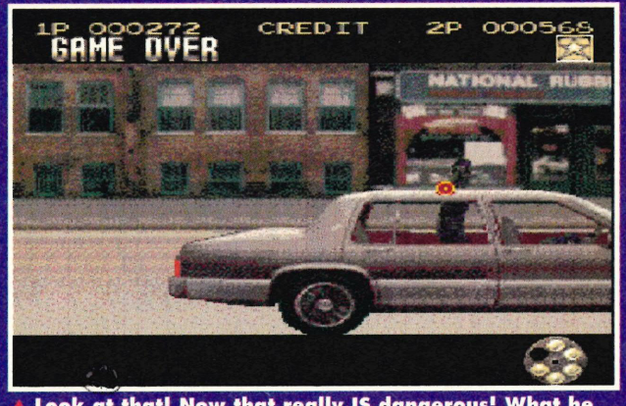
▲ Uh-oh. That won't look good on your record.



▲ Test your shooting skills on the target range. This bit's easy.



s cars. They won't
heir tyres, though.



▲ Look at that! Now that really IS dangerous! What he wants is a Lead Justice Injection, right between the eyes.



'Man Shooting At
! Shoot the shells!



▲ 86% Accuracy, eh? Well, that's good enough to get you promoted from Patrolman to Detective.

OOOH! GUNS! GUNS! GUNS!

But of course, that's only if you're using a joypad. To take the arcade authenticity even further Konami have engineered a Megadrive version of the coin-op's pistol which they will be including with the CD and cartridge. As well as having the normal light gun features, it also has a mercury switch inside it so that instead of just pressing a button to reload you have to point the gun towards the floor, just as you do in the coin-op.

The addition of the gun will bump up the price of the game above the norm (exactly how much Konami haven't worked out yet), but seeing as aiming down the barrel is miles better than steering a little gunsight around with the pad, it'll probably be worth the extra cash.

The guns will also be available separately so two players can participate on equal terms, and the guns will be compatible with any future Konami releases of Lethal Enforcers' ilk.

In case you're wondering, Lethal Enforcers doesn't work with Sega's Menacer gun. Unfortunately you can't use two Menacers at the same time because they would send conflicting infra-red signals to the receiver boxes and everything would, to use the technical term, 'go screwy'.

PREVIEW



JAMES POND OPERATION STARFISH

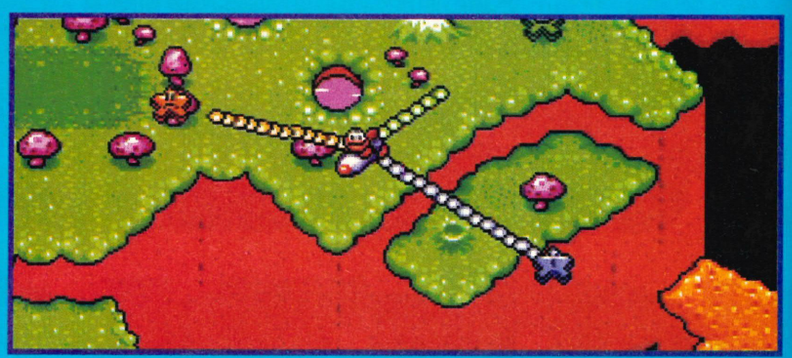
ELECTRONIC ARTS

BY: ELECTRONIC ARTS

price: £44.99
developers: VECTORDEAN
release date: SEPT 1993

After months of having rancid cheese mailed to us with lots of mystifying fish 'gags' all has finally been revealed. It's all to do with EA's new James Pond game, Operation Starfi5h.

When last you saw him, Jim was having lots of fun (although the punters weren't) with Aquatic Games, that 'comedy' sports game in which the FI5H super agent was keeping in trim after defeating Dr Maybe in his Robocod mission. But while Pond was having fun and games with his cuddly animal friends, bouncing on sponge trampolines and that sort of thing, Maybe had actually escaped justice!



▲ Using the moonscape map is not unlike using the map in Rolo to the Rescue.

JAMES PON
OPERATION STA

MELKY WHEY

The vile doctor is currently embarking on a new scheme to conquer the world... by monopolising the dairy products market. How is he doing this? Isn't it obvious? He's actually set up a base on the Moon where he is mining the yoghurt, ice cream and cheese which makes up the Moon's very substance.
Of course, as soon as FI5H got wind of the scheme, they sent up some of their best agents, only to have them mysteriously vanish shortly after landing on the lunar surface. Only their best fish will be able to put a stop to Maybe's nefarious cheese tyranny and it's up to you to help El Pondo on his mission to rescue the missing agents and close Maybe's Cheese Mines for good.

HE'S NO MILKSOP

What this is all leading up to is a big 16 M-bits of platform action, with Jim running and hopping (as only a fish can) around the vast number of craterscape levels, dodging unearthly lifeforms and braving Maybe's unpleasant traps.
As befits a spacey sort of secret agent game, Operation Starfi5h is replete with special space gizmos for Pond to pick up and use along the way – suction boots which allow him to walk on any surface, and the Fruit Suit, a sort of wearable weapon for example – as well as funky little vehicles like lunar buggies, rockets and drilling machines.
Also helping out is trainee FI5H agent, Finnius Frog, though when the game begins he has already been captured by Maybe forces and you have to hunt around to rescue him. As in Rolo to the Rescue (which was Pond programmers, Vectordean's last game), once Finnius and the rest of the agents have been recovered they join James on his mission so he can call on them at any time and make use of their particular capabilities to get him out of tricky situations.



▲ Hurrah! It's the imprisoned Finnias, guarded by a mechanical duck bomber!



▲ What's this? Upside down pictures? Why no, it's just Jim using his lunar suction boots!

ND III: ARFI5H

LACTOSE LAFFS

It's all most exciting we can tell you. We've had a go of a pre-production version of James Pond 3 and we can reveal that it's all looking rather good, certainly better than Aquatic Games, and those hardcore Pond fans (yeah, you know who you are, joining the James Pond Fin Club or whatever it was) will definitely not be disappointed. We'll be looking at the game in full next month, but until then you can feast your eyes on these attractive screenshots.



▲ Moon rats! Crates of TNT! It's just danger, danger, danger all the way!





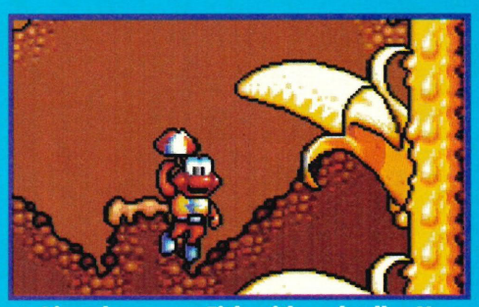
▲ Boo! It's evil Dr Robotnik! What a git!



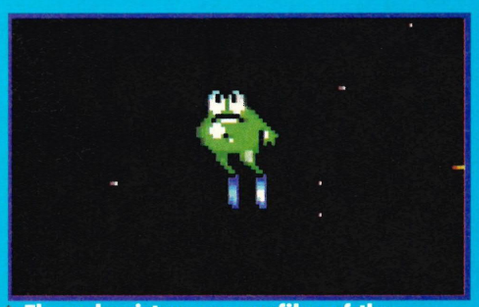
▲ Boo! And he's in league with giant rats!



▲ Hooray! Here's James to save us from Maybe's strenglehold on our dairy produce!



▲ Giant bananas. Fish with umbrella. Now there's a sight you don't see very often.



▲ The only picture on our files of the unstoppable amphibian agent, Finnias Frog.

PREVIEW



BY: ELECTRONIC ARTS

price: £44.99
developers: IN-HOUSE
release date: SEPT 1993

NHL '94

What's this? Not Electronic Arts knocking out slightly enhanced versions of their old games again? Oh, hush our mouths then wash them out with carbolic soap! NHL '94 is HARDLY ANYTHING like their previous EA Hockey and NHLPA titles.

No actually, let's just stop being silly for a minute. Just because it's the end of the issue doesn't mean we can just lose control. NHL and its forerunners are actually quite similar really, and the untrained eye would be hard-pushed to spot the differences. But they are there.

For a start-off, NHL is compatible with EA's new 4-Way Play adaptor, allowing, appropriately, four people to play in two-against-two team matches. Apart from that there are 'more than a dozen' gameplayer features, such as a shoot-out option in which a player from one team goes on a solo goal-scoring run against an opponent in a time limit, full manual goalie control, penalty shot or separate penalty shoot out options, and new crowd animations. Also, the teams in this game have been revised with all the latest stats and strips and stuff, all of which is apparently very important to all those ice hockey fans out there.

Anyway, it all sounds most thrilling, and we'll be on the hunt to 'Spot The Difference' in the next issue. Don't miss it, sports fans!



▲ Face-off between the LA Kings and Montreal Canadiens.



▲ Check the stats!



▲ Compare the players!

PREVIEW



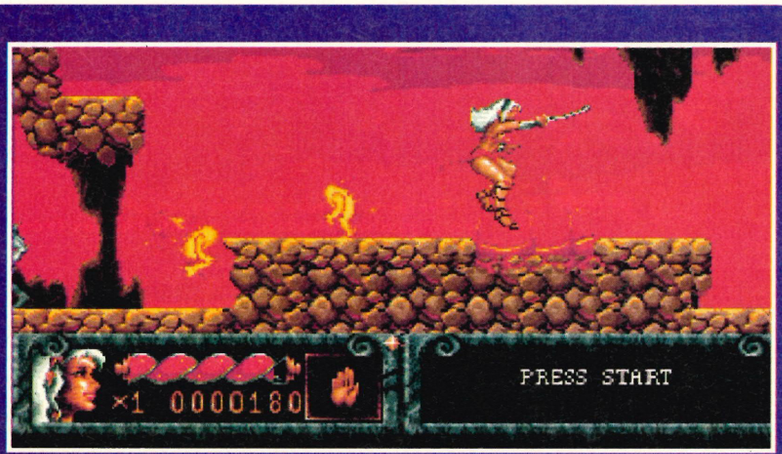
BY: ELECTRONIC ARTS

price: £39.99
developers: IN-HOUSE
release date: OCT 1993

BLADES OF VENGANCE

When you're coming up with a new game it's always good to start out with a strong, original plot, and the designers of Blades of Vengeance are obviously no strangers to that fact. In this platform/beat 'em up set in caves, forests and fortresses you have to combat The Evil Shadow Lord and his armies of vampires, dragons, zombies and more! Completely original, eh? You see the ingenuity it requires to be a game designer?

Anyway, there is a 'twist' to this game, in that it can be played by one or two players simultaneously, as a wizard, a barbarian or (yawn) a huntress all of whom have different fighting and magic abilities. To this end, there are loads of different magic amulets and weapons you can pick up to improve your chances and if things get tiring you can even take a ride on a friendly turtle, spider or centaur. It's all rather like a cross between Golden Axe and Risky Woods, which doesn't bode too badly. If you want to find out more read the review next issue.



▲ The delectable huntress shows no mercy to terrifying flame dwarfs.



▲ The Barbarian - hard as nails, but no magic power.



▲ Old Wizard - good with magic, no muscles, though.





BY: SEGA

price: £39.99
developers: CORE
release date: AUTUMN '93

ASTERIX THE GAUL

Asterix the Gaul. He's the greatest cartoon character in the World. Well, in France anyway. At least, that's what the French say. Mind you, he does have his own Parisian theme park and it's more popular than EuroDisney too. Well, that's what the French say. Still, all credit to him, he did stop the Roman invasion of France in 50BC. According to the French, that is. All we know for sure is that he's a big-nosed midget with a large yellow moustache and he's coming to the Megadrive.

Based on the popular comic-book series, this platform game puts you in the role of either Asterix or his inseperable buddy, Obelix, on a quest to rescue the druid Getafix and Obelix's pet hound, Dogmatix, from the clutches of the wicked Romans. Getafix is the guy who makes the magic potion that gives the Gauls their super-human strength and without his knowledge they are defenceless against the Romans. Dogmatix is just a dog and Obelix loves him.

On their rescue mission our heroes travel from Gaul through Belgium and Germany before their final stop-off at Rome, battling against dogs, boars and of course, Romans. So far, the game looks extremely faithful to the comic books, with loads of beautifully coloured backdrops and large, cartoony sprites. Asterix even flaps his feet when he drinks the magic potion. In fact, Asterix's creator, Uderzo, has expressed his personal approval at the look of the game.

But of course the big question is, how well does it play? Well, at present the answer to that is as secret as the recipe to Getafix's magic potion. But rest assured, we'll let you know in the upcoming Megatech review.



▲ Mah name ees Asterix, an' I can jermp like zees. Hup!







▲ I can flert in mah leetle bert.



▲ Hah!I jermp again like zees...



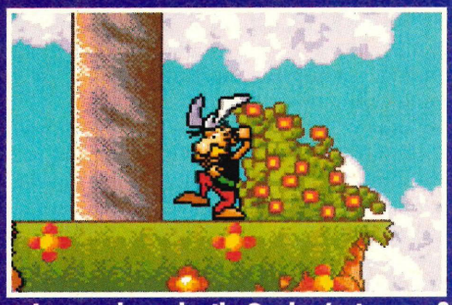
▲ ...and I land - hah! - like zees!



▲ I geev ze baddies le knockout!



▲ I lurve to eat a lot of feesh.



▲ I am a clever leetle Gaul, n'est ce pas?





MICROPROSE

BY: MICROPROSE

price: £49.99
developers: IN-HOUSE
release date: SEPT 1993

What's it like, eh? It's like London buses, that's what it's like. You wait three years for a decent Megadrive flight simulator then what happens? Two come along at once, and as if to prove this ridiculous contention, here it comes, hot on the afterburners of Domark's MiG 29 (awarded 86% in MT 17 and also due out in September), MicroProse's F-15 Strike Eagle II!



▲ FWISSSSH! There goes a Maverick, on its way to the Dong Hoi radar installation.

F-1 STRI

THE HISTORY OF FLIGHT SIMULATION

Now, as you may know, MicroProse have long been the experts of the flight simulation. Indeed the original F-15 Strike Eagle, a simple flight sim-cum-shoot 'em up with see-through vector graphics, was one of their first releases on the Atari 800 and Commodore 64 back in the early '80s.

By the time the sequel appeared, the PC was MicroProse's favoured machine, and while F-15 II had a bit more simulation and graphical sophistication in it, it was still a jet fighter shoot 'em up. The programmers obviously knew that there were still players who wanted a realistic-feeling game without all that 'landing tolerances' business and all that other technical jiggery-pokery getting in the way of the Heat-Seeking Demolition.

NEEEEEEEYOWWW! KABOOOOOOOOM!!

There are hundreds of randomly-generated missions in F-15, set in your choice of six war zones and played at any of four skill levels. In case you hadn't already guessed, your joypad gives you control of a McDonnell-Douglas F-15 Eagle which can strike against air or ground targets with its 30mm cannon and Sidewinder and Maverick missile armaments. The targets in this game include things like missile boats, tank farms, radar installations and, of course, lots and lots of enemy aircraft, namely MiGs (of varying vintage) and F1 Mirages.



▲ 'Hello readers. My name's Pilot Lennie and I've just shot

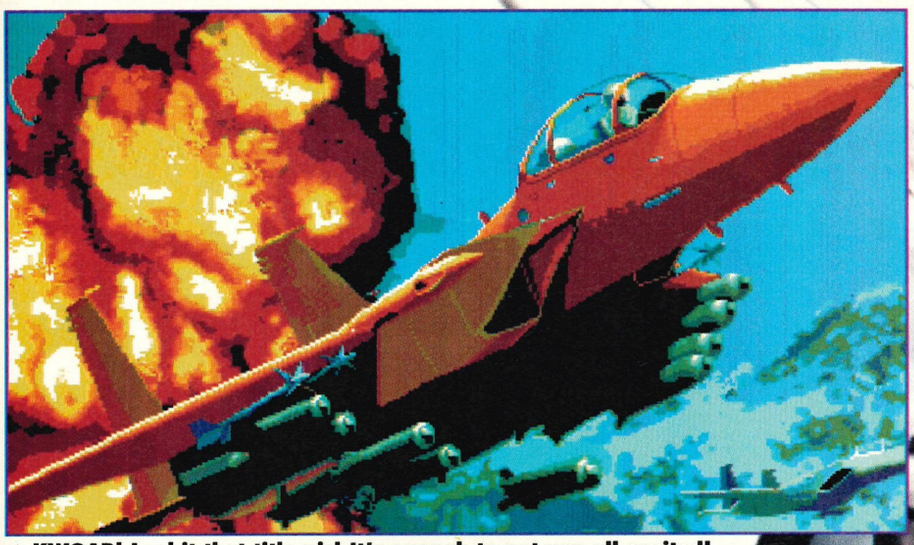
FLYING FIGHTER BOMBERS THE EASY WAY: THE CONTROLS

As any aeronautics expert could tell you, these modern aeroplanes have loads of dials and controls for the pilot to keep track of, but, as befits the nature of this game and the nature of the three button joypad with which you're meant to control it, the controls in this game have been simplified. So, for example, things like landing gear operation are automatic, so all you have to worry about is following the big yellow arrow to the target, selecting the right weapon and firing it.

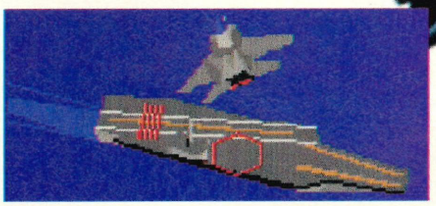
Certain simulation controls have been left in, such as the obligatory 3D viewpoint switches, so that you can look left, right, back and watch the action from outside the plane if you fancy it. There are also features like Time Warp, which speeds up the action if all you're doing is flying directly to a distant target. Unlike MiG 29, which lets you peruse control menus while you're flying, F-15's are accessed from a set of menus which appear when the game is paused.



▲ Even while being flown upside down by an imbecile the F-15 can destroy marauding F-1s.



▲ KWOAR! Lookit that title pic! It's enough to get you all excited!



▲ The F-15 swoops over its home carrier. Remember kids, don't let YOUR targeting system lock on to friendly forces or it could end in disaster!

5 KE EAGLE II



▲ The briefing screen will explain everything.



▲ The debriefing screen also explains everything. Like what you did and where and when you did it.

F-15 vs MiG!

What will it play like? Well, the unfinished version we had a go at was pretty good. The 3D vector graphics weren't superfast, but they were fast enough even on the highest of the three graphic detail levels and there were certainly plenty of things for you to shoot at and to shoot at you.

Is it going to be better than MiG 29? Difficult to say really. There are loads more missions than in MiG 29, but they're much less involved, consisting of finding and destroying two targets and getting extra points for anything else you run into while escaping. MiG had the emphasis a bit more on simulation, while F-15 looks like it will be more of a blastfest.

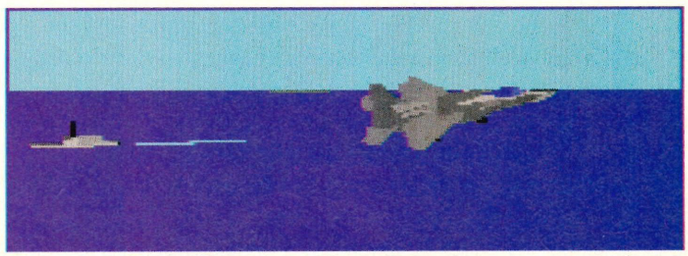
We'll have a better chance to compare the two in the full F-15 review, coming to you in time for next month's issue.







▲ Look at that lovely bridge. It's hard to imagine a better resting place for a radar-guided missile. Eheeheeeheee.



▲ What a lovely picture. And it's all thanks to external views.

PREVIEW



LANDSTALKER

SEGA

BY: SEGA

price: £49.99
developers: SEGA JAPAN
release date: OCT 1993

Whatever happened to Megadrive role-playing games, eh? Time was when you could leave your front door open, go down your corner software store and get a new RPG every other week, if that was your idea of a good time. And what have RPG fans had over the last six months? Shining Force.... and that's about it. Even Mega-CD owners who were expecting conversions of some of those nice Japanese RPG's haven't had much to celebrate. What's the world coming to?

Well, now you adventure fans have finally got something to be happy about, because Sega are finally getting English versions of Landstalker, possibly the best Megadrive adventure ever, ready for an October release date.

As you may be able to tell from the style of the graphics, Landstalker is the third part of the series of RPG's which began with Shining in the Darkness and continued with Shining Force. Unlike those two, which had a strong strategy element to the gameplay, Landstalker has as much sword-swinging, jumping-around, platform action as it has adventure.



THE PLOT THICKENS

The game centres around Nigel, an unambitiously-named treasure hunter in the Indiana Jones mode who, as the game begins, rescues plucky fairy, Friday, from a gang of enemy treasure hunters. Friday reveals that she knows that the lost treasures of King Nole are hidden somewhere nearby and the pair agree to join forces and find it.

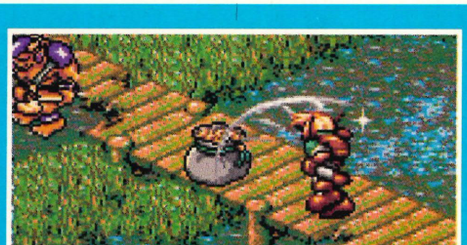
Unfortunately, the expedition begins badly when Nigel has a bit of an accident, tumbling down a waterfall and landing on his head. Rescued and nursed back to health by the friendly Gumi creatures, he ends up putting his treasure-hunting plans on hold until he helps patch up the rift that has formed between the Gumi and the creatures from a neighbouring village.

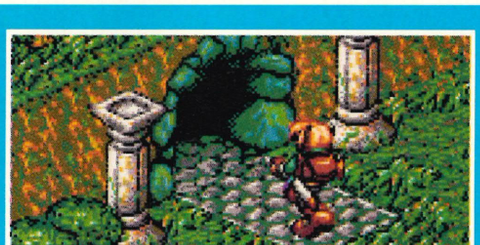
Of course, that's just the start of this massive 16 M-bit adventure, and as Nigel and Friday progress they find themselves travelling through strange cities, labyrinths of caves, shrines and dungeons, all the while solving problems, fighting cyclops, ogres and worse, and picking up clues to the exact location of King Nole's treasures.

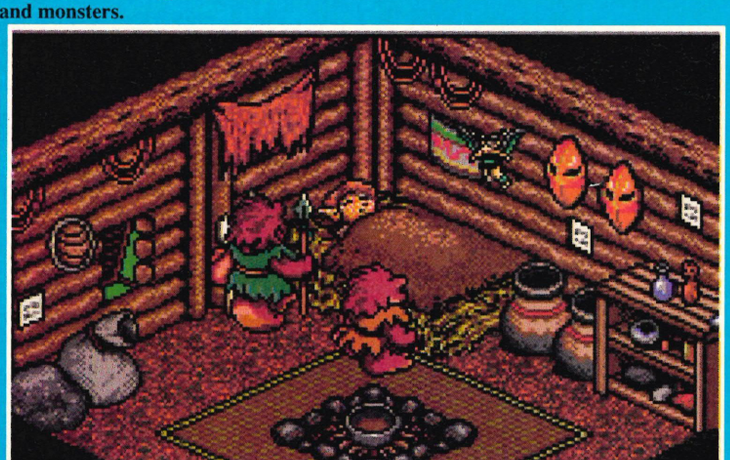
LAND

3D GRAPHICS!

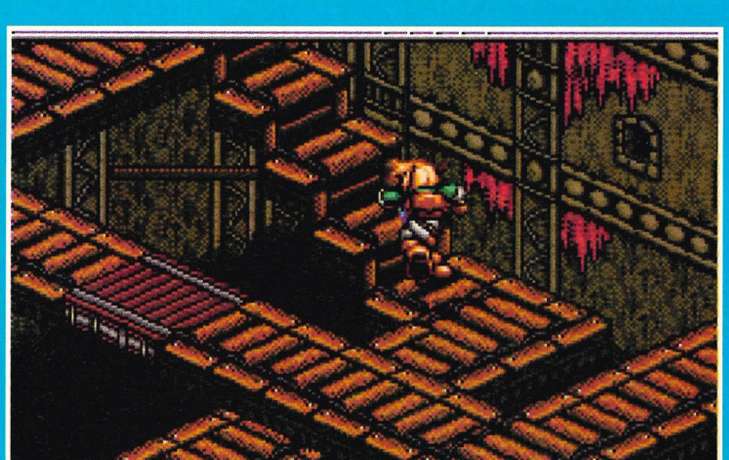
As you can see from the pictures, Landstalker isn't one of those role-playing games in which you take turns to move little Master System-style characters around a map. All the characters and the scenery graphics are beautifully drawn and the landscape is a gigantic 3D environment which Nigel can walk or leap or climb around, interacting with loads of different characters and monsters.







▲ **'Ooh blimey... What do they put in that Gumi Ale?'**



▲ **Nigel hops around a maze of platforms in a massive shrine.**



FIGHTING MONSTERS!

In games like Phantasy Star III, combat is limited to the player selecting a type of attack from a menu then sitting back to see how many damage points the computer decides you've inflicted. Landstalker isn't like that. Whether or not Nigel stays alive depends on you equipping him with good weapons and armour, and being sufficiently fast on his feet to stay out of reach of the roaming monsters, or fast enough on the attack button to slice them into hamburger meat.



▲ You've got a long way to walk to get to King Nole's Lost Treasure!



▲ Nigel intrudes on a potentially grisly sacrificial ceremony!



▲ Don't wander off the magic floating platform or Nige'll get a puncture.

OSTALKER

PUZZLES!

Likewise, if Nigel is confronted by a locked door which can only be unlocked by solving a puzzle, he can pick up those crates which are lying around and build a staircase over the deadly spiked balls to hit the switch which moves the two statues away from the exit in that room downstairs, if that's what's required.



▲ Evading rolling rocks is a big problem.



▲ Not just rolling rocks, but SPIKY rocks too! Man!





WE CAN'T WAIT!

Considering the Japanese version of Landstalker (which we could hardly even understand because of all the Japanese text) had us gripped into the wee small hours, we're sure that the English version is going to be one of the best Megadrive games this year. Got to be. It's a cert. Find out if we're right next month.





ROBOCOP VERSUS TERMINATOR

VIRGIN GAMES

BY: VIRGIN

price: TBA
developers: VIRGIN USA
release date: NOV 1993

ROBOC TERM

It was comic author Frank Miller who came up with the idea of bringing together the two toughest cyborgs known to science fiction and then letting battle commence in his Robocop vs Terminator stories, which became one of Dark Horse Comics' most successful series.

BIG ROBOTS!

Now Virgin Games are again throwing the two 'titanium titans* together to allow you, a mere human, to step into the Kevlar trousers of Mr Robocop himself and take on the massed forces of homicidal Terminators who have crossed the dimensionways from an alternate future and are now causing mayhem in Delta City.

What follows is twelve levels of platform-based, blast-'em-to-piles-of-scrap action in which Robo has to stride the streets cutting down crazed street thugs, hostile ED-series enforcement droids (which the Terminators are controlling) and, of course, the Terminators themselves.

As Robo progresses, he finds himself marching/climbing/swinging through Detroit's construction yards, toxic farms, the offices of Omni Consumer Products and a UN complex before finally following the



▲ **Ever feel like you're being watched?**

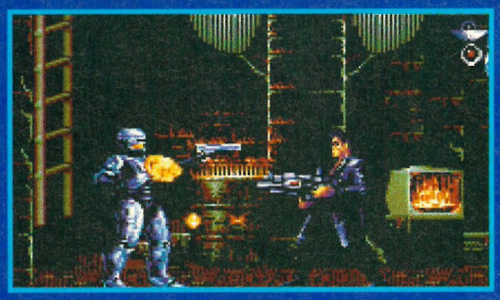
Terminators back to their home point in the space-time continuum. Here he has to take on a whole army of Skynet-manufactured Terminators: Terminator Spiders, Terminator Dogs, the super-tough, red Terminator Leaders (didn't the Daleks paint their leaders red?) and roaming Hunter Killer aircraft.

BIG GUNS!

Now the Beretta Auto-9 that Robo packs in his thigh is okay for disposing of human foes, but for these case-hardened horrors he has to use whatever weapons he can find. Rocket and grenade-launchers and smart bullet rifles are available if you can find them, and even the good ole phased plasma rifle in the 40 watt range makes an appearance in the later levels.

Any fans of the Robocop and Terminator films will appreciate little touches like that, as well as scenery details such as the sculptures in the background in the OCP offices and the burning TV's in the Terminator future levels. Even Robocop 2 makes a cameo appearance at the end of one of the levels, as a Terminator-controlled boss.





▲ Drop your weapons or... they quit firing!



▲ Drop your... oops, sensitive trigger!



▲ Drop your weapo... blast, done it again.



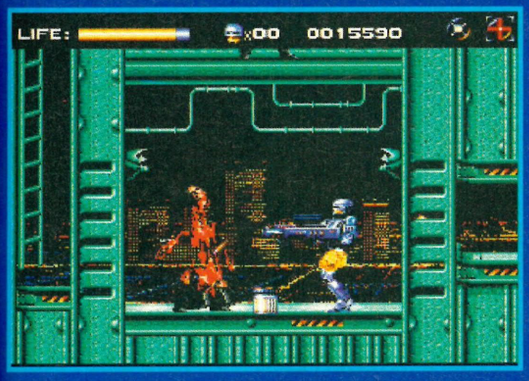


▲ Drop your wea... brakaka! Oh no!

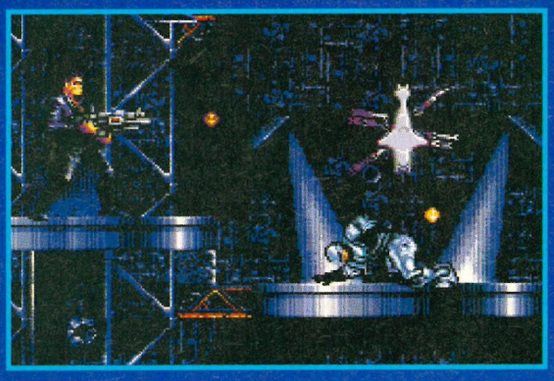


▲ Drop your weapons or there will be... trouble. There, I've said it. Now what? Hmm, oh heck, eat lead, you rusty tinpot. He. He. He.

OP vs INATOR



▲ Hey dad, like my new gun? Whoops! Scream!



▲ Okay robo-health-freaks. Now push, 1-2-3.

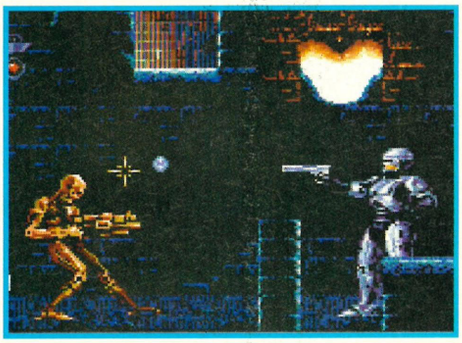




▲ Incredible! It's Elvis doing his shopping. He is alive!



▲ Termy, I love you. Come, let's elope!



▲ Don't move, C3PO, you're under arrest.

BIG FUN!

It's a fairly simple blasting game, reminiscent in many ways of Data East's Robocop arcade game. We weren't taken at first, but there's plenty of major league gun action and the graphics are excellent. We'll give it the full review treatment next month, so, till then, stay out of trouble.

*Quality Alliteration by Thomas Guise



Tom's

Hi folks! Tom here, or perhaps you'd prefer to call me the High Prince Of Atlantis. Let me explain. The other day I was relaxing on my island, making just the largest sandcastle (with moat) you've ever seen, when a huge wave crashed onto the shore, wiping it out. However my dismay soon turned to amazement when, looking up, I saw two beautiful women with silvery shining dresses and a smart pair of conical-shelled chest plates. Would you believe they were envoys from the God of the Seas, who requested my immediate presence in the throne-room? Well, not wishing to disappoint the ruler of the waves I climbed aboard their sea-chariots, incredible vehicles made from giant oyster shells and each one pulled by four golden sea-horses. Before I knew it, we were thousands of fathoms under the sea, and yet I was still able to breathe. Then I saw it. THE LOST WORLD. Atlantis! A massive city carved into the sea-bed. And Neptune himself was riding out on his mighty sea-stallion to greet me. At a banquet in his giant coral castle he revealed the truth, that I am his long lost son. I explained how that nasty MegaTech crew had exiled me and he immediately dispatched a legion of Jelly Fish to eat them. Alas, I had to return to my Island to finish the mail, but good old daddy sent a team of Mer-men to help me with the writing chores. You know the address. TOM'S ISLAND, MegaTech, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU and don't forget, every letter writer gets a MegaTech T-shirt. Prince of the Oceans, hey? I always wondered why I had fins on the back of legs and gills on my tummy. Aloha!

MORTA

Welcome Glasshopper! It's Mortal Kombat month and to celebrate the blood-splattered occasion, a select panel of the finest warriors from around the world have gathered at the Tom's Island dojo to tell us about the 'Mortal Moves'. Hear it straight from the experts' mouths right here, on Tom's Mortal Island!

ESCAPED LUNATIC

Dear TOM,
Forget about Global Gladiators and Cool Spot, why not have a Megadrive game about a public enemy? You could have a sideways-scrolling view with the yob in the centre, walking down the high street. Old ladies and mothers with prams could attack him and you'd have to shoot them before he got pissed off and beat the shit out of some toddler. Then the view could change to overhead as he runs through the inner city avoiding the police. The usual car chase level and fight on a train could be put in and the Menacer could be used for the first level.
What do you think?
Stephen Worthy, Esher, Surrey.



I'm appalled. Gunning down completely helpless, innocent people like old ladies, mothers and children. That's your idea of fun? You should be lobotomised.

TWO MINDS, NO INTELLIGENCE!

Dear TOM,
I am going to be completely original and ask you some questions.
1. After seeing the Mega-LD feature I

s Island

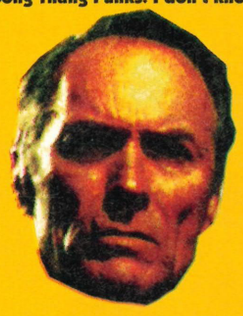
L ISLAND

Hannibal Lecter



Greetings, striplings. Yes, I like this Mortal Kombat thing. Toughens your nipples, doesn't it? Heh heh heh. Well anyway, the best mortal move by far has to be Sub Zero's spinal removal. It leaves the main torso flesh so delightfully bone-free and just ripe to be served with some fava beans and a nice chianti. Mmm-mm, lip-smackingly good. Just the thought of it has got my juices flowing. I wish the warden would hurry up and bring me those small children.
MORTAL MOVE: FORWARD, DOWN, FORWARD + HARD PUNCH

Clint Eastwood



Bong Thang Punks. I don't know about all this video games nonsense. In my day the way to put some scum-bag out was with a high-powered lump of lead straight through the head. Aah, the way their eyes would roll back in their skulls and they'd gurgle, just before performing a final shuddering death-crap in their pants. Great stuff, and it gave me the chance to come out with some immortal line like "Ho ho, you've pooed your pants." Now that's the a mortal move for you. All this ninja rubbish. No thanks.

Tommy Steele



Golly, hi everyone. I say, this Mortal Kombat game, it's a bit rough isn't it? All this blood and dismemberment, we never had that in my day. I remember when I was at school and I used to play by myself in the sandpit. The other kids would always come over and pull my kecks right up my bum. A wedgy, I think they called it. Anyway, it really stung. If only I could have done a fatal move like Raiden's. Just pointing my fingers and 'Shazam!' their heads would have blown up, raining brain and face into the air. Yeh, that would have shown 'em. Bastard. Still, I always had my singing to stop me crying as the nurse applied Sudon to my chaffed cleft.
MORTAL MOVE: FORWARD x 2, BACKWARDS x 3 + HARD PUNCH

The Proclaimers

Proclaimer 1. So. Mortal Kombat then.
Proclaimer 2. Hmm.



Proclaimer 1. Bit gruesome, isn't it?
Proclaimer 2. I suppose.
Proclaimer 1. Gosh, remember the old days? Letter From America? Now that was something, hey?
Proclaimer 2. Ha ha, yes. Yes it was.
Proclaimer 1. We're not awful, are we?
Proclaimer 2. No, no we're not.
Proclaimer 1. Why don't girls fancy us?
Proclaimer 2. I don't know. Shut up.

Goro

Hello luvvies. You know, I absolutely abhore this nasty Mortal Kombat stuff. I much prefer a nice bit a cake and a glass of squash any day of the week. Oh yes. Anyway, I can't complain, if Shang Tsung hadn't plucked me from obscurity I'd still be working in that supermarket as a cashier. But sometimes I get so worried that I might be type-cast. Why can't they put me in a nice puzzle game or something? 'Goro's Crackers' it could be called, and you'd have to make lines of crackers to score points. I could wear orange dungarees and nail-polish and it could all be brightly-coloured and have cheerful tunes playing throughout. Yes, and everytime someone lost the game I could rip their arse out with my teeth. See you later, sugar.



Errol Flynn

Ah, my friends. Let me tell you, I like Mortal Mombat. I like it, I like it, I like it. Especially that fair maiden, Sonya. Ho yes. I like a woman with balls and she's a feisty one, make no mistake. That move, where she grabs you with her thighs and throws you over the top of her? Hummada, hummada. You can thigh-grapple me any day, babe. And that killer kiss? Woohoo, what a way to go! Hey Sonya, if you can hear me? You and me, darling. let's take a naked trip through the love zoo together. Woof!
FORWARD x 2, BACKWARDS x 2 + BLOCK



am in two minds whether or not to buy a Mega-CD. What are the differences?
2. How much will the Mega-LD cost and when is it being released?
3. Will it be compatible with the Mega-CD and the Megadrive?
4. Why don't you send me a copy of Jungle Strike, or are you chicken? You are, aren't you?
Thanks a lot and I expect that copy of Jungle Strike soon.
Your questioningly,
Matthew Fitchett, Thetford.



Matthy, Matthy, Matthy. I wouldn't worry your walnut-sized brain about the Mega-LD. It's only available in Japan and is unlikely to ever come out over here. Besides, it costs at least twice as much as a Mega-CD and only has a few boring, incomprehensible games out for it. So forget about it.
Oh, and I really think I'm going to give you a copy of Jungle Strike. Especially after your lily-wristed taunts about me being a chicken. Ooh, you're really scaring me. Please stop.

FIVE KNUCKLE SHUFFLE!

Dear TOM,
King of Sega, Ruler of the Universe.
Please could you answer my questions.
1. Why does Streetfighter 2 keep on getting delayed?
2. Where abouts is the film studio where they made the Mega-CD game, Night Trap
3. When will the Megadrive and Mega-CD 2 be released?
4. How much will they cost?
5. Would you lend me the money?
6. Is Sega making a Streetfighter 3?
7. Any nice birds in the office?
8. Kelli from Night Trap (aka Kimberly from Different Strokes). Any chance of finding out her address for me please. Pretty please. Grovel.
PS. A big hand for the lads and lasses at MegaTech. Long live Sega.
The Greenster, Hastings.



The Greenster? What kind of a name is that? Are you supposed to be some kind of super-villain who paints all his victims green or something? And as for your sad obsession with Kelli from Night Trap. If you don't stop those sordid little things you've been doing in front of the game, you'll go blind and then you won't be able play the game anymore. In some countries they'd cut your hands off, you know!.

THE VOICE OF THE PUBLIC!

Dear TOM,
Sega, being the zealous bunch that they are, had the ingenious idea to make all Mega-CD machines only work with each of its territorial Megadrives – a well thought out idea or just naive thinking?
Well, shortly after its release along came those masters of devices, Datel, with their CDX Pro. For only £49.99 you could now interchange machines and play any software from any country. Was it too much to ask in the first place, especially if you had just paid £269.99 for a brand spanking new machine – Sega obviously thought it was.
So the total cost of your (proper) Mega-CD is now £319.98. But is there a deadly secret hidden here? Ask yourself why Sega attempted to stop you playing imported games on your new machine. Was it so they could get together with a well known 'Cheat' cartridge company and sneakily release a device allowing you to fully use your machine, thus getting a healthy bonus from that company depending on its sales? Maybe not, but Sega obviously don't think much of its customers, who after all have spent at least £400 on their



certain software.
STOP THIS OPPRESSION NOW. WE PAY YOUR EXTRAVAGANT WAGES. LET US PLAY WHAT WE PAID OUR MONEY FOR!
Joe Public.



Blimey, this subject has certainly got your goat, hasn't it? I'll admit it, the Mega-CD is very expensive and it does seem unfair that we can't play import games without a convertor, but anyone who bought a Mega-CD knew this was the case from the start. Besides, a lot of import games don't work properly on official machines because of the different speeds the respective machines run at and even the CDX can't compensate for that.
Also, it's very unlikely that Sega would secretly collaborate with a 'Cheat' cartridge company, because each of the various divisions of Sega around the world work seperately to gain profit. For instance, Sega UK wouldn't make any money from the sales of import games in Britain, in fact they'd make a loss. Which is the reason why they are always trying so desperately to stop the spread of grey imports. I'm not trying to defend what Sega do, but I think it's important to understand their motivation.

HOW BIZARRE!

Dear TOM,
I am an owner of a Mega-CD and would like to know if, on Golden Axe, there is a two-player option, if so could you please tell me how to get it since I have tried almost everything possible.
Brian Cotter, Torryburn, Fife.



You're not going to believe this, but Golden Axe on Mega-CD is only a ONE player game. We could hardly believe it ourselves until we checked, but it's true. For reasons best known to themselves Sega have removed the two-player option from the version on the Sega Classics disc. What a load of rubbish, eh? All that CD memory space, greatest machine on Earth and all that bumph. Pah, that's what I say, Pah!

DON'T COPY!

Dear TOM,
To start off with, what a superb idea you had about not printing letters which start off with 'what a great magazine', when I read a letters page I want to see a letter with some interesting questions and answers. I mean if we didn't like it we wouldn't write.
Enough of that. What I am writing for is for you to give me some information on the Megadrive copying machines. For a while I was thinking of buying one (although I wouldn't know where). If someone told you that you could have any Megadrive game available for the price of a disk, you'd jump at the chance. But after carefully thinking about it I decided against the idea as it is not fair on the other Megadrive owners, as they and I shall have to pay more for a game. But there is one thing that bugs me and many other people I reckon. How do they work? I know there is a disk drive involved, but what else? I hope you could answer these for me. Please!
Oh yes, One more thing and that is Sega know a good marketing technique when they see one and it is about Street Fighter 2. If you want to play with a friend head to head without keeping on pausing it, you are going to have to buy two new joypads. More expense for us players.
REMEMBER DON'T BUY THE COPIER! You never know, they might even put the prices down on games.

PS. I think it would be a good idea if you got some readers opinions on the Sega adverts. I think they're quite funny.
See ya.
No name, Colchester, Essex.



I see. You're just curious about how these cheat machines works, right? It's not that you're interested in buying one at all. Ha, no, of course not. Wait a minute while I wash my filthy mouth out.
Okay, let me reveal the dark secret of the dreaded copying machines. Basically the Magic-drive (as the Megadrive version is called) is not much more than a floppy disc drive. The games cartridge plugs in the top of the machine which in turn slots into the Megadrive cartridge port. All the game information on the cartridge is then downloaded onto floppy discs. Any time you need to play the game you just slot the disc into the Magic-drive and hey presto, it'll load the game into your Megadrive. See, simple.
There are problems though. For instance, on the SNES, Super FX games like StarFox can't be copied, because the Magicom (as the SNES copier is known) can't duplicate all the functions the custom accelerator chip would normally handle. Also, because games are being loaded off a floppy disc there are pauses in the action when more information is being accessed and of course, the larger the game the more discs would be needed. So a 16-Meg game like Streets Of Rage 2 might need up to ten discs to store it, meaning that you'd have to keep swapping discs throughout play. But that's the price you pay for using the copier.
Anyway, so you think the Sega ads are funny, eh? It seems that not everyone shares your sentiments...

NO MORE FAT BLOKE!

Dear TOM,
I really didn't want to be the one to speak out, but about those Sega adverts. I think that Sega have got their advertising campaign completely wrong. For instance, that fat bloke who goes about putting 'a ton of semolina in a vacuum bag', what exactly does this specify? The feeling I got from the advert was that Sega must rely on the hardware and software to get the sales. Take the Mega-CD ad for another example. What the hell is it on about? All I see is very little hardware and a lot of prattling on about the afore-mentioned 'Fat Bloke'. I think once again that Nintendo have out-smarted Sega by producing adverts that look space-aged and tell the customer about the product.
That's my point of view anyway, I'd be interested to know yours.
Many thanks and May the Force be with you, young Jedi.
Martin Hughes (aka Luke Skywalker), Eastleigh.



I've got to confess, I don't think much of those Sega ads either. They're just too weird and not very funny with it. It wasn't so bad in the old days with that bloke and his ninja-sidekick, but recent ones, like the Pirate TV ads, have just been rubbish. Mind you, I prefer them to the Nintendo ads. Talk about dull.

TOM GLENNISTER OF MEGATECH - REVEALED!

Dear TOM,
Don't panic! Even as you read this, I am planning a rescue operation to save you. All I ask in return is for you to answer these questions, then come to live with me on my own island!
1. Will Elite ever be converted to the Megadrive?
2. Do you think the press will make a fuss about Mortal Kombat, like they did about Night Trap?
3. Do you think the hype surrounding Jurassic Park is really worth it?
4. Will the Activator controller catch on or will it die out like the Menacer?
5. How old are you?
6. Have you got a girlfriend?
7. Will you print a lifesize poster of Mark Holmes?
8. What do you think of the Highlander films?
Oh well, that's all I can think of at the moment. I'd better go back and crack some more coconuts over my head before anyone notices I've escaped and made contact with the outside world.

PS. Have you noticed the Micro Machines advert – apparently your name is Tom Glennister!
Kerry 'Kez' Sharp, deepest darkest Blackwell.



Yes I did notice. Tom Glennister indeed. What cheek! You tell the world how great a game is and how do they repay you? By crediting all your words of praise to the editor of Sonic the Comic, that's what. Bah! I don't want to talk about it.
1. Not likely, but just between you and me Elite 2 might be on the way. Shhh.
2. Probably, but it's undeserved. Mortal Kombat isn't that nasty at all.
3. I do, I do, I do. Jurassic Park is the best filly ever made. Ever. I love it.
4. Who knows? I don't reckon it'll be much cop, but we'll see.
5. I'm unsure. I've been brought up by jungle elves since I was a baby.
6. Shan't tell.
7. I think not! Did you know that Mark has the lower half of a horse? That's right, Mark Holmes is a centaur!
8. What? The first one is good, but as for the sequel? Prrrp.

THE MAN WHO HAUNTED HIMSELF!

Dear TOM,
I was reading your Island letters in Issue 19 and I saw my name at the end of a letter and I went mad. How do I know that it's not another Steven Denholm from Haddington? Because Haddington is tiny. All that I am saying is that when I get my hands on the fool who was too scared to write their own name I will put his head through a window and then get my good friend M Bison to kill him. Ok wimp,

wherever you are?
The REAL Steven Denholm,
Haddington.

An imposter you say? Somebody dared to write to my island pretending to be you? That's disgraceful! But Steven, why didn't you tell me all this when I saw you yesterday at the Gentleman's Club? Wha...that wasn't you? Screaky!

BUT SERIOUSLY...

Dear TOM,
This is my first time writing to your rather cool Megadrive magazine and I have a few questions I would like you to answer without being stupid!
1. Why do you think it's funny to take the piss out of other writers? For instance, Sean Lemon (issue 20).
2. I know an inquiry went into Sega's and Nintendo's prices. When will Sega do something about their prices?
3. Do you know how many M-bit's Sonic Spinball will be?
4. Now don't think I am funny when I ask you this but, what does M-bit stand for? Because if it stands for Mega Bit that means 1 million bits, which is mathematically impossible on a 16-bit machine.
Thank you for answering my questions (that's if you print it, lick, lick)
From Simon
(I had better not say my last name. I'm ashamed of it and anyway you might take the piss).

Take the 'piss'? Me? Oh Simon, I'm mortified. How can you say such a cruel thing. I'll prove I'm a nice guy by answering your questions and I solemnly promise I won't be stupid. Tee hee.
1. Sean Lemon? Ahahaha! Stoppit, stoppit, ha ha ha!
2. Probably never.
3. Not more than eight and no less than four.
4. Don't you worry, there's no chance of me thinking you're funny. M-Bit does stand for mega-bit and one mega-bit is equavilent to 128 kilo-bytes. A byte equalling eight bits. The thing is, when we talk about cartridges, 8 Mega-bits is the amount of memory the game takes up. With the actual console, 16-bits is how much data the machines processor can handle at any one time. A game can be any size you like. For instance, a Mega-CD game could theoretically be 500 mega-bytes in size. However, the Megadrive would still only be able to process 16-bits of code at any one time. Don't read all that too fast, or you might accidently wet yourself.

HOW FASCINATING!

Dear TOM,
I was a proud owner of a Megadrive until 2 months ago. Then I purchased a Super Nintendo, the biggest mistake of my life. Now I intend to sell my Super Nintendo. I have already ordered a Megadrive 2 from the catalogue along with Sonic 2, Golden Axe, Streets Of Rage, Revenge Of Shinobi, Golden Axe III and the fabulous Flashback.
Mark Broome, North Shields.

Really Mark? Gosh, that's so-oo interesting. I don't know why people won't hang around with you, I mean you're such a fun guy. Honest. And you don't smell of wee at all. Anyway, don't let them get to you, because it's far more enjoyable locked away in the toilet by yourself. Please write again soon with another gripping instalment of your life.

GOOD GRIEF!

Dear TOM,
I read your mag every month. It is the best thing on the shelves.
I have Sonic II, it's great, but I have a problem with it. I am stuck on Aquatic Ruin. I just can't get past it because I keep running out of air and I can't find a solution to it. Please, please could you help me.
PS. Please don't say I'm crap at games.
Ta.
John McCabe, Ballinteer, Ireland.

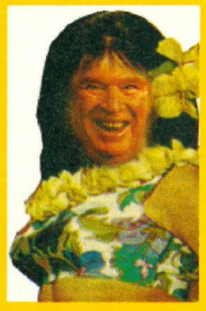
Don't you fret, John. I'm not going to say you're crap at games, it goes far deeper than that. Anyway, onto your problem. What you've got to do is look out for those little streams of bubbles coming out of the floor. Every so often a big bubble appears and Sonic has to swallow these regularly to stay alive. Problem solved. Unless what you mean is you run out of air whilst playing the game. In which case, you want to remember to keep breathing whilst thinking, okay? And always have a grown-up in the room, just in case.

I'M DESPERATE!

Dear TOM,
Please, please, please could you send me a copy of the X-Men poster from issue 17, because my brother completely wrecked the other one! Please, I'm desperate.
I also have some questions.
1. When will WWF Royal Rumble be out?
2. When will Polterguy be out?
3. How do you feel after your beating.
Keep up the good work.
A Fordham, Langley, Berks.

Sorry A, I'm afraid there are no posters left. In fact there aren't any copies of issue 17 left either. All gone. Boo hoo.
1. Sometime in autumn.
2. After he's had his tea. Ha, no just kidding. September.
3. Enlightened. It is the MegaTech way.

JOHN MADDEN TALKS BACK!



He's a servitor from the planet Nox and he's here to judge whether mankind is worthy of survival. Yes, Master of Life and Bringer of Death, John Madden, is here with his usual brand of cheap aftershave and light chit chat. This month's gripping topic – skincare.

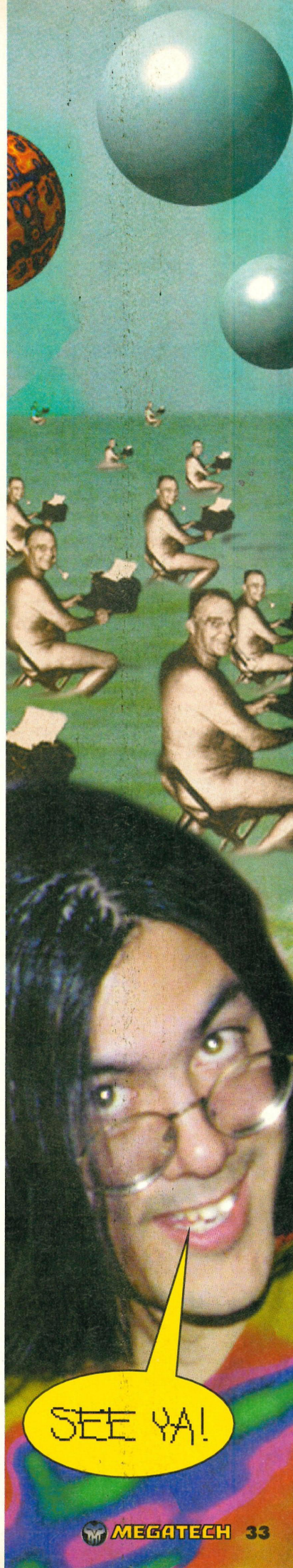
Howdy Sportsfans. We're well into summer and I'm mighty sure you lot are all enjoying the delights of the sun, but don't forget to look after your skin. After all , it's what keeps all your bones and organs and burgers in. So show it some respect, goddam it.

If like me, you happen to be a bit, well, sweat-friendly, remember to keep that skin cleansed. And it ain't no good just mopping up with an old snot-rag either, you need to keep your skin fresh. Don't make the mistake I made, of wearing the same pair of under-dacks for a week. Those black-heads on my arse were a real pain in the butt. Oh. Ha ha.

And try getting rid of those dead skin flakes too. I'm always finding clots of the red and flakey stuff under my armpits, in my belly-button, even wedged in the folds of my neck. Horrible. But by using a good exfoliation liquid you can prevent this problem. Why, it just sloughs that dead flesh off in sheets. In fact, it's goooood! Ah-ha-ha.

Finally, make yourself feel like a million dollars with a good lip balm. Used morning and night it can make you lips as soft and udder-suckingly kissable as mine.

Right, well I'm off to hang around that infant school playground now. See ya in thirty!



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REVIEWS

We've sweated blood this month to bring you a massive haul of 17 – count 'em – 17 games reviews. And seven of them are Hyper games, scoring over 90% on the MegaTechometer. Are we good to you or what?

● 36 GUNSTAR HEROES ● 42 JURASSIC PARK ● 46 SHINOBI 3 ● 50 WIMBLEDON ● 52 CHUCK ROCK II ● 56 ECCO CD ● 58 SILPHEED ● 62 BLASTER MASTER ● 63 SHERLOCK HOLMES II ● 64 AERO BIZ ● 66 GOLDEN AXE III ● 70 SUPER BASEBALL 2020 ● 72 POPULOUS II ● 76 MORTAL KOMBAT ● 80 PUGSY ● 84 HAUNTING ● 88 TOYS

THE RATINGS PANELS

Here's the rundown – how the scores are put together and the lucky, lucky people who rate the games.

THE TECHOSCOPE
It's a weird, circular thing divided up into four quarters, but what does it all mean? Well, this is our strange little way of demonstrating which particular skills you'll need to be strong on to be able to play the game well. Each quarter of the circle represents a gaming skill – Reflexes, Strategy, Challenge and Thought – and each of these has a rating, shown by the distance that the coloured area within each quarter sticks out from the centre towards the outside of the circle. Got that?

PRESENTATION
Presentation covers the standard of the intro, intermediate and options screens, and whether the game has been put together thoughtfully and playtested seriously, or just thrown together carelessly.



GRAPHICS
The standard of the visuals – backgrounds, sprites and animation – is covered by the Graphics category

SOUND
The Sound department gives you a percentage rating for sound effects and soundtrack.

STP
The Short Term Play rating tells you whether the game under review is instantly playable or takes a while to get into.

LTP
If you want to know if the cart will probably stay in your Megadrive for months to come or if it's destined to gather dust on a shelf in your bedroom after a few plays, check out the Long Term Play score.

OVERALL
The final Oerall score is not arrived at by averaging out the scores in all the categories above – it is not an average mark, it is only achieved after heated debates between the members of the MegaTech Ratings Panel – many a voice is raised, tables are pounded by fists, and blood is often spilt as the panel make their considered judgements on the game in question.



● PAUL GLANCEY
My role model is Captain James Kirk, because of his great leadership skills. And he was the only member of the Star Trek crew to snog a woman in every episode. I've always said it's a shame that William Shatner was William Shatner and not Captain Kirk, especially when he opened his mouth to sing – have you heard his rendition of 'Mr Tambourine Man' ? Awful



● MARK HOLMES
My childhood role model was Baloo the bear from The Jungle Book. It was his carefree attitude to life that attracted me to him as a character. I still believe in his philosophy of "the bare necessities of life will come to you," and I can relate to his love of music and dressing up in exotic fruits and palm leaves.



● TOM GUISE
My childhood hero was Batman, and my affection for the Caped Crusader has carried through to the present day. The Adam West Batman from the '60s TV series is stiil my favourite – the way his nipples stuck out of his costume and his fat belly bulged over his utility belt made a deep impression on me as a child. But the main reason why he became my hero was because he was always raelly good at getting out of the trickiest situations, a bit like me when one of my reviews is overdue.

● RADION AUTOMATIC
My childhood hero was Johnny Rotten, the lead singer from punk band the Sex Pistols. I remember my sister taking me to see the band when I was two years old – she took me in my special punk pram, which was really hard to push because of all the bondage straps around the wheels. Even at that age, I had green spiky hair and I spent the whole gig stage-diving, even though I couldn't walk.

● PAUL DAVIES
I remember being really impressed by the carthorse which the local milkman used to pull his float when I was a young lad. Such a noble animal, I couldn't help but admire the beast. But I've grown up a lot since then – these days my hero is much more, well, heroic. You know, a real role models that has an effect on real life – Sparkster the oppossum from Rocket Knight Adventures.

● ANGUS SWAN
My hero is well-known Yorkshireman and champion of the workers, Arthur Scargill. The way he stood up to the capitalist lackeys of the pig-dog right-wing government during the miners' strike filled me with admiration. If anyone's going to lead the revolution when it comes, it'll be him – he's got such a great oratorial style, you'd follow him to the ends of the earth. Great hairstyle too.

MEGADRIVE REVIEW

GUNSTAR HEROES

BY: SEGA

SEGA

8-MEG

STYLE

SHOOT 'EM UP

PRICE £39.99

PLAYERS 1-2

SKILL SETTINGS 4

RELEASE DATE

SEPT 1993



He is a gladiatorial champion from a distant planet, beamed to Earth by Sentinel 1 to protect humankind from other-world invasions. He is TOM GUISE and he talks complete nonsense. Today's subject – Sega's new platform shoot 'em up, Gunstar Heroes.

GUNSTA

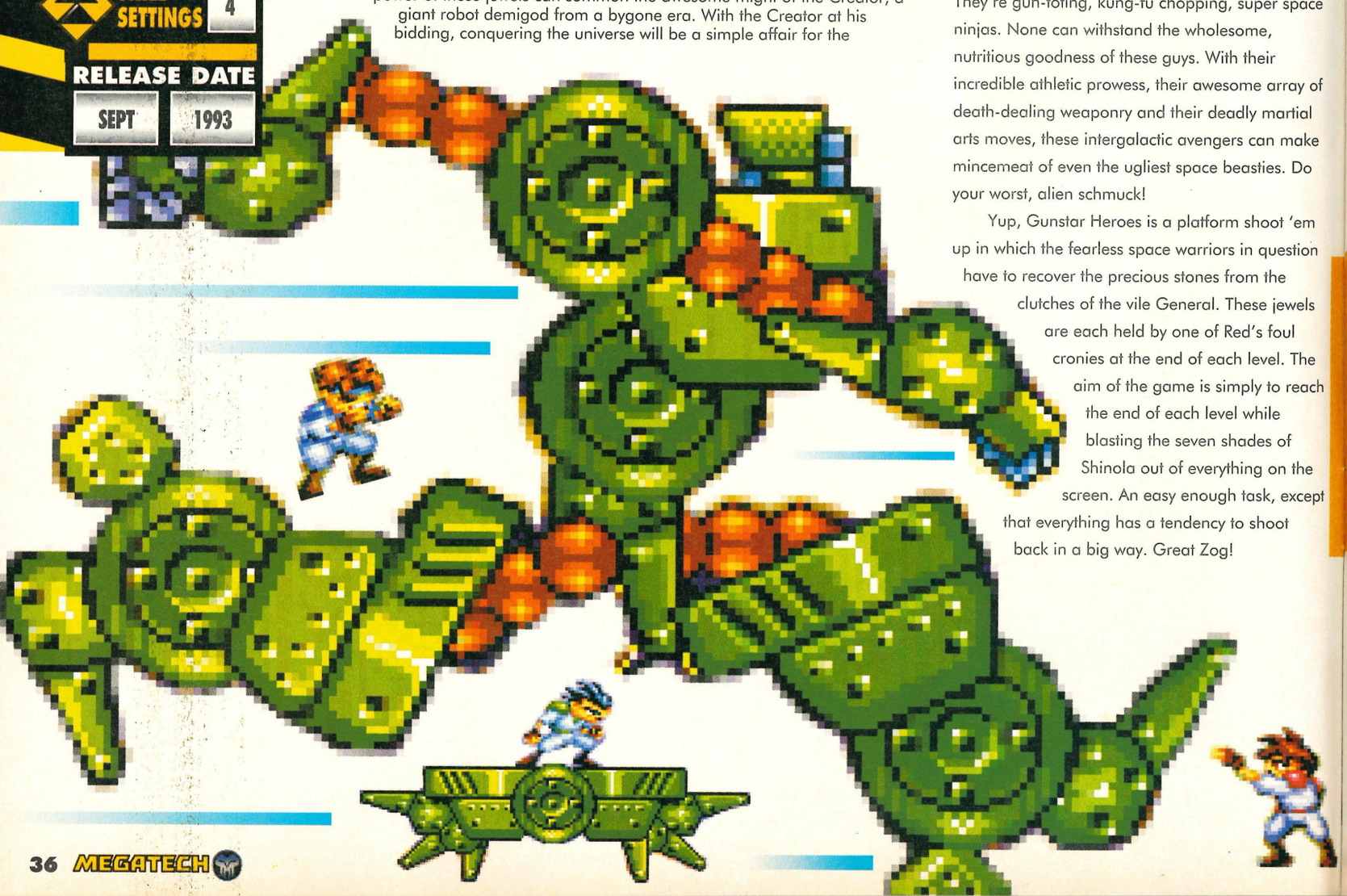
"Hear me, Earth scum. This is the voice of General Red. You've probably heard of me before. I've invaded loads of planets in my time. Loads. And I've made them all bow before me too. Still not familiar? Hey, well, you will be, buddy. Real soon! Even as we speak, my invasion force is passing your moon. Soon my mighty legions will march across this wretched lump of rock you call... Earth. Bah, resistance is useless. Come, kneel before me, puny Terrans. Surrender your daughters to General Red! Mwah-ha-ha!"

Yipes, it's that time of the month again. You know, World invasion by evil super-villain time. Happens as regular as clockwork. Bow, yield, kneel and all that stuff. Sure, sure, and as usual, we're completely powerless to act. But what doom-laden invasion plan threatens the galaxy this time? Read on, Earthling...

WHAT'S YOUR GAME, YOU VILE SPACE WORM?

Seeing as you're soon to perish in my devilish death-trap anyway, I may as well reveal the whole ingenious plot to you. Just to let you know how pathetically futile your attempts at resistance really are.

It's all the work of a villainous character known as General Red. For aeons his soldiers have scoured the galaxy in search of four precious stones. Combined, the power of these jewels can summon the awesome might of the Creator, a giant robot demigod from a bygone era. With the Creator at his bidding, conquering the universe will be a simple affair for the General. By the great moons of Neptune! What shall become of us? Who can save mankind from imminent destruction? The Gunstar Heroes, that's who! The Protectors of the Free. The Guardians of the Galaxy.



DURATION: 60 SEC.

TIMED SEQUENCE

GUNSTAR HEROES AND THE CASE OF THE FLYING BATTLESHIP

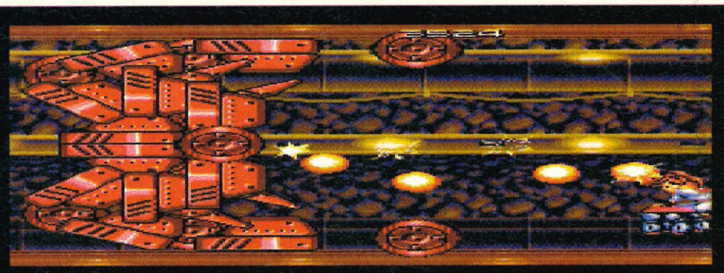
Our Gunstar Hero has just arrived on the scene as Captain Orange escapes in his Flying Battleship with the precious stones in tow. Hurry Gunstar, before it's too late!

AT LAST WE MEET, GUNSTAR HEROES!

They're gun-toting, kung-fu chopping, super space ninjas. None can withstand the wholesome, nutritious goodness of these guys. With their incredible athletic prowess, their awesome array of death-dealing weaponry and their deadly martial arts moves, these intergalactic avengers can make mincemeat of even the ugliest space beasties. Do your worst, alien schmuck!

Yup, Gunstar Heroes is a platform shoot 'em up in which the fearless space warriors in question have to recover the precious stones from the clutches of the vile General. These jewels are each held by one of Red's foul cronies at the end of each level. The aim of the game is simply to reach the end of each level while blasting the seven shades of Shinola out of everything on the screen. An easy enough task, except that everything has a tendency to shoot back in a big way. Great Zog!

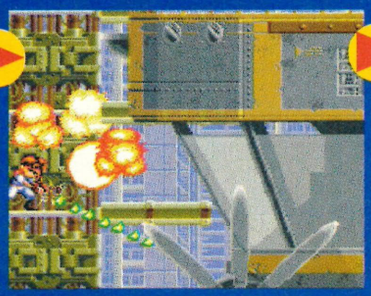
R HEROES



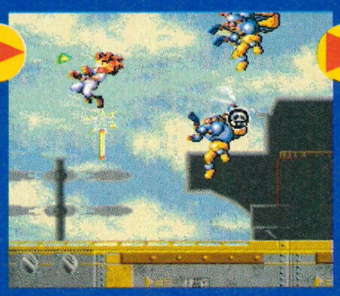




▲ The rocket-ship is leaving the launch-pad! Quick, climb the struts and get onboard!



▲ There he is, the dreaded Capt. Orange! I'm coming for you, you muscle-bound lunk-head!



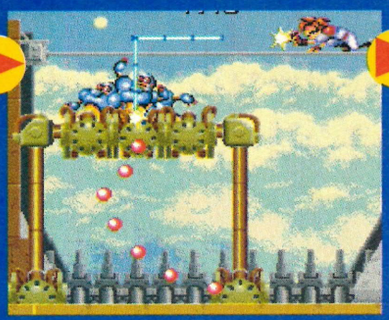
▲ Aboard, just in time, as the ship takes to the air. Aieeee! Flying monkey-boy attack!



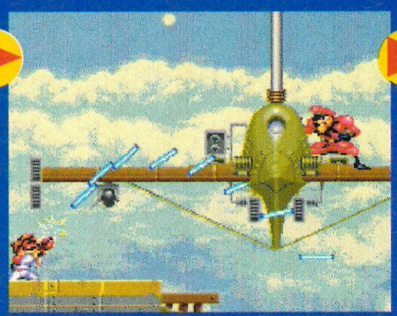
▲ Banzai! It's the Battleship's generators. Destroy them all to reveal a whole jamboree of power-ups.



▲ Holy Toledo! The mid-level boss. Get above it and then shoot away at your leisure.



▲ You cannot stand the might of my homing laser! Collect the heart icons for extra energy.



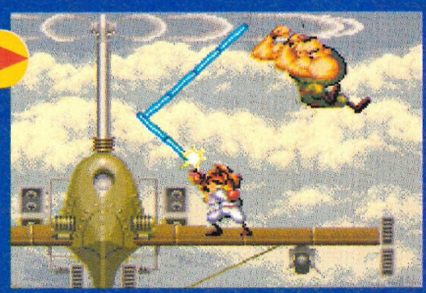
▲ What? The evil General Red, and he's escaping! You're going nowhere, you twisted fiend.



▲Ha! Take that, scumbag! Eh? The plane is plummeting back toward the Battleship. Watch out!



▲ Red Alert! Final Boss time and it's none other than Captain Orange. At last we meet!



▲ Hand over those stones or I'll be forced to... yikes! The legendary Rotor Press in action!

STILL WON'T TALK, EH, EARTHLING?

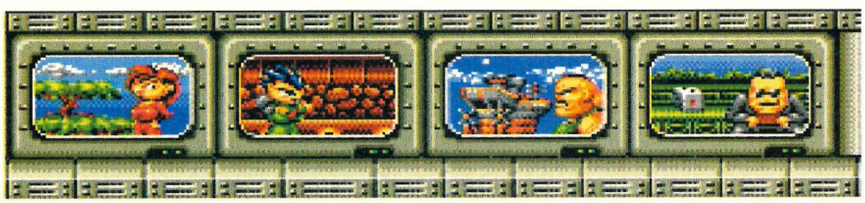
No matter, your tongue will loosen soon enough. Time and a careful twist of the thumb-screws will prove that. In the meantime, let me tell you more...

There's a choice of four different levels on which our heroes can start. It doesn't really matter which one you choose, because you have to do them all in the end anyway, but it gives you a chance to get to grips with each one

First up, there's the Ancient Ruins, a straight forward left-to-right blasting level. A planet populated by sweet, harmless little pea-like creatures has been invaded and the it's up to the Gunstar Heroes to put wrong to right. Our kung-fu kommandos have to battle against enemy troops, flying gun-pods, mutant plants and even wasps whilst racing through alien jungles, pea-creature villages and even up a giant Aztec pyramid, before sliding down the other side at sole-burningly high speed.

As with all good platformers, Gunstar Heroes has a minecart level. Think you've seen it all before? Think again! It's a super-fast rail chase from start to finish and the mine-carts are magnetic – yes, magnetic. Flip your carty high enough into the air and it'll cling to the ceiling and a good thing too, because sometimes that's the only place that's safe to ride, what with enemy minecarts, bomb-trains and even huge locomotives careering through the tunnel. At times the tunnel even switches to a straight vertical drop with the mine-carts racing down the sheer walls. If nothing else, Gunstar Heroes wins the 'Best Minecart Level of the Year' award.

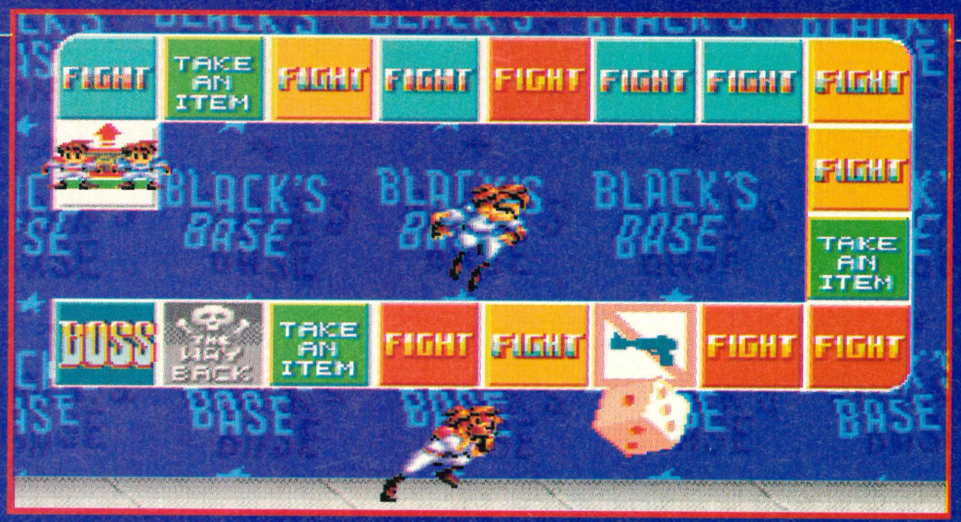
Then there's the flying battleship level. Chasing the huge rocket-ship as it takes off, our heroes have to reach the top of the launch struts and board the craft before it picks up speed. Then it's hair-raising battle atop the sky-ship before leaping





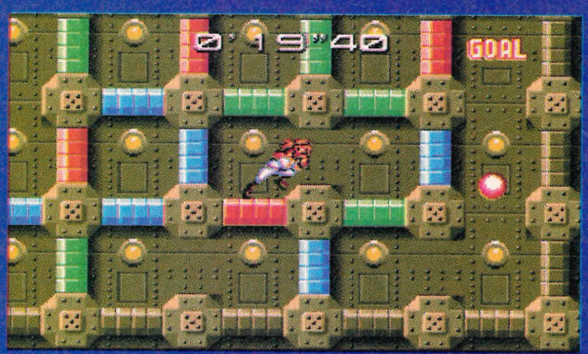
DICING WITH DEATH!

Surely Gunstar Heroes must be the first shoot 'em up to ever feature a board game level? That's right, a board game! Known as the Dice Palace, this level is played just like a real board game, with a huge die (singular for dice) and everything. There's even a 'Go Back To Start' square. Fear not though, this isn't your average Waddingtons-style, 'get-it-out-at-Christmas-only' board game. No sir. Each time you land on a square in the Dice Palace there's always something fun going on. Take a look and see...





VALVALION
This mutated giant tapeworm wends its way around the screen trying to smash you with its huge nut. Just keep shooting!



RUSH AND GO
It's like a out-take from the Crystal Maze, this one. Race to GOAL before the time runs out, punching the coloured doors to go through them.



MELON-BREAD
Not as tasty as it sounds, this huge, leering face floats around the screen attempting to munch you with its pointy fangs. Aim for the nose!

onto a plane for a one-on-one battle on it's wings.

Together with the Dice Palace board-game level, these make up the first four stages of the game, but don't think that it all ends there. The worst comes later.

DISPENSE WITH THE PLEASANTRIES!

Gunstar Heroes is an almighty blastathon of mega-proportions from beginning to end. The sheer variety of action from level to level keeps you on your toes, and it all plays at a blinding speed. Racing down the pyramid, cannon-balling through the mine-cart tunnel. The pace of the game is breath-taking.

And it's not just fast and furious fighting fun. Well, yes it is, but what good fighting fun it is. There's just so much going on. Baddies leaping out of every corner, guns blazing, bombs flying, explosions erupting every second. The blasting action is so intense!

KLAATU BARADA NIKTO, GORT!

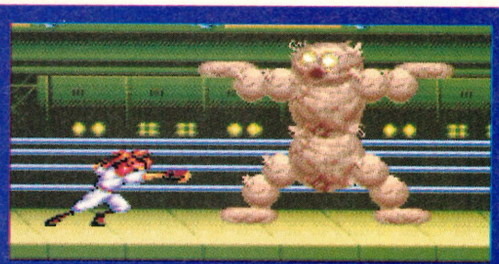
And then there are the bosses. Bosses like you wouldn't believe. And there are so many of them! It's almost like the whole game is one long boss-fest. What's more, each boss is so completely original and, in some cases, totally bizarre. Take the crazy Papaya Dance, a huge cactus that releases spores and giant centipedes. Or Bravoo Man, a giant humanoid made out of packing crates. He even performs Dragon Punches and



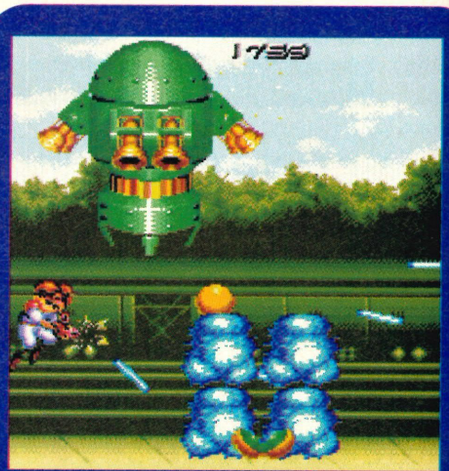
▲ **Take that and that and that, scumballs!**

spinning pile drivers. It's manic! And they're just mid-level bosses, from the SAME level!

Enter the end of level bosses and let the scream-fest begin. Some of them are mind-blowing. I kid you not, when you come up against the Seven Force for the first time you'll plop in your pants (and it'll be runny too). Each robot is so huge, fast and completely lethal. In fact, you could easily except that any one of them is the final boss by itself, not just one of seven. Gibber.

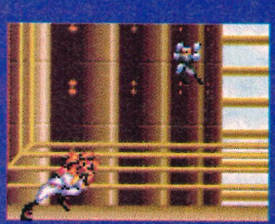


CURRY AND RICE
Even scarier than its bowel-shattering namesake, this humanoid Vindaloo from hell is completely unarmed. Unfortunately, so are you!



TIMERON
It all seems simple enough destroying this bomb-dropping machine, that is until it reverses time and sucks the explosions back up!

MINION SOLDIER
Surely the SMALLEST boss ever seen in a video game! But don't underestimate him – he can perform the deadliest pile driver you've ever seen.



DESTROY!
This poor fella just sits in his vehicle while you blast it to bits. Destroy it before the time runs out for a big points bonus. There's an energy-up in the left-hand box too.



WHAT A BLAST!

When playing a blast-a-minute game like Gunstar Heroes, you need blast-a-minute weapons to keep up with the pace. Fortunately, Gunstar provides the goods in the form of four death-dealing weapons. Powerful as they are, these weapons can be made even more potent by combining pairs of them. Here's a rundown of the best combos in the game.



FORCE
Photon balls that can be fired with pin-point accuracy.

FIRE
The most powerful weapon, but with the shortest range.

LIGHTNING
A blue laser bolt that can cut swathes through the enemy.

CHASER
Green arrows of death that home in on their intended target.



FORCE AND CHASER
Combining the awesome power of the Force with the homing power of the Chaser, this weapon is excellent for mopping up hordes of baddies.



LIGHTNING AND FORCE
The power and accuracy of the Force together with the speed of the Lightning produces this lethal spray laser. No need to aim, just wave the gun!

LIGHTNING AND CHASER
Homing laser beams of doom. An excellent weapon for disposing of the bosses, aiming directly for their weak spots.



DOUBLE-BARRELLED GUNSTAR FUN!

As the old saying goes, two Gunstar Heroes are better than one. Just as well then, that the game features a rather nifty two-player option, so a friend can join you in your mega-death-dealing mercy mission.

Identical in every way, except that one is red and the other one is blue, the two heroes can battle together onscreen, even throwing each other around. It's more fun too. For instance, the board game level takes on a whole new dimension with the dynamic duo battling for control of the dice roll, so that they can move ahead on the board.

However, don't go thinking that double the players makes the game doubly easy. Not a chance. In fact, if one player dies, in order to rejoin the game they have to steal half of the other player's vitality making the game extremely frustrating if your partner happens to be a complete gamesplaying baboon.

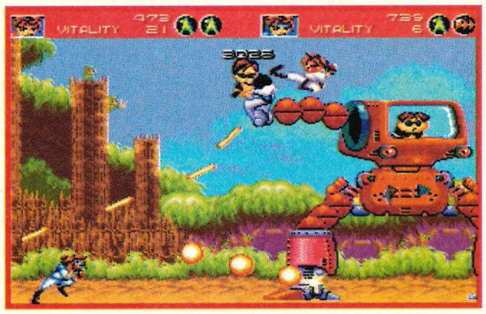


▲ **Leave my train alone, you fiends, and join me in a lambada.**





▲ **Ugh! Look what I found in my lettuce.**



▲ **What's that, folks? He's behind me?**

EAT EARTH FIST, O'MEHON!

It's super-fast, it's action-packed and it's packed with herds of monstrous bosses. So, it's pretty good then? Yes, of course it is. It's better then good, it's brilliant! Gunstar Heroes is so damned playable you wouldn't believe it. The way the main sprites leap and flip around, they respond so perfectly to the controls. It's spot-on. The mixture of beat 'em up and shoot 'em up action is balanced just right. Together with the sheer pace and variety of the action, it all makes for an incredibly addictive game.

And it's challenging too. On 'Normal' it provides a fairly decent challenge, but if you think you're pretty hot, try 'Expert'. It'll blow your socks off. There are so many baddies everywhere, you can hardly move. Finally, a game that proves to be a real rock-hard challenge!

I must mention the two-player game too. This is one of the best two-player blasters I've ever played , ever. Trying to get through the game with another player is excellent fun, unless your side-kick is particularly rubbish and keeps stealing your energy.



VORTEX BASE
A nuclear reactor gone mad! Aim for the core, but watch out for the deadly streams of neutrino rays it blasts around the screen.



HAPPY ITEM ROOM
The Community Chest square of the Dice Palace. Land on a Happy Item square and you get free run of all the power-ups inside.

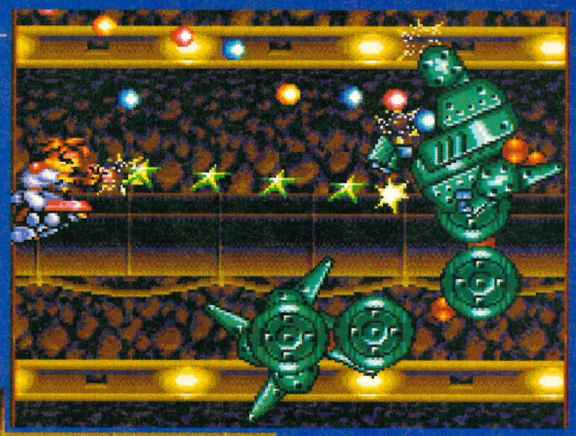
PUT AWAY YOUR PUNY EARTH WEAPONS!

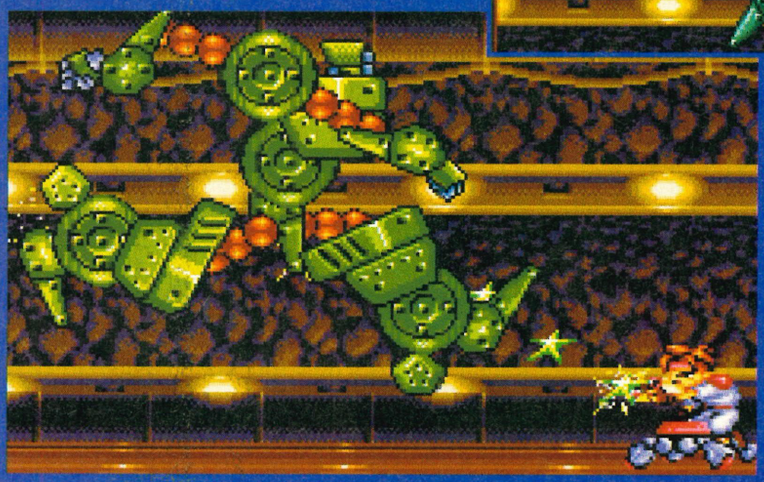
But what about the graphics? I mean, I like top-notch playability, but I want my games to look good too. Well, fear not, because Gunstar Heroes looks incredible, with amazing full-colour backdrops and brilliant-looking sprites. There's just so much attention to detail it's unreal. Take the Minion Soldier – his face must be only about four pixels in size, but even he sports a pair of little eyes. In fact it's difficult to believe that all these colours and this ultra-fine resolution is coming out of a Megadrive.

The animation is just jaw-dropping too. The main characters are fantastic. Some of the most impressive sprites I've ever seen in action. Their movement is so fluid, they're like little puppets.

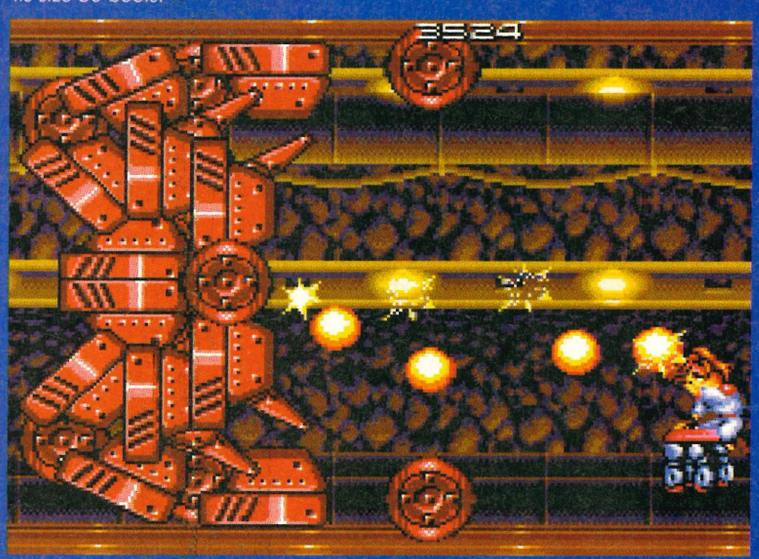
SEVEN GO ON A KILLING SPREE!

Huge, terrifying bosses are the name of the game in Gunstar Heroes. However, there is one group of gargantuan guardians that puts other so-called 'awesome bosses' to shame. Meet the Seven Force, a septet of deadly mechanoids that appear at the end of the hectic mine-cart chase. How many of these monstrous metal maniacs our heroes have to face depends on what difficulty level the game is set to. For instance, play on Normal and you have to face five of the randomly selected opponents. Here's a look at this magnificent seven in detail.





SOLDIER FORCE
The Windsor Davies of the game, Soldier Force charges after our heroes throwing parts of its body at them, firing out it's extendable arm and stomping over them in its size 80 boots.



CRAB FORCE
It'll take more than an ointment from the doctor to get rid of this chappy. Scuttling backwards along the screen, this mechanical crustacean fires photon globes and bits of its claws.



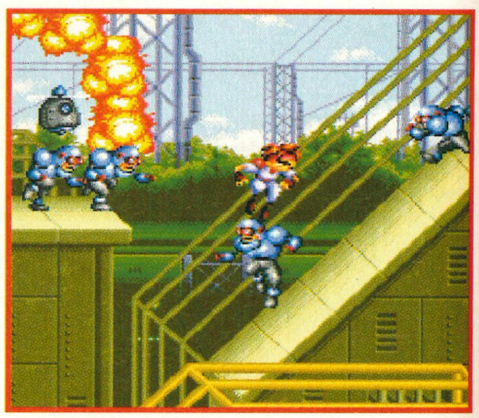
TAILS FORCE
No, not Sonic's foxy young chum. This giant, metal sperm swims around the tunnel spewing lethal bingo balls at our heroes and swiping its huge tail about. Hence the name Tails Force.

TIGER FORCE
Here boy, fetch! This animal automaton races down the tunnel wagging its tail behind it. And watch that tail, because it conceals a self-targeting laser and photon cannon.

ALTERNATIVELY

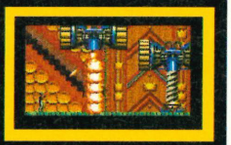


85 ALISIA DRAGOON
by SEGA
PRICE: £19.99
More platform shoot 'em up fun, this time with a magical madam and her four dragons. Highly recommended,



▲ **Man, my back feels really heavy. I'm tellin' you fellas, I need a holiday.**

ALTERNATIVELY



80 ATOMIC RUNNER
by SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
Alien invasion time again, but this time the Atomic Runner is on hand to save the day. Good, challenging, blasting fun.



▲ **How embarrassing, I can't believe we all came to this party wearing the same blue capes. And we all forgot our starfish, too!**



The bigger sprites are just as impressive. The huge bosses, running, jumping, throwing, spinning. The giant gun-boss on the mine-cart level even kicks back when it fires. Just brilliant. Even with so much happening onscreen and so many sprites, there's still next to no flicker or slowdown, although sometimes it does show up on the Expert setting, but that can forgiven because the screen is so chock-full of sprites. I'm amazed the machine can handle it at all.

MY PLAN HAS FAILED. I AM UNDONE!

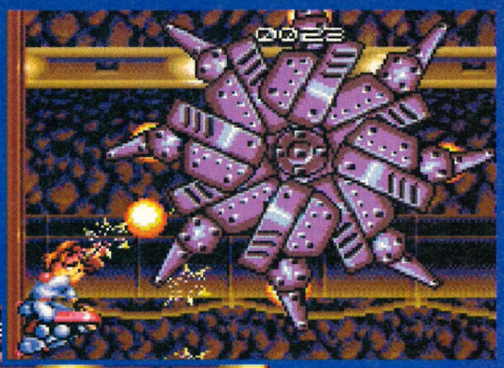
Often the most neglected part of any game is the sound. Not so here. Racy techno tunes add to the whole pace of the action. And the spot-effects are so powerful – clanking metal, laser sounds, explosions. Is this really the Megadrive sound chip at work? The whole atmosphere of Gunstar Heroes is increased ten-fold by the game's sounds.

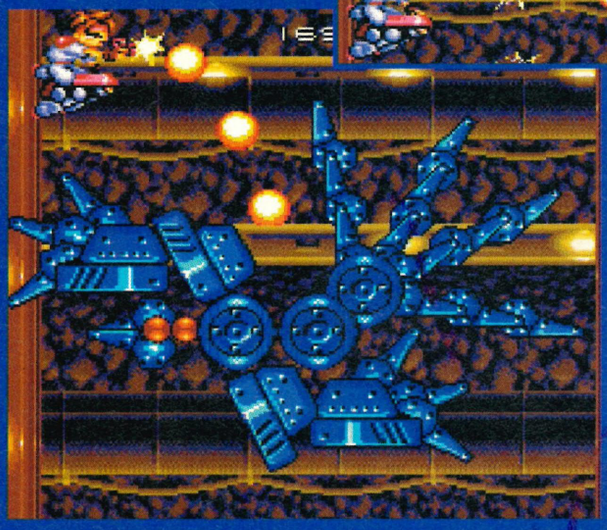
UNTIL THE NEXT TIME, TERRANS!

Gunstar Heroes is just brilliant. It has to be the first game I've played in a long time that actually feels like a real arcade game. If I saw this game in an arcade, I'd definitely have a go.

Without a doubt, Gunstar Heroes is my favourite Megadrive game this month, perhaps ever. I can't remember a Megadrive game that has scored so highly in every category before. Gorgeous graphics, superb sound, awesome animation, great gameplay, plenty of fast-paced action and high in the originality stakes, Gunstar Heroes really is a breath of fresh air. It laughs in the face of the Super Nintendo, it laughs in the face of the Mega-CD. This is what the Megadrive is all about. Mega-blasting arcade action, short and sweet. If there's one game you buy all year, make it this one. The best Megadrive shoot 'em up around.

EAGLE FORCE
Watch the birdy! This deadly bird of prey clanks it's way up the screen in a series of rigid poses. The trick is to slide through an opening before getting chewed up by its hard, spiny body.



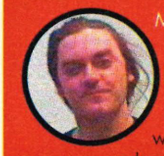


URCHIN FORCE
This spine-covered wheel of doom bounces it's way up the walls of the tunnel, spinning like a circular saw in an attempt to churn our mine-carting buddies to death.



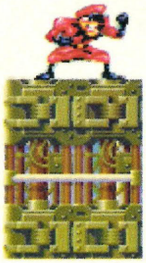
BLASTER FORCE
The largest hand-gun in the world and boy, does it kick back! Stay out the way of its barrel as it spins around to cock itself and keep blasting as it reloads its magazine. You feelin' lucky, punk?

THE SECOND OPINION



Mark Holmes

Well shoot me full of laser-holes and stick a flamethrower up my backside, this sure is my idea of what an action blaster should be – adrenalin-pumping speed, lots of smart weapons, frantic non-stop action with a million-and-one baddies coming at you almost constantly throughout the game... all this and a completely mental two-player option as well! Not only is this game a massive buzz to play (especially if you crank the sound right up – the effects are ear-bogglingly perfect), a lot of original thought has been put into it too, which makes it a real refreshing blast. Buy it, plug it in, turn it up and it'll blow you away!





▲ **Hello, little boys. Fancy a ride in my train? I can see you like the clench of my fist, laddy. Step inside.**





▲ **Mind the gap, mind the gap. Stand clear of the doors, please. And quit shooting, you little bastards!**

DOING THE GUNSTAR!

Those trigger-happy, ninjascopic space crusaders are some of the finest animated sprites ever seen in a video game. In fact, they do everything except go to the toilet. Not convinced? Take a look below at some of the hottest moves seen since Breakdance 2: Electric Boogaloo.



▲ **They can run...**



▲ **jump...**



▲ **slide..**



▲ **shoot..**



▲ **throw each other...**



▲ **punch...**



▲ **hang from things...**



▲ **flip...**



▲ **...and somersault**

RATINGS



PRESENTATION 93%
Smart title screen and intro, good options and select screens.

GRAPHICS 96%
Great animation, superb backdrops, mind-blowing sprites.

SOUND 94%
Tunes and spot effects from aural heaven.

SHORT TERM PLAY 97%
Instantly playable, instantly fun.

LONG TERM PLAY 95%
A tough game in NORMAL. A rock-hard game in EXPERT.

OVERALL 95
Definitely the best arcade game on the Megadrive. Get it or regret it.

MEGADRIVE REVIEW



MEGADRIVE REVIEW



BY: SEGA



8-MEG

STYLE



PLATFORM

PRICE £39.99

PLAYERS 1

SKILL SETTINGS 2

RELEASE DATE

AUGUST 1993



You must excuse TOM GUISE's ravings, but ever since he saw the new Spielberg movie he's become an intolerable dino-groupie. Will Sega's game of the film live up to his massive expectations?

JURASSI

Jurassic Park! What a great movie. The greatest show on Earth, that's what it is. I mean, take those dinosaurs, they look so real. In fact, I bet they are real. Yeh, that's right, real dinosaurs. It's easier than using special effects anyway. They've probably lived for millions of years, hidden away on a tropical island that can only be found via a subterranean cavern. And that Steven Spielberg, he just happened upon it whilst searching for the Lost Eye of Thundera or something. Him and his cute sidekick extra-terrestrial, on their pet shark, Bruce. Ahem, anyway, like I said, it's the greatest show on Earth and now Sega have turned it into a Megadrive game. Tyranno-riffic!

WELCOME TO JURASSIC PARK!

But what is Jurassic Park? If that's the question running through your head at the moment, you must have been buried in peat bog for the last couple of months. Turn on your TV, go into any shop or restaurant, look at people's t-shirts – the whole world has gone dinosaur crazy and all because of this Jurassic Park thing.

Jurassic Park is a theme-park, but not an ordinary one. It has no roller-coasters or ferris wheels. It doesn't even have a Tunnel Of Love. But it does have one thing that even Disney World hasn't got – genetically-engineered dinosaurs, extinct creatures recreated through the miracle of science, to live again. However, these creatures, the rulers of Earth for over 120 million years, are not going to allow themselves to be imprisoned by over-evolved apes. During a tropical storm they escape from their holding-pens and start eating the humans. That's the plot of the film (the one by Steven Spielberg that features real dinosaur actors) and it's the plot of the game too. So there you go.



▲ **The map of Jurassic Park. Look closely and you can see the large brachiosaurs grazing at the bottom! Ha, just kidding, saps!**

WHAT HAVE THEY GOT IN HERE? HING HONG?

Jurassic Park is a platform game. Well, what do you expect? It is a film licence, after all. Taking the role of superhero paleontologist Alan Grant (played by Sam Neill in the film), the aim is simply to escape from the island alive.

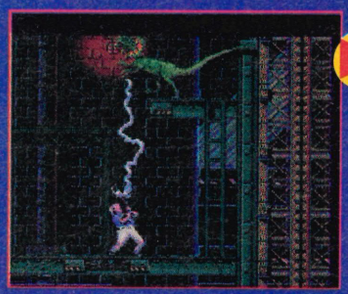
Fortunately, Grant isn't powerless. Using his mastery of the ancient art of Kung-Fu, his psychokinetic shape-changing powers and his lethal eye-beam energy rays, he is more than a match for his arch-foe-Flex Mentallo, Man Of Muscle Mystery. Just kidding, he can't really do any of that stuff at all, he's just a normal, boring old bone-merchant.

Using his mastery of the ancient art of running and jumping, Grant has to negotiate his way to the end of each dinosaur-infested level. Starting in the tropical jungle terrain of the park itself, the game moves on to spooky caves, the Jurassic Park power station, dinghy rides on the raging rapids, the pump station and even the inside of a volcano before the final showdown in the Visitor's Centre. And naturally, those pesky dinosaurs are everywhere just waiting to make a meal out of Grant. Run, run!

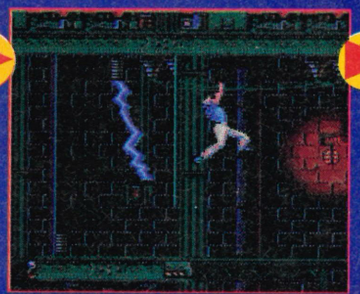
DON'T FEED THE DINOS!

Things sure are looking grim for everyone's favourite fossil expert, but it's not as hopeless as it seems. Luckily enough, those sloppy Jurassic Park work-people have left things scattered around the landscape. Not everyday things like soft drink cans, fish and chip wrappers or cigarette butts. We're talking high-powered tranquilliser darts,

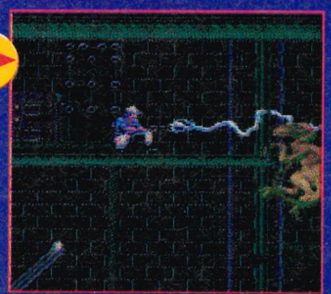
SEQUENCE TIMED DURATION: 60 SEC.



▲ **Deep in the power station. Look out, Grant, above you!**



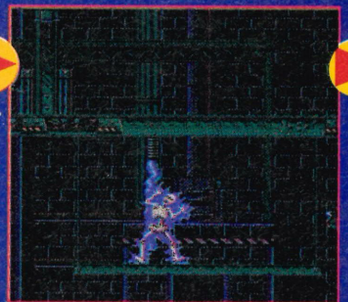
▲ **Now, along this rope. Eek, watch out for that crackly bit.**



▲ **Raptor! One taser bolt to the tonsils should sort him.**



▲ **Phew, that was close. Now up this electrified net. Watch out for the current.**

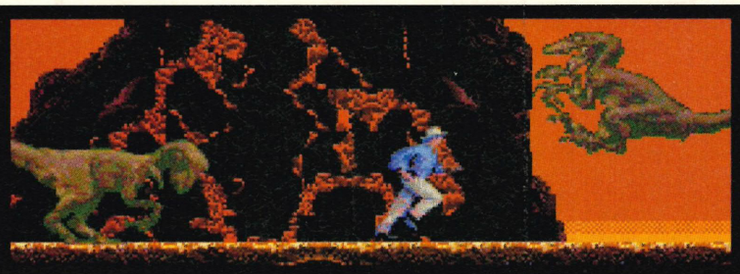


▲ **Ha, I've avoided all the electricity. Wha...nyamumum!**



▲ **Easy peasy, this level was a cinch. Hang on, what's that hot stench of rotting flesh? Scream!**

C PARK



stun grenades, incendiary bombs, and even rockets. With these weapons in tow, Dr Bones can bring even the most deadly Tyrannosaurus Rex out in a cold sweat by drawing a bead right between their eyes. Bam! Turn 'em into fossils, Grant. Bwa-ha-ha!

THANK JOHN FOR A LOVELY WEEKEND!

So, the game has dinosaurs (and they're real dinosaurs too, don't forget), death-dealing weaponry, terminator paleontologists and it's called Jurassic Park. Well, it must be great then. Right? Well, no.

For starters, it doesn't capture any of the feel of the film. The film was fast, a real white knuckle ride of thrills and spills. The action in the game, on the other hand, is paced so slowly. It's very similar to X-Men, gameplay-wise. Just a case of running around, picking things up and shooting at the dinosaurs when they happen along. Where are the thrilling jeep chases with T-Rex hot on your heels? Or the bit where you're trapped in the kitchen with two velociraptors, knowing that if they so much as see you, you're dead meat on a stick? There's nothing like that. It's all run, shoot, jump, run and run again. Pah!

DINOSAUR ATTACKS!

And speaking of the deadly velociraptors, where are they? This game is just full of pathetically wimpy ones who collapse after taking the puniest shot from a dart gun. It kind of takes the edge off the whole game, considering they're supposed to be the most lethal killing machines in existence.

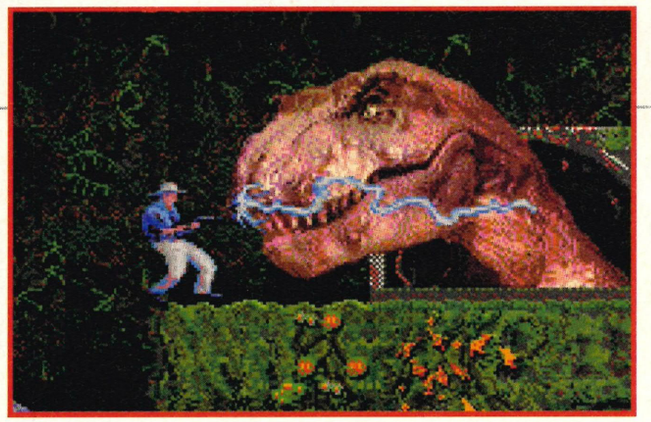
Then there's the mighty Tyrannosaurus Rex. Yeh, him and all his T-Rex pals who pop up around the game, and what mischievous blighters they are. Sticking their heads through little holes in the wall, popping their heads through flood drains, or even just shoving their heads through windows. They look like those people who put their faces through holes in cardboard pictures at Blackpool. You know, the pictures that make people look like fat women or gorillas.

Bizarrely enough, the deadliest creatures in the whole game are those tiny green 'Compys' who nibble at your ear-lobe. Now that looks really painful. Ow, gerroff!

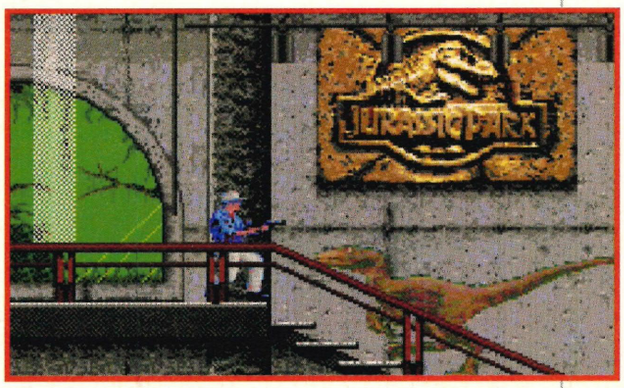
YOU DIDN'T SAY THE MAGIC WORD!

However, just because the dinosaurs are such wimps it doesn't mean this game is easy. It isn't. But that's not because of all the fiendishly constructed levels or tricky situations you have to overcome. In fact, the levels are really quite predictable and the puzzle element requires you to do little more than push a box under a high ledge and other such peanut-rewarding tasks. Nope, it's all down to the game's fiddly control system. I spent most of one day just trying to get through the river boat level. Why? Because the stupid dinghy kept dropping off the edge of the waterfalls. You have to get the moves precision perfect and with these controls that can be quite a task.

Take the pump station level on the raptor game. There are these little platforms sticking out of the water



▲ Ooh, ooh, ow! Stop with the gun, mate. I'm not gonna hurt you. I'm stuck in this pipe. Help us out. Just climb in my mouth. (Snigger!)



▲ If you follow me this way, everyone, you'll see a live raptor. Everyone? Where are they? Raptor? Scream!



▲ Hey, you can't fly you dumb ape!

THINK THEY'LL HAVE THAT ON THE TOUR?

Now here's something you don't usually get in other games, the option of playing either the hero or the villain. Super fossil-master, Alan Grant, or the Velociraptor, the choice is yours.



MAN

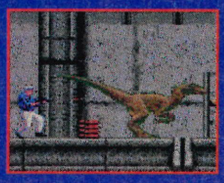
Play Alan Grant and all you have to do is escape the island alive. Easier said than done with vicious packs of Velociraptors after you and of course, the dreaded T-Rex to face. Gulp! Here's what the fossil finder can do.



KICK DOORS OPEN
A million years of evolution behind him and Alan Grant still insists on using his feet to open doors. Pathetic.



CLIMB LADDERS
Harking back to those jungle days before man strode the great savannahs, Grant is an adept climber – of ladders.



SHOOT WEAPONS
Ah, the creation of tools, man's greatest achievement. Grant can use man-made weaponry throughout the game.



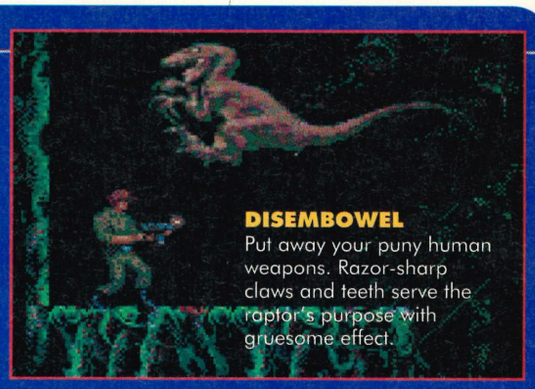
SEEK FIRST AID
Ow, that hurts. Luckily help is on hand in the form of this handy box of band-aids and cotton wool. There, there. All better now.

VS

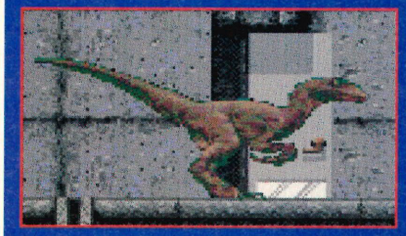


RAPTOR

Escaping from captivity, you, as the raptor, must catch Alan Grant before he escapes the island and warns mankind of the dinosaur threat. Watch out for taser-wielding soldiers and other electrical appliances.



DISEMBOWEL
Put away your puny human weapons. Razor-sharp claws and teeth serve the raptor's purpose with gruesome effect.



USE DOOR HANDLES
Where Grant uses his feet, a dumb old dinosaur can open doors with his hands. Who's the walnut brain now?



JUMP UP HIGH
Raptors can't use ladders, but they can jump. In fact, they can jump even higher than a ladder. That's because ladders can't jump. Heh.



EAT CHICKEN
In the film, the raptors nourish themselves on the still-living flesh of humans, here the delights of fried chicken serve their purpose.



and you have to jump from one to the other, but the jumping is so erratic that you tend slip and miss, over and over again. And – wouldn't you believe it? – the game always sends you back to the beginning of the level. Aargh!

The annoying thing is that it's obvious what you're supposed to do and how you're supposed to do it, but it's just so damned fiddly to do. At this rate, it could take 65 million years to finish the game. It's tortuous!

WHERE'S THE GOAT?

However, fiddly controls aside, the game isn't all that bad. Okay, so the levels are all pretty samey and don't capture the feel of the film at all, but the game is still quite enjoyable in its own right. Its appeal comes from the challenge of trying to beat each level. You know you can do it and, damn that control system, you will. It can get quite tense when you're almost at the end of the level and your energy is low. All you can think is, "I'm not going to die. I not going to do it again. Those bloody dinosaurs had better not get me." It's a kind of fun, I suppose.

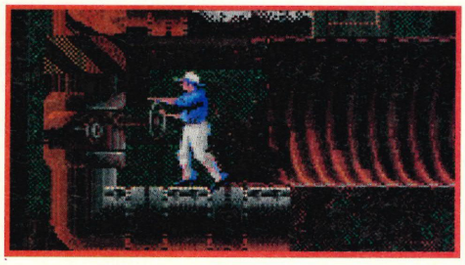
And of course, it's the dinosaurs that make the game. If it wasn't for them, this would be a very ordinary platformer. Maybe it's just the hype surrounding dinosaurs at the moment, but they do make the game fun. When you first confront T-Rex as he comes blasting through the wall it's quite exciting and funny too. When he lunges forward and eats you, now that does make you jump.

DID ANYONE HEAR THAT?

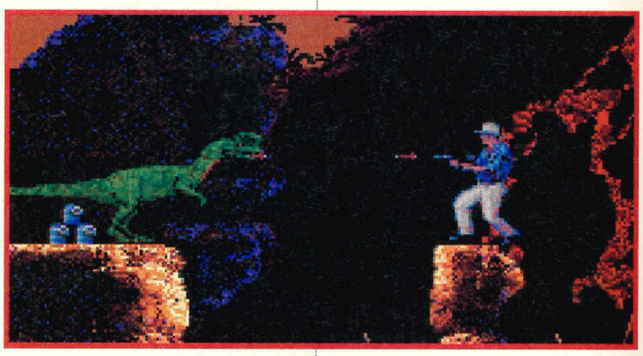
And talking of the dinosaurs, they look pretty darned good too, especially the T-Rex and the velociraptors, which seem to have been digitised from the actual models used in the film. They move quite realistically (not quite as realistically as their film counterparts though), lunging, running, looking around. The animation is impressive.



▲ **Teddy? My sweet pet triceratops, where are you? Scream!**



▲ **Broom, broom... screech! Parp! Hey, move the wreck, buddy! Vroom!**



▲ **"Wha... a dilophosaurus! Scream!"**



▲ **Goddam these pathetic little arms of mine. I can never**

In fact, on the whole the graphics are quite top-notch. There's some lovely attention to detail. If you look carefully, you can sometimes see baby dinosaurs hatching out of their eggs in hidden pipes and crevices. Little touches like that. However, there's also a fair amount of sloppy graphic work. Some of the jungle back-drops look distinctly patched together and the animation on Grant when he jumps makes him look like Penelope Pitstop.

The same double standards apply for the sound. The tunes are quite bland, and in places inappropriate, but some of the dinosaur sounds are excellent, with their screeching bird calls and deep, booming roars. Special mention must go to T-Rex who appears with the Sega logo at the beginning of the game and roars "Say-Ga." I like it.

WHEN YOU GOTTA GO, YOU GOTTA GO!

Well, in the final analysis, I have to say I do like Jurassic Park. It doesn't instantly grab you, but given time it does prove itself as quite a playable platform game. Even the dodgy controls become bearable with time. The simple concept of getting through dinosaur-infested levels produces quite an addictive formula and you will come back until you've finished the game – both games. The idea of playing a velociraptor is neat too, it's fun playing the bad guy for a change and getting to munch the humans is great.

Not a great game, just a fairly good one. If you're looking for another platform game you could do far worse than this, and if you're a Jurassic Park fan the dinosaurs should satisfy your fever, but don't expect it to live up to the movie. It's not that good. But come on, that was *some* movie. Those dinosaurs – real, I tell you. Real.



▲ Grief! Jump, Danny, you cuddly raptor, you. That crazed ladybird is right beneath you!



▲ What? Your nuts are trapped? I'll get help!

ALTERNATIVELY



82 X-MEN
by SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
Similar to Jurassic Park in looks and gameplay, but with a two-player option and a tad more in the fun department.

ALTERNATIVELY

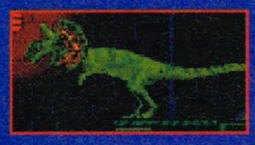


95 FLASHBACK
by US GOLD
PRICE: £44.99
Vaguely similar to JP, but much better. More exciting, more variety, more challenging and mind-blowing graphics. Get.

WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH!

You'd never believe it, but Jurassic Park is full dinosaurs – real dinosaurs too, none of that 'special effects' rubbish. Anyway, if you're the kind of person who can't tell their Triceratops from their spinning tops, here's the full lowdown on all the attractions to be found at Jurassic Park.





TRICERATOPS

Translated as 'three-horned face', so-called because it has three horns on its, er, face, the Triceratops is a peaceful herbivore. However, disturb its grazing and you'll feel the brunt of its multi-pronged attack.



BRACHIOSAURUS

One of the largest types of dinosaurs ever to walk the Earth, these huge sauropods are just gentle giants. Use them as stepping stones to reach high ledges, or scare them off with grenades.

DILOPHOSAURUS

The deadly 'spitter' dinosaur. The dilophosaurus fires gob into the eyes of its prey, blinding and paralysing them, so that it can feast at its leisure. In the game however, this spit just steals your energy.







TYRANNOSAURUS REX

King of the Terrible Lizards, the mighty T-Rex was the largest carnivore that ever lived. In the game he's completely invulnerable, but the flash of an explosion should blind him long enough for you to pass. But run!

PROCOMPSOGNATHUS

Ahh! They look such harmless creatures, but don't be fooled. These nasty little scavengers can leap up and savage you severely. In the book they actually ate the faces of human babies! When they rear up on their hind legs, watch out!

VELOCIRAPTOR

Able to run at cheetah speed and jump to incredible heights, the raptor kills its prey by disembowelling it with the razor-sharp middle claws on its hind legs. As intelligent as chimpanzees, they can even open doors.

%RATINGS



86% PRESENTATION
Attractive intros, decent options and T-Rex at the beginning.

85% GRAPHICS
Digitised dinosaurs, but poor animation in places.

78% SOUND
Bland tunes, okay spot-effects. Good dinosaur sounds.

81% SHORT TERM PLAY
First impressions are okay and it's fairly playable.

73% LONG TERM PLAY
Samey, but fun levels. Two types of game. But no lasting appeal.

OVERALL 77
If you need a dinosaur fix, this should suffice, otherwise it's quite uninspired.

THE SECOND OPINION



PAUL GLANCEY

You might have thought that with Jurassic Park being the eye-popping spectacle it is, Sega would have done something spectacular with the game. But no, here we are with another example of the old jumping-around-platforms-with-a-gun scenario that we've seen dozens of times already. The dinosaur graphics are quite smart, but there's nothing new to the gameplay, except maybe the option to play the velociraptor, but even that seems to lack the excitement you might have expected. It's a competent game, but it doesn't do the film justice. Hopefully the Mega-CD version (which is a completely different game) will be a bit busier in the thrills and spills department.

65 MILLION YEARS IN THE MAKING!

- Out in October is the Mega-CD version of Jurassic Park. The first Mega-CD game to be developed at Sega's Multimedia Studio in California, it features fully-digitised first person graphics and Sega's revolutionary Q-Sound system as used in Ecco CD (reviewed this issue).
- The dinosaurs in the game have been animated using the same stop-motion and soft-imaging techniques used to bring the film's creatures to life and the sounds have been sampled from live reptiles at the Okefenokee Swamp.
- Add to this the live-motion Tru Video Dinosaur Film Guide, featuring a paleontologist dissecting a chicken, and the whole package looks like it could be THE Mega-CD game of the year. We'll keep you informed, until then keep your eyes on the trees.

MEGADRIVE REVIEW





BY: SEGA

SEGA™

8-MEG

STYLE

BEAT 'EM UP

PRICE £39.99

PLAYERS 1

SKILL SETTINGS 3

RELEASE DATE

SEPT 1993



Since an early age, TOM GUISE was brought up by monks in the Himalayas, so he seemed like the ideal person to review Shinobi 3. Oh no, that wasn't Tom – he was brought up apes in the amazon. Oh well...

SHINOBI

The time has come once again for the Shinobi to return to the land of men and in this, Joe Musashi's third outing on the Megadrive, it's the age-old formula of platform and beat 'em action that we all know and... krrk... whirr... whoa – déjà vu! You know, those words, they seem so familiar, it's almost as if I've written them before. In fact, I have – way back in February, when we reviewed Shinobi 3: Return Of The Ninja Master. But that's the name of this game? What's going on?

THE RETURN OF THE NINJA MASTER – AGAIN!

So, why am I reviewing Shinobi 3 again? Well, I'm not, sort of. Yes, this is Shinobi 3, but it isn't the same Shinobi 3 we saw way back in February. That game doesn't exist any more and, as far as the gamesplaying public are concerned, it never has done. After the first batch of lukewarm reviews the game received, Sega took the latest episode in their top ninja saga back to their secret workshop hide-away deep in the snow-capped mountains of Tibet and reworked the whole game. The result is this all-new, revamped, ninjascopically superior Shinobi 3. The Ninja Master truly has returned!

THE EVIL MASTER-PLAN!

Here's the plot, ninja lovers. Zeed are back. Yes, that foul league of villainous super-ninjas are up to their old tricks once more. And what fiendish master-plan have they got up their unwashed kimono sleeves this time? I'll tell you. Nothing short of total world domination, that's what. Okay, so that was the plan last year and the year before, but hey, you can't keep a good master-plan down and besides, this time things are going to be different. Ho yes, this time the Zeed are going to inherit the Earth. They are unstoppable!

However, there is hope! Enter Joe Musashi. If anyone can halt the accursed Zeed in their dread designs, it's this man. Trained in the ancient ways of ninjitsu, he is the Shinobi, master swordsman, athlete extraordinaire, top continental chef and all-round super-fly guy. Go, Joe, go!



▲ **Razor-edged boomerangs? Pah! Machine guns? Phooey! Nothing stops Joe Musashi, master of the art of ninjitsu!**

THE WAY OF THE NINJA

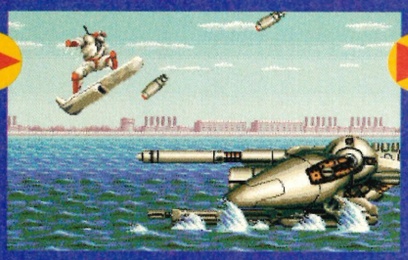
There are seven levels of Zeed-infested mayhem for our plucky ninja hero to negotiate. Starting in his forest homeland, our hero has to fend off evil ninjas and basket-headed blow-dart merchants, before heading for the outside world through a secret

DURATION: 60 SEC.

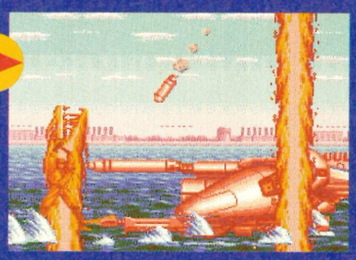
TIMED SEQUENCE



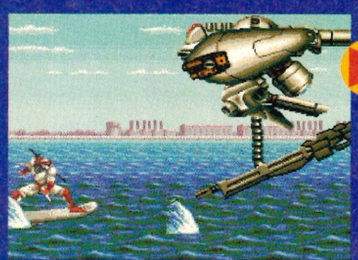
▲ **Tra-la-la... what a lovely day for surfing... but what's this skimming the waves in the background?!**



▲ **Why, it's some vile Zeed weapon equipped with ninja-seeking rockets! Leap! Leap or die in an explosion of sweat, snot and gore, Mr Musashi!**



▲ **Sharp knives alone cannot combat this metallic behemoth, but nothing withstands the power of Kariu magic!**



▲ **Except this thing. See, it even has the cheek to point its laser cannon in Joe's face. It could have his eye out with that!**



▲ **Yooch! Lucky he was wearing his laser-absorbent ninja garb! But one more hit on his primary shin-pad and he's done for! Surf, Joe, surf for all you're worth!**



▲ **Got him! Ha ha ha ha! But... URK! As it sinks beneath the waves it looses one final shot which strikes that weakened shin-pad. It's all over for Joe!**



RETURN OF THE NINJA MASTER



underground pass filled with bottomless pits, katana-wielding samurai and yet more ninjas.

Later levels include an evil genetics factory, where Joe is attacked by mutant experiments like winged brains and giant earwigs. Euch! There's a giant robot factory, filled with gun-toting commandos and even a battle atop a giant space-craft.

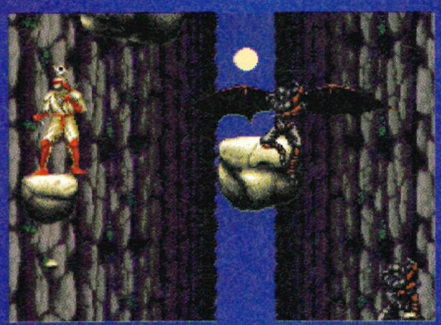
One of the most difficult levels in Revenge Of Shinobi was the final maze level. Well, that has been reproduced here too, only this time it's even tougher – there are all manner of deadly traps like hammers, spikes and hidden dart guns lining the way.

However, it's not all platforms. Level two actually puts Joe on horseback, leaping hurdles and attacking running ninjas, whereas level four sees him on a powered surf-board, flipping off ramps and battling hover-bikers. He can even use his board as a ram, bashing it down on the heads of those evil baddies.

NINJA IN PLATFORMS!

It's platform time again, folks. The Shinobi series of games have always been some of Sega's most popular and, realising this, the programmers have kept the formula of Shinobi 3 very close to that of its legendary predecessor, Revenge Of Shinobi.

As before, Joe can perform all his usual stunts – somersaults, throwing stars, ninja magic, low kicks – they're all there. However, Joe can now perform a whole range of all-new moves. Most notable of these is the fact that he can run – something that, bizarrely enough, he couldn't do before. What's more, Joe can now follow up his ninja sprint with a highly effective sliding sword attack. Other moves include the ability to swing across the ceiling, rebound off walls and even perform a devastating diving kick.



▲ Look on in awe as Joe braves vertigo!



▲ Witness the power of his ninja magic!



▲ Gasp as he hunts the robot slaves of Zeed on horse-back, then chops them into their component parts!



▲ See him perform surfboard aerobatics!



▲ Watch him sustain third degree burns in terrifying watersports accidents!



BIG BOSS

Then there are the end-of-level bosses. Unlike Revenge Of Shinobi, which featured such celebrity villians as Spiderman, the Terminator and Godzilla, the bosses in Shinobi 3 are relatively unknown. But that doesn't make them any easier to defeat.

There's a new mutated version of Blue Lobster (the samurai boss from Revenge Of Shinobi), who now sports four arms, a giant skinless genetic freak that reaches out to crush Joe with its huge hand, a massive robot that screams, shaking chunks of masonry from the ceiling, and even a strange mechanical orb that has the ability to reverse Joe's movement making it very tricky to avoid its laser blasts.

Meanwhile, waiting behind the scenes at Zeed HQ is the dreaded Neo Zeed, the long-haired demon master who kidnapped Joe's bride, the beautiful Naoko, in Revenge Of Shinobi (although where she is in this game is a mystery). Once more, he uses his lethal locks as a weapon, flicking poisonous hair-pins at Joe (yes, honestly!)

However, is Neo Zeed really the master-brain behind the plot this time? Or is he just the puppet of some even more powerful demon? Hmmm.

▲ Readers! Can you 'Spot The Ninja' and win a million pounds? Not in this mag, that's for sure!

HAI-YA!

So, it's got platforms, it's got ninjas, it's got smart bosses and it's a Shinobi game. It must be great then? Well yes, yes it is!

When I saw the original version of this game back in February, I must confess to being disappointed. Having been a huge fan of Revenge Of Shinobi (it was one of my first Megadrive games, sigh), I was expecting great things and I didn't get them. It was dull, samey and lacked that addictive Shinobi edge. Well, I can honestly say those problems have been ironed out. With the exception of some of the bosses, everything about this game has been changed and the result is a complete success. Shinobi 3 is brill.

For one thing, the

levels are brilliantly put together. At first they all seem a bit ordinary, but later on, the action really hots up. One level requires our hero to keep jumping on falling rocks in order to stay on the screen. All this and he has to fight winged ninjas too.

Then there's the maze level, this ingenious section really keeps you on your toes as you try to reach the correct door, which is always the hardest to get too. As for the last level, with electric walls and moving platforms everywhere, it really is a hardened reflex test.

Another thing that made Revenge Of Shinobi so smart was the amount of invisible power-ups that were hidden throughout the game. At first I thought this feature had been ommited from this sequel. However, after playing it through the second time round, I noticed a vertical tunnel at the top of the screen which led to a hidden room. The game is packed with them. In fact, sometimes you can choose between racing from left to right across the screen and completing the level, or clambering up the screen to find loads of power-ups.

ORIENTAL FLAVOUR

Of course, another thing that made Revenge Of Shinobi so satisfying was the powerful ninja atmosphere the game exuded. Well, Shinobi 3 has much the same feeling. Although there aren't things like the downtown Tokyo or Chinatown levels in this game, it still captures that strong oriental flavour thanks to the brilliant graphics.

Likewise, the sound is great too. Composed by Yuzo Koshiro (the man behind the fantastic Streets Of Rage and Revenge Of Shinobi tunes) the music really is superb. Plenty of strange oriental-sounding instruments and wood-block noises play throughout. It's like an episode of Monkey or something.

NINJA SPIRIT

Great action, fast-paced, briliant graphics, but is it challenging? Well, in truth I did finish the game after in a couple of sessions. However, that was on the Easy setting and the only difference between the difficulty settings in this game is the number of lives you start with. On Easy, because you start with seven lives, it's very easy to keep using Mijin magic on the bosses, a power that wipes out one life but causes extreme damage. So, in effect, it's cheating. To be honest, I'm not so sure I could complete this game on Normal or Hard. That would take some practice.

ALTERNATIVELY

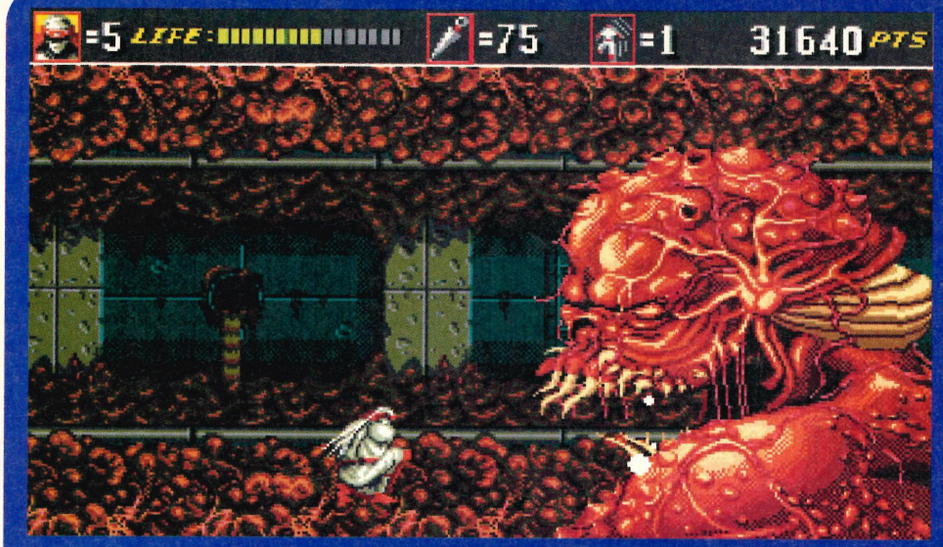


93 REVENGE OF SHINOBI
by SEGA
PRICE: £19.99

One of the first and best Megadrive platform games. Fun and challenging, even if you get Shinobi 3, you've got to have this too.

TOTALLY NINJASCOPIC!

Overall though, Shinobi 3 is a brilliant game. I may have finished it on Easy, but I still want to go back and play it on the harder settings. It's just so addictive. This revamped Shinobi 3 really has produced the goods. It's excellent looking, action-packed, full of secret rooms, has great bosses and is highly atmospheric. It may not be as hard as Revenge Of Shinobi, but it's definitely more fun. Fans of Revenge Of Shinobi will love this, and for those of you that have yet to try out the Shinobi saga, this is your chance. Shinobi 3 is one of the Megadrive's best platform games.



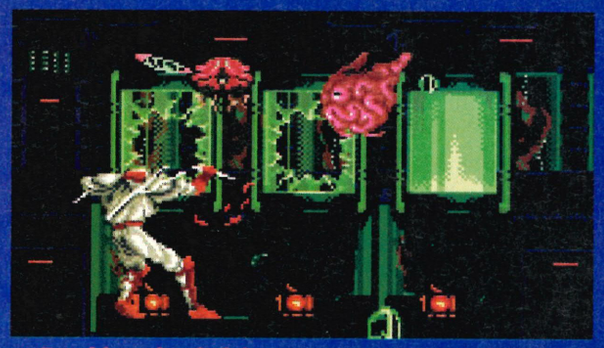
▲ **Grooh! Zeed's peons take on all sorts of nasty, spectacular forms in this game!**



▲ **Formation Robot Dancing in action. Here we have the ceremonial Zeed 'Sword and Shield' Polka.**



▲ **Joe gets in a quick prayer before embarking on the laboratory level.**



▲ **Breaking glass! Flying brains! Who could ask for anything more?**



▲ **Run Joe! Avoid the poo-beast's laser targeting system or it'll be the worst for you!**

THE SECOND OPINION



PAUL GLANCEY

It's obviously testament to their high regard for one of their most popular characters that Sega actually took the original version of the Shinobi 3 game back to their programmers – not just for a few gameplay tweaks, but to nigh-on reprogram the whole game! The results are worth the extra effort though, because what we have here is one of the best Megadrive action games around. The graphics and sound are really excellent and the gameplay is much faster and more intense than in the first game. Having said that, it does seem to be a much easier game overall, but that's mainly because Joe is now a much more versatile character with a wider range of attacks, and he can use his new hanging and jumping-off-walls moves to save himself in situations which would have meant certain death in the first game. This is definitely a tremendous game, but if you buy it make sure you don't give in to temptation and play on the easy level or you'll find you've cracked the whole thing in a day or two.

%RATINGS



PRESENTATION 90%
Smart intermissions, the usual options. Excellent overall.

GRAPHICS 92%
Great sprites, neat animation, lovely backdrops. Some smart effects too.

SOUND 91%
Excellent oriental tunes and decent spot-effects.

SHORT TERM PLAY 95%
Very playable, very addictive. Excellent fun.

LONG TERM PLAY 91%
Easy level is too easy, but it's good to come back to.

OVERALL 93
Brilliant. One of the best platform games on the Megadrive. An essential buy.



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MEGADRIVE REVIEW



BY: SEGA

SEGA™

8-MEG

STYLE

SPORT

PRICE £39.99

PLAYERS 1-4

SKILL SETTINGS N/A

RELEASE DATE

SEPT 1993



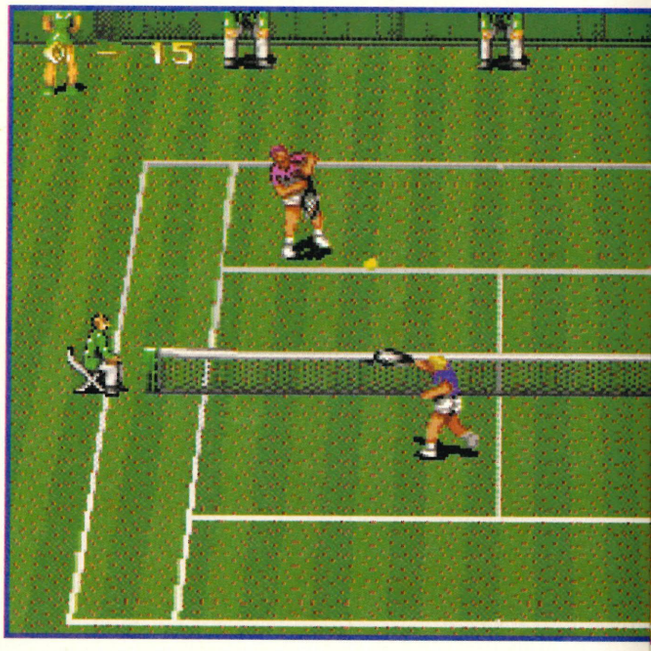
MARK HOLMES, no stranger to the world of shorts, sweaty training shoes and a terminal addiction to Robinson's Barley Water, takes a smash at the latest Megadrive tennis game.

WIMBLE

And the tennis games for the Megadrive just keep on coming! In the July issue we reviewed two – the imported David Crane's Amazing Tennis and the smart and soon-to-be-officially-released Davis Cup Tennis. André Agassi has just recently reared his head to put his name to another lacklustre tennis sim, and here's Sega's own-brand effort, licensed by the All England Tennis and Croquet Club themselves, no less. By the time it comes out in September, it will have missed the fever of the real Wimbledon fortnight by a good three months – a case of bad timing for sure, but how does the game compare to the rest of the tennis pack?

COURT OFF-SCREEN

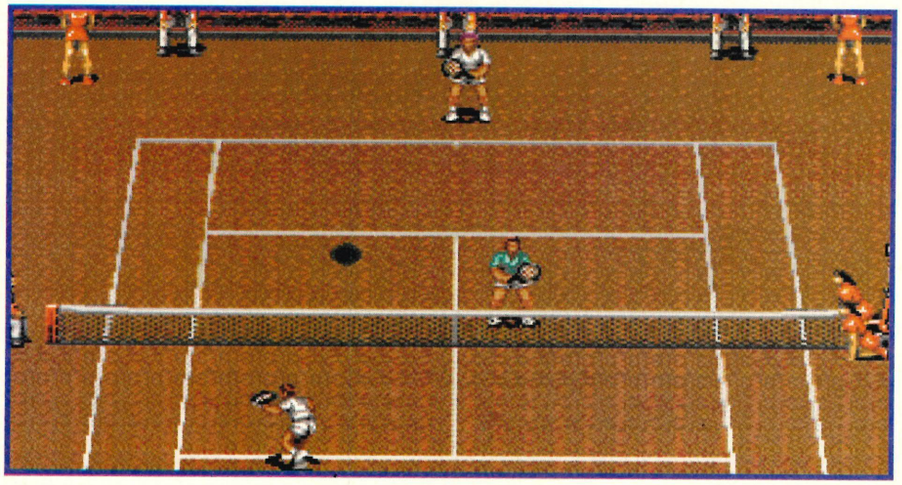
The first thing that you notice when you start up a tennis game is, of course, the viewpoint. This game opts for the top-down approach, very similar to André Agassi Tennis, which gives you the kind of view you'd probably get if you'd climbed up onto the roof at one end of the Centre Court. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, but there's definitely a problem with the view of the bottom end of the court. The screen has been cropped so that the baseline nearest to you is just visible at the bottom of the screen, although at the top end the view reaches right up to the line judges sitting up against the famous green Wimbledon backdrop. The players swop ends after each game, although the view stays the same. This means that if you're at the bottom end of the court, it's almost impossible to play a baseline game due to the fact that your player keeps on disappearing off the screen when trying to return a smash or long lob, because the screen scrolls down too slowly.



▲ **The 'overhead smash to the goolies' in full effect.**

DOUBLE FAULT

The speed at which the game runs is another immediately noticeable thing – it's pretty darned slow. The ball seems to float through the air like a small yellow balloon, unless you're doing an overhead smash (and even that doesn't look fast enough to stir up much chalk dust). The players aren't very fast on their feet either, so the whole game trickles along at a sluggish pace, generating very little in the way of excitement. The most ridiculous thing about the game is the way the players move about – they waddle around the court, waving their arms in the air, like arthritic grandparents who've had their tennis shoes filled with concrete and their laces tied together.



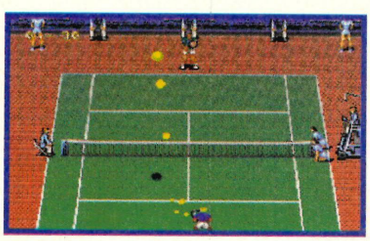
▲ **Hard court four-player simultaneous doubles action – a bit of a laugh.**

MINE'S A DOUBLE

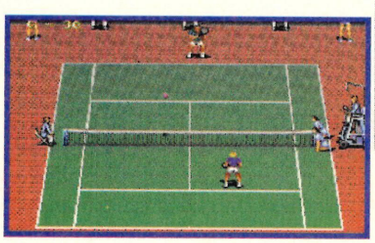
Okay, that's enough downers for now, what about the uppers – it must have some, surely? Well, yes it does. The best one is that the game is compatible with the Sega Tap four-way adaptor, allowing four-player fun and games when playing doubles. Having said that, though, I firmly believe that *any* sports game is more fun when four players get involved, and there's nothing in Wimbledon to raise it above any of the other four-way sports games I've played. Every other combination of up to two human players and two computer players in singles, or up to four human players and four computer players in doubles, is available (yes, that's right – you can even watch the computer playing itself, wow).

All your usual bunch of tennis game options are here, too: the choice between a one-off exhibition match of one to five sets or a tournament (Wimbledon, of course, but you have to win three qualifying games to get into the contest); a choice of players with varying skills and strengths (there were 12 to choose from in the version I saw) and the option to play on clay, hard or lawn courts (the Wimbledon tournament is grass only though, of course).





▲ **Locus Display in action.**

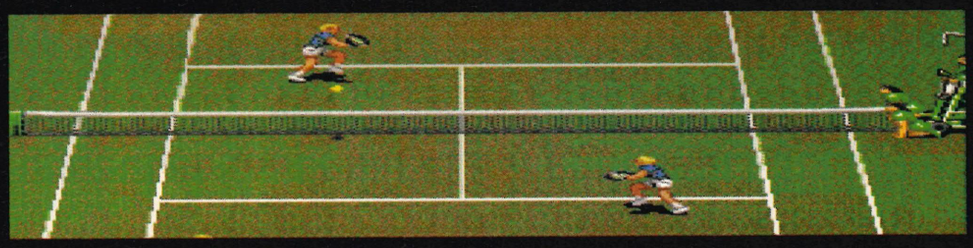


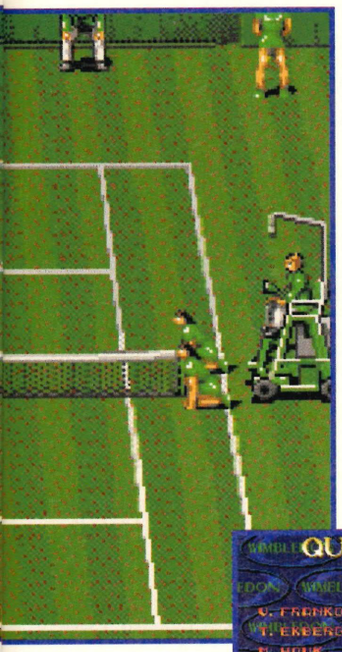
▲ **Hard court means high bounce.**

BOUNDING BALLS

Wimbledon also gives you some 'helpful' options to assist you in your quest for perfect timing and ball control. There's Colour Signal, which turns the ball from yellow to pink when you should be making your shot and actually works; Locus Display, which gives you that

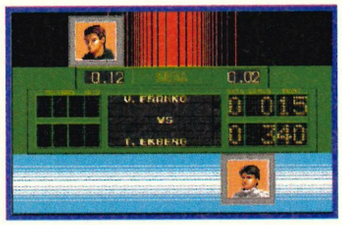
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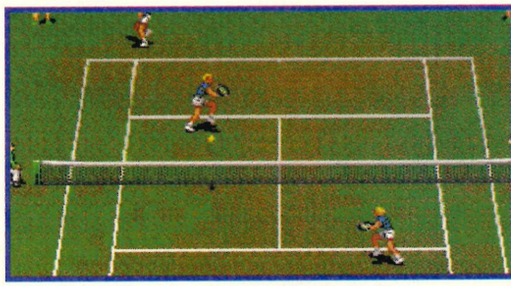




▲ The scoreboard appears after each game is over.



▲ It's that scoreboard again.



▲ A doubles rally in full flow.





▲ The Wimbledon qualifying draw.

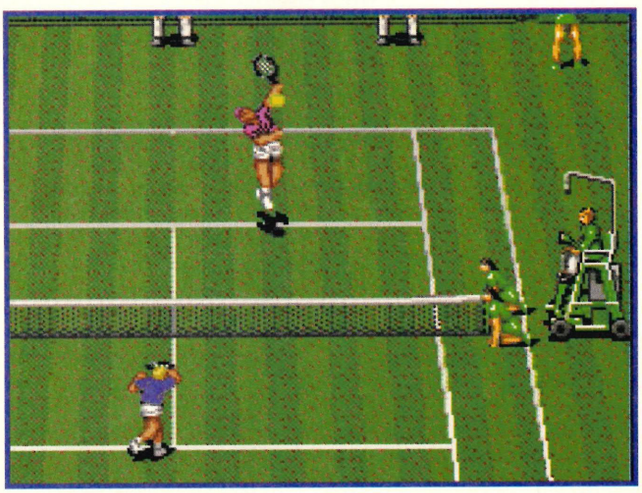
'stop motion' effect on the path of the ball and just confuses your eyes; Timing Chime, which seems to be a noise to help you time your shot, but fails dismally; and there's the strangely-named Bound Pointer, which indicates where the ball will bounce as it comes over the net. In fact, I found that using the Colour Signal and the Bound Pointer was a big help when I first started playing the game, as it's very difficult to get your timing right when you're first getting used to the controls.

UMPIRE'S DECISION

I found it pretty difficult to get a good game of tennis out of Wimbledon. Despite the various 'special effects' designed to help your ballplay, it's hard to get your timing right as the collision detection seems a bit erratic – sometimes you make contact, sometimes you don't – which makes it frustrating to play. The game lacks the playability of Davis Cup Tennis and would have done better if it took a leaf out of that game's book by keeping the human player in the foreground, making the judging of shots less of a hit-and-miss affair.

Playing against the computer is by no means easy, especially when you're trying to qualify for the Wimbledon tournament itself because your players' skill ratings go down due to the fact that you're playing against seasoned professionals.

One of my biggest complaints about the game is the fact that the screen is cropped in too much at the bottom end of the court, giving a cramped, confined feeling and giving a definite advantage to the player at the top end. The way the players move around like a bunch of lobotomy cases, the poor graphics in general and the way the umpire calls the scores in awful, Dalek-like digitised speech all bring the game down too. The fact that this is the only four-player tennis game to be programmed so far is a definite advantage, but if you can live without that, you'd be much better off going for Davis Cup's superior gameplay.



▲ An overhead smash beats the Ministry of Silly Walks.

THE SECOND OPINION

PAUL GLANCEY



This looked pretty good when I first switched it on, mainly because it at least looked better than the André Agassi game. But the main problem quickly becomes apparent and that is that the pace of the game is very slow, giving the appearance of playing in lunar gravity. It's just too slow to be exciting, and if you put a bit of effort into it you can keep a rally going for absolutely ages. Try as I might, I could find no skill setting which upped the pace of the game, and even playing on the hard surface or selecting a stronger player didn't pep things up much. Further oddness became apparent when I was playing against Mark. The ball was clearly going out by a good couple of pixels and the computer wasn't spotting it. That wouldn't have been so bad if an option such as Davis Cup's questioning of the umpire had been included, but you just have to accept it. Davis Cup is easily the better game, and if you've still got a yearning for Megadrive tennis you'd best get that.

%RATINGS



PRESENTATION 65%
Pretty basic. Could do with more options.

GRAPHICS 65%
Over-cropped screen. Sprites have mobility problems.

SOUND 60%
Awful music. Dalek-like digitised speech.

SHORT TERM PLAY 60%
Difficult to get shots timed right.

LONG TERM PLAY 70%
Difficulty & four-player option could maintain interest.

OVERALL 65
Lacklustre tennis game with the advantage of a four-player mode.

MEGADRIVE REVIEW





BY: CORE DESIGN

8-MEG

STYLE



PLATFORM

PRICE £39.99

PLAYERS 1

SKILL SETTINGS 3

RELEASE DATE

SEPT 1993



Chuck Rock? RADION AUTOMATIC is more likely to chuck up, especially after a few shandies. But despite his lack of prowess in the boulder-throwing department, we let him review Core's stone-age sequel, Son of Chuck.

CHUCK II S

Poor old Chuck Rock, eh? His penchant for stone-age-type puns and the like make him something of a target for cavemen with a more highly-developed sense of humour. One such purveyor of advanced joke-mongering is the evil, insidious Gary Gritter, who made a laughing-stock of our Chuck by kidnapping his bride-to-be, Ophelia, in the original Chuck Rock adventure. In this sequel, the animosity between the Rock and Gritter families continues to grow, with Chuck Junior entering the fray to continue the feud into the next generation.



ANCESTRAL HOSTILITY

In Chuck II, Gary Gritter's evil half-twin, Brick Jagger, is the protagonist. The story goes that Chuck now runs a successful car company, having obviously time-warped to the late 1800s when they'd invented cars, while Brick is the MD of the rival Datstone Corporation. He also has good taste in jokes.

Jagger doesn't like rivals on his patch, so he sent a couple of his heavies over to make Chuck an offer he couldn't refuse (ie: "Nice family you've got there, be a pity if somefing... 'appened to 'em. Oops, butterfingers.") Being the caveman hero he is, Chuck naturally told them where to jolly well get off, but unfortunately the last year-and-a-half behind a desk had done nothing for his fighting skills, and despite the fact he slaughtered an army of huge dinosaurs in the last game, he was eaily overpowered by the two blokes and promptly kidnapped.

But those thugs reckoned without Chuck's heroic baby son, Chuck (oh, ho-ho). On hearing of his beloved parent's disappearance, Chuck Jnr swiftly grabbed his trusty club and made for Jagger's hideout. What a little star!

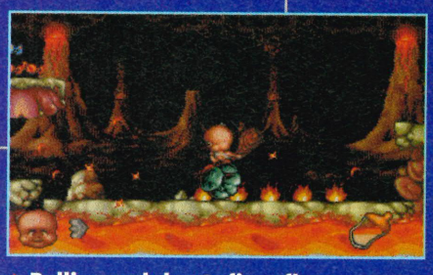
BABY ROCK STAR

Actually, there's a bit more to the plot than that, and it's all explained in a rather natty new animated intro sequence. The game has also changed – gone are Chuck's ugly features, rock-throwing and belly-butting. In are Jnr's cutesy face, nappies and a whacking great club.

Little Chuck (who will be referred to henceforth simply as Chuck, whereas his father shall be renamed Chuck Snr, or Pops or something like that), is capable of a new cavalcade of moves. For staters, there are his club-swinging skills, allowing him to attack whilst on the ground or jumping. His club allows him to destroy enemies, set off helpful traps (more on those later) and bash away parts of the background to reach new parts of the level. Chuck can also climb on top of his club to avoid indestructible hazards, such as flames shooting across the floor. There are also points in the game where Chuck can set the end of his club alight, allowing him to see in dark caverns and the like.

DRIVIN' AND SWINGIN'

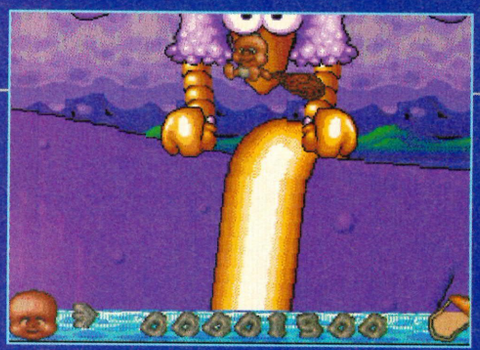
Chuck has uncanny natural riding abilities – should he stumble across a friendly dino on his travels, he simply needs to jump aboard for a free journey. These dinosaurs can take up to five hits before their loyalty wavers and they run away, so they give our baby-faced chum valuable protection for a while. He's also quite



▲ Rolling rock beats fiery flames.



▲ Hit the dino and make a bridge.



▲ Hitch a ride on the archaeopteryx.

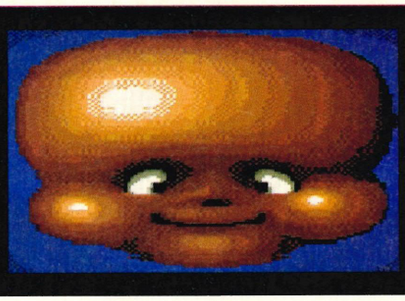


▲ Venus Flytraps turn Chuck into a caveman cannonball.



▲ The sinking lava tree – hop, Chuck!

ON OF CHUCK





▲ An evil caveman eats splinters.



▲ Chucky gurgles through the waterfall section.



▲ Rock man catapults Chuck into the air.

good at swinging on ropes – which is pretty handy, as there are loads of them about – and as the game progresses, Chuck needs his wits about him to swing from vine to vine without geting horribly killed.

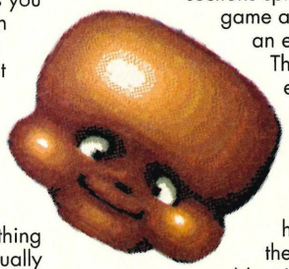
PLATFORM ROCK

The main action of the game is nothing particularly new, sticking to tried-and-trusted platform territory. However, the way it's all handled is pretty nifty. For instance, there's the cave stage, where Chuck wanders through a pasage illuminated only by the feeble light of his torch, so there's a small circle of light around him, but everything outside that is pitch black. There's also the tree-climbing level, with quite a nice display of rotation if ever there was one. In fact there's plenty of variety in the locations, from standard platform levels to rafting zones and cliff-climbing sections.

ANIMAL BATTERING

Loads of traps lie in wait, ready to trigger, which raises the puzzle element of the game a few notches. Traps are triggered simply by hitting them. However, unless you play the game in Easy mode, you have to work out where the traps are yourself. It's made a bit easier by the fact that the traps aren't tripwires or anything like that, but actually helpful dinosaurs. For instance, if there's a large gap stretching both horizontally and vertically, try hitting a coiled-up snake, which might just unravel into a useful set of steps. Need to cross a firey waste? Smack an elephant and watch as it spurts water over the flames. Need to cross a big chasm? Sneak up to a sleeping tiger and thump it.

However, there are those creatures that would hinder you, and there is a different method of disposal for each of these. Feed bananas to errant monkeys, or smash a bees' nest to scare off bears. This sort of problem-solving isn't too taxing, but it does provide a break from the runny-jumpy action.



[redacted]

Th sections spread throughout the game also help to bring in an element of variety.

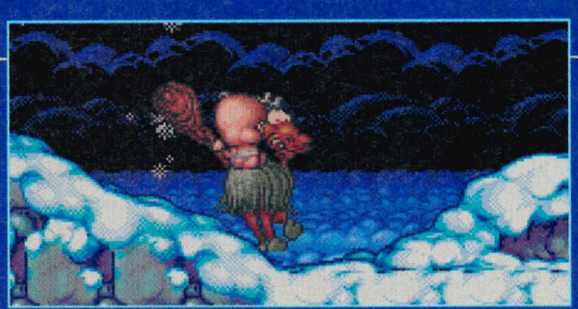
The first is a relatively easy case of knocking as many apples out of a tree as possible within a given time limit, with a trampolinosaur helping Chuck reach the higher fruits.

Next is a horizontally-scrolling river race where pad-bashing skills are required to beat Chuck's two opponents to the finish. Button-smacking is again the order of the day in the statue-carving bonus level, where Chuck hits a big block of stone until it resembles a fine figure of his doting father.

The final bonus stage is – wait for it – a mine cart level. Yes, that ubiquitous stage you find in every thouroughly modern platformer, although this time there's a dinosaur pulling the cart and Chuck simply has to defend himself until the end of the rails.



▲ Chuck can balance on his club to avoid nasties.

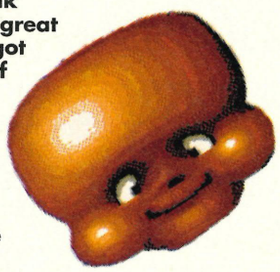


▲ Morgan moose makes a reluctant steed!



A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

How you'll get on with Chuck Rock 2 depends entirely upon how you feel about platform games. If, for instance, you're heartily sick of them and think you've just about had enough of the stinking sight of them, then there's not much in Chuck Rock II that'll change your mind. If you think platformers are great or you haven't got (m)any games of the type you'll probably like it a lot.



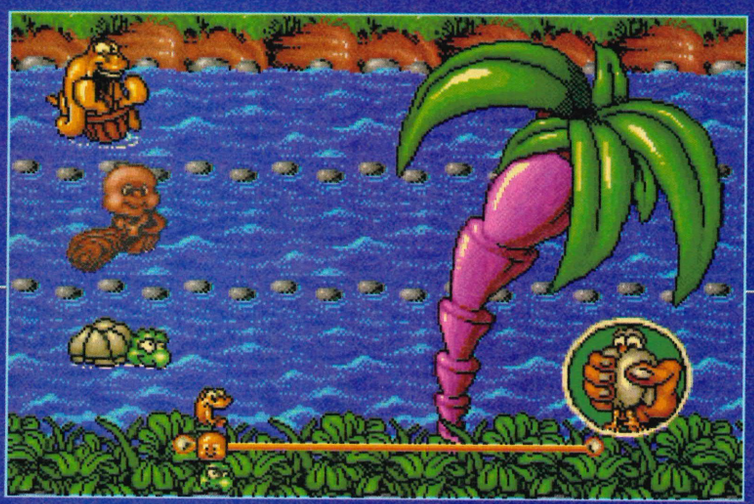
Chuck Rock II has an awful lot going for it. The graphics are great – very polished and very detailed, with loads of smart touches. The torch and tree-climbing sequences are particularly impressive. The sprites all have the distinctive style set by the first Chuck Rock game, and there's been more use made of the bash 'n' go dinosaurs. There's a lot more depth to the gameplay too, what with the rideable dinos, the dual-level play levels which let Chuck hide behind certain fences and so on, which makes Chuck II altogether a more rounded game than the original, although it is lent a more sombre tone by the colour scheme, which is generally quite dark.

The only trouble lies with the lack of any real invention. Just about everything's been done before, so if you're bored of the whole platform scene, you won't exactly be refreshed by the proceedings. If, however, you're on the lookout for a challenging, long-lasting and enjoyable platform title, Chuck Rock II could indeed be the answer to your prayers.





▲ Dippy the Dinosaur rears his ugly head, while Chuck beats a blubberman.



▲ Manic button-bashing is the way to win the bonus raft race.



▲ Carve the stone with Chuck's club for extra points.



▲

THE SECOND OPINION

MARK HOLMES



Having really enjoyed the first Chuck Rock game, I was looking forward to playing this sequel, and I'm glad to say that Core Design have maintained the high quality of the original. Chuck II is graphically excellent, superbly animated and, as Rad says, gets hard pretty quickly, so it presents a real challenge for the avid platform gamer. Despite the exclusion of Chuck Snr and his hilarious belly-butt, the new character of young Chuck with his different approach to dispatching the nasties more than makes up for it (although his cry-baby antics when he loses a life can get a bit annoying). There are loads of neat touches in the game, although I'll have to agree with Mr Automatic's comment that there are no revolutionary new features in the game. But hey – when a game is as good-looking and as playable as this, you can't really hold

% RATINGS



PRESENTATION 91%
Incredible intro sequence. Well presented throughout.

GRAPHICS 88%
A bit gloomy at times, but very detailed and well-animated.

SOUND 80%
Pretty damn good, actually.

SHORT TERM PLAY 87%
Dead easy to get into. Familiar platform gameplay.

LONG TERM PLAY 82%
Gets difficult quickly, but once clocked it loses its attraction.

OVERALL 86
A platform title which doesn't break much new ground but is still dead good.

"A MUST FOR ALL TENNIS FANS"

Jane Adams, *Today*

"THIS IS THE BEST TENNIS GAME WE'VE SEEN SO FAR ON THE MEGADRIVE"

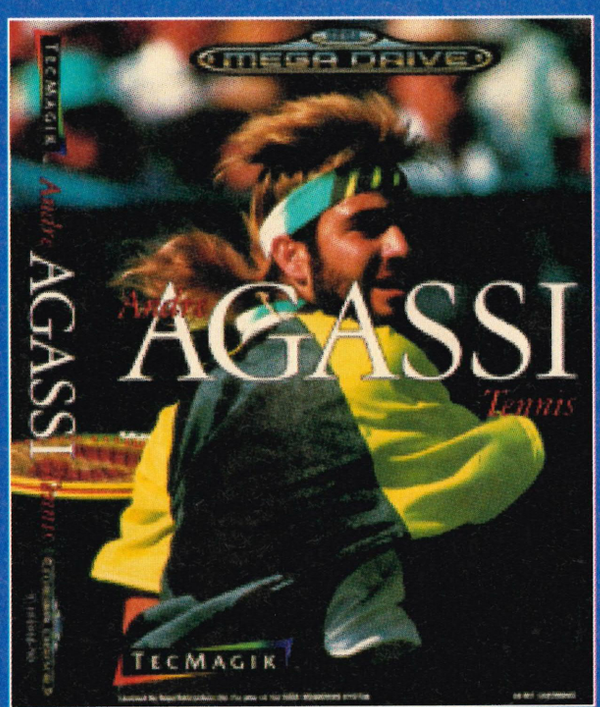
Mark Hill, *Sega Pro*

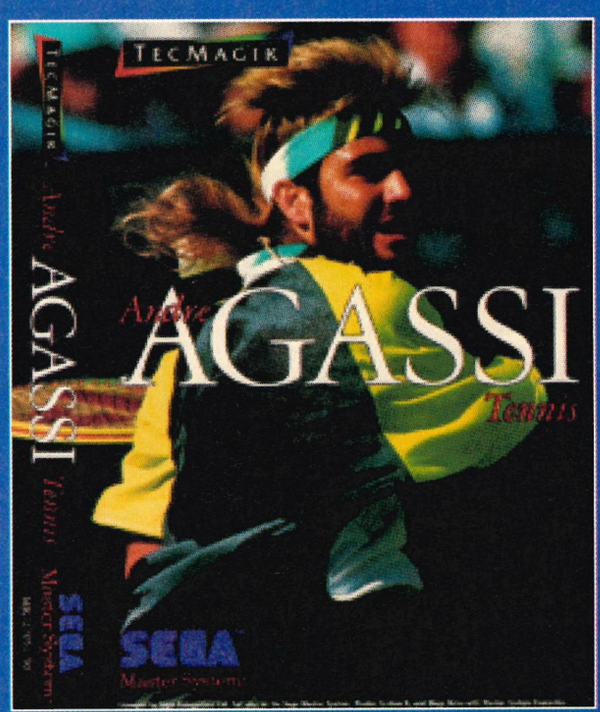
"IF YOU ARE AFTER A GOOD TENNIS GAME, THIS IS DEFINITELY THE BEST"

John Davidson, *Mega Drive Advance Gaming*

"TENNIS FANS CAN'T GO WRONG WITH THIS"

Adrian Pitt, *Sega Force Mega*





"IT'S THE LATEST AND GREATEST IN SCREEN TENNIS ... A DAZZLING SOFTWARE PACKAGE..."

Alex & Adrian Lisle, *Daily Star*

"YES ... TECMAGIK HAVE AGAIN COME UP WITH THE GOODS. A TOP NOTCH GAME THAT WILL BE AS GOOD NEXT YEAR AS IT IS TODAY"

Derek Dela Fuente, *Power Zone*

COMING SOON ON:
SEGA GAME GEAR, SUPER NINTENDO AND GAMEBOY

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MEGA-CD REVIEW

MEGADRIVE REVIEW



BY: SEGA

SEGA™

CD-ROM

STYLE



ADVENTURE/PUZZLE

PRICE IMPORT

PLAYERS 1-2

SKILL SETTINGS 1

RELEASE DATE

OUT NOW

Just seven months after the triumphant release of Ecco, the eco-friendly dolphin game, comes the CD version, with a treasure trove of extra features. MegaTech selected GUS SWAN, the only reviewer with flippers and a mask in his wardrobe, to dive in.

ECCO

More than any game last year, Ecco the Dolphin struck me as a piece of entertainment you couldn't get anywhere else except a console. The beauty of the game was the balance between the environment and plot surrounding the dolphins, and the level of skill demanded to make any progress beyond the first few levels. Ecco CD is not a sequel to the original, it merely adds to the design with seven new levels and a new soundtrack. However, a game this good shouldn't be overlooked by any Megadrive owners, so join me as I once more submerge myself in the world of Ecco.

IN DEEP WATER

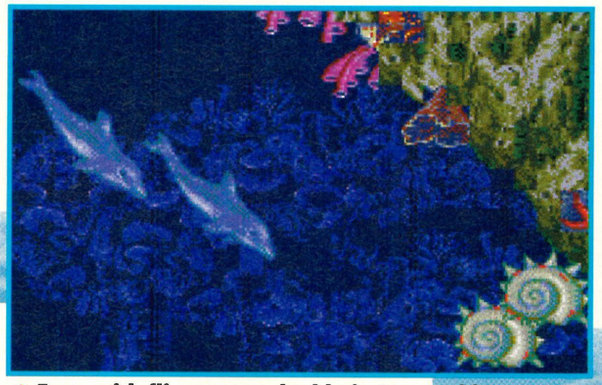
The first few levels of Ecco are set in some pretty, but uneventful caverns. This is a smart way of letting you get used to the way the dolphin responds, which is one of the best features of the game because the controls have a perfect sense of 'fluidity'. The excellent animation makes it very satisfying to perform beautiful rolls and summersaults with apparent ease. But exploring the Undercaves and finding the initial glyphs is merely paddling in the shallows. Soon Ecco has broken out of the reefs and heads for icy water.

From there the plot takes leaps and bounds: Ecco fraternising with giant whales that span four screens; Ecco chatting with a strange life-form called the 'Asterite helix'; Ecco exploring a mysterious Atlantean city for time-travel devices; and then an 'Ecco goes Jurassic Park' bit.

Once you've beaten a level, a password means you don't need to go back again. But this doesn't mean that Ecco is a walkover. The game's difficulty level seems to creep up on you, and suddenly you're being asked to perform gargantuan feats of cetacean athletics. Along the way, your brain is taxed as well as your fingers. Problems like navigating the vents, or locating the 'Unseen enemy' take some solving. There's weeks of gameplay in here.



▲ **Beware these puffer fish which inhabit the new sunken galleon levels.**



▲ **Ecco, with flippersome buddy in tow, guides him/her (difficult to tell) past dangerous spikey snails.**



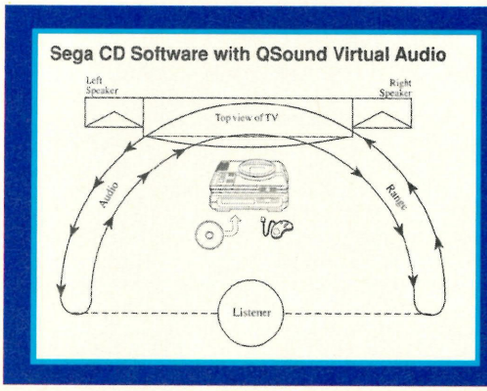
▲ **More all-new galleon action. With a jellyfish.**



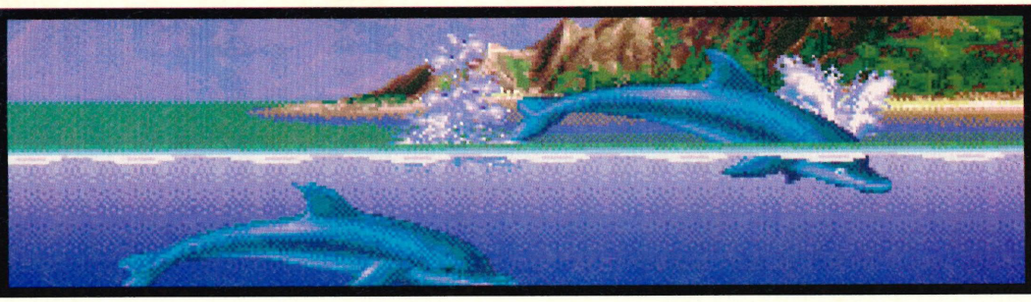
▲ **Cor! Full-motion video. Just like Wildlife on One, or something.**



▲ **Look at that! Another tiny bit of full-motion video!**



CD





▲ Swim slowly past old eight arms. Just like in the cartridge version, actually.



▲ Follow the rock to beat the overpowering current.



▲ The cartoon intro is a bit short but it's everso pretty.

RECONDITIONED ENGINE

You're either thinking 'Hmm this sounds new and interesting', or like avid MegaTech readers, 'Okay I know about Ecco, what about this CD version?'. Well the truth is there's not much difference. Like I said, this is a retune, rather than a new game. The graphics are the same as the original, and all levels are laid out identically. Seven new ones, set around a sunken galleon, have been added, and they are just as fab as the others, with new puzzles and creatures. However, they slot snugly into the existing game structure rather than alter it radically.

Now, I already have Ecco the Dolphin on cart, and I wouldn't consider this different enough to merit buying, not that there is much else on the Mega CD shelf crying out for my readies. But, if I had been remiss enough to not have it, I would be down the shops pretty sharpish, since this is one of the best games for the Megadrive on any format. It's the perfect sort of game for the Mega CD, because it has the level of depth and quality you'd expect from your expensive kit. I can only hope that a worthy CD successor is in preparation, using the virtually endless space for expansion that CD offers.

THE QSOUND EFFECT

I was never one to complain about Ecco's music, but the CD version is massively improved with the aid of an innovation called QSound Virtual Audio, which gives the player the impression of being surrounded by sound without requiring an expensive Surround Sound processor. Hook your Mega-CD up to your hi-fi, place the speakers on either side of the TV, and the normal stereo sound 'picture' is apparently expanded by the use of automatic subtle volume changes and sound balancing, a method not unlike the old 'holographic sound' effects used on old Pink Floyd albums. Using the stereo monitors in the office, I could get the gist of the effect even if I didn't feel 'wrapped' in sound.

However, the music itself is excellent. Anyone who likes Vangelis-style ambient, swirling soundtracks will be in heaven. At the risk of sounding like a git, I'll say it adds a new dimension to Ecco, making it even more relaxing to play. The whale and dolphin 'voice' effects of the cartridge version have been upgraded to real sound samples, accompanied by digitised splashing effects as you break the surface.

THE SECOND OPINION

Paul Glancey



I know this is unreasonable – the cartridge version of Ecco being so amazingly good and, after all, how can you improve on amazingly good? – but I can't help feeling a bit disappointed by the fact that the improvements on the CD version amount to seven extra levels and a nice new soundtrack. It's a brilliant game, there's no denying it, but anyone who owns, or who has played the cartridge version (which must be a large proportion of Megadrive players in this country) won't get a great deal out of it. If you're one of the few who are new to the game and you're trying to put your Mega-CD to good use at last, then yes, get it, please, you definitely won't regret it. I just can't help feeling that if Sega had put out a completely new Ecco sequel on CD, it would have made everybody happy, and it would have been another reason for Megadrive players to consider progressing to Mega-CD.

%RATINGS



PRESENTATION 92%
Excellent intro, control method, everything.

GRAPHICS 95%
Superb animation on Ecco and some brilliant background scenery.

SOUND 98%
Wonderous ambient soundtracks and digitised effects.

SHORT TERM PLAY 93%
The novelty and mystery of the early levels of Ecco make it really compulsive.

LONG TERM PLAY 95%
It's even longer! 30 levels of rock hard game should last ages.

OVERALL 92
The perfect tonic for underused CDs.

THANKS TO...
...Ice Distribution (0302 340079) for the loan of the Ecco disc. Call them for more details. The official UK version of Ecco CD is due out in October, official UK version fans!

MEGA-CD REVIEW



BY: GAME ARTS

CD-ROM

STYLE

SHOOT 'EM UP

PRICE IMPORT

PLAYERS 1

SKILL SETTINGS 2

RELEASE DATE

OUT NOW



Rank, as everyone knows, hath its privileges, so when PAULGLANCEY got wind that we'd got this Mega-CD lovely in he booted his admiring minions to the floor and claimed the Silpheed review as his own.

SILPH

Ask any MegaTech reviewer and they'll tell you that £270 is a lot of money. Certainly it's a lot to spend on a console add-on, so for Sega to get Megadrive players to actually stop cogitating about buying a Mega-CD and stump up the cash they needed something a bit more eyebrow-raising than Wolf Child. 3D graphics! Amazing sound! Dazzling new types of Megadrive game! That's what we were promised, but where were they? Bloody nowhere.

But back around issue 17 time, we saw a demo of something which looked like it could be THAT GAME. This demo showed a Mega-CD game doing things that Megadrive games didn't do. Lots of really detailed 3D vector graphics. Hilly fractal landscapes tilting and zooming past. 'Phwoaaar...' we mooned with mouths agape and lolling tongues. How embarrassing.

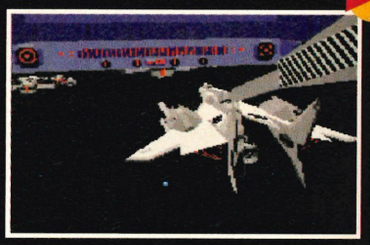
But hey, we're not as stupid as we look. 'Okay,' we reflected a few weeks later when the stars had faded from our eyes, 'it looks amazing, but,' – and here you have to imagine a sardonic sneer playing about our cynical lips –'will the gameplay be any good?'

Well, now we've played the finished item and we know the answer to that cynical question. It's awesome.

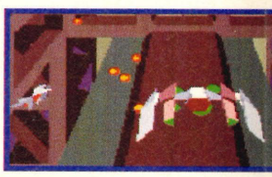
THE ALL-NEW LAUNCH SEQUENCE

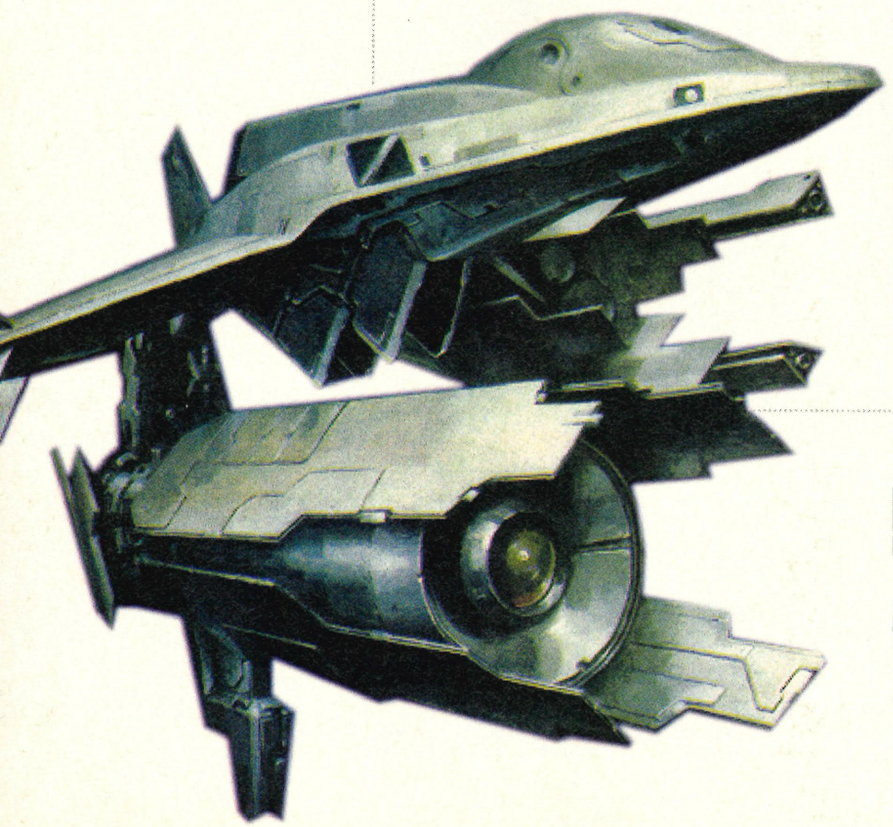
Remember the pictures we showed you of the intro animation which showed the Silpheed being deposited from its hangar to the launch tube inside its mother ship? Fab wasn't it?Well, apparently that wasn't the full intro sequence after all.Let the demo run on the new version and you get something similar, but even longer, with even more detailed graphic sand klaxons and the tannoyed voice of the squadron controller coming over on the soundtrack. 'Awesome' is the word to describe the smoothness, the detail, the overall gob-smacking gorgeousness of it all. Check out this series of snapshots and witness the truth.













▲ **The Silpheed enters a maelstrom of asteroids. Dodge and weave!**

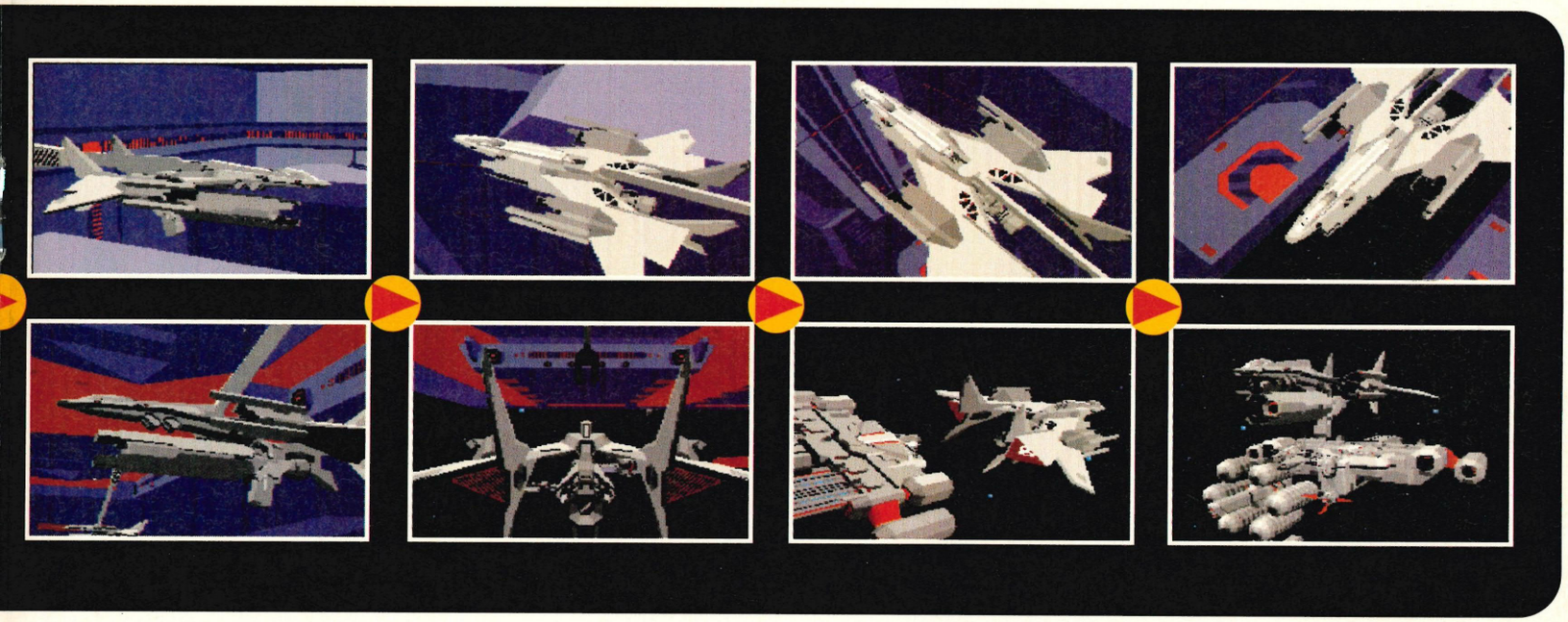
UNIDENTIFIED CRAFT DETECTED

Set in the 31st century, Silpheed is your standard space epic story. The Milky Way Union of Earth-friendly planets is under threat from a gang of powerful terrorists led by a megalomaniac called Xacalite. Xacalite has built up a fleet of captured Union space battleships and has begun launching assaults on Union colony planets.

It's up to you to lead a squadron of SA-77 Silpheed craft into ship-to-ship combat against fleets of Xacalite's suicide fighters and giant space cruisers. The ultimate objective is to find Xacalite's Mother Planet, and destroy the giant Death Star-ish space weapon which is being constructed in orbit.

EED





▲ **Tiny fighters swarm at you from this giant spacecraft's hangar deck**



▲ **Flyimg amongst the vast fleet of ships on level six can be dangerous!**

ALL PILOTS TO LAUNCH STATIONS!

The game is a 3D shoot 'em up which takes place in twelve levels which see you in open space, asteroid fields,inside artificial planetoids, hyperspace, and in the midst of spectacular massed battles between gigantic enemy cruisers and Union ships.

Basically, the gameplay is the same as that of any scrolling shoot 'em up, except it's all flipped into a 3D perspective. You can fly left and right and up and down (though the up and down is actually 'in' and 'out' of the screen), and the idea is just to shoot the squadrons of little enemy ships piling on from in front or behind, while dodging asteroids or any other large object that might get in the way.

Nothing out of the ordinary there, eh? There are even extra weapons and power-ups to give you more of a fighting chance.

WHAT'S SO GOOD

If the gameplay is so ordinary what is it that makes Silpheed so special? Well, there's no two ways about it. It's got to be the amazingly smooth, visual cortex-warping 3D graphics.

The incredibly detailed giant spacecraft and the intricate planetary backdrops which the Silpheed flies across are made out of hundreds of polygons. As everyone knows, the Megadrive is lucky if it can get ten polygons moving smoothly, simply because the graphics hardware is designed for moving predefined sprites, not plotting shapes in three dimensions and colouring them in one by one.

The trick the programmers at Game Arts have used is to get all their 3D computer models generated on some mega 3D-rendering machine, then downloaded them onto the CD as if they were frames on a film which plays in the background.

This means the Megadrive doesn't have to do that much work, so the scenery can look amazing and move really smoothly, while the blasting action is kept good and fast. It appears, though, that speed has been maintained by making the actual enemy fighters very weedy-looking little polygon shapes, and even some of the 'boss' ships look undersized and crude, which is in sharp contrast to all the glorious mega-craft you see in the background. It doesn't really matter that much because the game still looks really cool, but maybe that's something Game Arts can work on for Silpheed 2.

ALL GRAPHICS, NO GAME, EH?

Pretty scenery is all very well, but what is it they teach you at the School For Reviewers? 'Good Graphics Do Not The Game Make'? Well, yeah, I used to believe that when I was reviewing Commodore 64 and Amiga games. I've noticed with certain Mega-CD games (Cobra Command, Sewer Shark and this one) that even with simple action at the heart of things, you still find yourself really getting a thrill from the game because the combination of realistic graphics accompanied by realistic stereo sound really captivates you and makes you feel like you're right there in the thick of the excitement. The shoot 'em up action in Silpheed is good and fast and very challenging, but I admit it's not, of itself, spectacular. What makes the game such a thrill, though, are things like manoeuvring past a GIGANTIC asteroid (and hearing a suitable approaching asteroidy rumble in your starboard earhole), then JUST dodging the laser beam which PULVERISES the asteroid and sends massive shards of spinning rock HURTLING towards you. You don't get that sort of drama in your everyday Megadrive shoot 'em ups.

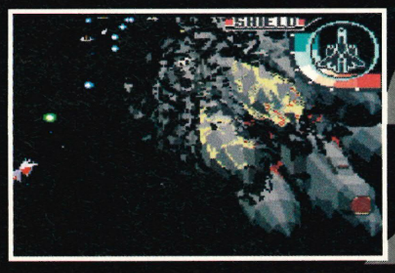
Also, and I don't think I can overstate this, but the 3D effect is simply superb. The graphics in some levels are more effective than others, but ones such as level four which is set on a gigantic space plateau made up of channels of hexagonal pillars, or level five which puts you in a futuristic city full of corridors with slamming gates really will amaze you. The level of detail and the smoothness are just not something you'd see on any other console or home computer.

BOOM!

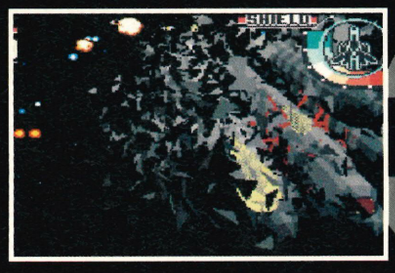
No matter where it goes the Silpheed seems to be in the sights of the enemy's big guns and it's up to you to dodge the giant beams of laser energy which surge down the screen at various points in the game. Sometimes they find another target, such as an asteroid or a nearby space cruiser, which then spectacularly explodes into hundreds of spinning polygons! Awesomely awesome! Here's a sequence from the first level.



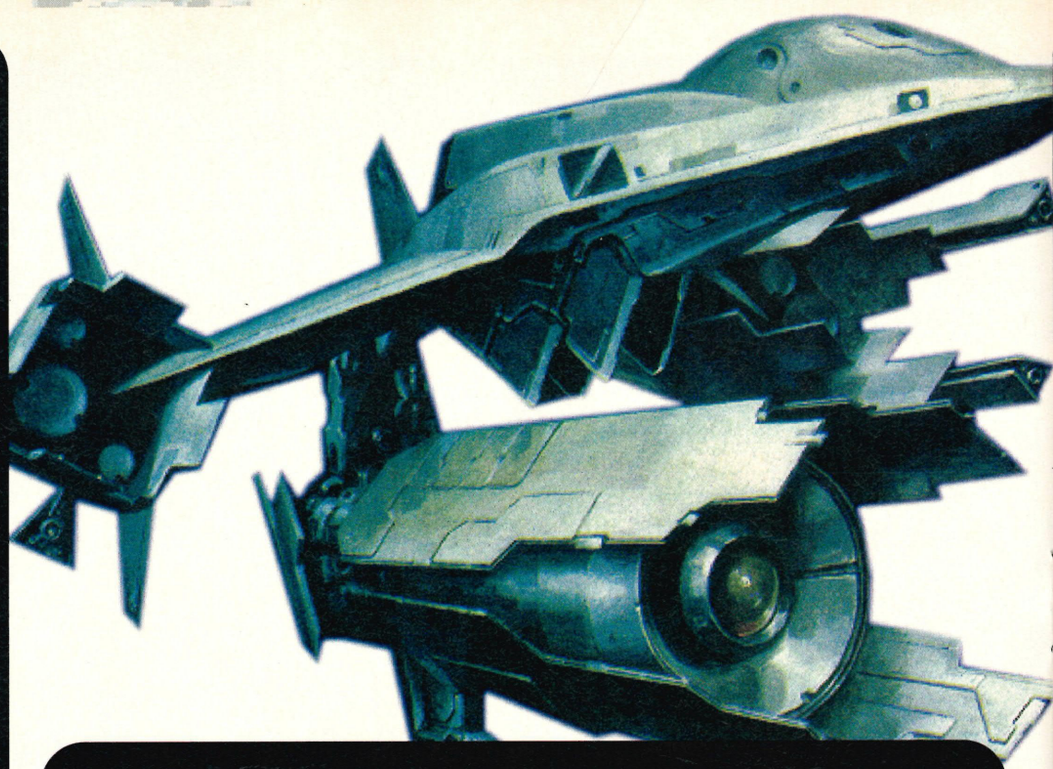
The beam misses you but strikes the nearby fuel carrier, destroying one of it's fuel pods and punching a massive hole through the main fuselage!



Another massive shot strikes home, pulverising the superstructure and it's all over for the carrier's crew, reduced to their component molecules.



Still, the sacrifice was worth it. Woweee! You don't get explosions like that in any other Megadrive games do you?





QSOUND TOO!

Stereo sound effects? Yes indeed, like Ecco CD (reviewed this issue) Silpheed has been been empowered with atmosphere-enhancing QSound Virtual Audio which provides an expanded spatial stereo sound effect when you plug your Mega-CD into an ordinary hi-fi amplifier. You also get the effect, though slightly less pronounced just by plugging a pair of headphones into the jack socket on the Megadrive, but either way it's worth taking the trouble to get it going in stereo, because having the sound to go along with the action really adds a lot to the atmosphere.

BUT LET'S FACE IT, IT'S JUST A SHOOT 'EM UP, RIGHT?

Okay, cards on the table. Silpheed is just a shoot 'em up, with nothing particularly new to the fundamental gameplay. BUT, it would take a very cynical player to pick up the joypad, play the first three levels and say, 'Well, that was crap. Just like any other ordinary shooter.' The fact that it looks so cool, and you know that there's something awesome to see on the next level really keeps you hooked.

If all this sounds like too much manic raving to be true, take a trip down to your local import shop, and if you can fight your way to the front of the crowd around the demonstration monitor you'll see how crazy I am.

GUNS AND AMMO

The weapon systems in the Silpheed are quite unusual (for a video game craft anyway) insofar as it can carry up to four types of armament at a time. A main twin-shot gun which is centrally mounted, and two specialised weapons mounted on the sides of the main fuselage. On higher levels, you are supplied with an especially powerful set of weapons which can launch various kinds of energy bomb and smart torpedo if energy levels allow it. You start the game with only the twin-shot, but with the completion of every level you are rewarded with the option of a new weapon which can be fitted in one of the two side-pods. You can actually install different weapons on each side of the ship, so that you can fire homing shots from the left and V-beams from the right.

WHAT ABOUT THIS CARTRIDGE BALONEY?

You may remember that last month we said we'd heard Silpheed would have to be packaged with an extra cartridge containing an auxiliary processor chip to help handle the fab graphics. Well, that was baloney. Actually it was crossed Japanese-to-English translation wires, for which we apologise. In fact, Silpheed requires only the central processors in the Mega-CD and the Megadrive to work its magic – and what magic!

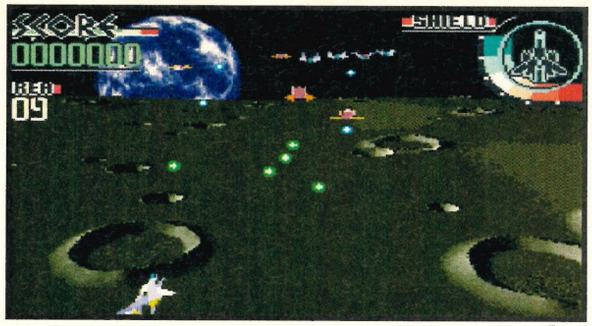


▲ Approaching the fleet in one of the yummy intro scenes.

THE ORIGINS OF SILPHEED



It was back in 1989 when Game Arts programmed Silpheed for IBM, Apple and Atari systems. The 3D shoot 'em up gameplay was very similar to the Megadrive version's, although as you can see from these pics, the graphics were nowhere near as good!



▲



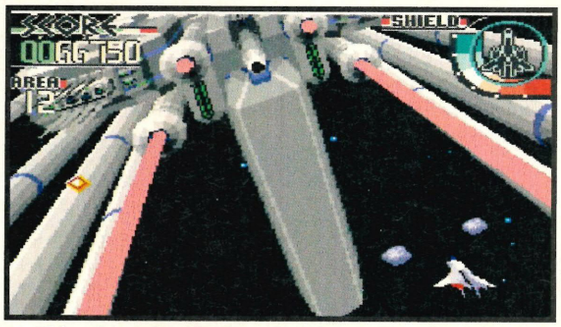
▲ **Level four's hexagon plains will really make you go 'Waaah!'**



▲ **The boss at the end of the fractal archipelago level doesn't look amazing but it sure puts up a fight.**



▲ **This spacecraft is the setting for the rather thrilling third level.**



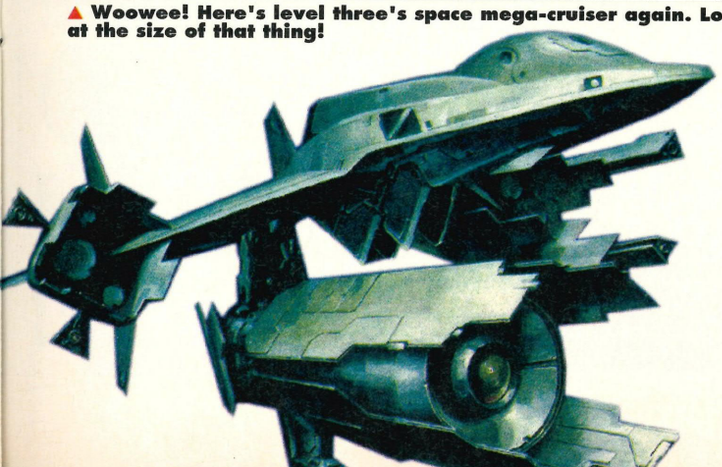
▲ **This gigantic rotating death satellite looks awesome, but those pink beams are deadly!**



▲ **Don't get caught in those dreaded laser beam.**



▲ **Woowee! Here's level three's space mega-cruiser again. Look at the size of that thing!**



HEY, THANKS...
Thanks v much to George at Ice Distribution who sent us his first copy of Silpheed to make it through customs. Contact him about buying the game on.

OFFICIALDOM
The version of Silpheed used in the review is a Japanese disc and will not run on official Mega-CDs without the use of a Datel CDX converter. The official version of Silpheed is due to be released by Sega in November, priced £44.99.

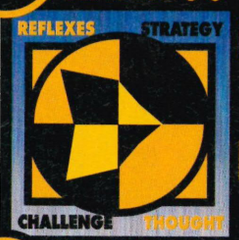
SECOND OPINION



MARK HOLMES

Phew, Paul's really gone over the top on this one, hasn't he? Well, I must admit, it is a bit of a blast to play, despite the fact that it's basically an old-fashioned up-the-screen shoot 'em up with some Mega-CD graphics tricks thrown in to jazz it up. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to get the full effect of the QSurround sound on my crappy office monitor, but from what I could hear, the sounds of destruction were very muted indeed. I didn't enjoy the game as much as the other shoot 'em up I've played this month, Gunstar Heroes, which boasts excellent blasting sound effects as well as highly ingenious and inventive gameplay. Silpheed looks very pretty, it offers quite a challenge and there's no doubt that it's one of the best games yet for the Mega-CD.

% RATINGS



PRESENTATION 95%
Good options. Gob-smacking intro sequences.

GRAPHICS 94%
Awesome. Shame about the weedy enemy fighters, though.

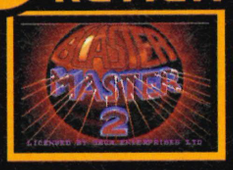
SOUND 95%
Great tunes and Q Sound effects add a lot.

SHORT TERM PLAY 90%
Simple but fun action. The graphics make the game, though.

LONG TERM PLAY 96%
12 levels of fairly tough action. You'll have another go to see everything again.

OVERALL 94
If you've got a Mega-CD you've got to have this game.

MEGADRIVE REVIEW



BY: SUN SOFT

SUNSOFT

8-MEG

STYLE

PLTFM/SHOOT

PRICE IMPORT

PLAYERS 1

SKILL SETTINGS 3

RELEASE DATE

OUT NOW



Well known for trundling around north London in a small, brightly painted tank, PAUL DAVIES was the obvious choice for reviewing this dinky little shoot 'em up.

BLASTER MA

Very much the loner, the poor star of Blaster Master II is left stranded in the wilderness of his home planet having been separated from his homies on a mining expedition. Armed only with a mining laser and assisted by a slightly odd looking form of transport in the form of a cannon-toting buggy, the little character is in pursuit of his colleagues. With the self-adopted title of Blaster Master, our hero's journey home takes place in a mixture of side-scrolling platform-like environments and plan-view puzzle-like mazes from which Blaster master escapes to the next stage.

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With the self-adopted title of Blaster Master, our hero's journey home takes place in a mixture of side-scrolling platform-like environments and plan-view puzzle-like mazes from which Blaster master escapes to the next stage.

INSIDE AND OUT

Though the platform areas are familiar in design – with power-ups left lying about for collection and assorted, mutated enemies looking for a few moments' confrontation, Blaster Master's buggy makes all the difference. BM begins his quest inside the buggy a versatile vehicle and trundles or hops about the place in smooth response to the driver's request. Its cannon pivots through 90 degrees which, when both left and right directions are considered, allows for a full 180 degree range of fire.

During the platform levels BM is also free to hop out of his transport for a while in order to explore the kinds of spaces that are restricted to the buggy - the majority of the impor-tant power-ups are only accessible in this way. In the overhead, maze-like areas BM has no choice but to remain inside the buggy.Another feature unique to the side-scrolling sections is the specialist weaponry carried by the buggy. These include homing missiles, rockets and a powerful electric-shock type treatment for BM's antagonisers. The buggy is limited to the amount it may use but extras are available in the form of icons that are left lying around.



ABOVE AND BEYOND

One such door conceals the entrance to the overhead section of each stage. In here the Blaster Master pilots the buggy through the confines of a maze shooting away blocks that may obstruct the way ahead – a practice which also reveals icons, though not of the type found in the platform sections. In this case power-ups affect the buggy's speed and rate of cannon fire. Once the exit to the overhead maze is found the stage is complete.

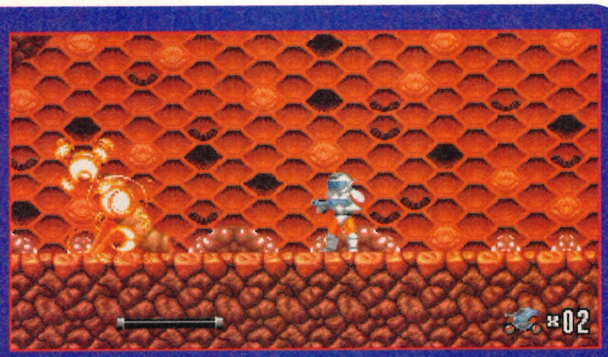
BLASTER RATES?

Having never played the original — which, incidentally, appeared on the 8-Bit Nintendo console — I cannot compare the two. This sequel seems to me like an Amiga game in style. That is the graphics are very sharp and colourful and the movement of the sprites is all very smoothly executed. Exploration of the platform sections is intriguing if not mildly addictive but I find that the overhead sections are rather cumbersome and not so much fun.

Without the arrival of Gunstar Heroes or Rocket Knight Adventures this game may well have impressed me more than it actually has. Subsequently I found all the trundling around in the buggy tedious and was only mildly excited by the one-to-one battles between Blaster Master and many of the larger enemies he faces. This isn't to say that the game is poorly produced, it's just that it has so much competition that I cannot honestly recommend it – despite its few interesting features. Not a blast.



▲ Leave the tank to find hidden rooms.



▲ The Wasp Boss meets its doom inside a Crunchie.

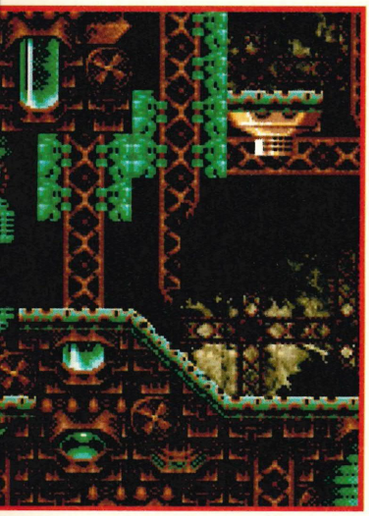


▲ Come on out, you lily-livered goons! Come out and fight!



▲ Pizza danger in an underground cave.

STER



▲ Terror strikes the heart of BM as a forcefield separates him from his tank.

RATINGS



PRESENTATION 68%
A static title screen with brief demos of the game.

GRAPHICS 86%
Very clear and a good use of colour. Smooth animation too.

SOUND 79%
Revamped, old computer-type music backed by OK spot effects.

SHORT TERM PLAY 82%
Intriguing at first as there are some interesting ideas in play.

LONG TERM PLAY 76%
There are eight levels, all of which are a challenge, but it's quite dull.

OVERALL 81
A great looking game with nice touches, but not a necessity.

MEGA-CD REVIEW

MEGADRIVE REVIEW

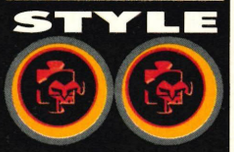


BY: SEGA

SEGA™

8-MEG

STYLE



PUZZLE

PRICE IMPORT

PLAYERS 1

SKILL SETTINGS 1

RELEASE DATE

OUT NOW

SHERLOCK HOLMES
CONSULTING DETECTIVE VOL II



Dark doings at Megatech again. Tom's gone AWOL to play Mario Kart in the opium den. While there to investigate his disappearance, GUS SWAN happened across Sherlock Holmes Vol II...



When Sherlock Holmes was released it was one of few 'fancy' Mega CD products that actually worked as a game. It's success came from the mix of Full Motion Video sections and some well set mysteries. The second volume sets out to recreate the effect in the safest way possible — being a virtual copy of the first game only with new, longer cases on two CDs.

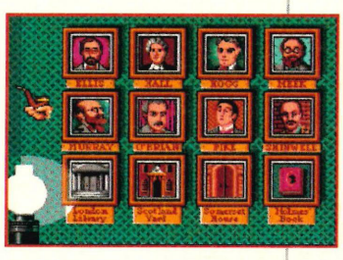
ELEMENTARY

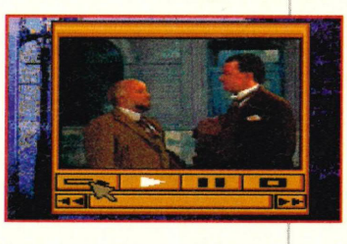
Playing Sherlock might sound hard, but it's very simple. After a short introduction, Holmes should have a few leads; names and places which he should investigate by looking up his directory. If these throw no light he can try some of his old friends (the Baker St. regulars) who each have expertise in the area of crime. Then it's off to visit the characters, and be treated to a short 'film' of each being interviewed. There's a significant improvement over the first Sherlock game here, in that the interviews now have video recorder controls, so you can wind on to a crucial name or event or replay specific bits or whatever. This relieves some of the tedium of having to sit through whole spiels time and again if you want to check names or facts.

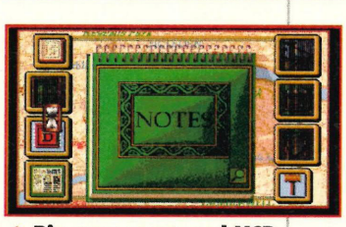


THANKS! To George at Ice Distribution (0302) 340079 for the loan of the Sherlock Holmes CD

'BLOIMEY MISTER 'OLMES!'







▲ Big new cases and VCR controls on the video bits make this better than the original Holmes game.

It's inevitable that you're going to run into a dead end, which makes Sherlock Holmes frequently very annoying to play. Getting out a rut probably means scanning the Times newspaper (full of amusing stories about gallant gentlemen stopping ladies' horses from bolting). There you'll see some incident that has a ring of relevance to your case. This is one of the better features of the game, with the newspaper stories adding a real atmosphere of the time; Home Rule for Ireland; European politics and the 'Glories of Empire' all get a look-in on the pages of The Thunderer. Attention to detail is quite high throughout, and that includes the details of the case.The interview section is the crucial part of the game, when clues are revealed, but it's often hard to make out what these 'American Cockneys' are trying to say, with their appalling accents and delivery.

Once the Queen's English has been murdered, it's time to head off somewhere else. And that's that, until you have a clear idea of the murderer and head for the Judge. He'll ask you a few questions to check you've been doing your homework.

I have to say that the novelty of the Sherlock Holmes format is beginning to wear a little thin. I knocked off the first case in about two hours, which doesn't bode well for long term play. Once you've found the murderer, there's not much point in playing it again. However, the presentation of the game is very neat, with some added options that improve on the first. Sherlock Holmes should appeal to those who shy action, and want a little mental stimulation. I can take that, in small doses.

RATINGS



PRESENTATION 91%
Lavishly boxed and nice atmosphere.

GRAPHICS 90%
Impressive FMV sections and crisp graphics.

SOUND 88%
Lots of dramatic monologues from the characters

SHORT TERM PLAY 85%
A sedate detective game to play.

LONG TERM PLAY 84%
The last two cases are tricky.

OVERALL 84
An okay 'tec game that plays safe from a formula.

MEGADRIVE REVIEW

AEROBIZ

HYPER! HYPER GAME AWARD

Bring out the Branson! GUS SWAN, ardent strategian of these parts, was pickled pink with the idea behind KOEI's new air business simulation, Aerobiz. Here's an account of his Virgin steps in the realm of the trolley dollies.



BY: SEGA

KOEI

4 M-BIT

STYLE

STRATEGY

PRICE IMPORT

PLAYERS 1-4

SKILL SETTINGS 5

RELEASE DATE

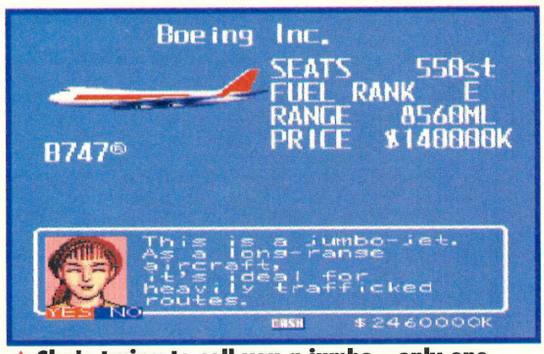
OUT NOW

Okay, I know what you're thinking: "Aerobiz sounds like a crap idea, and yeeugh! Look at those screenshots! Right, turn over..." WAIT! Before you do, listen as I plead the case for just about the best strategy game on the Megadrive. It's more appealing than you'd expect – not 'Run a shoe-shop simulation' or 'Super Accountant's World'.

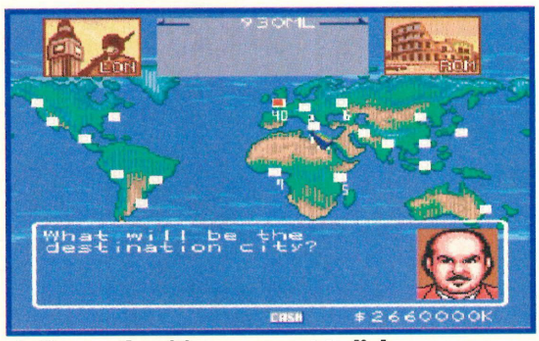
However, the game's action does centre around an airline, from scratch. You start out with a few planes and a couple of route choices. From there it's your job to open up new cities (by negotiating 'slots'), buying new planes, building hotels and branches, setting prices, wooing customers with marketing plans, consulting the board, looking at flight statistics and strengthening your best air routes.

After getting settled you might want to invest in a charter business, or perhaps take advantage of the forthcoming Olympic Games. However, a war might force oil prices up and mean cut-backs. How about a price war with one of your rivals — there are four of you out there, trying to cut each other's throat. You get my point? Aerobiz is one mother of a complex game, as there are literally hundreds of options, maps and statistics to wade through.





▲ **She's trying to sell you a jumbo – only one slight bump caused by a stray mountain.**



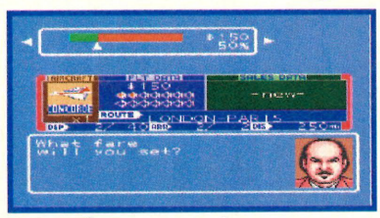
▲ **Choose the cities you want to link.**

For some gamers, like me, this is seventh heaven, but only because it is all perfectly logical and realistic. The decisions you take do seem to pay off, and the potential for devising and refining your strategy is infinite.

Playing Aerobiz is a taxing business, and not for those unprepared to sit for a good session and use their brains. It's actually quite easy to pick up, but the reward is also not instant. The graphics are pretty poor, although the presentation is clear, and the information is shown in inventive ways. Satisfaction comes from seeing your airline steal passengers, make a killing on a good route or make a huge profit. Allowing four human players to play the campaigns promises long ongoing games between friends. Aerobiz is like the 'football manager' games that were massive on the Spectrum, but 10 times better – I think it's absolutely ace.



▲ **The worst period of the year is sitting with the know-all board. They regularly tell you to get your finger out.**



▲ **It's that man again.**

RATINGS



PRESENTATION 93% – Four players, essential battery back-up.

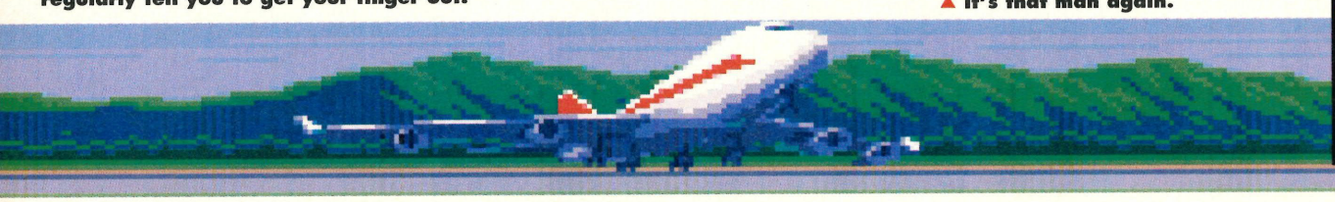
GRAPHICS 55% – Not pretty but damned functional.

SOUND 35% – Warbling music destroys the OK FX.

SHORT TERM PLAY 88% – Easy to get to grips with.

LONG TERM PLAY 93% – Phenomenal value potential for addicts.

OVERALL 90 – If (but only if) you want pure strategy GET THIS NOW!



THANKS! To George at Ice Distribution (0302) 340079 for the loan of the Aerobiz cart.

MEGASELL

I WANT TO USE THE MEGATECH MEGASELL. HERE'S MY MESSAGE:

£1

£1

I WOULD LIKE MY ADVERT TO GO UNDER THE FOLLOWING HEADING (TICK BOX):

- FOR SALE ❑
- WANTED ❑
- PEN PALS ❑
- SWAP ❑

Fill in the top box for £1.00 (20 words), or for a longer message, fill in both boxes for £2.00 (40 words).

Please note: only one word per box. Phone numbers count as one word. Please use block capitals.

Name:.....

Address:.....

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.....Postcode:.....

Telephone No:.....

FOR SALE

Megadrive games: Euro Club Soccer, Corporation, Ghouls & Ghosts all £15. Immortal and Sword of Vermillion both £20. Shadow of the Beast £10. Phone Dan on 0773 550366.

Megadrive 3 games. 2 pads, Megatech issues 1 -19 (Yes! Thats right. Includes legendary issue one!) Astounding condition £199 the lot or slice of Dairylea (joke). Buyer collects. Phone Barry 0245 354157 (Chelmsford)

Megatech issues 1 – 18 in excellent condition £15 the lot. Phone Justin at work up to 5pm on 0734 539857.

Megazines for sale:- Sega Power, Mega, Mean Machines, CVG etc... Also for sale Megadrive games:- Streets of Rage 2, Sonic 2, John Madden 92, European Club Soccer, Telephone: 091 3867082 after 4pm.

Megadrive games for sale or swap: Megalomania, Sonic 1, Sonic 2, Alien 3, Another World, Immortal, Galahead; Also Prince of Persia and Impossible Mission for the Master System as well as Master System coverter for Megadrive. Phone Steve evenings and weekends 081 301 2747.

Megadrive plus: Streets of Rage 2, WWF and Sonic. Brilliant condition plus two pads £100. Ring 0727 874150 (Herts St Albans)

Megadrive good condition, 11 games all top titles, plus 8 Megatechs, 1 Joypad, (no box) £300 O.N.O. Please write to: John Thompson, 67 Latmer Street, Liverpool, L5 2RE.

Megadrive Games for sale including Ecco, Desert Strike, Speedball 2, Madden 92, Sonic 2 and many more £15- £25 Tel: 0608 661617.

For sale Sonic 2 £20, Greendog £20, Thunder Force £20, Eswat £15, prices inc P+P. K Lampard 25 Scott Avenue, Gtamwell, Stanstead Abbots, Herts SG12 8BG.

Megatech issues 1 – 12 £30 O.N.O or swap for any good SNES game 0497 847468 ask for Sam, please phone after 3.30pm

One time offer only! Megadrive and Mega CD, together with a number of extras and 19 software titles all in excellent mint condition inc al hardware boxes, high street value £1000 only £600 for quick sale, sold as complete.

Jap, Pal Megadrive for sale, with 7 games – Alien 3, Desert Strike, Streets of Rage etc... Stereo speakers, 2 joypads loads of mags, worth £400+ sell for £240. Tel: Simon 0684 563712.

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Aliens 3 £25, Streets of Rage £15 both boxed with instructions, will swap for Road Rash 2, NHLP Hockey, Lemmings or Super Kick Off. Phone Stephen on 0670 815834 after 4pm.

SWAP

Please help me! I've just bought [illegible]ue one of Edge magazine. Now I can't afford this month's MegaTech. Will anyone swap their MegaTech 22 for my unfortunate purchase? 24 Mboko St, Chipping Sodbury, Nigeria.

Megadrive games for swap, Super Monaco 2, Strider, Shining in the Darkness, Moonwalker, PGA Tour Golf. Wanted: Phantasy Star 4, Speedball 2, Hellfire, Aero Blasters, Sonic 2. Others considered if interested phone 0254 264427.

I would like to swap Road Rash 2 for Desert Strike must include manual. Tel 0204 301854 after 6pm week days.

Amazing collection of Megadrive Games to sell / exchange 0232 844473. I'll also buy relent Megadrive / CD games - up to £20 paid!!

Will swap Desert Strike 90% + for George Formans and Buster Douglas Boxing 40% - I'll also give 3 magazines 0372 720031.

I have Universal Soldier, Winter Challenge, Todds Adventure in Slime World, on English and Hellfire, Gain Ground, Thunderforce 2, Darwyn 4081, Castle of Illusion on Jap to swap. I'm after Sonic 2, World of Illusion, Ranger X. Wayne "By-The-Way", Chilsworth, Gunnislake, Cornwall, PL18 9PB.

Swap my copy of John Madden or £30 cash for your mint condition copy of Edge write now (send no money yet) to Pete Futcher 2 Granary Rd, Bromsgrove Worcs B60 3QH.

Come on Mega CD fans I'll swap Sherlock Holmes vol 1 for Prince of Persia or Jaguar XS220. Phone [illegible]n on 0522 720271 ask for ext 7939 or 7422 only Monday to Friday 0830 1654.

WANTED

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Just fill out this form (or a copy of it) and send it with a cheque or Postal Order made payable to MegaTech, and send it to Megasell, MegaTech, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

Due to deadlines, allow up to six weeks for your ad to appear in the magazine.

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MEGADRIVE REVIEW



MEGADRIVE REVIEW



BY: SEGA

SEGA

8 M-BIT

STYLE

BEAT 'EM UP

PRICE IMPORT

PLAYERS 1-2

SKILL SETTINGS 2

RELEASE DATE

OUT NOW

Using any excuse to put on a loin cloth and run around screaming, that Lord of The Shiny Weapon, MARK PATTERSON, takes on Golden Axe's latest challenge.

GOLDEN A

Following the less than passable Golden Axe 2, Sega promised that the third game in the series would see a return to the excellent gameplay of the original. They even said that they were going to be using the original programming team, so what went wrong?

COIN-OP CALAMITY

Like many people, I was expecting this to be a conversion of the excellent Golden Axe 3 coin-op, but I couldn't have been more wrong. The gameplay is almost identical to the first two games, with the heroes on a quest to recover the mystical Golden Axe which should vanquish all evil from the land. As before, the game is made up from horizontally scrolling levels with the occasional nasty wondering on from either side.

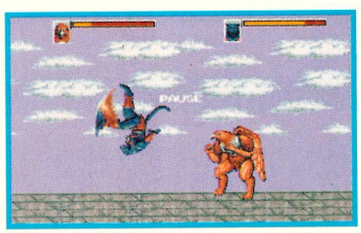
In fact, the only real change between the three games is the characters. The Dwarf is the only one still alive, although he's now been pensioned off to Mother Fogerty's Home For Retired Short Gentlefolk. Instead we now have Chronos Evil Rate, a half-man half-leopard thing; and Proud Cragger, a giant human who's slow in both senses of the word. The remaining two characters are just like the warriors in the first games, although they now have a few extra moves and different coloured beachwear.

The characters who aren't selected still appear in the game, although as evil twisted versions of their former selves. Obviously you've got to fight them, but not to the death. When they've been battered almost senseless, they change colour, tell you how sorry they are for trying to slice your head off and then disappear off home again.

CHRONOS EVIL RATE

Give this guy a bowl of Katkins and he'll rip your arms off. Chronos is the fastest of all the characters, with some nifty moves. He isn't as strong as the others though, so he takes some time to finish off the bad guys. However, he looks pretty hard, which is more than enough reason to choose him.





▲ What banana? Whoa-hoh!



▲ Majora, 1345AD.

GROUND ROUND

Golden Axe 3's villains are a motley gathering of barbarians, skeletons, knights and fat blokes, none of whom are particularly good in the evil department, and all of which are easy to slice up. At the end of each stage is the obligatory boss, although they're so limited and poorly drawn and in this game I don't know why the programmers bothered. This is one area when the game really loses it. Had there been a better variety of higher quality nasties, the resulting carnage would have been far more fun than what we have now.

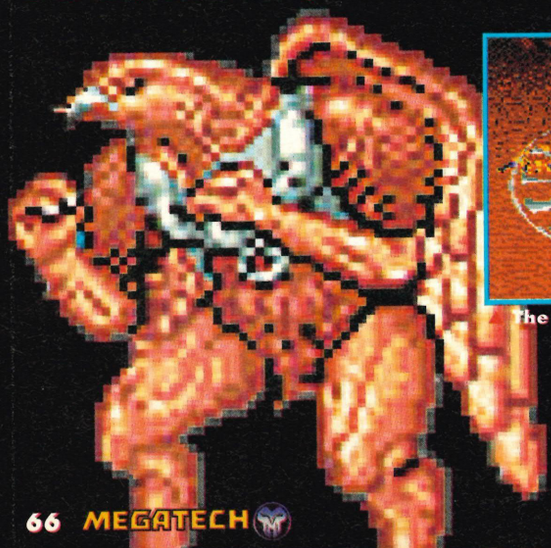
It's not all bad though – the game does have one redeeming feature, albeit a small one. The programmers have taken a leaf out of the Streets Of Rage 2 book and given the characters a large array of moves. Instead of the normal slice 'n dice swordplay, each one has a varied set of attacks, ranging from straightforward slashes to devastating throws. Executing these is simple, as there's only one attack button. The attack that your character executes depends on how close he is to his foe. Getting right up next to them sets them up nicely for a knee in the knackers, while swordplay comes into effect at a distance. When the going gets really tough, pressing B and C pulls off a special attack which sends your guy crazy ape, slashing at all sides. Particularly handy for getting out of tight spots.



▲ Oh dear, Millwall lost again.



▲ "Hello, my name's Bacon Slicer."



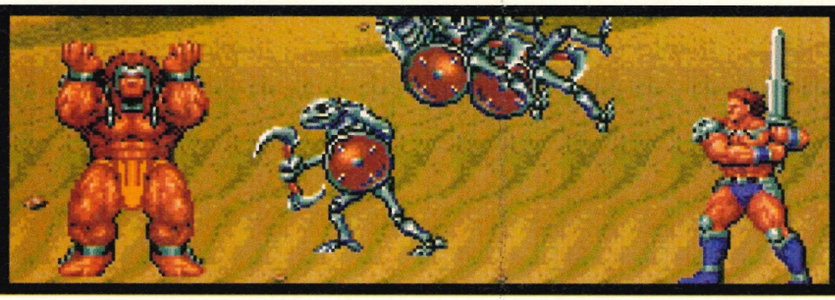


▲ The all- new action codpiece at work.

IZZY, WIZZY, LET'S GET BUSY

Sometimes brawn just isn't enough, and your heroes have to rely on their spell-casting abilities. Each character has his own spell to call down fireballs, deadly fog and earthquakes. The power of the spell depends on how many potion bottles they've collected. These are usually carried by sack-wielding gnomes, who'll drop one every time they're smacked with a sword. It's best to save these for the bosses – not because they're

AXE III



PROUD CRAGGER

Built like a brick out-house, Cragger is by far the largest character in the game and the strongest. Still, he's so slow the nasties have usually hacked large chunks out of him by the time he joins in the fray. He's only worth picking if you don't think the game's challenging enough (which it isn't).



CAHN GRINDER

Armed with a suitably hard name and a very large sword, Cahn is one of the most formidable of the heroes in the game. His excellent moves, speed and strength make him first choice, especially in the head-to-head mode where he obliterates the other characters.



SARA BURN

After giving up a life of spending Saturday nights outside a chippy in Basildon, Sara Burn decided to go adventuring. Like most members of the white handbag brigade she's really tough, not to mention fast.

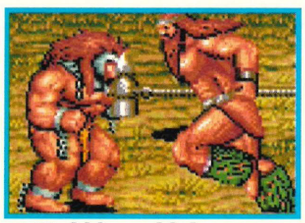




▲ **Beware – you're entering the Blubber Zone!**



▲ **Wibble-wibble!**



▲ **Wobble-woble!**

difficult to beat, it's just that it takes so long it becomes dull.

Additional help also comes from dinosaurs. These aren't so much Jurassic Park as the Land That Time Forgot. They basically look like snails, but take on their lizard-like appearance when you hop on one. Once you board one, you can take advantage of their unique combat abilities, which usually comes in the form of fire-breathing or a large, spiky tongue. They're actually quite detrimental, as they make your character an easy target because they're so slow.

ONE-ON-ONE

As before, there's a two-player option where you, and possibly a mate, team up against the forces of evil. This is actually completely out of character with the rest of the game, as it's a good laugh. There's also a versus mode option which lets you play the game as a one-on-one beat 'em up. Considering it's supposed to be a throwaway option, it's actually more fun than the game itself.

IT'S NOT GOOD

Call me soft in the head, but I actually believed Sega when they said that this was going to be a bit good. It's actually turned out to be the worst in the series. The graphics are appalling, with pukesome backdrops and laughable sprites. The cabbage-flavoured icing on the cake is the gameplay though – it really is most poor. Apart from being linear to the greatest degree, there's almost no need to use all the excellent moves you've been given. The depressed-looking enemies who appear merely wave their swords in a unthreatening manner while you turn them into so much paste. If any of your friends are taken in by this game and buy a copy, do me a favour – laugh at them for me.

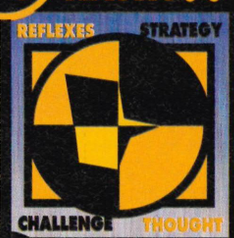
THE SECOND OPINION



Paul Glancey

I'm afraid it's true. The extra moves would have made this a much more interesting game than the previous two in the series – if only you needed them. The variety of baddies is minimal and all most of them need is a couple of slices, or to be thrown to the ground twice, and they vanish. Even the big guys (such as the rerun of the Bad Brothers, with the hammers) are easy to defeat with just a few mid-air or charge attacks. It was a nice idea to be able to choose a road at different points, changing the route to the end, but that doesn't add to the variety either. In short, then, if you've got the first in the series you're certainly no better off buying the third as well.

%RATINGS



PRESENTATION 77%
The usual Golden Axe options, including the jolly duel option.

GRAPHICS 55%
Sprites and backdrops are of the lowest quality.

SOUND 60%
The sound effects and music are the audio equivalent of the graphics.

SHORT TERM PLAY 60%
Getting used to all the moves is fun.

LONG TERM PLAY 54%
Big, but not challenging. (Or fun, for that matter.)

OVERALL 55
Pah! Doesn't improve on the original one bit.

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MEGADRIVE REVIEW



BY: EA



8 M-BIT

STYLE

SPORT

PRICE £44.99

PLAYERS 1-2

SKILL SETTINGS 1

RELEASE DATE

SEPT 1993

Who better to review this new baseball title than that rugged powerhouse of a man and legendary baseballer JOE DeMAGGIO? Well he's dead, so RADION AUTOMATIC's doing it.

2020 BAS

2020

Baseball is the sport of the future. Well, actually, that's a lie, it's the sport of about a year ago when it was first released on SNK's Neo Geo console, and it cost about ten hundred pounds. Anyway, the storyline goes that this is the sport of the future. Yeah, it's the whole "bloodthirsty audiences of the 21st Century" line again, and this time, instead of inventing a whole new sport, which might confuse people, the sporting types have just revamped baseball and added a few armoured exoskeletons and robots, you know the sort of thing. So now there's no need to shell out or a Neo Geo or wait thirty years, for you can play it on your very own Megadrive.



STARING AT THE WALL

Now the rules of baseball are pretty simple. The object is to hit the ball really far and run around the four bases. You can stop at any base should you wish, but if two people occupy a base at the same time you're out. Hit the ball out of the park and it's a home run, worth tons of points. If the ball gets caught without bouncing or your batsman misses the ball three times, they're out. When three men are out, play swaps over. If you hit the ball and it goes behind the line going from the first and third bases it's a foul ball.

Now it gets a bit funny, with this being the future and everything. Everyone in the game is wearing armoured exoskeletons. These protect them from the super-fast speeding steel baseballs, and also endow the players with super-powers. Around the edge of the field are a number of jump pads. Jumping for the ball whilst standing on one of these triggers your suit's jets and results in a super-high jump, making it a whole lot easier to catch would-be home runs.



▲ "C'mon then, sucker – sock it to me!"



▲ Crackers? Yum, I'll have Stilton on mine!



▲ "Please, God, let me hit the ball."



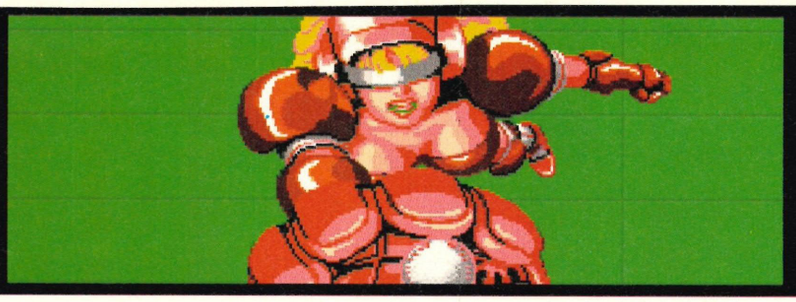
▲ Unfortunately, the ball does not explode.

COUNTING THE FLOWERS ON THE WALLPAPER

Right, so that's the rules out of the way. Now for the teams. Each player in each of the teams has their own statistics. These denote their pitching ability, batting ability, fielding ability and luck. These are important considerations when picking your line-up and subbing players. Each pitcher also has an ERA (Earned Run Average). The lower the number, the better the pitcher (because they've let fewer runs go, y'see?). Also, every game the computer picks one Lucky Player for each team. This fortunate chap (or chapess or indeed, chaptron) has their batting ability increased for the duration of that game. So it's acase of hard luck if it's your star pitcher.

It's also poskibule to improve the stats of your players simply by buying upgrades to their armour. This generally costs a lot of money, but there's three levels of upgrade for batting, pitching and fielding available, costing between $1000 and $20000 dollars. How do you get your hands on that kind of dosh? Well, every time you score a run or steal a couple of bases (if you're batting) you're rewarded with a fat pile of spondoolicks. If you're the defending team, every time you get a man out, or get a Strike or catch something you get a heap of moolah. Conversely, if you're attacking and you lose a man you also lose some cash, although your dough is safe if you're playing in defence.

EBALL



NAILING YOUR HEAD TO THE FLOOR

ZCor, what with all this futuristic armament and excitement, the TWO different leagues (ie they've got different teams in them) and that, this must surely be the greatest sports game ever. Until of course you realise that it is a baseball game, and baseball games are notorious for being crap. And indeed, this one is. The gameplay, despite all the neat things that appear to be going on, is very simple. More simple in fact than any other baseball game. The elements of play detailed here rarely intrude on the routine of press the button, throw the ball, press the joypad, steer the ball, press the button hit the ball, run. And that's it, over and over again, even if you're a baseball fan it isn't up to much cop. If you've really got to have a computer baseball fix then RBI III is just about the only title which really does the game justice, despite the fact you've got to have a PhD in Rounders to fully understand it. Sadly, whilst this is a nice attempt to brighten up the idea baseball is a sadly unconvertible sport.



▲ The pitcher delivers a high-tailin', leg-cockin' speedbal delivery.



▲ The batting!



▲ The catching!



▲ The blue thing!



▲ The litter!

LOOKING FOR GREY HAIRS

It's also possible to power up the robot players found on many teams. However, this is a different kettle of fish altogether. Robots are powered up in the same way, by calling time out and selecting the Power-Up option, but instead of simply improving single attributes a work-over boosts the robotic abilities by 40%, 60% or 80%, depending how many sponds are expended. This sounds pretty good, but robot players are still inferior to their human counterparts, and prone not only to the same injuries humans take when hit by the ball but also run the added risks of break downs or running out of fuel. Both bah and humbug.

PICKING YOUR NAILS

Just to add to the misery, there's another couple of terrors awaiting prospective cyberpunk baseballers. First off are the stop zones, which, should ball pass near them, simply kill it's velocity thanks to their futuristic powers which may never, ever be fully explained. This usually happens when you're on a dead cert for a home run. Also, there's the Cracker. This is typically droll baseball humour for a whacking great hidden land mine which lurks unseen of the pitch. Its location is always random, and whosoever should steppeth on it should be prepared for an explosion of stun-grenade proportions. This does no permanent damage but prevents the player from acting for some seconds.

THE SECOND OPINION



Paul Glancey

I think Rad's being a bit hard on this game. I don't like baseball games, but of all the Megadrive ones I've played this is the most enjoyable, thanks purely to all the futuristic extras and the smart graphics. And I have to complement the programmers on how closely the conversion follows the Neo Geo original. However, I admit that it's still not a game I would play for more than a couple of hours, tops, simply because, as Rad says, of all the sports games baseball is one of the most boring to play as a video game. As usual, the two player option is best, but even then, doing the same old thing again and again quickly becomes dull. The game could really have done with more danger from features such as the mines which litter the field towards the end of a match. An exploding ball would have been good, or perhaps some kind of weapon with which you could take out the fielder standing underneath a fly-ball, waiting for the catch. For this kind of money I expect big thrills, and Super Baseball doesn't deliver them in sufficient quantities.

% RATINGS



PRESENTATION 88%
Very well presented, loads of cut screens and blow-ups.

GRAPHICS 80%
Surprisingly similar to their Neo-Geo counterparts.

SOUND 78%
Good music and effects. Speech is a bit muffled.

SHORT TERM PLAY 76%
Quite engaging for an hour.

LONG TERM PLAY 57%
Dullsville, after that.

OVERALL 62
Sadly, another baseball conversion ruined by being a baseball conversion.

MEGADRIVE REVIEW



MEGADRIVE REVIEW

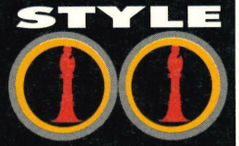


BY: VIRGIN

SEGA

8-MEG

STYLE



STRATEGY

PRICE £44.99

PLAYERS 1

SKILL SETTINGS 1

RELEASE DATE

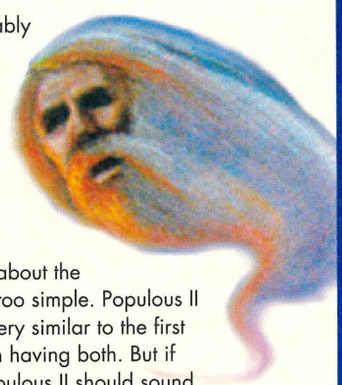
SEPT 1993

Today's lesson comes from the Book of MegaTech and will be read by Gus Swan: "And lo, the chips containing the game of Populous II did come into the office, and verily once more did Godly acts and divine things reign therein. That is the end of today's lesson, now I'd better get on with the review."

POPULOUS

Populous was a game that found its place in gaming heaven immediately. It was certainly the first pure strategy game for the Megadrive, with enough depth and size to please the most demanding of players. It was also an original idea at the time, and spawned a host of spin-offs and imitations like Mega-lo-Mania and Bullfrog's own Powermonger.

IN THE BEGINNING...

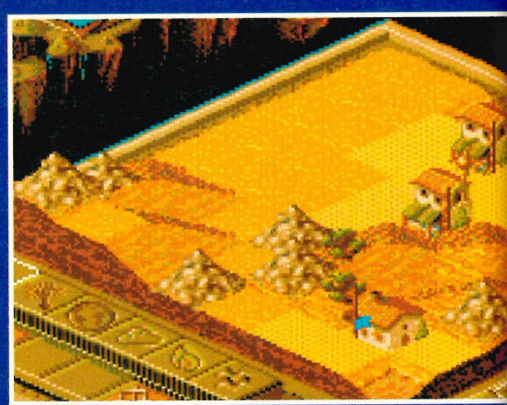


Unless you're strategically-minded, you'll probably think God games are god-awful, so save yourself the trip and stop reading now. Like all good strategy games, the basis was simple but the room to develop tactics was endless. Like chess, you manipulated forces against each other, but unlike chess there was a random element to your pawns, and the visual treat of using disasters.

But blasphemies have since been spoken about the first Populous – it was too repetitive, too easy, too simple. Populous II is like the Second Coming. The game itself is very similar to the first edition, in fact so close that it's not really worth having both. But if you're a new convert to the strategy genre, Populous II should sound quite appealing.



▲ "I think this little display emphasizes my fee idols. And another thing, thou shatt not commi



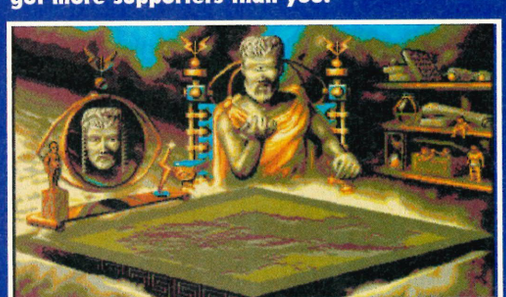
▲ "Hmm this looks too quiet – looks like a bit wouldn't go amiss."



▲ The ampitheatre is like parliament – I've got more supporters than you.



▲ Everyone to the papal magnet. People come when you call them.



▲ This appealing chap hands out experience points to successful deities. Thanks.



▲ Hideously long password mode screen. Is it really worth noting for that old bag?

WELCOME TO MY RELIGION

You play as a God, with the overall aim of seeing your followers multiply and prosper over 1,000 different worlds. The one impediment to that is Evil (or Good, if you're playing nasty). Evil's followers have a place in the world too, and a protective deity who is out to get your people.

SETTLE DOWN NOW

Your people are gathered in settlements, which are surrounded by cultivated land. The size of the settlement is dictated by the area of cultivation. There's an important principle to bear in mind here: only flat land can be cultivated. Flattening land is your most basic Godly power, and the basis of the whole game.

Inside the settlement, people modestly get on with the process of making babies, depending on how 'good' the land is. Once the settlement is full, someone is ejected and migrates to a piece of inviting flatland. In this way, your people should eventually cover the world.

II: TWO TRIBES

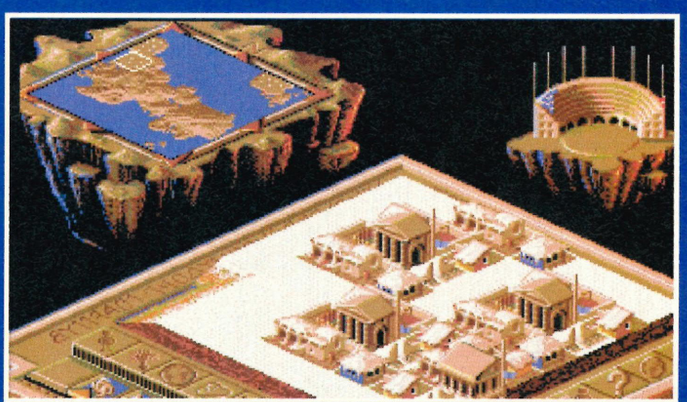




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adultery."



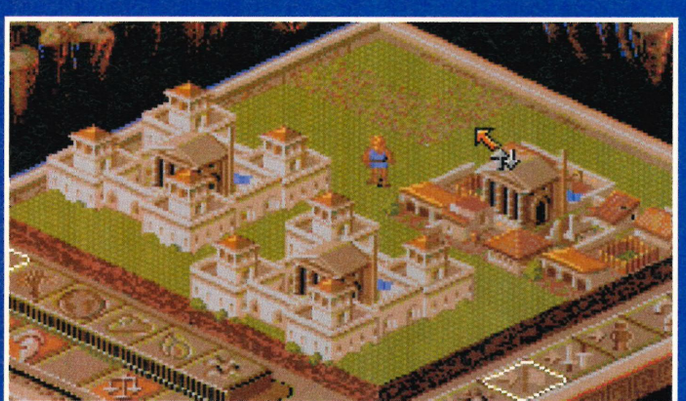
▲ You know, people often say to me, "God, why did you strike me down?" I say "It's a mystery, my friend, a mystery."



▲ Doesn't it all look like a Christmas card from up here - fluffy snow on rooftops, peasants freezing in hovels. Great.



famine



▲ Did I say you could build a citadel here? Did my holy pillar of fire stop at this point? I think not... BLAM!



▲ I know I'm a God of Love, but I really do enjoy a good rumble. The crusades for example, tremendously entertaining.

The part you play in this is almost indirect, and Populous II can get a bit frustrating in the way the people don't always do as you'd want. You can coax followers, but by and large they wander as they want, getting killed regularly and completely missing the enemy sprite you want them to beat the crap out of.

There's also a fair bit of routine flattening on each world, which means it isn't the game for people who want instant adrenalin-pumping action. The game also plays like this through all 1,000 worlds. All that changes is the difficulty level. As you progress, you start with less followers, harsher terrains and a stronger and cleverer opponent. Sounds like Dullsville? Well, fun (of a sort) presents itself with disasters.

VENGEANCE IS MINE!

Disasters are your way of intervening in your opponent's development. They are based around elemental principles (Earth, Fire, Air, Water) and take various forms like earthquakes, fire-showers, thunderstorms, tidal waves and swamps. About 20 all told, though not all available at the one time.

Creating chaos from heaven is, of course, a tiring business and is only possible by collecting Mana — an energy supply provided by your followers. Disasters have to be rationed and used strategically, not recklessly.

It's in this area that Populous II is most improved from its predecessor. In the original Populous, the disasters were pretty crummy — visually pathetic, with most of the low-powered 'acts of God' being tactically insignificant. This has all changed.

Some of the disasters look superb (the thunderstorm, pillar of fire and whirlwind spring to mind). More importantly, there are more and of greater variety, allowing you to use them more tactically. For example, use a whirlpool in a coastal area, or a whirlwind where you don't want to damage land.

The game's lasting appeal is boosted by the desire to reach higher levels, gain some new disaster power and see just what torments you'll be able to inflict. You start off as a poxy God, incapable of organising a wet weekend in Scunthorpe, but once you get into your stride it's fire and brimstone for supper. That's the crucial difference between this and Populous I – you don't feel you've completely sussed the game early on.



▲ The day should start cloudy with sunny periods, with maybe a tidal wave later in easterly parts.

DIVINE JUDGMENT

I was slightly disappointed that Populous II didn't have any radical new features, unless you count the Customise option, which allows you to create new lands, and also allocate your God experience points (the password for this is enormous). Even the graphics are very similar (ie neat, but dull) and, strangely, have less variety.

I wouldn't recommend it to Populous owners, because they will scoot through a couple of hundred levels on the first few sittings, severely reducing the game's value. However, the root idea is just so smart, and the improvements are good enough to make any newcomer think it was heaven-sent.

ALTERNATIVELY



94 MEGA-LO-MANIA
by:VIRGIN
PRICE: £44.99

Supreme strategy. Outshines Populous II by being prettier, faster and much more fun to play.

ALTERNATIVELY



78 POWERMONGER
by:ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £39.99

Bullfrog's attempt to make an in-depth war-game ended up being too cumbersome and unrewarding to be enjoyable.



▲ Hello! interviews the elemental disasters at their lovely home in Conway. "Hello, I'm fire!" (main). "That's me, Earth" (centre right). "Water!" (bottom right). "I'm actually a baptismal font: air's on holiday" (top right).



▲ Are all the giants dead? And all the witches fled? Am I still safe in bed? Er, no.



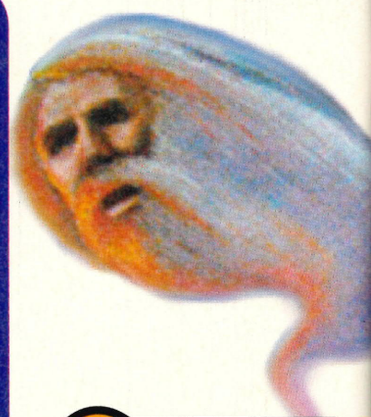
▲ A rare moment of non-drama in the ongoing struggle that is Populous II.

THE SECOND OPINION

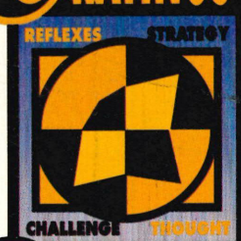


MARK HOLMES

In the period between the original Populous and this sequel, a fair few God games have entered the Megadrive strategy arena, so the big question is, how does this update compare to the new pretenders? Well, it's a definite improvement on the original Populous, mainly because you've got a bigger and more spectacular range of disasters with which to wreak havoc on your enemies. There's no doub that it's a high-quality strategy game although, as Gus points out, the game doesn't really have any radical new features to tempt owners of Populous 1 to buy this sequel. And what about the big question that I mentioned in my first sentence? The truth is, I find Mega-lo-Mania a much more satisfying God-game, because it looks better, it's faster and it has a great sense of humour, making it a lot more fun to play.



%RATINGS



PRESENTATION 90%
Loads of custom options, full icon control.

GRAPHICS 72%
Neat and clear display, but not very surprising.

SOUND 47%
Apart from some samples, it's almost silent.

SHORT TERM PLAY 86%
There's not much to do at first.

LONG TERM PLAY 90%
Later worlds broaden options and challenge.

OVERALL 89
The strategy game gets a new lease of life, and merits it. Amen.



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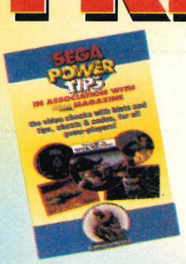
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MEGADRIVE REVIEW

MEGADRIVE REVIEW

MORTAL KOMBAT

BY: ACCLAIM

PRESENTS

8-MEG

STYLE

BEAT 'EM UP

PRICE £49.99

PLAYERS 1-2

SKILL SETTINGS 5

RELEASE DATE

SEPT 1993



Ever since TOM GUISE was bullied at school by a 2,000 year-old dragon/boy with four arms, he has waited patiently for the chance to get his revenge. Now his chance has finally come in the form of an invite to the Mortal Kombat tournament. Watch your back, Goro!

MORTAL

If you were given the chance to design a beat 'em up, what would you put in it? I know what I'd like. For starters, I'd want plenty of rock-hard moves, like a good punch to the nuts, or a head-butt to the bridge of the nose. Something painful, perhaps using weapons like knives and harpoons. Yeah, and having cartoon-style characters is all fine and dandy, but wouldn't it be more fun if you could fight real opponents, like actors? And really hurt them too? Make them bleed? In fact, why stop at the blood when you could have still-beating hearts ripped out of their owners' chests? Or spinal columns removed whole? The painful possibilities are endless. Oh, glorious gore, that's what we want. And that's where Mortal Kombat comes in. The most violent coin-op ever and now it's been converted to the Megadrive. Ha ha, let the blood run thick and free. More tea, Vicar?

MORBID FIXATION!

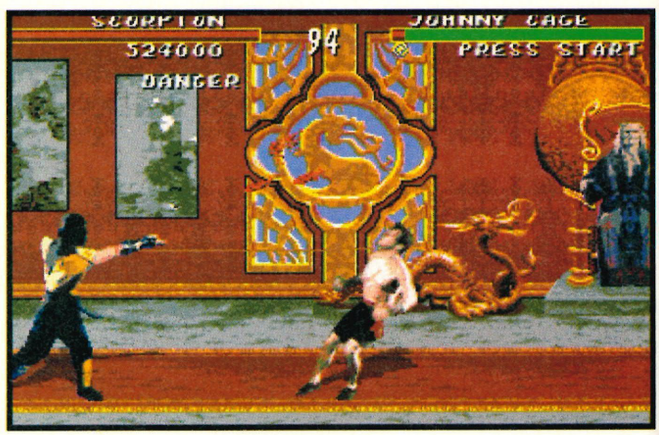
Ahh, Mortal Kombat. Much has been the hype over Midway's infamous coin-op. In fact, some people have even claimed that it's better than the Streetfighter 2. Strong words indeed, but why such massive interest in what seems like just another beat 'em up? There can only be one reason – the gore. From the sheer amount of blood that is spilled throughout the game to the now-infamous 'death moves', Mortal Kombat has caused quite a stir with arcade-goers and watchdog commitees alike. Mortal Kombat is BIG news.

Programmed by Croydon-based software developers, Probe (of Alien 3 and T2: The Arcade Game fame), this 16 M-Bit Megadrive conversion of the blood-drenched beat 'em up hopes to capture the winning formula that has made Mortal Kombat such a hit.

NOW ENTERING KOMBAT!

Ever seen Enter the Dragon? Then you should already be familiar with the plot of Mortal Kombat. Every year the greatest fighters from across the World travel to a secret location to take part in the Mortal Kombat tournament. Whoever wins the tournament is deemed the greatest fighter on Earth.

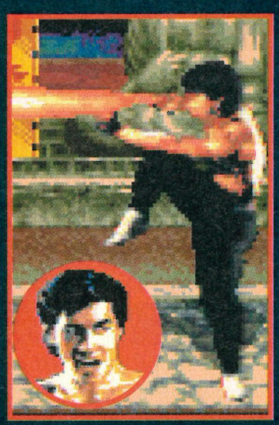
Fair enough, except that in the last five hundred years the competition has seen only one champion – Goro. Goro has an unfair advantage though, because apart from being a 2,000 year-old half-human dragon with four arms, he also happens to be the



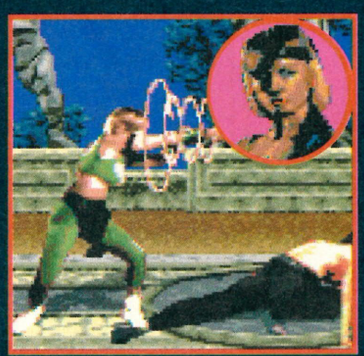
▲ **Ka-shlock! Eat harpoon, you pathetic fool! Mwa-ha-ha!**

THE HAST!

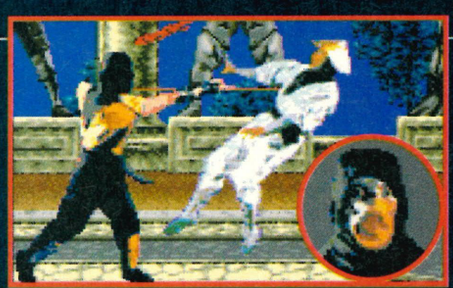
Who are the Mortal Kombatants? Let's take a look at the motley krew.



LIU KANG
A Shaolin monk, Kang has entered the tournament to defeat Shang Tsung and return honour to the competition. Armed with fireballs, Kang is also able to propel himself through the air with a deadly spear kick.

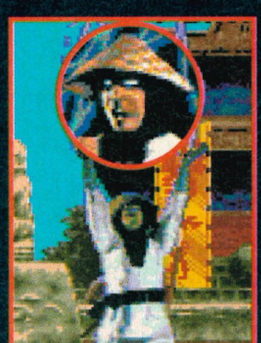


SONYA
A Special Forces Operative who was hot on the trail of Kano, Sonya has been forced to take part in the tournament. Emitting pulse waves from her hands, Sonya also has a gripping thigh attack.



SCORPION
A demon, Scorpion is a ninja who was assassinated by Sub Zero years ago and has returned from the grave to avenge his death. Able to teleport, Scorpion also has a harpoon attack, pulling his victims towards him by their throat.

RAYDEN
A thunder god no less, Rayden was invited by Shang Tsung himself, in the hope that he could steal the deity's immortal soul. Flying torpedos, lightning attacks and even teleportation are at his disposal.





SUB ZERO
A ninja who can command the elemental powers of ice, Sub Zero blasts at his opponents with a deadly ice attack, helplessly freezing them. However, beware of performing a double blast which backfires, freezing Sub Zero himself.

KOMBAT



servant of Shang Tsung, the Grandmaster of the Tournament. When Shang Tsung used foul means to attain his position of power, he plunged the tournament into disrepute by forcing the combatants to fight each other to the death. Why? So that he could steal their souls and prolong his unholy life. Inevitably this means there's bound to be a lot of blood and mutilation throughout the whole competition. How terrible, snigger.

FIGHT!

The basic format of Mortal Kombat is a familiar one. Each fight takes the form of a one-on-one bout. Win two bouts against your opponent and you move on to face the next challenger in the tournament.

There are six selectable fighters in Mortal Kombat and each one has their own set of unique attacks. Defeat the other five characters and your chosen character has to face themself in the Mirror Match. After that, it's on to the three Endurance rounds where they have to face two different opponents in succession.

Still going? Then it's on to the champion, Goro. Beat him and the final match is against Shang Tsung, the Grandmaster himself. Tsung is able to emit his own brand of fireball and even take on the shape and form of any of the kombatants, using their special moves as his own!

On top of all this, the tournament is interspersed with bonus rounds where you have to test the edge of your hand against such worthy materials as wood, metal and stone. And to top it all, there's the secret match against the Reptile, a green ninja who can be found hidden somewhere in the game. Leaving such subtle clues to his whereabouts as 'tip eht fo mottob', it's not at all obvious that he's hiding in the pit.

EXCELLENT!

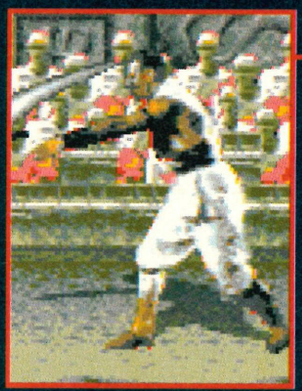
There's no denying it, Midway's Mortal Kombat coin-op was an impressive beat 'em up. Featuring fully-digitised action, with actors playing the parts of the various characters and a Ray Harryhausen-style puppet starring as Goro, the animation was great, even if it did bear a resemblance to some Monty Python cartoon. Coupled with the gorgeous backdrops, the mean and moody soundtrack and excellent speech, this is one game that you wouldn't have expected to see grafted on to the Megadrive successfully. Well, somehow Probe have done it, because this conversion is near-enough spot-on.

Okay, so the sprites are a tad smaller, the backdrops have lost a bit of detail and some of the speech is missing, but apart from those minor differences, Megadrive Mortal Kombat IS the coin-op. Just look at the screenshots. See those fully-digitised sprites? Well



JOHNNY CAGE
Movie star and martial artist, Johnny Cage is here to prove that he's more than just a pretty face. Able to perform fireballs and sliding kicks, he can also drop into the splits and punch his opponents right in the lunchbox. Kooyay!

KANO
Metal-faced mercenary, Kano has entered the competition in the hope of claiming big money. With incredible cannonball attacks at his disposal, Kano also uses a concealed throwing knife and head-butts at close range.



wait until you see them move. Spinning, jumping, punching and teleporting all over the place, the animation is excellent and dead fast too.

Then there are the sounds. Tunes lifted straight from the arcade machine and great quotes like "Excellent!" and "Finish him!" litter the game. The atmosphere is incredible. It's quite clear where those 16-Megs of memory have gone.

GET OVER HERE!

I'll confess, I was never a fan of the coin-op. Acclaim sent us the machine a while back in order to promote this upcoming Megadrive conversion, but if never did anything for me. The problem is there just isn't the depth of playability that you get from Streetfighter II. With the limited amount of normal moves each character possesses, there's less scope for learning devastating new combinations, and once you master the special moves the game just becomes one big special moves-fest. It's just too limited and I got bored real quick.

However, the strange thing is, I like the Megadrive version. For some reason it seems to possess a playability that the coin-op didn't have. For a start, the special moves are much easier to pull off and with the gore-cheat entered, the added element of blood-drenched fighting action is great. Firing your rope and spear through an opponent's neck and telling them to "Get over here!" before punching them through the air in a spray of blood is a real hoot, and pulling off a death move successfully, like Johnny Cage's head-removal, really is satisfying.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not some kind of snuff movie fan. All this blood and gore is definitely over-hyped. The bright-red ketchuppy mush that flies around the screen doesn't look real at all, neither do the head-explosions or even the infamous spine-removal, and I doubt it'll induce anyone to nightmares. What it is, though, is very funny, and that's where this game entertains.

Of course, the lack of depth to the playability is still there. The limited amount of moves, the lack of combinations, the complete dependance on special moves. It's probably a credit to the closeness of this conversion and is especially noticeable on the easier skill settings when the computer opponents fall for the same tricks over and over again. However, play on the harder settings and you've got a real fight on your hands. And of course there's the two-player option to keep you going as well.

FINISH HIM!

I know there'll be a lot of complaints over the gratuitous violence in this game, but to be honest I think it's undeserved. The gory aspect adds nothing more than a sort of comical-injury element to the action, but if it helps sell the game then great, because Mortal Kombat is easily the best beat 'em up on the Megadrive so far.

I know Streetfighter II is on the way and it has the advantage of being a more playable game to begin with, but Mortal Kombat is still highly enjoyable in its own right. Fantastic-looking and excellent sounding, I find it hard to believe that Mortal Kombat will be beaten by Streetfighter II in those departments, and even playability-wise it produces the goods. I for one am addicted to it.

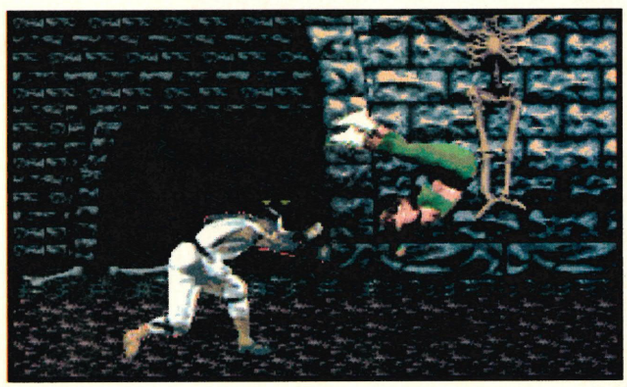
In fact, I am convinced that both Mortal Kombat and Streefighter II can stand together in your games collection. If I had to choose, I'd definitely wait for Streetfighter II, but if you can afford the dosh give Mortal Kombat a go – you won't be disappointed.

THE SECOND OPINION

PAUL GLANCEY



I know I'm probably in the minority, but to me the Mortal Kombat coin-op always appeared to be a weaker imitation of Streetfighter II. The digitised fighters just didn't look right, and to get the most out of the game you had to pull off really fiddly joystick moves – even more complicated than Streetfighter's. The main attraction was the gore and the fatality moves, and although these are included in the conversion (via the cheat mode) it isn't enough to make it a mega game. I was warned that it was possible to beat every opponent with near enough one move, but while this is more or less true on the easy level, the fighters on the medium and hard levels aren't so stupid – they learn your moves and respond much faster. And of course, the two player version doesn't have this problem at all. Good conversion though it is (in fact if you're already into Mortal Kombat, you'll wet your pants when you see how accurate it is), it still didn't convert me, and I'm still hanging onto my cash for Megadrive Streetfighter II coming out in October.



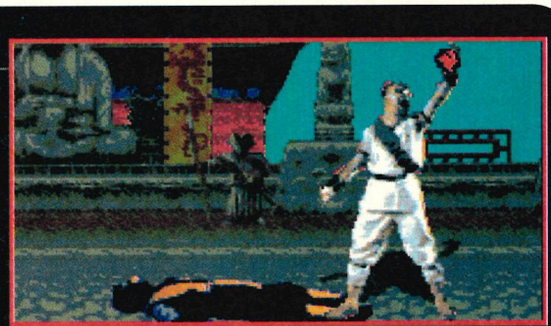
▲ **Hai-yah! Get off my back, you old bag!**

THE SENTENCE IS...DEATH!

With the gore cheat entered, Mortal Kombat takes on a whole new crimson-coloured hue. Instead of merely punching your opponents across the screen at the end of a match, you can now pull off the original, arcade 'Death Moves'. By performing a special button combination when the dreaded command "Finish Him!" rings out, the screen goes dim and, well see yourself...



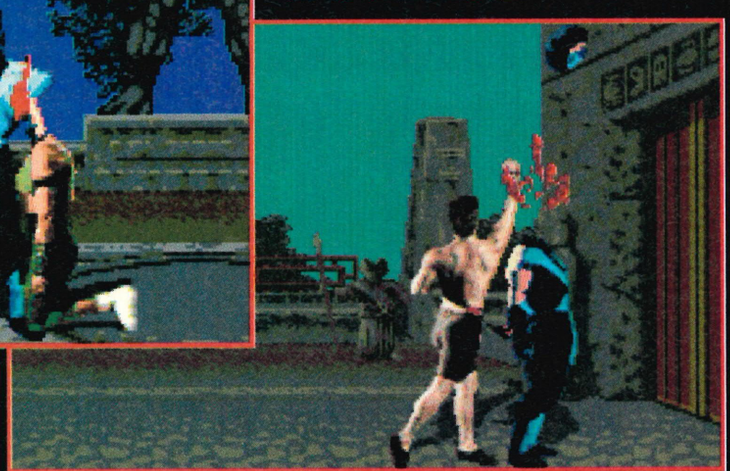
SONYA'S KISS OF DEATH
Blowing a kiss, Sonya send a small spark to the opponent, which immediately engulfs them, leaving their charred remains onscreen



KANO'S HEART REMOVAL
Plunging his hand straight into his enemy's chest, Kano rips their heart out and holds the still-beating organ aloft.



SUB ZERO'S SPINAL FILLET
Placing his hands on both sides of the unfortunate victim's head, Sub Zero rips it off with spinal cord in tow.



CAGE'S DECAPITATION
Crouching down, Cage brings his fist across his stunned opponent's jaw, lifting the head clean off the shoulders in a spurt of blood.



▲ **Go on, do as he says. Finish me. No, no you can't, can you? Look friend, let's work together and end this war.**



▲ **Kapow! Taste the knuckles of Kano, you Thunder-God bowel system!**

BRING ON...THE FIGHTING PAD!

The original Mortal Kombat coin-op made use of five buttons: two for punching, two for kicking and one for blocking. Of course, this causes a bit of a problem as the Megadrive joypad has only three buttons. How does it cope? Well, the A button is used for the high punch, and the B and C buttons control the low and high-powered kicks respectively, with the Start button used for the block. Only the low kick is lost.

Fortunately, by the time the game is released, Sega's six-button fighting pad should also be available. This pad not only features more than enough buttons to cope with all the moves, but also has a specially-designed direction pad which rolls around, making it easier to perform tricky special moves. Stupidly, though, the Start button still only blocks, meaning that whatever type of pad you use you still can't Pause the darned game. Doh!

Don't worry if you can't afford the six-button pad, though – the three-button pad doesn't hinder play that much, with only a few low-punch related moves being lost.

ALTERNATIVELY



85 **FATAL FURY**
by SEGA
PRICE: £44.99
An excellent conversion of the hit Neo Geo beat 'em up. Good graphics, good sound and good playability. Mortal Kombat is better though.

ALTERNATIVELY



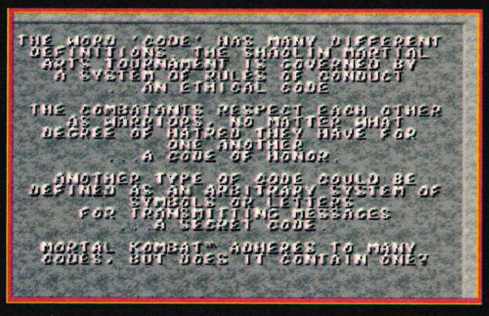
79 **DEADLY MOVES**
by KANEKO
PRICE: IMPORT
Not a bad beat 'em up, but a lack of challenge and a limited array of moves means it just doesn't make the grade.

I NEED BLOOD!

The main selling point of Mortal Kombat has always been the gore-factor. Realising this, the programmers have left all the blood and dismemberment in the Megadrive version, only it's hidden. If you want to enjoy the blood-spattered delights of disembowelling your opponents with your fingers, then a special code has to be entered at the beginning of the game. What is this code? Well, in fact there are two. Let MegaTech reveal all!

MORTAL KODE NO.1

1



▲ Start up the game and this screen appears, telling you about Mortal Kombat's code of honour. Enter the following combination of button presses: A, B, A, C, A, B, B.

MORTAL KODE NO.2

1



▲ The selection screen at the beginning of the game. Enter the following combination: Down, Up, Left, Left, A, Right and Down. More easily remembered as DULLARD.

2



▲ The letters should go red and the words "Get over here!" should ring out. Now enter Kombat and...

2



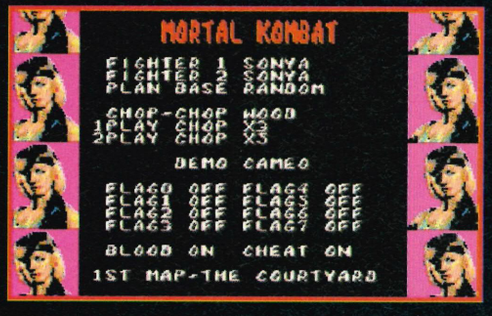
▲ The words "Cheat Enabled" should appear. Select that option and...

3



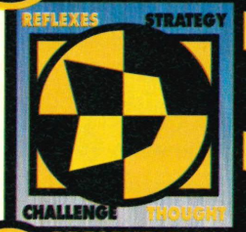
▲ Voila! All the blood and gore from the arcade original, including the gut-wrenching 'Death Moves'. Enjoy!

3



▲ Voila! All the cheats you could ever want. The blood mode, infinite credits, death-in-one-hit, different demo screens, the lot.

%RATINGS



90% **PRESENTATION**
Arcade-perfect presentation screens and hidden cheat options.

93% **GRAPHICS**
Fantastic sprites, fabbo backdrops, superb animation.

92% **SOUND**
Excellent renditions of the arcade tunes, top speech, smart spot-effects.

90% **SHORT TERM PLAY**
Very playable, easy-to-perform special moves, user-friendly Easy settings.

89% **LONG TERM PLAY**
Tough hard settings, but it's the excellent two-player mode that'll keep you at it.

OVERALL 90
The best Megadrive one-on-one beat 'em up yet. But don't forget Streetfigh...

MEGADRIVE REVIEW

MEGADRIVE REVIEW

PUGGSY

BY: PSYGNOSIS

PSYGNOSIS PRESENTS

8-MEG

STYLE

PLATFORM/PUZZEL

PRICE £39.99

PLAYERS 1

SKILL SETTINGS 1

RELEASE DATE

OCT 1993



Ever since an unfortunate accident with a rusty nail when he was 12 years old, MARK HOLMES has been mourning the death of his childhood friend, a spacehopper named Gdoink. So when Psygnosis' new platform puzzler, featuring a similar blobby orange character, arrived in the office, he bounced the cart straight into his Megadrive.

PUG

Just what is wrong with the engineers of interplanetary navigation systems these days, eh? Just recently, it seems that hardly a month goes by without us valiant MegaTech reviewers having to guide some poor life-form or other through a hostile alien planet because they can't find their way back home. You'd think that in these days of mega-technology the boffins would be able to design a fool-proof homing system to guide a spaceship back safely, wouldn't you? But no – the list of unfortunate creatures which get stranded on strange planets just keeps on growing. Last month there was Bob, this month there's Puggsy. But Puggsy's different, you see, because whereas I was tempted to leave boring Bob to rot on the alien planet he'd crash-landed on, my urge to save Puggsy from the hostile environment he's thrown into is very strong. I'll tell you why...

OUTER SPACEHOPPER

The initial reason why I wanted to help poor old Puggsy out of his alien predicament is because of his physical appearance. He looks very similar to my old spacehopper, Gdoink, with his bouncy, blobby orange body, handlebar ears and dippy smile. But don't be fooled by his gormless appearance – Puggsy isn't just another loveable creature who's only good for platform-hopping and bottom-bouncing on baddies. The big difference between him and my old spacehopper is the key – Puggsy has white gloved hands with which to manipulate objects that can help him out of the puzzly predicaments he finds himself in.



RACCOON TOUR

As I said in the first paragraph, Puggsy has lost his way. The neat intro screens show his spaceship splash-landing on a strange world where he hopes to get directions back to his home planet. But the hapless alien proves himself to be a very poor judge of planets, because this particular one is inhabited by a mischievous race of raccoons. The black-eyed bounders are definitely not the most hospitable of hosts – the first thing they do when Puggsy sets foot on their soil is steal our wobbly orange friend's spaceship.

The raccoons carry the hot ship back to the city of Raclantis, as a trophy for their great ruler, stranding Puggsy and setting the game in motion. Under your control, Puggsy has to make his [illegible] puzzle-packed [illegible] ent island [illegible] way to reclaim [illegible] n the city of [illegible] evels with extra [illegible] portunities crop [illegible] e way, but there [illegible] o five world [illegible] ardians to be [illegible] defeated at various stages in the journey if the blobby orange being is to reach his destination. A Tiny Toons-style map charts Puggsy's progress, and he revisit any location he's already passed through, if he feels the need.



▲ Every game needs a mine level, and this is Puggsy's. Well, one of them anyway.

BUTT-BOUNCE PLUS

Puggsy encounters many weird and wonderful creatures on his way through the levels on the island – some of them are helpful, but the majority are harmful. There are raccoons in various guises all over the place, as well as marauding bears, squirrels throwing death-dealing acorns and stuff like bouncing suit-of-armour helmets later on. Yes, I know – they don't sound very terrifying, do they? Okay, they're not actually terrifying at all, unless you've just finished potty-training and eating rusks, but that's not the point.

The point is that they present a moving obstacle which, especially in later levels, adds to the difficulty of the puzzle. You can give them the old butt-bounce treatment, but

TIMED SEQUENCE DURATION: 2 MIN.

Here's a bit of Puggsy-style problem solving from early on in the game.



▲ Here's Puggsy in the forest. The exit's to the left but check out those powerful flames which are blocking the route.



▲ Maybe this chest holds a clue. What's that? A water pistol? So that's how you put the flames out.



▲ Aha, here's the water pistol he needs, but how is he supposed to get it from up there? Puggsy can't jump THAT high.



▲ Oho! So if you put a st[illegible] operates the fan and blo[illegible] ledge and down the hill!

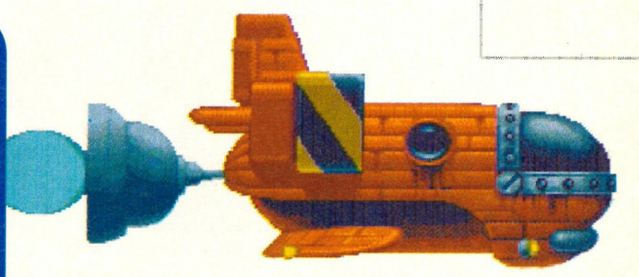
GSY







▲ Clad in turbo sneakers, Puggsy hurtles toward the exit, pursued by a Mummy!





▲ Fans! Balls! Switches! It's all too much!



▲ This Pirate Parrot is the first boss. Hit him with that fish!



▲ Space Invaders? Eh?



▲ Avalanche! Aiieeee!

they're definitely not easy to kill off. You have to use the old Mickey Mouse in the Castle of Illusion-style holding-down-the-D-pad-when-you-land-on-their-heads attack, and if you get your timing just a tiny bit out, you'll lose a life.

The nasties are also placed in all those hard-to-get-at positions, like walking underneath a platform which doesn't give you enough room to jump for a bottom-induced death move. Obviously, the levels become more and more nasty-infested the further you get into the game, and they're placed in more and more obstructive places, so even more finely-tuned timing and strategy is needed to overcome them. So the nasties aren't terrifying, but they sure do get more and more frustrating as Puggsy gets nearer to the city of Raclantis.

However, dealing out death by butt is definitely the least interesting of Puggsy's skills – like I said, this guy isn't just another one of your identikit platform-hopping cutesy characters. He may look like a blob of orange snot with a face and limbs, but this little alien is one smart cookie when it comes to using different objects to get himself out of the puzzle-ridden places he finds himself in.

ESCAPE ARTIST

The first few levels of Puggsy lull you into a false sense of security by being incredibly easy to complete – based in the beach areas of the island, with a jolly calypso soundtrack and just a few objects to pick up and use, they're a breeze. But half-a-dozen levels into the game, when you've got the hang of the controls and what Puggsy can do with the objects he finds, you really have to engage your brain as well as your hand/eye co-ordination. It's not long before the old grey matter is working overtime, as you're desperately trying to suss out how to use the different objects to their best advantage so you can get off each level.

After a while, you realise that there isn't just one set solution for each level – there are several possibilities. So, according to your playing style, you can choose to exit from each level in different ways – as long as you can solve the puzzle in the first place, of course. This is an excellent feature,



▲ ...l on the switch it ...the pistol off the



▲ Now to put those flames out! But what's this? There's only three shots in this gun and there are four fires to extinguish!



▲ Where did I see that water pump... aha, there it is. Now to fill up the gun and extinguish that final fire.



▲ Hooray! The way is clear, and Puggsy's free! Free! Ha-ha-ha-ha! Nothing can stop him now!

giving the game a great amount of depth and longevity. Even after you've solved a level, you can go back to it and try to solve the puzzle in a different way.

OBJECTIVE CONTROL

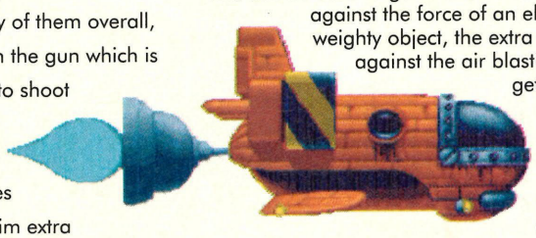
So what sort of objects are to be found lying around, and how do they help Puggsy through the puzzles? Well, there are over forty of them overall, ranging from the gun which is simply used to shoot baddies, through the training shoes which give him extra speed and bounce, and on to the remote control handset which can be used to manoeuvre a whole platform in one of the later levels. There are treasure chests which give clues as to how to get off the level, sunglasses which give one-hit invincibility from nasty attack, stools and barrels which can be stacked up like steps to get to otherwise inaccessible platforms... and the list of things goes on.

The great variety of objects available and the different things you can do with them really adds to the depth of the game, making the whole thing totally engrossing. This certainly isn't one of those simplistic games where you have to hop around a few platforms, kill a few nasties, find a key and then find the exit – it's a lot more involved than that.

WEIGHT PROBLEMS

It's not just the variety of objects to be found in Puggsy that makes the game so involved, it's also the way that a lot of them can be used for more than one purpose. Once you've got past the simple intro locations, each level is cleverly designed so that you can reach the exit by using different combinations of objects to do different things. Apart from its obvious use as a baddie-killer, the gun, for instance, can be used as a step to reach high platforms or, if Puggsy keeps hold of it, he can jump up, hook it onto a high ledge and use it as a lever to heave himself up onto the ledge.

Another smart thing is the way that each object has a different weight – the heavier the object, the more it will weigh Pugsy down. This can be used to good effect when Puggsy is trying to walk against the force of an electric fan – if he picks up a weighty object, the extra weight allows him to walk against the air blasting towards him, whereas he'd get blown back if he was carrying a lighter object.



Similarly, grabbing a rubber duck in the watery levels will help Puggsy to float nearer to the surface. Balls can also be bounced and then leapt upon to reach high-up platforms. It's one of those games where you'll come to a dead end, then eventually get a flash of inspiration to use an object in a different way and all of a sudden you've cracked it!

Manoeuvring some objects is not easy, however – trying to stack up barrels can be a nightmare, as you have to drop them precisely on top of each other, otherwise they'll just bounce all over the place. If you drop an object, it could bounce miles away down a slope or into some inaccessible cranny, and that can be very frustrating.

SOLVE AND SOLVE AGAIN

I found Puggsy a really refreshing game to play, although at times it can be so frustrating I was on the verge of throwing the Megadrive through my monitor screen. It's great to play a platform-based game in which a lot of thought has gone into the game design, especially when so many games just recently have conformed to the standard 'jump-jump, butt-bounce-butt-bounce' platform formula.

Although the main character and the graphic style gives it the look of game aimed at the younger player (and it even has an abbreviated 'Junior' option for youngsters), the puzzles have enough diversity and depth to keep older gamers glued to their screens. In fact, the learning curve has been superbly-programmed, easing you in gently through the early levels and then gradually introducing more and more fiendish puzzles, making the game more and more challenging the further you get into it. Solving the harder puzzles gives you such a satisfying feeling, the game really gets its hooks into you – it is incredibly addictive.

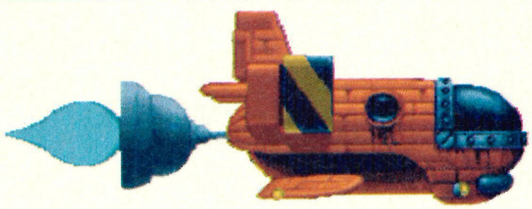
The fact that there are several different ways to complete each level gives the game great longevity – even when you've beaten a level, you can go back to it and find new ways to solve the puzzles. An excellent, well-designed game that'll take you ages to complete, Puggsy is great value for money.

THE SECOND OPINION

PAUL GLANCEY



This is ace! There's so much in it and, unlike other puzzle games, solving the problems isn't just a matter of carrying an object to a particular location and dropping it. It's much cleverer than that. In fact a lot of the levels are like those Crystal Maze problems where you can look around the place, see the significant objects, get an idea of how they all work and interact, then look for a way to use them. Take the lighthouse level for example. You've got a giant, unlit candle, which is obviously the source of light in the lighthouse, a Bunsen burner, a gas meter, a small, unlit candle and loads of coins. Obviously you need to light the main candle using the small candle, but to do that you need to light the small candle by getting the turning on the Bunsen burner, and to do THAT, you need to drop a coin in the meter. But the gas runs out really quickly so you need to keep running back and forward between the meter and the Bunsen to finish the level. Working it all out is great fun, though, and if you fancy a bit of a breather from the normal stuff you can drop into one of the little hidden rooms where you can have a quick game of Space Invaders or Gravitar or Shoot the Bunnies. The graphics are great, the music's very jolly and I loved it. This could be my favourite Psygnosis game ever!



ALTERNATIVELY



90 KRUSTY'S SUPER FUN HOUSE
BY ACCLAIM
£39.99
Fiendishly-designed platform puzzler in which you play Krusty, aiming to send packs of cutesy rats to their grisly deaths.

% RATINGS



PRESENTATION 90%
Smart intro. Password option. Very well put together.

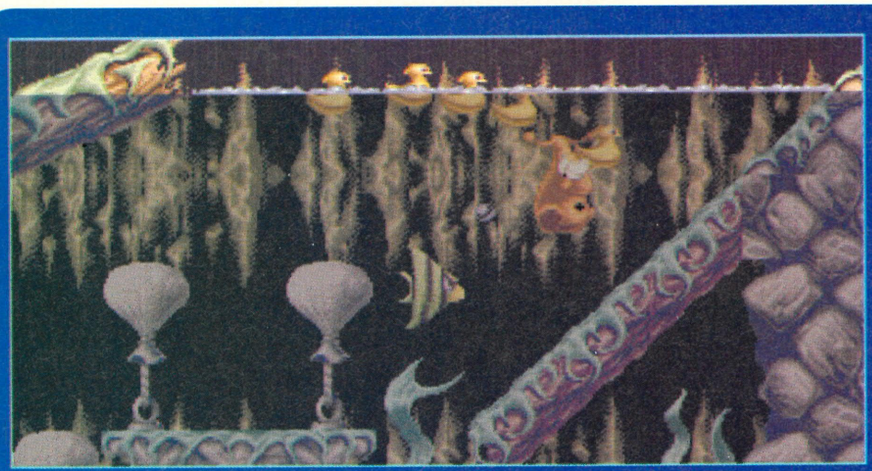
GRAPHICS 90%
Childlike and pretty cutesy, but rich and colourful too

SOUND 90%
Different tunes for each section, from jolly to spooky.

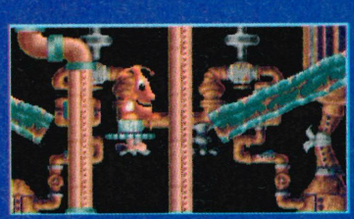
SHORT TERM PLAY 88%
Idiosyncratic controls, but early levels let you in gently.

LONG TERM PLAY 92%
Good difficulty curve, very addictive, levels can be re solved.

OVERALL 90
An excelent platform puzzler. Good value for children of all ages.



▲ The rubber ducks keep Puggsy out of deep water. Now, where's the harpoon?



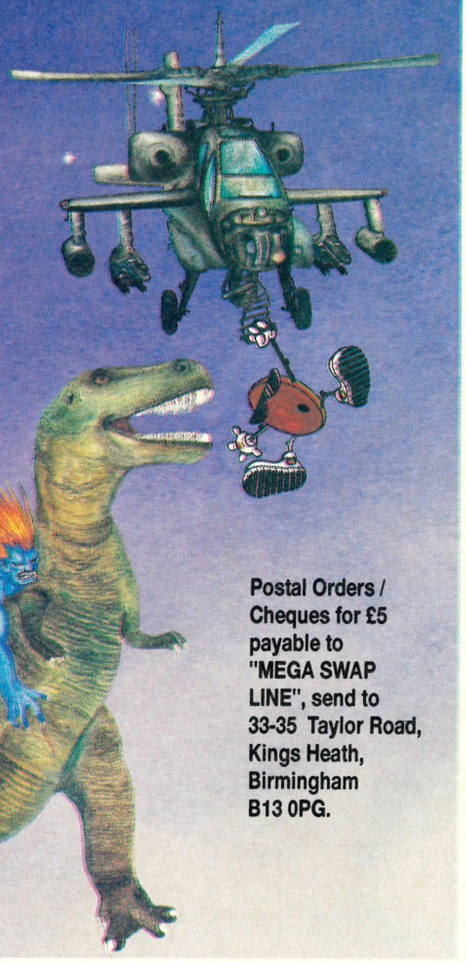
▲ Propeller-powered platforms?



▲ Radio-controlled platforms?!

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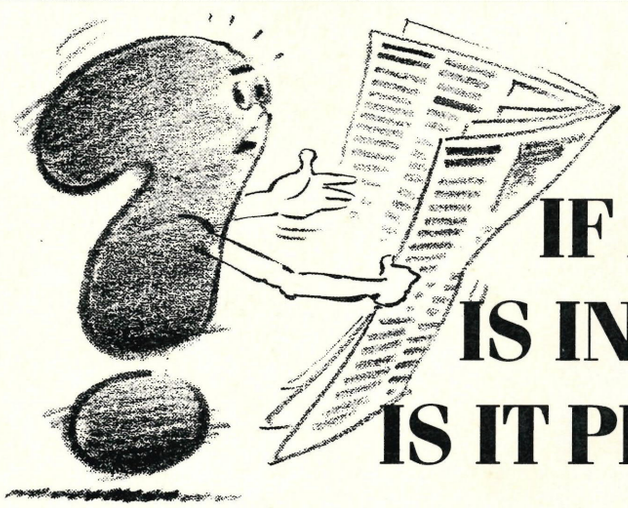
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MEGADRIVE REVIEW



BY: EA

ELECTRONIC ARTS

8 M-BIT

STYLE

PUZZLE

PRICE £44.99

PLAYERS 1-2

SKILL SETTINGS 1

RELEASE DATE

SEPT 1993

Many have commented that RADION AUTOMATIC is the work of some sinister supernatural agency, and here he is, reviewing a game in which he gets to frighten old ladies and little children. Chilling.

HAUNT

I used to live in a haunted house – it's true. If you looked in the fire long enough and stared really hard you could almost possibly imagine that there might conceivably be some flickering demonic images, nearly. And once, my brother was listening to my stereo when I was sure I'd turned it off. And our dog used to stare at one corner of a room, so there must have been a ghost there. Back then I thought it must just be a random manifestation, possibly a chimney sweep who'd been bricked up in the chimney years ago, or some woman who was horribly murdered in the bathroom (although I wasn't there at the time. I was at my mate's house. Honest). But now I realise that I must just have caused the death of some skateboarder through my penny-pinching ways, which is exactly what Vito Sardini has done.

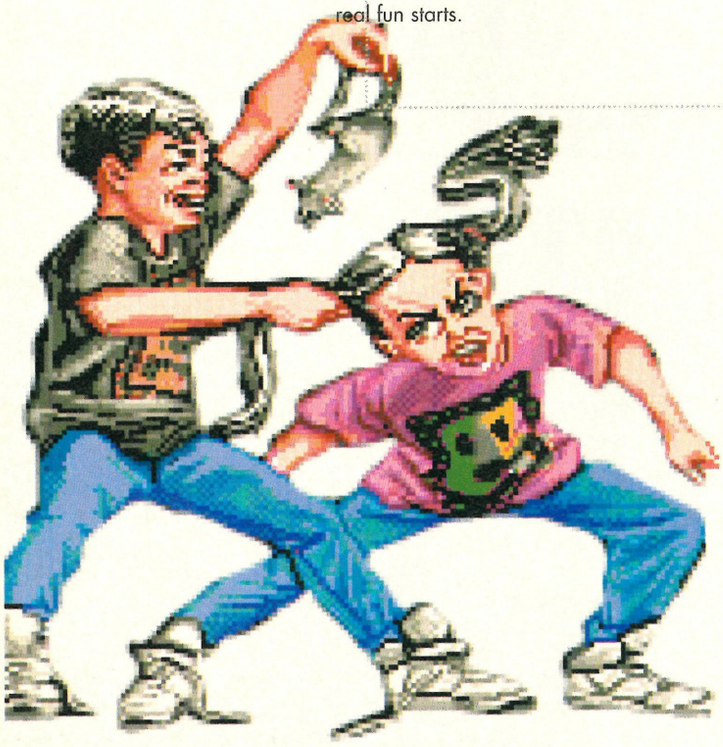
Vito is head of a company that makes very cheap skateboards which have a tendency to fall to bits all the time, which you may think would be a sure ticket to bankruptcy, but for some reason these decks are very popular. It might have something to do with the fact no-one ever gets the chance to complain, because they invariably meet sticky ends, often involving heavy goods vehicles.

Now though the Lords of the Netherworld have given one of Sardini's victims the chance to right the wrongs by granting them ghostly powers with which to scare the Sardini family away from their four beautiful homes and thus serve them jolly well right. However, before Polterguy (for it is he) can embark on his mission of vengeance, he needs to build up his spectral powers, which is where we join the game.



THE LIVING DEAD AT MANCHESTER MORGUE

Polt wanders around the Dungeons of the Beyond dodging attacks from rolling skulls, flocks of bats, volcanic steam eruptions and grabbing hands which burst through the walls. Attacks from these blighters drain Polto's energy, and once he loses the lot it's game over. Whilst he's roving around, droplets of ectoplasm drop from the ceiling and Guy simply has to walk over them to absorb the mystic energy. However, ectoplasm has a habit of dissipating rather rapidly, so it's best to get a move on and nab it before it all evaporates. Once Polterguy's Ectometer is full up he is allowed out of the dungeons and into the house, which is where the real fun starts.



CANNIBAL HOLOCAUST

First job is to press the START button, which brings up a map of the house showing the location of our hero and the four members of the Sardini family. Pick a Sardini, any Sardini, don't tell me which one it is, and track them down and scare them. This is more difficult than it actually sounds, because the Sardini family can't actually see Polterguy, so instead of just standing in front them and saying "Woo", or turning their stereos on when they're not looking, Polts has to chill them by possessing various household items. Sinks spew blood, disembodied legs ride bicycles, dead bodies turn up on the carpet, skeletons wander around looking scary and so on. To possess an item all you need to do is move Polter over to it, press towards the thing on the joypad and hit the A button.

Not even possession is as simple as all that, though. There are two types of haunt-traps, automatics and controllables. Automatics are simple enough,and these glow with a yellow light when Polter walks past them. Jump into it, load it with ectoplasm, jump out again and watch it do its stuff. Polterguy has to lurk inside traps and press the A button again to trigger them when the family member walks by. Traps glow blue when Polterguy is around.

Controllable traps are the most fun, once Polterguy has jumped into the item you're able to guide it around the screen with the joypad. Now, press B and the item should do something extra scary, like wave some tentacles around or shoot lightning. Polterguy's Ectometer turns into a red timer bar when one of these green-glowing items is in use.

ING STARRING POLTERGUY





▲ These novelty mantlepiece ornaments, eh?



▲ Oho! The old Severed Heads In The Pantry gag, eh?



▲ Some of these toys are absolutely lethal. In the hands of a small child this Giant Jack In The Box could easily remove an eyeball, evacuate a bowel or cause unpleasant stains to underwear.

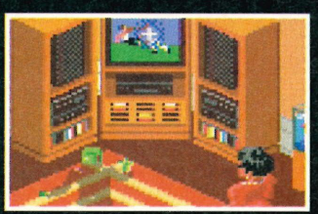




▲ The Sardini's regretted buying that cheap furniture.



▲ Projectile vomiting horror!



▲ Cor! Bruce Lee's on the telly!

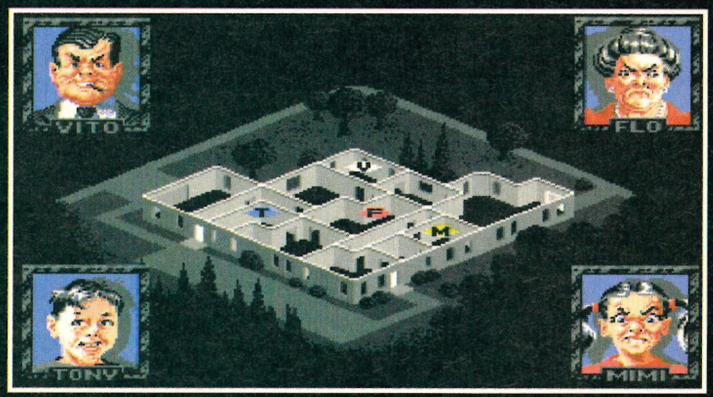
EVIL BRAIN

Even then, it's not enough just to have a severed head appear on the chopping block once, as the Sardinis take a lot of scaring. Each Sardini has their own personal scare meter, which goes from Calm to Very Scared, and to frighten them out of the house Polterguy has to push them beyond this last point of terror.

If possession isn't good enough for you, there's another way to scare the wily Sardinis – spells. These are picked up in the dungeon in the same way as ectoplasm, and there are six available.SupR-Scare is a bomb which is placed in a room and set off from another area of the house. Any family member in there is duly scared. Boo-Doo allows Poltso to cast fireballs at family members, which usually scares them a fair amount. Zom-B-Ize lets our man take control of one of the Sardinis themselves and chase their kin around the home for a while. The other two spells are Ecto-Xtra, which replenishes Poltman's ecto bar, and Dog-Off, which distracts the meddlesome family dog.

ENTRAIL PIT

This dog has the uncanny ability to detect ghosts, and he's very protective of the family. His barking reduces Polterguy's ecto supply (I don't know why either), and also calms the family down. He's also capable of summoning ecto-beasts. These fearsome beings from another dimension attack Polterguy and steal his ecto energy, unless he can kick them into submission with his mighty boots first. Blimey, sounds like quite a task eh?



▲ Spot the hauntees on the house map. Is there anybody there?



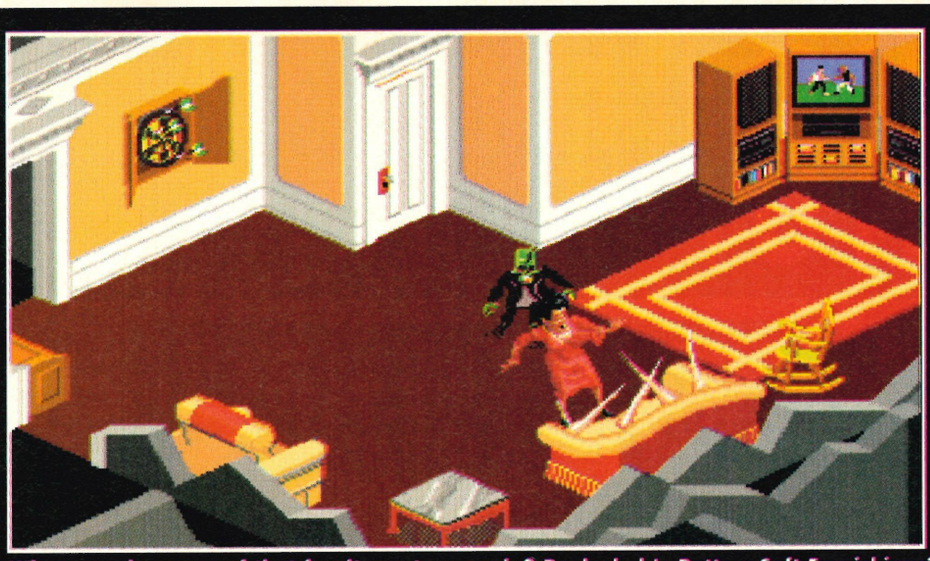
▲ Hello little girl. Would you like to be possessed?



▲ The perils of fishkeeping, graphically illustrated.

Well, actually, no. Y'see, the problem is the only place where Polterguy loses any energy, and is therefore in any danger of dying, is in the Dungeons. This, coincidentally, is the most tedious part of the game. It's a right pain having to traipse back there before every level, and at least once right in the middle of a level, and the perspective and collision detection means it's doubtful you'll last more than about five trips down there. Once you get up to the house it's good fun, but it's a bit like Switch, just a series of set-pieces and jokes and no real gameplay. The trouble with this is that once you've seen all the haunts, there's nothing to keep your interest held. There is the suspense "Maybe they'll go into that room they never, ever go into, ever, and I'll finally get to see what the funny jokes and horrifying haunts are", but that's not really enough to keep you going.

Also, there's the matter of the presentation screens - you can't skip through them and the text scrolling is so very slow, meaning you waste about four hours (slight exaggeration here – ED) between each level and at the beginning and end of each game before you get going. Congratulations to EA for trying something new again, and there's no doubt that given a bit more thought and a bit less tedium this format could produce some splendid games, but unfortunately Haunting is too devoid of game to make it especially worthwhile. Perhaps Haunting '94 might be a bit better.



▲ What was the name of that furniture store again? Beelzebub's Bottom Soft Furnishings?



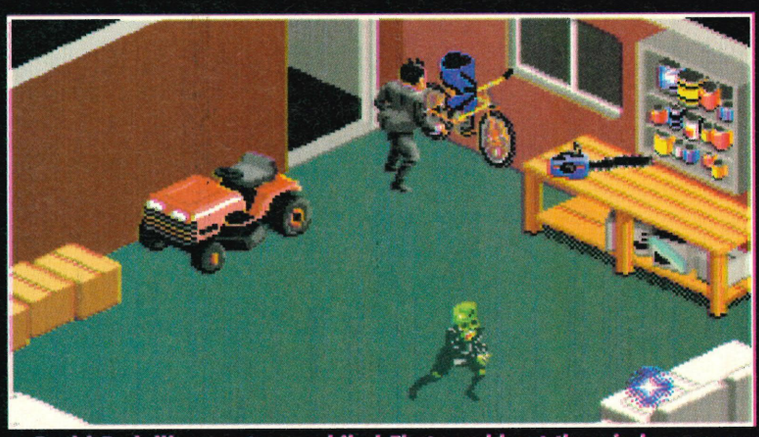
▲ 'Daa-aad! You've been decapitated!'



▲ 'A BARREL of LAUGHS!' AHAHOHOHO!



▲ You see what happens when you don't use Domestos?



▲ Eeek! Pedalling pants on a bike! That would put the wind up anyone!

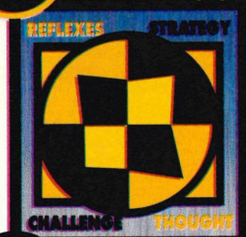
THE SECOND OPINION



Paul Glancey

I was quite keen on this when I played it last month, but then I only played it for about half an hour. Since then I've spent quite a while on Haunting and I have to say that although the graphics are ace and the little gags really do raise a snicker the first time you see them, the game itself is pretty insubstantial. In fact, the only thing that keeps you playing is seeing the next joke when you possess the next piece of furniture, but the jokes aren't THAT good. In fact, the computer practically plays the game for you and all you have to do is manage your energy level by not playing too many tricks. On my first go I reached the third of the four houses and, although most of the jokes were new, the gameplay hadn't really improved, except for the fact that the Sardinis were tougher to scare. It's always good to see EA trying an idea which is unusual, but I'm afraid Haunting doesn't work that well.

%RATINGS



PRESENTATION 74%
Loads of presentation screens, but no options.

GRAPHICS 93%
Smart sprites and backgrounds, loads of detail and great animation.

SOUND 77%
Sinister tunes, hissy screams and reasonable effects.

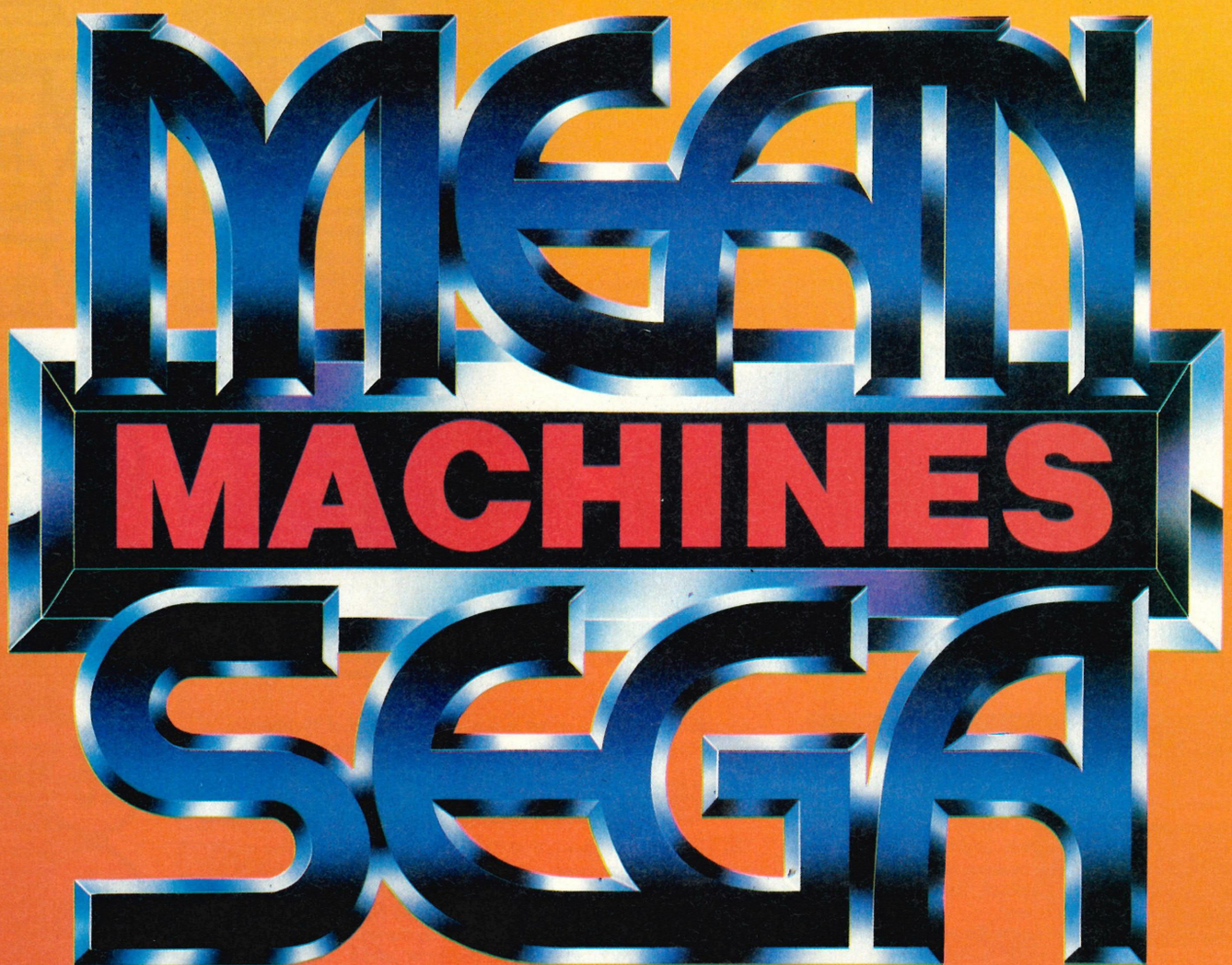
SHORT TERM PLAY 80%
Seeing all those gags makes playing it quite compulsive at first.

LONG TERM PLAY 68%
But the gags alone don't make up for minimal gameplay.

OVERALL 76
Loads of neat ideas without a good game to back them up.

Not written by sad gits

(Honest!)

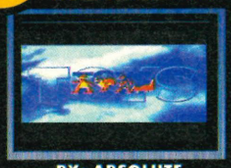


BRITAIN'S BIGGEST AND BEST SELLING SEGA MAGAZINE

MEGADRIVE REVIEW

TOYS

Who better to review a game about toys than Lord of Toys, King of Sweets, TOM GUISE. In fact he jumped at the chance. (After we stole his fire-truck and kicked over his Lego castle, that is.)



BY: ABSOLUTE ENTERTAINMENT

8-MEG

STYLE

SHOOT 'EM UP

PRICE IMPORT

PLAYERS 1

SKILL SETTINGS 1

RELEASE DATE

OUT NOW

Toys! What a brilliant film that was, eh? Well, to be honest I don't really know. I didn't go and see it because it was supposed to a complete load of chuff. Well, now it's been made into a Megadrive game. Ooh great. Mind you, the idea of a video game based around toys doesn't seem all that bad. Especially not when you're using the toys as weapons. In fact, it sounds quite good actually. All aboard for Toytown!



▲ **Leslie's vile uncle sits before his security monitor, chuckling evilly. "Yuk yuk yuk yuk yuk yuk yuk yuk yuk yuk yuk yuk," he says.**

ONCE UPON A TIME...

Just in case you don't know the story behind Toys, it's about a toy company called Zevo Toys. Zevo Toys is a lovely place where all the workers dance while they make lovely, safe, cuddly, friendly toys.

Anyway, the boss, Kenneth Zevo, bites the dust and leaves his toy factory to brother, Leland, an army general who immediately turns the place into a regimental establishment where the toys are really weapons in disguise. Gasp! Shocked by this turn of events, Kenneth's fun-loving son, Leslie (played by Robin Williams in the film), decides to save Zevo Toys and that's where the game begins.





▲ **Leslie launches robot homing ducks at the evil jeeps! Hooray!**



▲ **Ooh! More lovely toys delivered by the wacky conveyor belts! Hooray!**



▲ **Shoot the laser elephant camera in the eye, then in the lens! Hooray!**

MUUUM!

Taking control of Leslie you have to go around the toy factory knocking out Leland's spy cameras. This is easier said than done because the whole factory is packed with baddy toys like tanks, choppers and walking bombs. Fortunately, Leslie has goody toys of his own. Spinning tops, racing cars, bowling balls, walking elephants and many more are at his disposal. These can be found on conveyor belts dotted around each level.

Defeat the toy defences and you get to the camera (which sits neatly inside an elephant's head, for some strange reason). Here you have to shoot the lens before the elephant's eyes target you and fire a deadly laser bolt. Destroy the camera and you move onto the next one.

Later levels entail performing much the same task, only this time in the cafeteria and the warehouse, but with new baddy toys like paratroopers, robot crates and exploding elves to contend with. And lucky Leslie gets brand new toys too like pie-tins, tomatoes (since when were they toys?) and balloon clowns. The final level is a scrolling shoot 'em up set in a miniature model of Manhattan, where Leslie has to take out the General's command centre.

LEAVE YOUR SISTER ALONE!

The problem with Toys is that it's so frustrating to play. You might think that using all those wonderful toys to beat baddies would be fun, but it isn't. You see, most the toys just zip around in fancy patterns avoiding the targets making it very hard to get out of a tricky situation successfully and avoiding the enemy toys is almost impossible. Why can't the main character jump?

Challenging it may be, but not for the right reasons and because the monotonous, samey nature of each level it just doesn't seem worth the effort. Even the best bit of the game, the elephant-camera section, soon becomes a dismal chore.

The idea behind Toys is quite a good one, but unfortunately it hasn't been realised – similar to the film, I suppose. Dull, annoying, bland-looking with rubbishy sounds, I'd leave this one well alone if I was you.

%RATINGS



PRESENTATION 44%
Plenty of naff intro bits. No options at all!

GRAPHICS 45%
Dull-looking levels, poor animation. That's supposed to be Robin Williams?

SOUND 28%
Two tone tunes. Awful spot-effects.

SHORT TERM PLAY 30%
Incredibly dull from the onset and it just gets worse.

LONG TERM PLAY 19%
You won't reach the end. You won't want to.

OVERALL 27
A fairly good idea. A really bad game.

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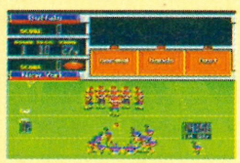
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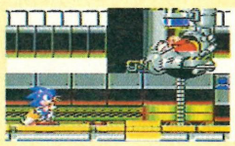
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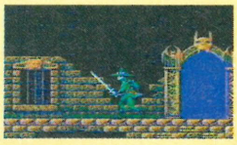
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TECHNIQUE ZONE

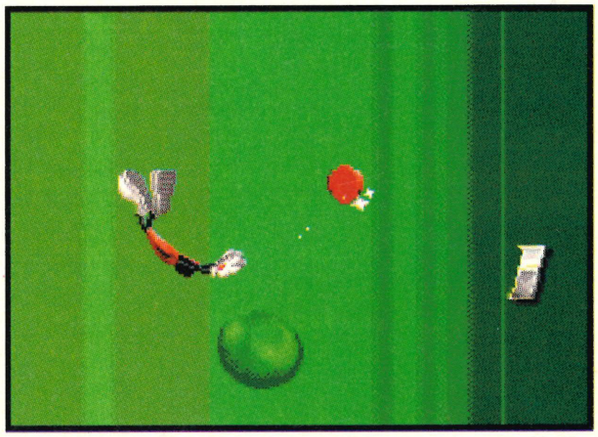
Love, they say, is the greatest thing. But is it? Is it the greatest thing, we would just like to ask? It certainly IS NOT the greatest thing if you're stuck on the third level of Jungle Strike. You can't go up to a member of the opposing gender, ask them out for a little light supper and perhaps some dancing afterwards, then, following a prolonged series of romantic encounters, become engaged, then married, and then, the day after the wedding, use your new-found love power to complete the game. Life just isn't like that.

In these circumstances, what IS the greatest thing is MegaTech's guide to Jungle Strike which you will find on the following pages. Where to find the extra lives, level codes, all that stuff. Definitely more use than a big snog with a bit of tongue as well. Or is that wrong? Answers on a postcard please.

Meanwhile, if you would find yourself in the possession of some hot 'nugget' of tippery, some map, some cheat, some Action Replay or Game Genie code, please, we implore you, don't keep it to yourself. Send it at maximum speed to us at: TECHNIQUE ZONE, MEGATECH, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

On the other hand, if you find yourself in the possession of some hot tongue of love... Er, no. Never mind.

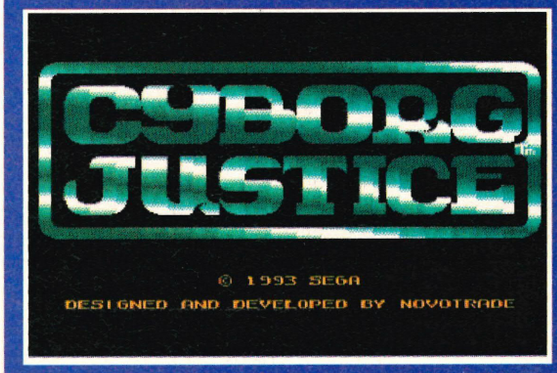
COOL SPOT



Stephen Coutts, good old Robert Prior and Luke Lachar (it looks like 'Lune' Lachar actually, but that can't be right can it? Unless one of his parents is a 60s rock star of course.) These are the names of the brave Spot players who discovered that by the simple act of playing this delightful little monkey of a game, then pausing it in mid-excitement you can enter this cheat for invincibility and instant access to the next level. And we can now confirm that the cheat in full is... (GUNSHOT) AAWWKK! (SLUMPS)

Oh hohoho, what fun. Just press A B C B A C A B C B A C. You'll hear little Spot's voice saying 'Wo-ho-ho!' and lo and behold and behest and between, there you slap-bangingly are on the next level.

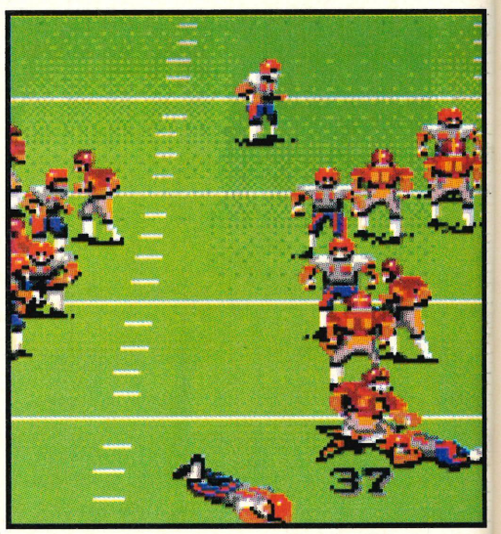
CYBORG JUSTICE



That Pinky Lomas – there's just no stopping him! Now he's discovered the cheat mode in this robo-punch-up game! What a hero! At any time during a duel or arcade game, pause and press C B B C C A C B. You should then be confronted by a load of options which allow you to change the game mode (arcade or duel), the number of players, your level, your arm weapon, the difficulty (0-255) and the number of lives (0-255). You can also restart the level, go to the boss (if you are on a boss stage), reset the game, see the end sequence or 'Record Demo'. This last option lets you play for about 30 seconds and then watch those 30 seconds of play again by choosing 'Replay Demo' from the options screen. Brilliant! It gives a new lease of life to this otherwise unsuperb game.

JOHN MADDEN '93

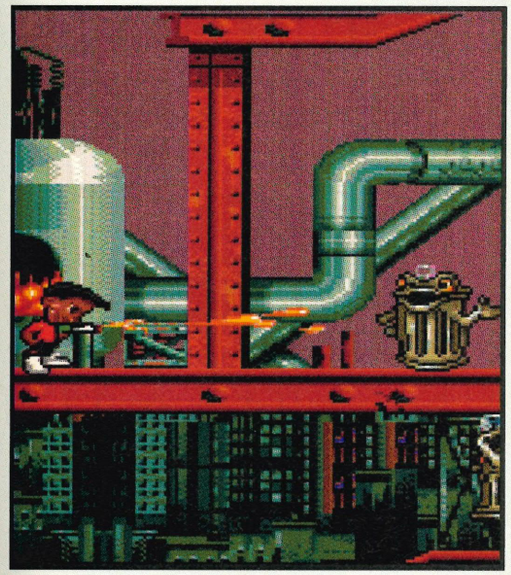
Want a laugh? No, no. Put your trousers back on. Mr Pinky discovered this little bug in JM '93 which you can witness for yourself, thusly. Simply choose a passing play and line up. Press C to snap the ball then press A immediately. Your quarterback should put the ball down and do a little dance. Unfortunately he gets sacked and you lose a few yards but, y'know, it's just a bit of fun, officer. If you then watch the replay it's even weirder and you quarterback just appears as loads of frames of animation.



TECHNIQUE ZONE

GLOBAL GLADIATORS





Lovely Ed 'Pinky' Lomas. Why 'Lovely'? Well, it's because he has discovered the level-warping cheat which is not unlike the one printed above for Cool Spot. Hardly surprising that it's so similar seeing as this game was programmed by the same people. Anyway, to business. Pause the game while it's 'in action' and press this combo of buttons:B C B A B B C B A B. Then unpause and crash, bang, wallop, there you are on the next level.

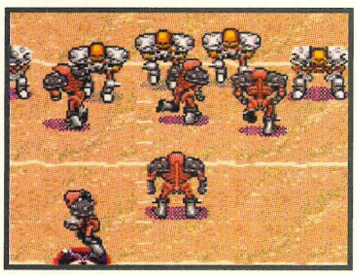
Now, you're reward for reading this far is a further Pinky-devised Global Gladiators cheat which is even better than the first. Reset the game and when the Sega title appears (before the 'VIIIIRGIIIN' bit) press C B A C B A C B A C B A quickly and a secret programmer's screen with level selects and infinite lives switches appears! Lummocks!

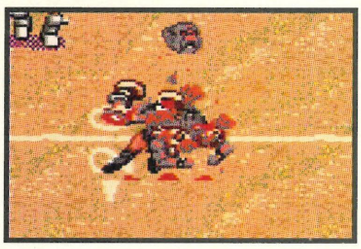
MUTANT LEAGUE FOOTBALL



Lee Hurst is clearly a keen mutant, and presents these passcodes for other keen, but less capable, members of the genus Mutantis Footballerus.

PLAYING FOR	PLAYING AGAINST	ROUND	CODE
SLAMMERS	BASHERS	2	CNB111111P
	VULGARS	3	CNG111111Z
	SLAYERS	FINAL	CNL111111Y
RAZORS	MONSTERS	2	1C51111113
	BASHERS	3	1CF111111M
	SLAYERS	FINAL	1CK111111H
VULGARS	MONSTERS	2	4C5111111B
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SONIC 2

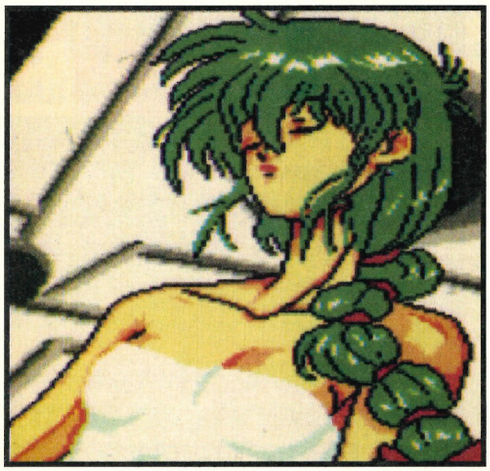


Just when you thought that we had exhausted every Sonic 2 cheating possibility, here we go, dragging it out of the software cabinet again, for these new tips from Pinky Lomas.

To win loads of rings in the Casino Night Zone's fruit machines jump into one of the baskets/slots/whatever you want to call them, then bash the C button repeatedly. You should find you always get three of the same symbol, thus winning loads. Don't forget, though, if the first reel stops at Robotnik stop bashing or you'll end up getting three Robotnik's and lose rings!

And finally, here's a cheat Pinky sent us ages ago but which we could never find space for. On the two-player split-screen mode let one of the two players finish and act and then make the other player lose all his lives. The Game Over message will appear and the scores will come up. Then when the next level starts and that player will have loads of lives. The other player can then try it and both of you will end up being unstoppable!

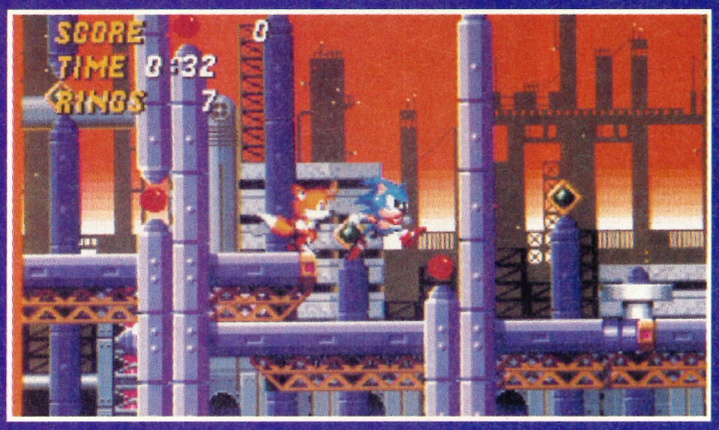
TECHNIQUE ZONE



EARNEST EVANS

You never know, there might be somebody out there with this game. Craig Ritchie certainly has, and he says that if you keep pressing left after you've defeated the boss at the end of level four you land halfway along the train on stage five, thus giving you only half a train's-worth of baddies to beat to complete the level.

THIS MONTH'S JOKE TIP: SONIC 2



We don't know where David O'Riordan of Co Tipperary got this astonishing piece of information, but we would just like to share it with you. We quote:

'I have a cheat for Sonic 2. You might have to do this cheat a few times before you get it.' (Yeah right.)

'Finish all levels up to level four (Chemical Factory) with Sonic alone.

'Then when you have finished level 4 the option screen will come up.

'Pick Sonic's father.

What a mad world, non?

SHERLOCK HOLMES: CONSULTING DETECTIVE



After providing the quick solutions for two of the cases last month, here's Pinky Lomas again with his quick solution for The Tin Soldier mystery.

Go to General Farnsworth Armstead, the French Embassy (which is listed under E in the directory), the Grand Hotel (under H) and the Princess Theatre. Then go to court and answer Phillip Arneau, 'B', 'D' and 'C'. That's it complete in about 28 moves.



FLASHBACK

'What happened to the second part of the Flashback solution, then, eh?' you are no doubt saying while pounding your fist on the dining room table or a nearby family member. Well, there's a good reason why we haven't printed them. Well, it's not that good, but it's all you're going to get. There we were, surfing on deadlines, just about to put the second set of maps and tips together when, blammo, our copy knackered itself. And with no time to go out and get a new copy we were stuck, and so are you, with only the Jungle Strike tips to entertain you. We'll try and resume normal service by next month, honest. Sorry again. Sorry.

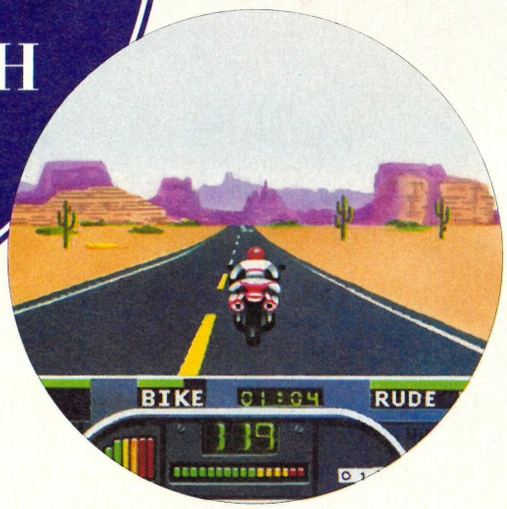
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As mentioned before, the vast majority of tips we received this month were for EA's recently-released super shooter. So here's a namecheck for the worthy tipsters, who sent in passwords, Action Replay codes and the tip about the pyramids: Tony Rowley, Joe Dean, Stephen Childs, A Howell, S Barry, Kevin 'Costner' Foster, Stuart Weir, Pinky (of course), Good Old Robert Prior, Peter Lynas, Edward Hunt, Darrell Woodcock, Mark Miles, Jason Hansen, Philip Wade, P McMurray, Edd Manning and Electronic Arts themveryselves. Thanks everybody.

JUN STRI

PASSWORDS

Select those hard-to-reach levels with ease by using these handy Alphanumeric Sequences of Mystery!

CAMPAIGN		PASSWORD
2	SUB HUNT	RNGR7N4MYRH
3	TRAINING GROUND	9V6FR9WNMCZ
4	NIGHT STRIKE	XTMKR74MZYV
5	PULOSO CITY	VNP37PZF9T9
6	SNOW FORTRESS	W6HJY746JK7
7	RIVER RAID	THZRSD3BRW3
8	MOUNTAINS	7GRTHCFDYRH
9	WASHINGTON	N46MDRWT7ST

THE PINKY CODE BNSH3N6MHJK

This last one, from Pinky Lomas, starts you on the first level, with four lives and the choice of any of the four co-pilots. He discovered that if you take any password and change the first letter you can switch levels. 'R' puts you on level two, 'X' on level four, 'V' on level five, 'T' on level 7 and '7' on level 8. So you can take your favourite password which incorporates loads of lives and points and convert it to put you on any level you like.

ACTION REPLAY CODES

We've had quite a few Action Replay Pro codes from Kevin Foster and Robert Prior.

INFINITE LIVES	FF10CF0003
INFINITE FUEL	FF10C70060
INFINITE HELLFIRES	FFBA4D0009
INFINITE HYDRAS	FFBA0D003C
INFINITE CANNON ROUNDS (CAMPAIGN ONE)	FFBF47005A
INFINITE ARMOUR	FFF8950000
LEVEL SELECT (REPLACE X WITH LEVEL NUMBER)	FF10B3000X

COMEDY CODES

These Action Replay Pro codes are a bit useless, but fun.

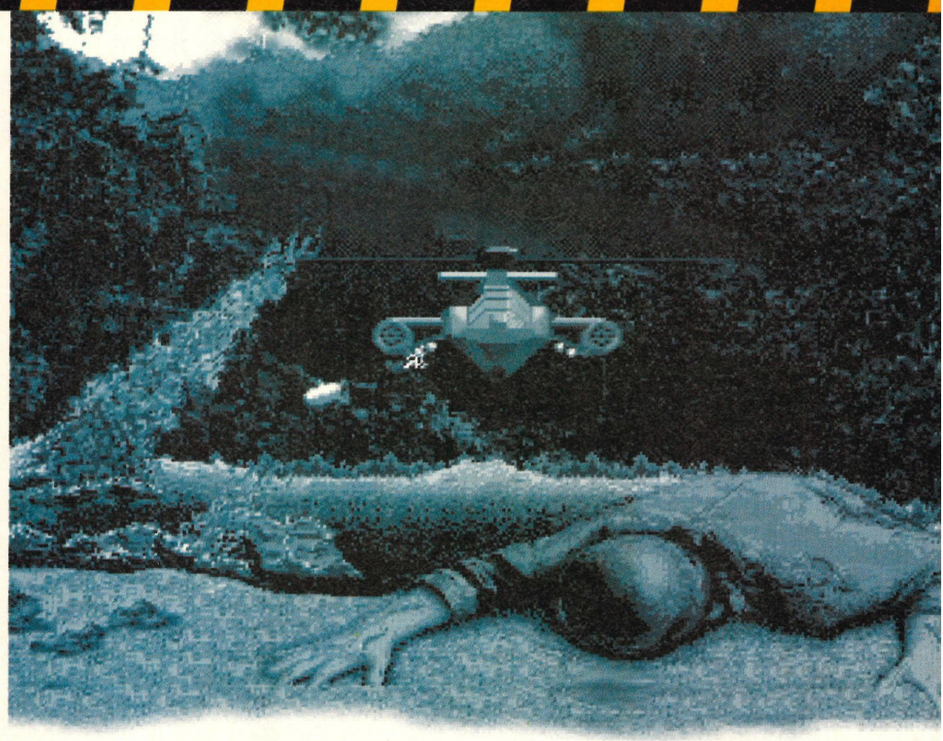
FF127B0010

When you take off from the White House a phantom chopper appears on the right hand side of the screen which can fly through buildings and is undetectable to the enemy, but it cannot fire weapons... so, er, yeah. Anyway, when you turn the Action Replay off the screen scrolls to the real chopper.

FFBFX7000X

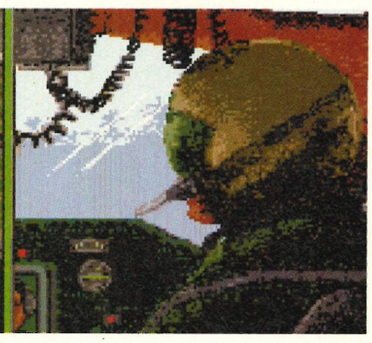
Change X to any number or letter and you change the shadow under the helicopter into some strange graphic.

GLE KE



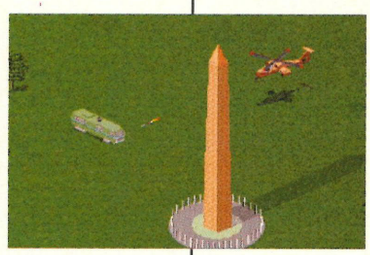
JUNGLE STRIKE LEVEL-BY-LEVEL GUIDE



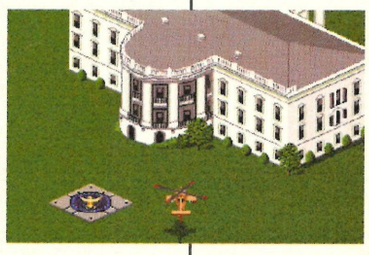


1 CAMPAIGN ONE: WASHINGTON DC









- Shoot the petrol stations for extra supplies.
- Capture the sniper running from the CIA building to get the map to the drug Lord's jungle fortress.
- Car bombs drive faster than civilian cars and will shoot back at you. You will lose points for destroying civilian vehicles.
- Blast moving ammo trucks to reveal their cargo. Leave the ammo on the street until you need it later in the campaign.
- To find agent Akhbar look for the police shootout. Blast the house and Akhbar will run out in a yellow robe.
- You get bonus points for capturing all four enemy commanders.

TECHNIQUE ZONE



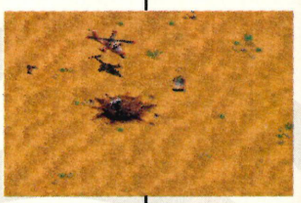
2 CAMPAIGN TWO: SUB HUNT

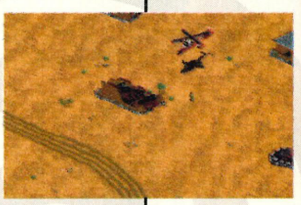




- A good strategy for destroying the nuclear submarines is to position the hovercraft in front of the subs and drive backwards while dropping mines.
- The hovercraft's mines are also an effective way to destroy moving speedboats. Just cut across their wake and drop a mine in front of them.
- In fact you can even use the mines to good effect on the trucks! Those mines! They're just great.
- Watch out for gun boats which carry extra lives.

3 CAMPAIGN THREE: TRAINING GROUNDS





- Just south of the home base is a small group of huts. Shoot these to find a power winch.
- There are lots of building all along the south of the playing area. Several contain prisoners which can be exchanged for armour.
- In the Sheridan depot, blast as many tanks first, then eliminate the stationary tanks (bit obvious that one).
- The Sheridan tank inside the far right corner of the barracks fence contains an extra life crate.
- The recommended course of action regarding the radar sites is to take out the second set from south to north.

4 CAMPAIGN FOUR: NIGHT STRIKE

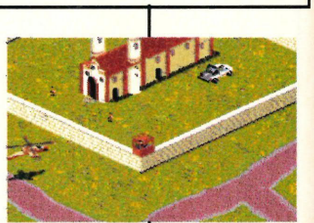


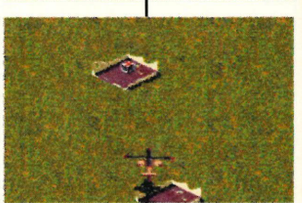




- Complete mission seven first. Call up the map and highlight the enemy weapons commander who is in the group of barracks in the south west corner of the map. He knows where the fuel and ammo is located.
- If you are short of armour rescue some of the men from the bamboo cages at the north end of the map, near where the helicopter pads are.
- Look at the clearings carefully and you will see they are split up into segments. At the western-most point you will find the missing co-pilot. Go to the southern-most point then go up to the place that sticks out to find an extra life.
- Lead the enemy helicopters away from their pads, lose them, then return to blast the pads.
- As you may have noticed, shooting the place up, even with the chaingun creates enough light to see, so make good use of that ability.

5 CAMPAIGN FIVE: PULOSO CITY





- Fly around the encampments and take out the towers before you do anything else.
- Shoot all of the civilian buildings for lots of goodies. Behind the landing zone there is a house which contains an extra life.
- When you're on the motorbike, ride in front of the armoured vehicles and drop a mine in their path. This way it only takes one hit to kill them.
- While riding the motorcycle, drive over to the armoury and blast the MLRS. They cannot fire low enough to hit the bike, but are deadly against the Commanche.

TECHNIQUE ZONE

6 CAMPAIGN SIX: SNOW FORTRESS



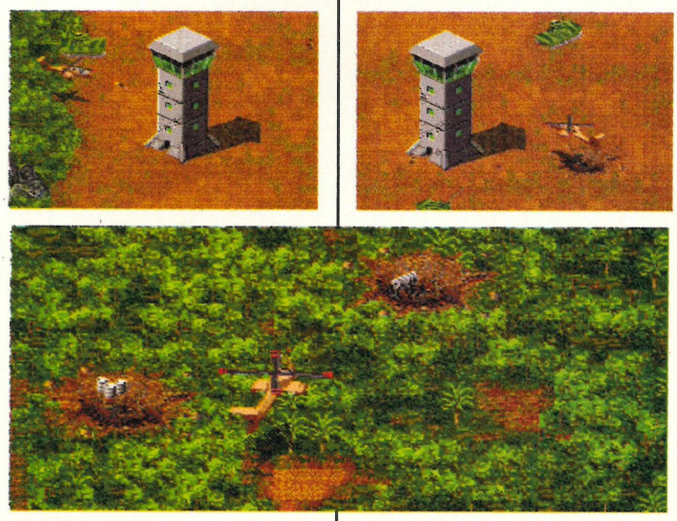
- Position the Commanche so that the M1 tanks help you blast open enemy buildings.
- The central watch tower in the Patriot missile supply area contains an ammo crate.
- Up near the power lines, outside the fence there is a house half-buried in snow. Blow it up to find an extra life.
- The extra radar is north of the enemy power grid. The easiest way to find it is to look for the lone Gatling gun near it at the western side of the map.
- When fighting the tanks approach them from their blind side and blast them as you fly over. Don't stick around if they get you in their sights.
- On mission three stay on the edges of the compound and just stay out of the way of the tanks.
- On mission six just hit the targets fast and move out. Don't try to kill the tanks. One of the buildings on the left of this area holds an extra life.
- When you're looking for the underground bunkers just switch to the map and highlight the choppers which always stay near them.

7 CAMPAIGN SEVEN: RIVER RAID



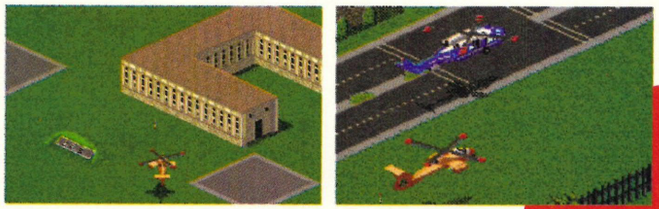
- When you start this campaign, go north-east from home base to find four miniature pyramids. Shoot these for four extra lives.
- Once you have destroyed the patriots, you're next target should be the fuel depot. The easiest way to complete this part of the campaign is to destroy all the Sheridan tanks which are guarding the complex with the stealth fighter, then change back to the Commanche to destroy the actual structures. However, before you change back to the Commanche, go to the nuclear missile sites which are the smaller of the pyramid structures to the east of the map and proceed to destroy their defences with the stealth bomber. In the stealth bomber you can evade the radar defences, which would spot the Commanche.
- The best way to destroy the greenhouses is to line up the steal fighter over a row of houses and strafe them with the ironbombs.

8 CAMPAIGN EIGHT: MOUNTAINS



- The southern control towers cover the northern towers with an alert zone, so it's safest to attack the southernmost control tower first.
- Don't touch the stone thing between the control towers or you will find yourself surrounded by M1 tanks.
- There is an extra life crate in the south east corner of the map, just east of the cement bunker.
- To destroy the generator fly up to it from below and hit with everything you've got. It's too dangerous to try and take out all the defences first. Just hit it and run.
- When you've destroyed the drug lord's villa he escapes in a boat which lies due east of the villa. Just blast it and pick him up.
- To destroy the bunker you need to blow a hole in the side of it (this requires a lot of hits). Then fly due east and let your co-pilot off into the truck there. When he's driven it into the hole you've made, pick him up and blow up the truck!
- A little way east of the home base there's a couple of small pyramids which contain a high-speed winch.

9 CAMPAIGN NINE: RETURN HOME



- Let the enemy armoured car attack the IRS building for big bonus points. This is the home of the USA's Internal Revenue Service (like our Income Tax malarkey) so it's not surprising those naughty programmers reward you for destroying it.

clash of the ROAD

On the grid this month – driving games.

MARK PATTERSON trades in his Micro Machine so that he can compare the best 3D racers the Megadrive has to offer.

IN THE RUNNING



Ayrton Senna's Super Monaco GP
By: Sega
The follow-up to Sega's massively successful Super Monaco GP, this game featured several improvements over the original, including Formula One ace Ayrton Senna's mugshot in the game, but not as many new features as people would have liked.



F1 World Championship
By: Domark
The newest of all the games featured here is the official Formula One game, and as such lets you compete on 12 world-famous circuits against the world's most famous F1 drivers.



Jaguar XJ220
By: Sega
Jaguar currently stands unopposed on the Mega-CD as its only driving game. In it you're dumped behind the wheel of one of the world's fastest production cars, the Jag XJ220, so called because its top speed clocks in at an incredible 220Mph!

LAP ONE: SPEED

The whole thing with driving games is that they let you drive incredibly expensive cars really fast. That being the case, the first thing you should expect from your driving game is a good sensation of speed.



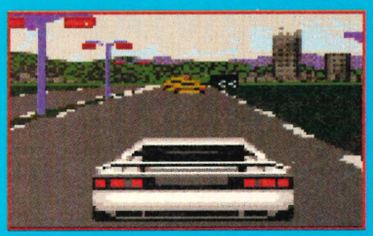
SUPER MONACO 2
While not actually showing any real improvement over the first Monaco game, this is not at all sluggish. On some straights where the detail is sparse, the impression of bombing along at several hundred mph isn't that good, but on the other hand, take a chicane in sixth gear and you will know the meaning of the phrase hair-raising. While nowhere near as fast as F1, Super Monaco still gets the pulse racing.
★★★★



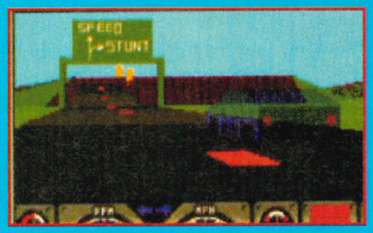
F1
Several phrases come to mind here. Something off a shovel. Like greased whatsit through a goose's whatsit. But however you describe it, F1 is quite simply the fastest thing in the history of Megadrive race games. Nothing even comes close to touching it. As if that wasn't enough, there's even a special Turbo mode which takes the game to an almost unplayable speed. If it's purely adrenalin-pumping pace you're after, this is the one.
★★★★★



Jaguar XJ220
Considering you're supposed to driving one of the fastest production cars on the planet, XJ220 is a bit of a letdown. There are loads of roadside objects to keep an eye on, but you usually have plenty of time to prepare for corners as they never approach at any real speed.
★★★

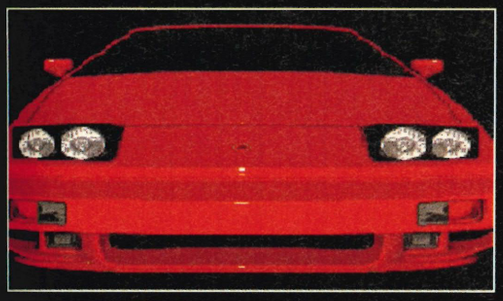


Lotus Turbo Challenge
Like Jaguar, Lotus could do with perhaps a touch more speed. That's not to say it's slow, but you don't really get the feeling of tearing up the backstreets in a £75,000 super-car. This is mainly because it's almost impossible to create the same sensation of speed because of the behind-the-car point of view.
★★★



Hard Drivin'
This game comes trailing in last, behind the rest of the field. The plodding, jerky vector graphics give a very poor sensation of speed. I'm not sure what vehicle you're supposed to be driving, but if you said it was a Lada, I'd believe you.
★★

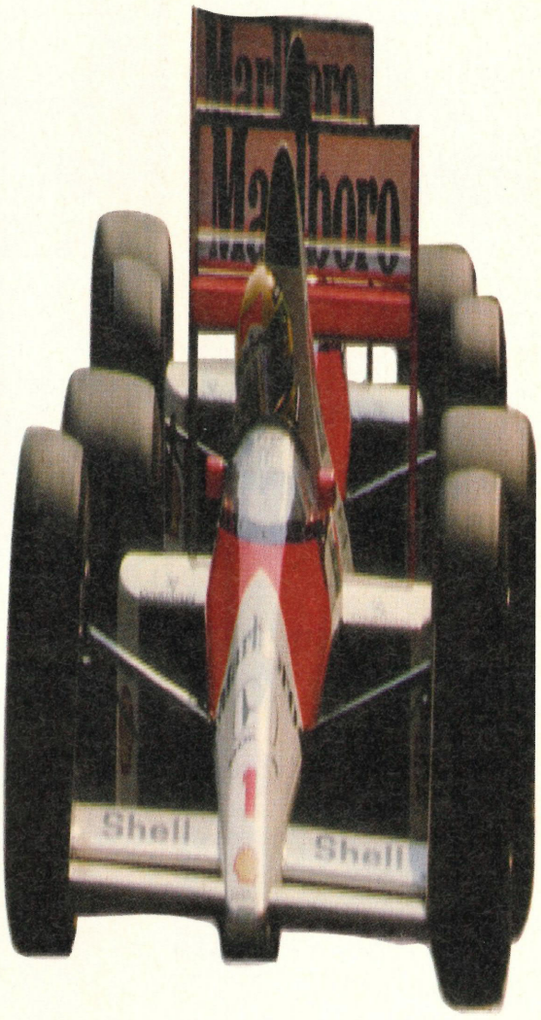
WARRIORS!



Lotus Turbo Challenge
By: Electronic Arts
Despite not doing so well in Formula One racing the season, Lotus do produce the rather natty Esprit and Elan. In this game, you race on all sorts of courses – misty country roads, dual carriageways, motorways at night and so on.



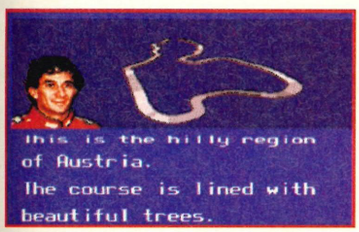
Hard Drivin'
By: Domark
Exchanging world-famous race-circuits for a stunt track and motorway, Hard Drivin' has you looping loops, jumping ravines and going head-to-head with the mysterious Phantom Photon – all displayed in 3D vector graphics.



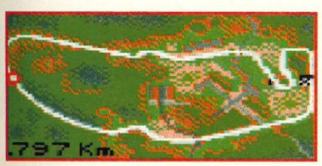
Hard Drivin'
There are only two different courses in this game, one of which will test your driving abilities to the extreme. The first is the very straight-forward speed track, where the aim is to complete a few laps as quickly as possible. Nothing tricky there. The second is the excellent stunt track, where you're required to negotiate obstacles such as a giant loop, although after the third of fourth time around, it all becomes very dull.
★★★

LAP TWO: TRACKS

With a supercar at your disposal, you'll be wanting to take it out for a spin. Whether it's the open road or Grand Prix championships, you'll be wanting something which will test your skills to the limits.

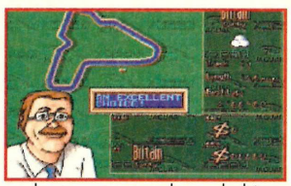


Super Monaco GP 2
All the world chamionship courses are faithfully reproduced, but it doesn't end there. Sega have also included several bonus courses, one of which is designed by Ayrton Senna himself. However good you think you are, you'll find a track which will test you to the limits.
★★★★★



F1
Like Super Monaco, F1 features all the major Grand Prix circuits, but without the extra courses. Because you can race the tracks in any order, it allows you to start on easy circuits such as Mexico, which has long turns and straights, before graduating to Monaco, which has enough twists and tight bends to upset the greatest driver.
★★★★

Jaguar
You're taken all over the world in this game, to race on a wide variety of courses. The challenge comes more from the frequently dodgy road handling of the car rather than the tracks. The courses themselves consist of long turns and some very awkward chicanes. For the most part, though, the tracks are relatively easy to negotiate.



★★

Lotus
There's not that much variation in the courses, but what does make the difference is that some tracks have totally bad weather, which can lead to bad visibility and slippery road surfaces. One of the trickiest things to get used to is the way the programmers have used hills to mask sharp corners, so you don't know what's coming up until the last moment.



★★★

clash of the ROAD WARRIO



LAP THREE: HANDLING

If you've got the speed, you're going to need the handling to go with it. There's nothing worse than having to slow right down just become the game won't let you take a corner in anything other than first gear.

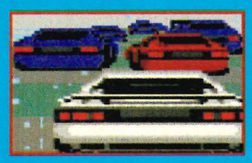


Super Monaco GP
Handling is all-important in this game, where tracks like the infamous Monaco will put an end to the reckless driver's career. Until you get used to the steering system, you'll find yourself weaving around a lot, but it only takes a few laps to get used to it.
★★★★★



F1
Considering the speed of this game, the road handling of your car is more than up to the task. It's very sensitive, which is just as well seeing as how the corners come up at such a speed. Like Monaco, it takes a few goes to learn just how far to push the car when taking corners.
★★★★

Jaguar XJ220
Hmm, as formidable as the car is in real-life, it's somewhat lacking in the game. Hit a certain speed and the road-handling goes straight out the window. It's all too easy to spang into the side barriers simply because the car turns too slowly.
★★

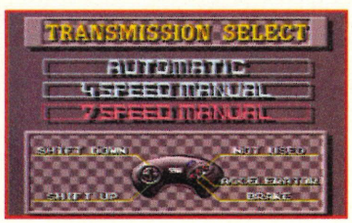


Lotus Turbo Challenge
Neat overtaking moves are called for as you attempt to out-drive your human opponent. Your Lotus is more than up to the task, especially when it comes to the weaving and bobbing required to overtake on the straights.
★★★★

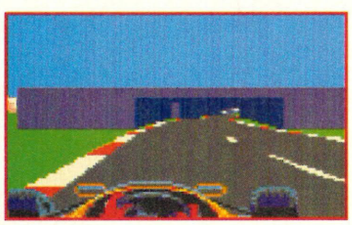
Hard Drivin'
Road handling are two words which hardly feature in this game. Oversteer is your worst enemy, especially on the speed track. Getting around the stunt track is simply a matter of making small adjustments, as there are no major turns involved, so the steering problem doesn't matter there.
★★

LAP FOUR: FEATURES

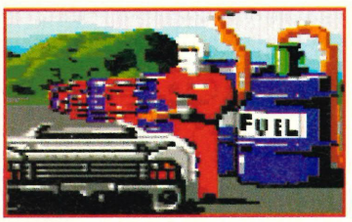
Driving is one thing, but you also want some substance to the game. Some offer customising options, others track designers. Whatever the case, they give the game more depth.



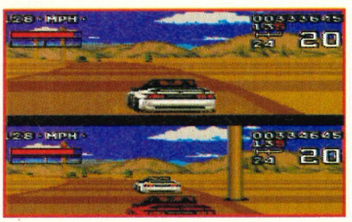
Super Monaco GP
The presentation is good all-round in this game, while not actually offering anything novel.
★★★



F1
Like Super Monaco, F1 offers few features. It does, however, have a neat split-screen two-player option which is fantastic. There's also a turbo mode, where the screen size and detail is minimised, thus speeding up the game by several times.
★★★★



Jaguar XJ220
This game is packed with features, the most outsanding of which is the track designer. Once you're bored with the existing courses you can create your own, then save it to the Mega-CD's battery-backed memory.
★★★★



Lotus Turbo Challenge
The most oustanding feature of this game is the fantastic split-screen head-to-head mode which works particularly well considering the arcade nature of the game. Apart from that, though, there isn't really anything else to bolster the game.
★★★

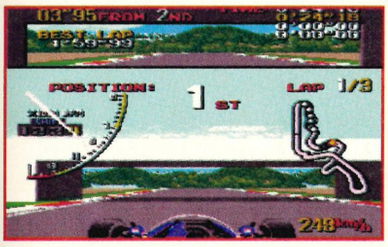
Hard Drivin'
There's very little substance to this game. Apart from the rather jolly stunt track, Hard Drivin' has absolutely nothing else to offer. A non-starter and no mistake.
★



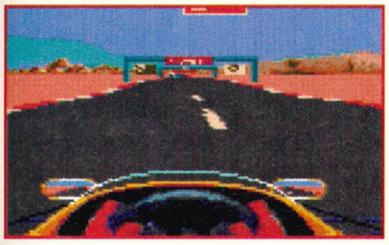
ORS!

LAP FIVE: REALISM

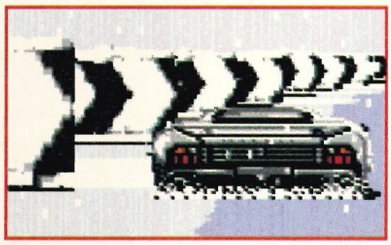
If you're going to play a 3D racing game, the main thing you want out of it is the feeling of really zipping around corners at hundreds of miles an hour. This doesn't necessarily mean that the graphics have to be incredibly detailed, just really fast and with a convincing 3D effect. There are other things that help a racing game, such as giving the player real tracks to race around, or real, named drivers to pip at the post.



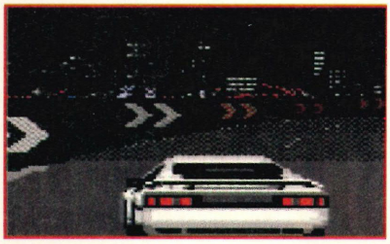
Super Monaco 2
With its speed, handling and the excellent low viewpoint, this is as close to the real thing as you can get on the Megadrive. The tracks are all based on maps of the originals, so you can spin-off on all the famous turns.
★★★★★



F1
For real seat-of-your-pants driving there's nothing to match this. The speed alone would have Nigel Mansell reaching for the brakes – it taxes every reflex. The vector graphics give it a different feel and look from Ayrton Senna's, but it's every bit as effective.
★★★★★



Jaguar XJ220
I've never driven one of these wonder-cars, but I'm sure it's not like this. The dodgy handling combines with the could-be-faster speed to produce a game which could be a simulation of just about any other car, especially if it doesn't go very fast.
★★



Lotus Turbo Challenge
As in most viewed-from-behind-the-car-driving games, true realism goes out the window in this one. However, at the other end of the scale, this is the kind of over-the-top racing every boy racer would give their furry dice to be able to try their hand at.
★★★



Hard Drivin'
The polygon graphics go some way to making the game seem realistic, and there's also on-coming traffic to avoid. However, the lack of speed conspires with the occassional bug which allows you to drive through some scenery, stripping the game of any realism it may have offered.
★★

	HARD DRIVIN'	LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGE	JAGUAR XJ 220	F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP	AYERTON SENNA'S SUPER MONACO GP
SPEED	2	3	3	5	4
TRACKS	3	3	2	5	5
HANDLING	2	4	2	5	5
FEATURES	1	3	4	4	3
REALISM	2	3	2	5	5

THE CHEQUERED FLAG

And it's over to Murray for the results. Iiiitttt's been a phenomenal race! It was a battle royal for first place, with Ayrton Senna being pipped at the post by the in-form F1 World Championship.

F1 World Championship
After a fast start and excellent performance, the blistering F1 from Team Domark takes the laurel wreath and the championship. At the end of the day the speed of this, undoubtedly the fastest driving game ever, won through.
24 POINTS

Ayrton Senna's Super Monaco GP
Pulling up in second after losing it in the first turn is Ayrton Senna. All the tracks in the world weren't enough to give him the edge he needed to outpace F1.
22 POINTS

Lotus Turbo Challenge
High performance closed-road driving just doesn't have what it takes to overtake the Formula One giants. But if you're just looking for a real arcade-style challenge, this is still worth a look.
16 POINTS

Jaguar XJ220
The Mega-CD's entry in this race is lacking in the horse-power to make a serious challenge and finishes well short of the line. Even if you're desperate for a driving game on CD, stick with cartridges.
13 POINTS

Hard Drivin'
After a massive engine blow-out, Hard Drivin' couldn't even make it to the pits. Slow, dull and lacking in excitement, this shouldn't have even made it through the qualifying round.
10 POINTS



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GAME INDEX

Welcome to the MegaTech Game Index, the top buyers' guide to the best Megadrive and Mega-CD games available, with secret tips and high scores thrown in for good measure.

If you can beat any of the high scores listed here, fill in the form below and mail it to: MEGATECH HYPERPLAYERS, MEGATECH, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. And no cheating, because we know, you know.

NAME:
ADDRESS:
GAME:
DIFFICULTY SETTING:
LEVEL:
SCORE:

GAME:
DIFFICULTY SETTING:
LEVEL:
SCORE:



MEGA-CD GAMES

Disc games official and unofficial, here revealed. Backwards writing already enough of this! Forward gear engage!

AFTERBURNER III

BY CSK
PRICE: IMPORT ONLY
REVIEWED: MT 15

Hey! It's G-LOC! Well, it's not really, but it's near enough to make no odds. Fly your deadly fighter de jet through wave after wave of oncoming planes. Lots of Mega-CD sprite scaling and rotation in evidence here.

▲ Well, at least you couldn't do all those hardware sprite tricks on a Spectrum.

▼Ghastly music, hopeless graphics, hardly any action at all and the fact that the guns fire automatically means that even a concussed iguana could play it on a cold day when it was feeling lethargic.

MT RATING: 22%



BATMAN RETURNS

BY SEGA
PRICE: £44.99
REVIEWED: MT 19

An enhanced version of the mediocre cartridge Batgame, but what enhancements! As well as having the old platform bits (which are largely unchanged) the game uses the CD hardware for spectacular 3D driving/shoot 'em sections in which you get to blast the Penguin's henchmen from their motorcycles/cars/giant cannon-bearing lorries.

▲ Switch off the platform bits and just play the driving sections – they're excellent and are a game in themselves! The orchestrated music and sampled speech adds to the atmospher

▼ It's a shame the platform bits weren't improved. The driving sections are also REALLY tough.

MT RATING: 94%

BLACK HOLE ASSAULT

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 14

Robot beat 'em up in which you can either go head-to-head against another player (on various planets) or go on a mission to free the Solar System from robo-domination.

▲ Fast action, smartish graphics, good clanging sound effects and smart intro bits.

▼ Not enough variety in the combatants to keep you hooked. Cyborg Justice is actually better and that's on a 4 meg cart.

MT RATING: 61%



DEVASTATOR

BY WOLFTEAM
PRICE: IMPORT ONLY
REVIEWED: MT 20

Yet another robot beat 'em up for the Mega-CD. Basically a platform shoot 'em up in which you have to blast everything in sight, but with flying shoot 'em up sections bolted on.

▲Very impressive intro and inter-level anime-style animations.

▼Seen-it-all-before, nothing new – like an old cartridge shoot 'em up.

MT RATING: 62%

EARNEST EVANS

BY WOLF TEAM
PRICE: IMPORT ONLY
REVIEWED: MT 3

Ernie is a sort of Indiana Jones-type adventurer, complete with whip and (occasionally) hat, who is on a platform-going mission to recover some lost magic book from an evil agency of some description. Anyway, it's wacky occult platform action a-go-go in this game, which is unusual insofar as Earnest himself is actually made up of about nine different sprites, two for each limb, which makes him look like a sort of butch Pinocchio whenever he moves.

▲Well... the game designers obviously had some nice ideas.

▼ It's just that the programmers didn't share the same, inspired vision. Yukky graphics and lots of gameplay glitches cause the problems.

MT RATING: 50%



FINAL FIGHT CD

BY CAPCOM
PRICE: IMPORT ONLY
REVIEWED: MT 17

The arcade game comes to your Megadrive. A one or two player beat 'em up in which you have to recover a nice young lady from a vile, slobbering gang leader who probably has rude things on his mind. All the levels of the coin-op, as well as all the characters, the bonus rounds and a new time attack mini-game as well.

▲ It IS the arcade game... and more!

▼ Unless you're seriously opposed to senseless violence, there are no downers.

MT RATING: 94%

HOOK

BY SONY IMAGESOFT
PRICE: IMPORT ONLY
REVIEWED: MT 16

Join up with the lost boys and help old Pete back to his former Pan status so that he can track down his own kids, kidnapped by Cap'n Hook. Of course, it's the top-grossing film of 1991 turned into a platform game, in which Pan has to fight, leap and occasionally fly his way past Hook's henchmen.

▲Really nice graphics and the CD music is most impressive. Plays quite well too.

▼It's a bit frustrating at times, and it's a shame that the voices of the original actors weren't used in the cut-scenes, as they seem rather amateurish.

MT RATING: 80%

JAGUAR XJ-220

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 16

Much like EA's Lotus Turbo Challenge, this game lets one or two players drive Megadrive replicas of British sports cars either in tournaments or in split-screen, head-to-head races.

▲Lots of tracks, smart 3D graphics, ace music and the two player mode is great.

▼Single player mode gets a bit boring after a while. Handling isn't as good as Domark's F1 World Championship.

MT RATING: 87%

KRIS KROSS: MAKE MY VIDEO

BY SONY IMAGESOFT
PRICE: IMPORT ONLY
REVIEWED: MT 16

The Mega-CD provides a new form of entertainment. You have to run a video request TV show by splicing together three constantly running 'tracks' of full-motion video to fit one of three Kris Kross track and the whims of a caller. You can even add rudimentary special effects.

▲It's fun in an unusual sort of way and some of the video clips are quite wacky.

▼There are only three songs to mess around with and unless you're well into Kris Kross the novelty soon wears off.

MT RATING: 80%



NIGHT TRAP
BY SONY IMAGESOFT
PRICE: IMPORT
REVIEWED: MT 17
Svelte young ladies are being lured into a house where they are drained of blood to be used in the manufacture of a (gulp!) soft drink. Luckily, SCAT (the Sega Covert Action Team) are onto this and they've given you control of the house's security cameras and hidden traps. You have to use the cameras to keep up with what the girls are doing and watch out for the vile kidnapping Oggers who are lurking around the house, and capture them before they nab the lovely damsels.
▲Two whole discs provide an hour and a half of fairly entertaing full-motion video exploits.
▼The gameplay is mostly trial and error and one mistake can lead to disaster.
MT RATING: 79%

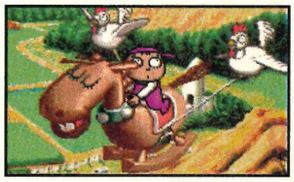
NIGHT STRIKER
BY TAITO
PRICE: IMPORT ONLY
REVIEWED: MT 20
Sad 3D shoot 'em up, Space Harier-style, featuring a transforming flying car fending off invading aliens.
▲Fast action... but in a crap sort of way.
▼Appalling sprites, badly animated. Nasty musical score, limited movement
MT RATING: 17%

PRINCE OF PERSIA
BY SEGA
PRICE: £44.99
REVIEWED: MT 10
Escape from your dungeon and run, leap and swordfight towards the the luvly Princess of Persia, cruelly locked up by mad Grand Vizier Jaffar. Evil traps and evil henchmen are everywhere in this twelve-level platform game which demands fine control and route-learning from the player.
▲ Brilliantly animated characters and cunning traps make this gripping from start to finish.
▼ Controls are terrible and it's a bit short-lived. Considering it's on CD you might have expected it to have more than twelve levels.
MT RATING: 70%



SEWER SHARK
BY SONY IMAGESOFT
PRICE: IMPORT ONLY
REVIEWED: MT 16
As the pilot of a high-speed sewership, you have to find your way through a vast maze of smelly tunnels populated by nasty sewer critters to the sunny climes of Solar City. Fast 3D flying and blasting is the order of the day.
▲ The Mega-CD's full-motion video capabilities are used really well and the atmosphere created really makes the game. Once you get into it, it's good fun.
▼ The actual gameplay is pretty basic stuff and if you make one mistake it's Game Over.
MT RATING: 87%

SHERLOCK HOLMES: CONSULTING DETECTIVE
BY SEGA
PRICE: £44.99
REVIEWED: MT 16
There are three chilling cases for Holmes and Watson to solve in this full-motion video extravaganza. Sherlock has to interview all the suspects and piece together clues from his many sources to identify the murderers before bringing them to justice.
▲A good idea for a game, nicely presented.
▼Holmes is a bit limited in his investigative abilities. It would have been good if he could do more than just talk to suspects. Oh, and the acting in the video clips is somewhat ropey, but hey, we're game reviewers, not drama critics.
MT RATING: 79%



SWITCH
BY SEGA
PRICE: IMPORT
REVIEWED: MT 19
A very odd game in which you're presented with all sorts of strange situations and you just have to press buttons to try and get out of them. The overall aim is to get to the bottom of a maze of locations, without pressing the buttons that blow up various world monuments. Usually though, hitting the wrong button results in hilarious things happening. There are over 1,000 gags stored on the disc and the fun comes from waiting for the (very) unexpected to happen.
▲ Uses the Mega-CD well for all sorts of graphical tricks and sound and music effects and the variety and the overall hilarity makes it a sort of up-market activity centre.
▼ If you don't have a rather odd sense of humour you probably won't see the point. If you do have that sense of humour the sad part is that Sega will probably never bring this out officially.
MT RATING: 90%

WOLFCHILD
BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 16
A conversion of an old Amiga game, this puts you inside the hairy skin of a lad who's prone to transforming into a fireball-shooting werewolf. Handy, this, because on his quest to rescue his kidnapped dad he has to shoot a lot of monsters and robots and stuff.
▲ Quite a playable platform shoot 'em up with decent music.
▼ Nothing really new and the pseudo-Anime graphics in the intro are a bit naff.
MT RATING: 82%

WONDER DOG
BY JVC
PRICE: IMPORT
REVIEWED: MT 12
Wonder Dog has just crash-landed on Earth and has to get back to his home planet of K-Ninus by hopping around platforms and dodging hostile weirdoes on various planets. This is on CD only and will be available officially in the summer.
▲ Great graphics and sound.
▼ There just aren't any really smart or innovative features in the game and it's quite easy to beat.
MT RATING: 82%



MEGADRIVE GAMES
These are the ones that are worth watching out for.

688 ATTACK SUB
BY: ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: PRE-MEGATECH
Submarine simulation in which you can captain a US or Soviet nuclear sub, navigate hazardous waters and play havoc with your torpedoes.
▲ Lots of depth and a good simulation feel.
▼ The Thrills per Second gauge barely twitches so it won't appeal to everyone.
MT RATING: 85%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE
Try this method to complete the final Hit and Run mission, in Beginner and Standard modes. First activate the top-down map and zoom out until a target appears. Arm a missile and head to periscope depth. You will probably be detected by a patrolling sub and have a missile launched at you, but concentrate on launching all four missiles as soon as they're ready and once they're on their way, run for it! There's no way you can check on the missiles' progress so don't hang around. Set speed to 1/3 to effect a turn to 330 degrees, and head for the edge of the continental shelf. Activate contour mapping and as soon as you reach the drop-off, dive as deep as you can and increase speed to full or flank. Head NW, using the contour mapping to steer around obstacles while occasionally checking the top-down map to make sure you're going in the right direction. Don't risk diving too deep, though, as the last thing you want is to scupper yourself on the sea bed. As you approach Denmark the enemy will try to find you on sonar. Do not use your own sonar or try to attack them. Just keep going and by the time the mission clock reaches about 25 minutes you should have reached safety and the mission is over.

A

ALIEN 3
BY ARENA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 9
Nothing like the film, this puts you in control of a megaweapons-toting Ripley on a platform crusade to waste the aliens and rescue the cocooned humans.
▲ Excellent sound effects, music, graphics and gameplay. Really challenging too.
▼ It's so good it's suspicious.
MT RATING: 94%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE
When the game starts, go to the options screen and, using the second control pad, press C, UP, RIGHT, DOWN, LEFT, A, RIGHT and DOWN. You should hear a noise. Leave the options screen and start the game. When you wish to skip a level, pause the game and press C, A and B. Lines should run down the screen. Now when you unpause the game, you should move onto the next level.

CURRENT HIGH SCORE
15,570,450 (Hard level) by Robert Guthrie, Galashiels

ALISIA DRAGOON
BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 4
Become mistress of a multitude of mythical monsters in this lengthy and unusual platform shoot 'em up.
▲ Superb graphics + novel gameplay = good fun.
▼ Hardly a downer in sight.
MT RATING: 85%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE
Switch on and after 'SEGA' disappears from the screen hold down A until 'GAME ARTS' has disappeared. Now hold down B until 'GAINAX' has disappeared. Now hold down C until 'MUSIC COMPOSED BY...' has disappeared. When the stars come out of the crystal press START and you should hear a sound. Start the game and press C on the second controller to blank the screen. This warps you to the next part of the current level, or you can warp even further using these button combinations:
C – Stage one
B – Stage two
B and C – Stage three
A – Stage four
A and C – Stage five
A and B – Stage six
A, B and C – Stage seven
START – Stage eight

CURRENT HIGH SCORE
Elven Mage (level 7, normal) by Anthony Dowd, Telford



AMAZING TENNIS
BY ABSOLUTE ENTERTAINMENT
PRICE: IMPORT
REVIEWED: MT 19
A tennis game with the strange novelty of a behind-the-player-sprite viewpoint. The player graphics are big and well animated, but their size makes it quite difficult to see past them to the other side of the court. That said, generous collision detection makes it easy enough to hit the ball back. Plenty of strokes to master and opponents to beat, and of course there's the two player mode.
▲ Graphics look very smart and overall the game is very playable.
▼ In the two player mode, the guy at the far side of the court has some difficulty seeing what's going on.
MT RATING: 82%



ANOTHER WORLD
BY VIRGIN
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 14
Lester Chaykin (scientist) is transported by a twist of fate and a particle accelerator to Another World where he has to somehow evade death at the hands of evil spudhead aliens and get back home for tea.
▲ Ace graphics and animation, and the way puzzle, adventure, platform and shoot 'em up action is combined is great.
▼ Controls are a bit dodgy, and once



you've finished the game you won't come back to it.

MT RATING: 86%

ATOMIC RUNNER

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 10

A bizarre platform game in which the hero has to leap and blast his way through numerous alien-infested levels.

▲ Great background graphics and a decent, if unusual blend of shoot 'em up and platform action.

▼ Atomic Runner sprite is a bit weedy.

MT RATING: 80%

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

310,000 by Russell Halford, Bracknell, Berks

AYRTON SENNA'S SUPER MONACO GP 2

BY SEGA
PRICE: £49.99
REVIEWED: MT 6

Update of the excellent 3D race game, with extra tracks, better sounds, slightly tweaked gameplay and digitised pics of Ayrton Senna looking grumpy.

▲ Fast 3D graphics and loads of tracks to race on.

▼ A bit pricey. The extra features don't make it THAT much better than the original Super Monaco. Formula One World Championship is faster and more fun.

MT RATING: 90%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

Select Japanese text from the options menu, then go to Free Practise mode. Press the D-button down to scroll through the text and a flashing red arrow appears to indicate the most difficult corner on the circuit.

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

160 driver's points by Wayne Pearce, Haddlesey

B



BATMAN RETURNS

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 12

Based on the second Batmovie, this pits the Batman against Catwoman and The Penguin in a variety of platform beat 'em up scenarios.

▲ Lots of levels and quite a lot to do.

▼ Graphics are big but grainy so it's sometimes hard to see what's happening and the action is v frustrating. Not for novices.

MT RATING: 76%

BATMAN: REVENGE OF THE JOKER

BY SUNSOFT
PRICE: IMPORT
REVIEWED: MT 16

This Batgame's based on the comics rather than the movies, but it offers similar platform beat 'em up action to the others. Fight off The Joker and his cronies with your flying batfeet and wrist-mounted bat laser weapons.

▲ Enjoyable blend of platfom and shoot 'em up with a fair amount of variety in the levels/

▼ Graphics are pretty garish, and not altogether wonderful. Unlimited continues make it quite easy to finish.

MT RATING: 75%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

You don't lose your Invincibility bat capsules when you die so you can keep collecting them, dying, then going back and collecting them again, thus storing up dozens and making it very easy to conquer the bosses.



BIO HAZARD BATTLE

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 11

Take control of a laser-armed insect-fish-ship-thing on a mission to wipe out a wide variety of mutant insects and other assorted nasty creatures in this one or two player blast.

▲ Spectacularly gross graphics, two player option, unusual scenario and good extra weapons systems make this a winner.

▼ 0896

MT RATING: 88%

BLOCK OUT

BY ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £19.99
REVIEWED: PRE-MEGATECH

A sort of 3D Tetris in which you have to dump oddly-shaped blocks together in a well to make solid layers. These completed layers then disappear which is good, because if they didn't the blocks would spill over the top of the well and that would be the end of the game.

▲ Tons of options (including two players, head-to-head) make for loads of game variations, all of which are excellent fun.

▼ Sometimes the game slows down and the controls go a bit dicky resulting in the occasional misplaced block.

MT RATING: 91%

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

435,311 (Level 0-!, Flat Fun) by Lee Nixon, Sheaford

BUCK ROGERS

BY ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £19.99
REVIEWED: MT 4

Role-playing game based on the TSR board game in which you have to lead your six rookie troopers around numerous space scenarios in a quest to vanquish the evil RAM organisation. Lots of gun battles, strategy-based spacecraft battles with a soupçon of puzzle solving.

▲ Good plot and quite enjoyable, even for players with only a passing interest in RPGs.

▼ Rather basic graphics may put off your standard Megadrive fan.

MT RATING: 88%

BULLS VS LAKERS

BY ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 10

Probably the best of EA's basketball simulations, featuring all the American big name players, replete with their speciality moves.

▲ Good graphics and feels like a realistic simulation.

▼ Not as instantly accessible as David Robinson's Supreme Court Basketball.

MT RATING: 80%

C



CHAKAN

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 15

Chakan is an undead swordsman who has to hack up all platform-based supernatural evil before he can settle down for an eternal rest.

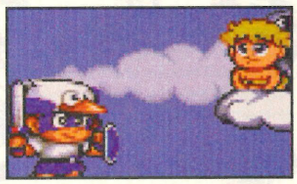
▲ Excellent graphics and lots of variety in the later levels.

▼ A bit too much challenge and not enough fun.

MT RATING: 73%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

Put the game in practice mode and find the air portal (at the bottom right of the navigation screen). It's the only portal with a small platform above it. Jump on the platform and you'll find that, though you've collected no potions, you can activate the portal spell. Do so and you are given a full complement of potions, all the weapons and Chakan is warped past the first twelve levels.



CHIKI-CHIKI BOYS

BY CAPCOM
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 14

A conversion of the Mega-Twins coin-op in which two young fellah-me-lads go on a platform treasure hunt, swiping at cuddly monsters with their swords and magic weapons.

▲ Pleasant enough game with nice graphics and enjoyable action.

▼ Lacks the arcade game's two player mode which would have made it something special.

MT RATING: 80%

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

288,330 by Andrew Thorne, Dorking

COLUMNS

BY SEGA
PRICE: £19.99
REVIEWED: PRE-MEGATECH

Sort out coloured gems as they fall down the screen in this Tetris-style puzzle game.

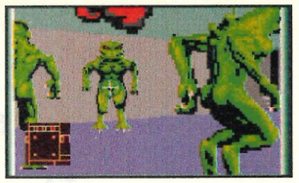
▲ Hypnotic music and graphics make this almost unputdownable. Two player competition mode is superb.

▼ Sometimes success is as much down to accident as design (which may not be that bad).

MT RATING: 88%

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

97,633,647 by James Montague, Chelmsford



CORPORATION

BY VIRGIN
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 4

A huge 3D adventure with a bit of shooting 'em up, in which you have to get past the security robots in a high-tech office building.

▲ Good graphics and unusual and absorbing gameplay.

▼ Doesn't quite achieve it's potential because some of the best ideas in the game aren't used quite as well as they might have been.

MT RATING: 87%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

To finish the game the easy way use this method. Get to level five and update your access before descending to level four. Update your access on level four and go back up to level five. Once in the lift, take down the password and reset the game. When you start again enter the password and repeat the process. You should find you can update your card seven times and con now go to any level you like, so go to level -3 where the embryo chamber is to be found. Collect an embryo and head straight for the car park on the ground floor to complete the game.

D

DAVID ROBINSON'S SUPREME COURT BASKETBALL

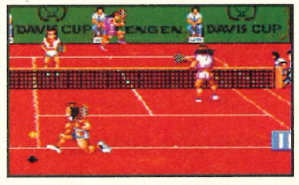
BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 6

Become the basketball champions of the USA in this semi-sim which puts the management of the squad in your hands, as well as the on-court action.

▲ Good graphics and strikes the right balance between realism and fast arcade action.

▼ The way the court flips round as you cross the half-way line takes a bit of getting used to. Real basketball fans my prefer something more simulationy, like Bulls vs Lakers.

MT RATING: 83%



DAVIS CUP TENNIS

BY DOMARK
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 19

A tennis game whose strength is its speed of play and its range of options. Practice against all sorts of players or machines on all sorts of courts, then take part in singles or doubles tournaments all around the world. Lots of moves of course.

▲ Loads of options, superfast gameplay and the two player options make this the best Megadrive tennis game.

▼ Nothing major, although when the players are wearing their pink kits it looks like they're playing butt naked!

MT RATING: 90%

DECAPATTACK

BY SEGA
PRICE: £34.99
REVIEWED: PRE-MEGATECH

Rather large platform game in which you play a sort of Frankenstein's Monster creature who gets rid of the baddies by throwing his head at them.

▲ Unusual gameplay makes it fun to play.

▼ Not particularly flash in the graphics and sound departments.

MT RATING: 79%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

You can pick up extra lives by jumping straight down onto the springy poles. As you hit the top, keep springing up and down and the pole segments should light up. When they're all lit an extra life is yours.



DESERT STRIKE

ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 3

Lay waste to a mad dictator's desert army, rescue hostages and blow up his 'baby milk factories' in this helicopter shoot 'em up.

▲ Lots of variety, great graphics and terrific gameplay make this one of the best shoot 'em ups on the Megadrive.

▼ Slightly dodgy 'No, no, nothing to do with the Gulf War, honestly' premise.

MT RATING: 93%

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

6,220,200 by David Morgan, Seaford, Sussex

DICK TRACY

BY SEGA
PRICE: £19.99
REVIEWED: PRE-MEGATECH

Shinobi-style beat\shoot 'em up game starring 'The World's Greatest Detective'. Take on the likes of Lips Manlis and other deformed gangsters as Dick tries to get to the bottom of a bomb plot.

▲ Challenging and good fun, with a good mix of game styles.

▼ Perhaps not quite enough variety in the beat 'em up bits.

MT RATING: 79%

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

339,900 by David Rowntree, Devon

DRAGON'S FURY

BY TENGEN
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 1

Originally reviewed as Devil Crash (the Japanese version) this is a pinball game which lets you bash a ball around a three-screen-high scrolling table and eight bonus sub-tables, all populated with little devils and ghostly monks.

▲ Superb graphics and sound and it has a superb pinball feel to it.

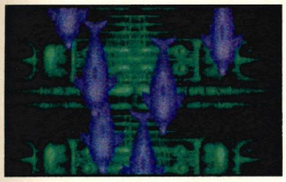
▼ Religious fundamentalists may not approve of a pinball game with Agents of Satan sprites.

MT RATING: 91%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

Try entering TECHNIQUE
NOSOFT as a password to start the game with ten balls and a 2,000,000 points bonus. Entering DEVILCRASH starts you with seven balls, and ALCLAE8ECK gives you 21 balls and enough points to take you right to the final screen.

E



ECCO THE DOLPHIN

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 13

Become a dispossessed dolphin which has to solve the puzzles which block his way in over 20 undersea mazes so that he can find his mates who have all mysteriously disappeared.

▲ Original concept combined with wonderful graphics and amazingly engrossing gameplay make this a classic.

▼ Hundreds of people rang us up asking how to beat the Helix in the Darkwater level. Hey, it was a downer for US.

MT RATING: 94%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

With this game you don't need any others. When the name of the level appears press A, B and START and Ecco will be invincible.

E-SWAT

BY SEGA
PRICE: £34.99
REVIEWED: PRE-MEGATECH

A single player conversion of the old cop shoot-out arcade game in which the player gets to enforce the law from inside an armoured flying suit with flame throwers and lasers.

▲ Lots of platform action, decent graphics.

▼ Nothing special these days. It's a shame you have to play several levels before you get the armoured suit as this could have been a super-destruction game.

MT RATING: 79%

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

642,900 (Completed on Normal) by Harry Weichers, Ferndale, S Africa

EX-MUTANTS

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 12

A platform game based on the cult comics, in which you play a heavily-armed hero or heroine on a mutant-mashing mission to rescue your fellow heroes.

▲ Challenging and fun, and captures the atmosphere of the comic well.

▼ Graphics are mostly a bit cheesey.

MT RATING: 89%

F



F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

BY DOMARK
PRICE: £44.99
REVIEWED: MT 20

This is the official Formula One game, featuring all this season's international tracks. As the Megadrive goes, this is the best racing game money can buy – an incredible sensation of speed (the turbo mode is like trying to control a missile blasting down the track) and lots of thrills 'n' spills in one-off races or a 12-race tournament. There's also the choice between Arcade mode (where you drive for points, scoring every time you pass a car) or normal racing. And there's a superb two-player mode too. Brilliant!

▲ Two different speed modes, both with varied difficulty settings – speed increases with difficulty. Mega-exciting one or two-player racing action, 12 realistically-mapped Grand Prix circuits. Superb sound effects.

▼ Er... the car configuration screen is a bit limited for obsessive car-tuners. That's all, really.

MT RATING: 94%

F22 INTERCEPTOR

BY ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 1

The first Megadrive 'flight simulator' is a pretty simple air combat game in which you first have to train, before being sent on lots of basic missions to various parts of the world.

▲ Fast and fun, simple to get to grips with and loads of little missions to complete.

▼ More of a simple shoot 'em up than a flight sim.

MT RATING: 88%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

You can beat all the aces using this simple tactic. Simply pull a very steep climb straight into the sun and keep going with your afterburners on. The enemy plane will follow you and when you see it levelling off in the monitor dive straight down onto it, shooting as you go, and you'll be able to dust it, no trouble.

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

USA: 35,577 by Dean Lloyd, Rugeley
USSR: 35,577 by Dean Lloyd, Rugeley
IRAQ: 36,477 by Dean Lloyd, Rugeley
KOREA:36,477 by Dean Lloyd, Rugeley

FLASHBACK

BY US GOLD
PRICE: £44.99
REVIEWED: MT 18

Spy/scientist Conrad Hart has to uncover an alien plot to destroy the human race in this huge platform adventure. All sorts of Prince of Persia-type puzzles and guard-shooting exploits abound in five big levels packed with weird and wonderful scenery.

▲ Excellent graphics, sound, gameplay... and everything!

▼ It's one of those games that's so good you can't stop playing it, so finishing it doesn't take that long.

MT RATING: 94%

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

80,344 (Finished in 7 hours, Expert setting) by R Franklin, Barking.

FORGOTTEN WORLDS

BY SEGA
PRICE: £19.99
REVIEWED: PRE-MEGATECH

One or two players participate in this conversion of the unusual Capcom coin-op in which two floating blokes have to decimate loads of fantastic monsters with meaty weapons.

▲ Good weapons, smart graphics and pretty good fun to play.

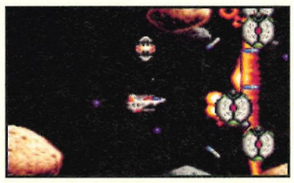
▼ A bit easy, that's all.

MT RATING:79%

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

1,991,800 by Daniel Gallop, Essex

G



GAIARES

BY RENOVATION
PRICE: IMPORT
REVIEWED: MT 2

Yet another horizontally-scrolling space shoot 'em up, but this one has loads of weapons, enemies and levels to keep you occupied as you go on a mission to free the universe of space pirates.

▲ Smart graphics with lots of variety, loads of everything and it's pretty tough to beat.

▼ The only thing wrong with this is that perhaps it's not amazingly original.

MT RATING: 84%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

Plug in two controllers and press START and B on pad one to bring up the options screen. Select tune 18 and hold down A on pad two then select EXIT with pad one. Still holding A press C on pad one and keep them held down until the SEGA logo disappears. Now hit START and you've got a level select.

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

1,608,352 by Asif Akhtar, Wimbledon

GHOSTBUSTERS

BY SEGA
PRICE: £34.99
REVIEWED: PRE-MEGATECH

Choose your favourite Ghostbuster, ready your proton pack and exorcise a whole load of spooks from platform-laden houses, thus uncovering a supernatural plot to plunge the city into the seventh level of Hell.

▲ Jolly graphics, lots of variety, it plays well and it goes on for ages.

▼ Music is a bit iffy.

MT RATING: 86%

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

17,758,000 by Wayne Lockwood, Boroughbridge

GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS

BY SEGA
PRICE: £44.99
REVIEWED: PRE-MEGATECH

Conversion of the ghost-slaying coin-op in which Sir Arthur has to rescue his princess from the clutches of a demon and his army of spooklings. Lots of platforms to jump around and plenty of extra weapons to pick up.

▲ Looks great, plays great, great music. Just great.

▼ Price is also great.

MT RATING: 93%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

If you've got the official version of the game you can use this for invincibility. Go to the options screen and exit four times. Then on the title screen press A four times, UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT. Then hold down B and press START.

GODS

BY MINDSCAPE
PRICE: IMPORT
REVIEWED: MT 11

Lots of Greek mythology stuff here, as you control the platforming activities of a warrior who has to brave Harpies, Minotaurs and lots of other monsters in his quest to solve puzzles and generally embarrass the gods of Olympus.

▲ Really slickly done, with excellent graphics and decent puzzle/shooting/platforming gameplay.

▼ Would have been frustratingly difficult even without the dodgy control system. Torn-out hair may be a side effect of playing this.

MT RATING: 89%

GYNOUG

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 5

Angelic Gynoug (angelic because he's an angel) has to rid the underworld of all sorts of nasty demons in what appears to be a horizontally-scrolling shoot 'em up. Uncanny.

▲ Fast gameplay, lots of power-ups and some of the graphics, namely the bosses, are spectacular.

▼ Errr...

MT RATING: 91%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

On the options screen go down to DIFFICULTY and press A, B, C and START together to get a secret EASY setting. Alternatively, go down to CONTROL and hold down A until a stage select option appears.

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

2,345,760 by Wesley Thomson, Fife

H

HELLFIRE

BY SEGA
PRICE: £34.99
REVIEWED: MT 5

It's surprising that a little-known Toaplan coin-op should become such a popular Megadrive game, but then life's full of surprises. What makes this different from other horizontally-scrolling blasts is the unusual rotatable guns fitted to the player's ship.

▲ Weapons system works really well and leads to clever, tactical blasting. Graphics, of course, are great and it's all just very good fun.

▼ What downers?

MT RATING: 92%

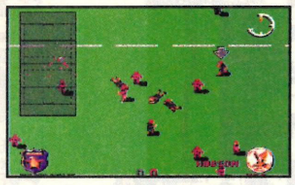
MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

Go to the options screen and set the game to HARD. Now select tune 1 on the sound test and leave it to play until YEA RIGHT appears. You now have 99 credits, but the game difficulty is set to super hard.

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

19,478,220 by Robert Guthrie, Galashiels

I



INTERNATIONAL RUGBY CHALLENGE

BY DOMARK
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 19

As the name suggests, this Kick Off-esque rugby simulation lets you play in the big three international rugby tournaments, namely The Triple Crown, The Five Nations and the World Cup. Just about all the rules of the sport are observed and clever control



devices make it easy to carry out the unusual moves.
▲ A cleverly-done conversion of a sport which doesn't lend itself to computer conversion. If you're into rugby, you'll enjoy it.
▼ Suffers from a few annoying flaws, such as the way the computer players tackle perfectly, but you only get a result about 50% of the time.

MT RATING: 75%

ISHIDO
BY ACCOLADE
PRICE: £35.99
REVIEWED: MT 2
A board game based on some other ancient puzzle game (presumably not on a computer) in which you have to fill squares on a board with tiles by matching shapes and colours.
▲ Unlike most Megadrive puzzle games it doesn't appear to have its roots in Tetris.
▼ Blimey it's difficult. One for real puzzle maniacs only.

MT RATING: 80%

J



J-LEAGUE PRO STRIKER
BY SEGA
PRICE: IMPORT
REVIEWED: MT 19
Take to the field as one of ten Japanese teams from the J-League in this prize soccer game which is loaded with features. The style is Kick Off, but the graphics are better and it's easier to control the ball, which leads to some spectacular and realistic-looking football. If you're prepared to pay an extra £25 for Sega's multi-player joypad connector up to four people can play at once, two-a-side.
▲ The multi-player options, the excellent graphics and the amazing playability make this the best football game on the Megadrive at the moment.
▼ It's a shame that all the text is in Japanese as it makes some of the more exotic options (such as the instant replay) impenetrable.

MT RATING: 93%

JOE MONTANA 3
BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 11
More Amerian football action in a game which combines all the features of the first two Montana games, including the full spoken commentary, the different pitch views and all the teams and plays you'd expect from an American Football game.
▲ Good fun, smart graphics and the speech is just gob-smacking!
▼ Unfortunately still not as good a Gridiron simulation as John Madden '92

MT RATING: 78%



JOHN MADDEN '92
BY ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 1
Electronic Arts' second American Football game is arguably the best of the lot. A 3D pitch display, and lots of player involvement with tactics, plays and steering your squad of little sprites around the screen make you feel like you're really in the thick of it.
▲ Such a smart game that you'll enjoy it even if you don't care much for the sport. The two-player game is superb.
▼ Nowt.

MT RATING: 95%

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL '93
BY ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 12
Classic teams, more speech, battery save and extra moves are what this has over JM'92. Apart from that it's practically the same game, so don't consider buying this if you've got the other. Unless you're a real gridiron nutter.
▲ It has all those extra features, so if you really follow the sport closely you'll appreciate the additions.
▼ Most players won't spot the differences. Besides, this is slightly slower than '92.

MT RATING: 91%

JUNGLE STRIKE
BY EA
PRICE: £49.99
REVIEWED: MT 18
Over one year on, and EA have finally produced the sequel to their awesome Desert Strike. Following on from the last game, you're now pitted against drug lords deep in a South American jungle and on the streets of Washington DC. The graphics are stunning and you now get to pilot a number of different vehicles, including a stealth fighter and a hover craft.
▲ Impressive graphics and tons of missions action. Even better than the first game.
▼ Shock, horror! None at all!

MT RATING: 95%

K

KLAX
BY TENGEN
PRICE: £34.99
REVIEWED: PRE-MEGATECH
Tetris-derived puzzle game in which coloured tiles roll down a conveyor belt and have to be caught and tossed into a bin to make point-scoring patterns.
▲ Lots of scope for developing strategies make this extremely playable.
▼ Nothing much, but it's not quite as playable as Block-Out.

MT RATING: 85%

CURRENT HIGH SCORE
9,754,765 (Largest Klax 11x67,000) by Sharon Mitchell, Fraserburgh

L

LEMMINGS
BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 11
Get the suicidal lemmings across obstacles and into their home in this conversion of the classic puzzle game, which has all the features of the original and more levels.@EXTRA:
▲ Tons of levels to beat, and the idea of the game is terrific, though sometimes it's more fun watching the Lemmings die than it is saving them.
▼ Who can say?

MT RATING: 92%

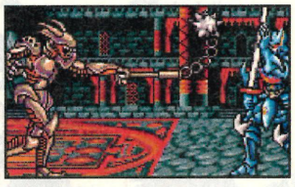
LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGE
BY ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 12
Drive Lotus Esprits and Elans around increasingly tortuous tracks, with ever-worsening weather conditions to add further to your troubles. Split screen two player mode.
▲ Very playable 3D racing game. Two player head-to-head game is excellent.
▼ The weather effects are nice but as a whole the graphics look like they could have been better.

MT RATING: 85%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE
Try entering MANSELL as a password and you should qualify in every race you drive in.

CURRENT HIGH SCORE
86,132,636 by Paul Bartlett, Erith, Kent

M

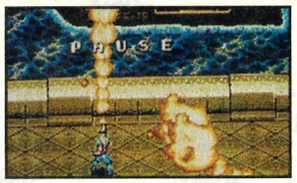


MAZIN WAR
BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 18
Dash along a series of increasingly difficult levels hacking apart everything you encounter. It sounds simple, but you're presented with challenge after challenge including some completely massive bosses. It could be better looking, but it plays fine as it is.
▲ Lots of action in the Golden Axe vein and incredible bosses.
▼ If anything the game is too difficult and apart from the bosses offers few surprises.

MT RATING: 90%

MEGA-LO-MANIA
BY VIRGIN
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 13
Populous-style strategy game in which you have to lead your race of people out of the Stone Age and into the future by teaching them to build weapons and implements which help them conquer nearby races.
▲ Very easy to get into and the quantity of features and the quirky touches make it fun from start to finish.
▼ There are only nine levels, but they should keep you going for quite a while

MT RATING: 92%



MERCS
BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 1
Commando-style shoot 'em up in which you have to gun your way through hordes of soldiers, destroying tanks, gunboats, etc, buying more destructive weapons as you go. This version includes a second game variation not found in the arcade game in which you have to recruit new allies to fight alongside you.
▲ A really good blastfest.
▼ Lacks the arcade game's two player feature.

MT RATING: 90%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE
Finding the game too easy? Just activate original mode, then hold down A, B, C and START to make it even harder!

CURRENT HIGH SCORE
1,407,500 (Arcade) by Neil Kendall, Birkenhead
5,107,950 (Original) by Stu Gorlner, Gorsley

MICK AND MACK: GLOBAL GLADIATORS
BY VIRGIN
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 15
Mick or Mack join up, somehow, with McDonalds (of hamburger infamy) to fight various environmental threats (such as blobby slime monsters and mad beavers) in this platform game.
▲ Smart graphics and gameplay is fast and jolly.
▼ Alas, it's all a bit too simple to be interesting for very long, and it actually comes across an 8 megabit McDonalds ad.

MT RATING: 81%

MICKEY MOUSE IN CASTLE OF ILLUSION
BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: PRE MEGATECH
The notorious mouse has to rescue his missus, Minnie, from evil witch Mizrabel in this cute and cuddly platform adventure with lots of Disneyesque monsters.
▲ Wonderful graphics and very playable.
▼ A bit easy to complete, so it's best for kids.

MT RATING: 84%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE
There are at least three hidden treasure rooms in this game. One is in the third part of level one and another is in the first part of level three. To find both of them just fall down the pit and walk through the wall on the left to find loads of goodies.

CURRENT HIGH SCORE
2,824,500 by Nathan Preston, Mid-Calder

MICRO MACHINES
BY CODE MASTERS
PRICE: £34.99
REVIEWED: MT 15
Now that all legal problems between Code Masters and Sega have been cleared up you should be able to get hold of this one or two player race game in which you have to steer your toy car/boat/helicopter (the Micro Machines of the title) around tracks set up on the beach, the breakfast table, in the garden and more.
▲ Tremendous fun in single or double player modes. Really recreates the childhood feeling of driving toy cars around the garden.
▼ A bit simple, but that doesn't really count against it too much.

MT RATING: 92%

MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE
BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: PRE-MEGATECH
Commandoes-on-platforms blasting action in this arcade conversion. Lots of add-on weapons and bad guys to use them on.
▲ Good guns 'n' destruction action, with a good level of control over your bloke.
▼ A bit easy to complete, and it doesn't have the arcade game's two player mode, which would have been fun.

MT RATING: 85%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE
On the title screen, wait until START is highlighted in red then hold down C and press START. Once the game has begun press START and then A to warp to the next level!

CURRENT HIGH SCORE
2,104,100 by Dan Towes, Gillingham

MIGHT AND MAGIC
BY ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: PRE-MEGATECH
Absolutely gigantic role-playing game with 3D graphics in which you have to get your party of thieves/warriors/wizards around cities and countryside populated by an incredible range of monsters and villains (dinosaurs? ferocious cats?).
▲ Vast depth should keep hardened role players going for ages.
▼ Iffy monster graphics and long-winded combat system may be off-putting to non-RPG veterans.

MT RATING: 79%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE
For free gold, gems and powerful weapons at any time of the day or night use this secret technique. Choose 'VIEW CHARACTER' and when 'VIEW WHICH' appears hold down left, A and C on the joypad. Let all three go simulataneously and when the character menu appears keep pressing left and you should see a load of odd characters which should mean the cheat has been activated.



MUHAMMAD ALI BOXING
BY VIRGIN
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 15
Park Place (the original programmers of the John Madden and EA Hockey games) designed this boxing simulation in which you can help the legendary Ali recapture his title by beating off nine other heavyweight challengers.
▲ The 3D boxing ring graphics, the controls and the whole feel of the game captures the atmosphere of boxing better than any other boxing game.
▼ Ummm... Rather naff 3D intro sequence, but that's about it.

MT RATING: 92%

N

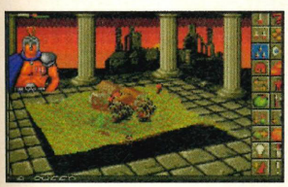
NHLPA HOCKEY
BY ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 10
Ice hockey simulation which is a slight advance over its predecessor, EA Hockey. One or two player options, league championships, and that essential ingredient in any hockey game, a punch-up sub-game when the players start to get under each others' feet.
▲ Superb, fast, end-to-end hockey action, with a wonderful two-player option.
▼ Pretty much the same as the first game, so don't buy it if you have the original.
MT RATING: 89%

P

PGA TOUR GOLF 2
BY ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 13
Seven 3D courses based on real-life PGA Tour venues are the setting for this prime golf simulation. Multi-player and skins tournaments, on-screen advice from the pros, battery game save – this cartridge is just loaded with features.
▲ Superb control method provides a perfect feel, as do the excellent graphics.
▼ Like a lot of EA's sports sims, it's a bit similar to its predecessor, PGA Tour Golf.
MT RATING: 94%
CURRENT HIGH SCORE
SCOTTSDALE: 242 Strokes (best 72) by Darrell Simmonds, Cirencester
SOUTHWIND: 242 strokes (best 72) by Steve Jones, Portsmouth

PHANTASY STAR III
BY SEGA
PRICE: £49.99
REVIEWED: PRE-MEGATECH
Another gigantic RPG with a futuristic fantasy theme. The plot can take several routes across several worlds and through different generations of heroes so it really does take ages to conquer.
▲ Sheer vastness is its best quality.
▼ Graphics aren't particularly inspiring and the combat by rounds system doesn't make it too attractive to RPG non-veterans.
MT RATING: 89%

PIT FIGHTER
BY TENGEN
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 2
Venture forth into the seedy underworld of illegal fist-fighting in this conversion of the Atari beat 'em up coin-op. Two players can participate as any of three different characters, all of whom are portrayed in (rather chunky) digitised people sprites.
▲ Good, violent fun.
▼ Graphics look a bit over-chunky.
MT RATING: 77%
CURRENT HIGH SCORE
2,449,350 by Stephen Gallimore, Bournemouth



POWERMONGER
BY ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 14
Lead your gang of savages to supremacy on a vast archipelago of islands in this pseudo-sequel to Populous. Teach them to build boats and weapons and build up alliances with neighbouring leaders. It's a bit like Mega-Lo-Mania only it takes a much more serious tack.
▲ Technically it's excellent and feels very simulationy.
▼ It's the serious approach that makes it less enjoyable than Mega-Lo-Mania, plus it's very samey from island to island.
MT RATING: 81%



PREDATOR 2
BY ACCLAIM
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 11
Play the part of Captain Harrigan, a vice squad copper who has discovered most of his suspects butchered, apparently by an alien hunter. Harrigan has to run around mini-maze-like levels, shooting drug-dealers and other street thugs, while rescuing helpless hostages before the Predator trains his sights on them. Take on the Predators themselves on later levels.
▲ There's a sort of mindless fun to be had from this.
▼ Pitifully easy to beat and the graphics are pretty dismal.
MT RATING: 62%
MT SECRET TECHNIQUE
The level codes are as follows:
Level 2 – Killers
Level 3 – Camouflage
Level 4 – Los Angeles
Level 5 – Subterror
Level 6 – Total Body
CURRENT HIGH SCORE
12,355,340 (Easy) by Nathan Preston (Mid-Calder)

PRINCE OF PERSIA
BY SEGA
PRICE: £44.99
REVIEWED: MT 10
Escape from your dungeon and run, leap and swordfight towards the the luvly Princess of Persia, cruelly locked up by mad Grand Vizier Jaffar. Evil traps and evil henchmen are everywhere in this twelve-level Mega-CD platform game which demands fine control and route-learning from the player.
▲ Brilliantly animated characters and cunning traps make this gripping from start to finish.
▼ It's a bit short-lived. Considering it's on CD you might have expected it to have more than twelve levels.
MT RATING: 89%

Q

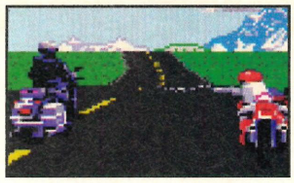
QUACKSHOT
BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 1
Donald (famous Disney Duck) is after treasure and lots of it. This lust for gold leads him on a massive around-the-world treasure hunt on platforms, in which he has to enlist the help of various Disney characters and do over various other Disney characters (but nastier ones).
▲ Superb graphics, like all the other Disney games, and quite a testing game overall.
▼ Or at least it would be testing if you didn't have infinite continues to play with.
MT RATING: 82%
CURRENT HIGH SCORE
10,077,000 by Martin Hunt, Maidenhead

R

RANGER X
BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 19
A platform shoot 'em up starring a giant jumping, flying robot with an array of big guns and the occasional use of a hi-tech unicycle and a flying machine. The idea is to travel the many and widely varied scrolling zones, taking out a particular variety of target and anything else that fires back.
▲ Major league bosses and fancy graphics tricks make this look streets ahead of any other Megadrive shooter. The variety and smart ideas makes it play better than any other Megadrive shooter, too.
▼ There's a bit of sprite flicker when things get busy on the screen.
MT RATING: 94%

RAMPART
BY TENGEN
PRICE: IMPORT
REVIEWED: MT 13
Line your cannons up on approaching galleons full of invaders in this unusual medieval shoot 'em up with a hint of Missile Command. Meanwhile, the invaders have got your castle in their sights, and after they've knocked your walls down you have to rebuild them by dropping oddly-shaped bricks into the gaps, almost like Tetris. The two player game is similar, only instead of ships, your enemies are other players in other castles.
▲ Superb blend of different game styles which plays brilliantly in one and two player modes.
▼ Nothing. It's lovely.
MT RATING: 90%

REVENGE OF SHINOBI
BY SEGA
PRICE: £19.99
REVIEWED: PRE-MEGATECH
Joe Musashi, top ninja, is out to rid the world of a band of gangsters with bases on both sides of the pacific. Eight lengthy levels of platform beat 'em up action lie afore the player, in which he has to get the mighty Joe past all sorts of supernatural soldiers (some of whom are more supernatural than others) with only (only?) the power of his fists, sword, shurikens and mystical ninja magic.
▲ Excellent graphics, gameplay and sound (music is by Yuzo Koshiro of Streets of Rage fame).
▼ Downers? Nein danke!
MT RATING: 93%
MT SECRET TECHNIQUE
For infinite shurikens (yes, this old chestnut) go to the options screen and set the shurikens to 00. Wait a bit and, after a wibbly-wobbly sound, the 00 changes to a ∞ (ie. an infinity symbol) meaning infinite shurikens are yours.
CURRENT HIGH SCORE
9,999,900 by Daniel Sullivan, Coventry



ROAD RASH 2
BY ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 12
More no-holds-barred motorbike racing action from EA, this time with an extra weapon for your biker (a heavy chain) and AND a split-screen two player mode.
▲ First rate combination of 3D race game and beat 'em up (though, to be honest there's not much beating 'em up). Good fun.
▼ Two player mode doesn't add that much to the gameplay, surprisingly so it's not actually much of an improvement over the original.
MT RATING: 89%
MT SECRET TECHNIQUE
To start racing with any bike you like start by selecting the Mano A Mano game then choose the bike you want. From the bike shop, go back to the game select and choose two player Take Turns game. Then select the solo game and start and you're astride your chosen machine.

ROBOCOD
BY ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 1
Nasty Dr Maybe (ever noticed the bad press doctors get in video games?) has hijacked Santa's toy factory at the North Pole and it's up to famous fish agent, James Pond, to sort things out. Aided by his new stretching cyborg body, Jim has to leap and climb around an absolute stack of platform levels, dodging Maybe's multitudinous monsters as only a fish can.
▲ Ace cutesy graphics and loads of levels and hidden bits.
▼ Despite lots of graphical variety there really isn't that much to the gameplay.... Still that didn't seem to bother too many people when it came to this game.
MT RATING: 85%
MT SECRET TECHNIQUE
Select your starting level by switching on the game, then holding down A, C, diagonally down and left and START. You can also gain a very long-lasting shield by starting the game and collecting these objects (which are on the roof near the start of the game) in this order: cake, hammer, Earth, apple, tap. Once this is done you can activate another cheat which opens all the doors in the game by going through the first door you come to, collecting the nearby star then leaving through the exit on the left.
CURRENT HIGH SCORE
13,780,300 by Simon Shone, Heywood

ROCKET KNIGHT ADVENTURES
BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 20
Rocket-powered oppossum Sparkster has to defend the planet Elhorn against the Black Lord and his pig-troops in one of the best Megadrive platform shoot 'em ups we've see for a good while. Loads of big bosses, original, inventive levels and excellent-looking, well-animated graphics all add up to lots of fun.
▲ Smart graphics, excellent bosses, ingeniously-designed levels. Lots of fun.
▼ A bit easy (but only on the lower difficulty settings).
MT RATING: 92%





ROLO TO THE RESCUE

BY ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £34.99
REVIEWED: MT 14

From the creators of James Pond comes yet another cutesy platform game. This one stars a baby elephant (you don't get much cuter than that) out to find the circus owner who kidnapped his Mum and apparently locked up all the other country animals he could find. Rolo has to recruit the freed bunnies, squirrels, etc, and use their varied skills (rabbits can jump, squirrels can climb) to find him points bonuses and, more importantly, the keys and bits of map which can lead him to his pilfered parent.

▲ Excellent graphics, puzzle gameplay is simple but well thought out and enjoyable.

▼ There are over 100 levels and because there's no password system it'll takes hours and hours to go through the whole game in one sitting.

MT RATING: 89%

ROLLING THUNDER 2

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 17

Someone is blocking satellite communications and it's up to top secret agents codenamed Albatross (player one) and Leila (player two) to find who's at the bottom of the plot and eliminate them. This is yer actual shoot 'em up in which the two heroes have to leap around the ledges on a scrolling screen dealing lead-flavoured justice to the minions of the sinister organisation, preferably without getting themselves perforated in the process.

▲ A great conversion of the arcade game, with lots of levels and action.

▼ Potentially even better Rolling Thunder 3 is coming soon on import, though that may well be blocked from working on official machines.

MT RATING: 89%

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

554,180 by Scott Hazel, Trunch, Norfolk

S



SIDE POCKET

BY SEGA
PRICE: £34.99
REVIEWED: MT 17

An American Pool simulation, this, in which you can play solo or two player games, 'pocket' games, nine ball games or mess around with a trick shot option. There's also a tournament mode in which you get to tour the bars of America looking for competition.

▲ Good ball movement and control and it's interesting the way the programmers have combined arcade elements (such as hitting certain targets for extra shots) with the traditional green baize action.

▼ Pool and snooker purists may turn their noses up at it.

MT RATING: 80%

SLAP FIGHT

BY TENGEN
PRICE: IMPORT ONLY
REVIEWED: MT 20

Conversion of a ten-year-old coin-op – a real old-fashioned up-the-screen shoot 'em up with bolt-on power-up weapons and hosts of swirling spaceships to blast. You get two versions of the game on this cart – a totally faithful reproduction of the arcade original and an updated version with different baddies and backgrounds.

▲Two games for the price of one. Extremely playable, with fast and challenging action and loads of different weapons to play around with.

▼Too short, and it's a bit of a nostalgia trip for old shoot 'em up fans – very old-fashioned..

MT RATING: 83%

SNOW BROS

BY TENGEN
PRICE: IMPORT
REVIEWED: MT 19

A conversion of an obscure old Toaplan coin-op, similar to Taito's Bubble Bobble. In it you play Nick and Tom (yes, it has a simultaneous two player option), two snow-chucking icemen who have to leap up and down numerous levels of platforms combatting monsters with fiery weapons.

▲ Excellent two player game, with great graphics and plenty of action.

▼ Rough and tough players may find the password system makes it a bit easy to finish.

MT RATING: 86%

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

BY SEGA
PRICE: £34.99
REVIEWED: PRE-MEGATECH

Vile Dr Robotnik is capturing woodland creatures, turning them psychotic and putting them in heavily-armed robot suits. Sonic has to put a stop to this by jumping and dodging over colourful platform landscapes packed with hidden hedgehog traps, freeing his mates as he goes.

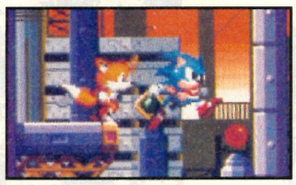
▲ Really smart and stylish graphics, and a fair bit of action.

▼ Lacks gameplay depth, unfortunately, and it's very easy to finish.

MT RATING: 83%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

On the title screen press UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, then hold down A and START to get a level select.



SONIC 2

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 11

Sonic returns with a small fox buddy named Tails in tow. Once again he has to do battle with Robotnik, but this time there are more traps, more levels, more monsters and... more players. The split-screen mode lets you play as Sonic while your mate takes control of Tails.

▲ Looks, plays and sounds brilliant. The 3D bonus game is a real wow!

▼ A bit easy to complete, though definitely not as easy as the first game.

MT RATING: 95%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

Go to the sound test on the options screen and select these tunes in this order, pressing C after each one: 19, 65, 09, 17. Press START and when the title screen appears press A and START to be greeted with a level select.

Now go to the sound test on the level select screen and select tunes 01, 09, 09, 02, 01, 01, 02, 04. Choose the stage you want to play and hold down A and START to start a level construction cheat. Pressing B changes Sonic into a scenery graphic, pressing A cycles through the graphics available and C places it on the landscape. Press B to start playing your new level.

On the same screen select 4, 1, 2, 6 on the sound test. Now select the level you wish to play, collect 50 rings and, hey presto, you're Super Sonic!

To give yourself 14 continues go to the normal sound test and choose 19, 65, 9, 17, 1, 1, 2 and 4 before starting the game. You'll know the cheat has worked if the background music throughout the game is track 4 and there are no sound effects.

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

1,143,030 by Kevin Broughton, Woolwich

SPIDERMAN

BY SEGA
PRICE: £19.99
REVIEWED: PRE-MEGATECH

The nasty King Pin has planted a bomb under New York, and blamed your friendly neighbourhood Spiderman! As Spidey, you have 24 hours to find the bomb by swinging and crawling around mazes of platforms, whacking and webbing bad guys and a fair few Marvel supervillains.

▲ One game that really makes good use of the character. Loads of levels and they're all challenging and excellent fun.

▼ Nary a downer to be seen.

MT RATING: 91%

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

23:03:42 remaining (Nightmare level) by Scott Hazell, Norfolk

STAR CONTROL

BY ACCOLADE
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: PRE MEGATECH

The evil Ur-Quan empire are out to enslave the populations of Earth and her allied planets. It's up to you to take on the twelve spaceships of the Empire races in one of the twelve ships of Earth's Alliance in open space combat. All the ships are wildly different and success is down to mastering the many different weapons and special weapons at your disposal. Of course you can take on a friend, head to head, or play a drawn-out strategy game variation.

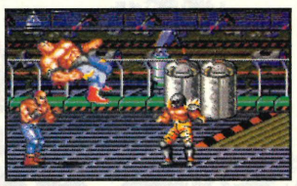
▲ One of the best two player Megadrive games ever. Learning the tactics and using the wild weapons is great fun.

▼ Not quite as much fun in single player mode.

MT RATING: 90%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

If you're playing the strategy game you can get loads of special items using this method. Start Full Game mode then hold the D-button diagonally down and left and keep B pressed until the star map appears. You should find every unexplored planet now has a precursor relic on it.



STREETS OF RAGE 2

BY SEGA
PRICE: £44.99
REVIEWED: MT 13

Sequel to the excellent urban beat 'em up, with two new characters, more moves and much improved graphics. One or two players can brave the scrolling back alleys and back bars to rescue their captured buddy from the clutches of an evil gangster and his many and varied cronies.

▲ Amazing graphics and sounds (music by Yuzo Koshiro) and really enjoyable gameplay.

▼ Sadly, rather easy. Make sure you play it in hard mode (or MANIA, as explained below)

MT RATING: 92%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

When you get the chance to start the game or access the options menu put a controller in port two and highlight OPTIONS. Hold down A and B and press START. Keep them held down until the options screen appears and you can now start the game on Very Easy or Mania skill levels, with up to nine lives and on any level up to level 8.

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

708,480 (Normal) by Craig Wilkins, Northampton
724,490 (Hard) by Kevin Golder, Malvern
969,790 (Hardest) by Aaron Seddon, Wigan

SUNSET RIDERS

BY KONAMI
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 16

Having the distinction of being the only cowboy shoot 'em up on the Megadrive, this one or two player game is similar to Rolling Thunder. Leap onto saloon roofs and up cliffs, shooting bad-hats and injuns and rescuing captured ladies (not politically correct, this game). There's also the thrill of a horseback bonus collection section.

▲ Great graphics and sound and excellent fun, especially in two player mode.

▼ Only four levels so it doesn't take long to finish.

MT RATING: 87%

SUPER KICK OFF

BY US GOLD
PRICE: £44.99
REVIEWED: MT 15

Conversion of that seminal piece of soccer software. Loads of options for different tournaments, weather conditions, strip colours – the lot. And real teams, British and Continental (though not real players, British or Continental). You can even save your teams and progress through championships onto battery-backed memory.

▲ Super Kick Off's feel and playability is unrivalled by any other football game on the Megadrive at the moment.

▼ £45? Seems a bit steep, isn't it?

MT RATING: 94%

SUPER OFF-ROAD

BY ACCOLADE
PRICE: £34.99
REVIEWED: MT 6

Once an obscure coin-op by Leland, this Super Sprint-style race game has been converted to every format imaginable. Drive your little monster truck around bouncy courses in the pursuit of three computer opponents (though one can be another player) and prize money. The cash lets you upgrade your truck with new engine bits and so on.

▲ Starts off as really good fun, and there are loads of different courses.

▼ It's quite easy to wipe the floor with the opposition during the first 20 or so races, get a fully tooled-up truck, then keep winning for a while before the computer catches on and gives its best drive 66 nitros, suddenly leaving you with no chance. What a bummer.

MT RATING: 83%

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

199,000 (no continues, 48 races won) by Mike Houghton, Stockport

T

TALE SPIN

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 12

Baloo, the bear in pilot's clothing, and his little chum Kit (it's a one or two player game, this) have to secure an air freight contract by recovering lost cargo in this platform game based on the Saturday morning cartoon show. In between platform levels, they take to the air to see off the 'norty' Shere Khan's pilots in a mini-shoot 'em up bit.

▲ Interesting idea for a two player platform game...

▼ ...which doesn't work. As soon as the different characters start to move apart on the screen things get a bit screwy. The action isn't particularly exciting anyway and the graphics are rougher than you'd expect from a Disney game.

MT RATING: 63%



TAZ MANIA

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 6

Another Saturday morning cartoon becomes a Megadrive platform game. Taz (the Tazmanian Devil) has to whirl his way around the deserts, jungles, and abandoned mines of the Tazmanian islands on the hunt for some giant eggs for his breakfast.

▲ Marvellous cartoon graphics and the music and sound effects are spot on.

▼ This is one of the easiest Megadrive games ever.

MT RATING: 82%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

On the title screen press A, B, C and START on both controllers at the same time and you should hear a sound. Now start the game and when Taz appears press START and C to pause the game. Push left or right to alter the bottom number which has appeared and you can choose a different level. You can use a similar method to make Taz invincible, but instead of pressing C and START, pause the game, press B and unpause it.

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

1,534,480 (Hard) by Imelda Khoo, Hailsham



TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES: THE HYPERSTONE HEIST

BY KONAMI
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 16

Vile Shredder is using his new-found Hyperstone to shrink down New York,

building by building, and only the Turtles can stop him. Much like the popular coin-op, this is a scrolling beat 'em up in which one or two players can take their favourite Turtle on a Foot Clan-smashing mission.

▲ Tremendous graphics (the Turtle sprites are just great) and sound and loads of fighting action. Great fun.

▼ The fighting isn't hard work at all and experienced players will be able to beat the game easily.

MT RATING: 87%

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

1,103 by Chris Biggar, Accrington, Lancs



TERMINATOR 2

BY ACCLAIM
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 13

This Terminator game is based on the hit Operation Wolf-style coin-op in which you play a resistance fighter of the future who has to blast away at the never-ending ranks of Terminators marching out of the screen at you. Works with Sega's Menacer light gun to make it even more like the arcade game.

▲ Good graphics and good fun too, with one or two players. With the Menacer it's excellent.

▼ The third level is so hard it's mega-annoying!

MT RATING: 86%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

When the T2: THE ARCADE GAME title screen appears press UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT until you hear the Terminator's voice say, 'Excellent'. Now when you're playing the game just press A, B, C and START to go straight to the next level.

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

6,702,800 (Normal) by Peter Davis, London, SE5
4,274,350 (Hard) by Gavin Pinkett, Abertillery

THUNDERFORCE III

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: PRE-MEGATECH

Six level space shoot 'em up by Tecnosoft (programmers of such cracking games as Dragon's Fury and Thunderforce IV) with loads of extra weapons, massive boss monsters and weird scenery to keep the player occupied.

▲ Brilliant graphics, sound and gameplay. A very addictive blast.

▼ Recently superseded by Thunderforce IV.

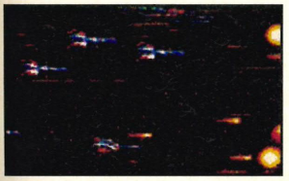
MT RATING: 89%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

Pause the game at any point then press UP ten times, then keep pressing B, then DOWN, then B, then DOWN. You'll know if it's working when the weapons start appearing in the boxes at the top of the screen. You should now be endowed with all the weapons and the next power-up you come across will be a Claw.

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

11,528,100 by Hywel Llewellyn, Pentyrch.



THUNDERFORCE IV

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 9

More space shoot 'em up action, this time with more levels, a couple more weapons and video effects which will knock your eyes out of your head and possibly into a low Earth orbit.

▲ The graphics really are a knockout and the gameplay is just ace.

▼ Lots of new effects, but the basic gameplay is nothing original

MT RATING: 94%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

Set the SHIP STOCK on the options screen to 00 and you'll start the game with 99 lives. You can also start with all the weapons with this method. Start the game without altering the options then, when the stage select appears don't press anything and wait for the action to begin. Pause the game and press UP, RIGHT, A, DOWN, RIGHT, A, C, LEFT, UP, B, UP.

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

6,134,410 (Easy) by Daniel Gidman, Bristol
509,697 (Normal) by Lee Harrison, King's Lynn
5,280,880 (Hard) by Gay Fairholm, Dumfries

TINY TOON ADVENTURES: BUSTER'S HIDDEN TREASURE

BY KONAMI
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 17

Buster Bunny (of TV cartoon fame) is off on a treasure hunt through 33 big levels of platforms. Trying to make sure he gets to the treasure first is evil kid, Montana Max, who has populated the place with his cuddly but dangerous hench-creatures, and with the aid of Dr Gene Splicer, Buster's brainwashed pals. As usual, lots of items to collect for points and secret rooms and bonus levels.

▲ Fast and fun with great graphics and sound.

▼ Not a great many new ideas and not terribly difficult to finish.

MT RATING: 94%

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

421,300 (Completed with 23 lives left) by Ali Forbes, Medstead, Hants.

TOE JAM AND EARL

BY SEGA
PRICE: £19.99
REVIEWED: PRE-MEGATECH

Toe Jam and Earl are two 'spaced-out' (ho ho! What a laugh) aliens who happen to have crash landed on a strange world of 20-odd levels arranged like floors in a department store. Their objective is (either on their own or together this being a game with a two-player option) to avoid getting knackered by all the crazy inhabitants of the planet and find the bits of their spaceship so they can escape.

▲ Lots of wacky noises, kooky graphics and the two player option make it fun.

▼ Very basic gameplay which is only propped up by all the wacky noises and kooky graphics.

MT RATING: 82%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

There are secret islands accessible from level one. To reach both you need to find either Icarus Wings or Rocket Skates or a Float on one of the levels above, then fall down to level one. Activate one of these presents and go either towards the top-right corner where there's an island loaded with presents or to the bottom-left, where there's an island with a hole in the middle. Fall through the hole and you land in level 0 where you can replenish your energy and enjoy a few new sights. Also, when you finish the game, don't follow the yellow brick road as instructed but explore the bottom-right and the very top of the level to find a few extras.

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

1,802 (as Earl) by David Hall, Birmingham



TWO CRUDE DUDES

BY SEGA
PRICE: £34.99
REVIEWED: MT 5

One or two players can be the crude dudes, fat punks who have to fight through post-holocaust suburbia looking for the labs where sinister scientists are churning evil mutants out of their test tubes. Cartoony, comedy beat 'em up action is the order of the day, with out two heroes grabbing anything they find (telephone poles, cars, tanks, each other) to club the opposition into submission.

▲ Great graphics and great fun.

▼ Dead easy, though.

MT RATING: 84%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

Play a one player game and plug in a second pad. When you start to run out of lives in single player mode, press START on pad two and you'll be able to continue.

W

WARSONG

BY TRECO
PRICE: IMPORT
REVIEWED: MT 4

A fantasy strategy game in which you have to lead your army of wizards, warriors and assorted mythical beasts into battle in several scenarioes with the overall goal of regaining your throne.

▲ Simple controls and fun battle scenes make this enjoyable even for someone who's usually not that keen on this sort of game.

▼ Graphics aren't super-duper.

MT RATING: 85%



WORLD OF ILLUSION

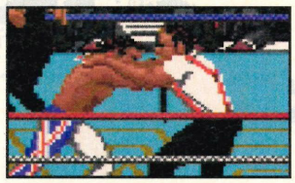
BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 12

Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck have been transported into some magical land of crazed Disney characters (most of whom seem to have come from Alice in Wonderland) and if they're ever going to get back to their Hollywood penthouses they'll have to get around numerous levels of platforms and other obstacles, helping each other out if your playing with both characters in two player mode.

▲ The best graphics of any Disney game yet and you can play slightly different games by choosing to play as Mickey or Donald or both together (in which they have to co-operate).

▼ This is definitely aimed at younger players and is very easy to finish.

MT RATING: 90%



WWF WRESTLEMANIA

BY FLYING EDGE
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 13

Become your favourite fat wrestler (providing their one of the eight included) and use their own special moves in this game of the phenomenon. Recreates pretty well the in- and out-of-ring shenanigans which make this branch of the sport so lively, and lets you participate in tag matches, one-on-ones, survivor series or a WWF Championship.

▲ Looks great and successfully gets across the excitement of the 'real' thing.

▼ There are ways to beat all the opponents with one move... but we won't ruin it by telling you what that move is here.

MT RATING: 84%

Z

ZERO WING

BY SEGA
PRICE: £19.99
REVIEWED: MT 5

Evil space pirates have reneged on a treaty they signed with us Earthlings and have attacked our space cruisers. Only one Zig space fighter escaped the conflagration and you're at the controls, so now you have to pilot your Zig into enemy territory and give them some hot laser death right where they live.

▲ The sprites and backgrounds look really sharp.

▼ There are only three weapon types to play with and the action isn't particularly varied.

MT RATING: 82%

MT SECRET TECHNIQUE

Watch all of the intro screens then start the game and collect all the green power ups and nothing else (not even speed-ups or smart bombs) then when the next green is due to appear the purple mega power-up should come on instead. If it doesn't, change weapons and try it again with the new weapon. Occasionally it doesn't work and you get a 1-UP or a 10-UP instead.

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

2,584,700 (Easy level) by Craig Wilkins, Delapre



Just recently, rumours have been flying around the games industry that the joystick-waggling presenter of TV's GAMESMASTER was leaving the top-rated show before the third series began. Could it be true? MegaTech gets to the bottom of the story and reveals more insights from the man himself as we boldly go...



"the Dominik Diamond who presented Gamesmaster was a bit of a dickhead really, know what I mean?"

*"being a presenter on a TV show is that it's a f**king brilliant job, because it's the only job in the world that requires absolutely no talent whatsoever."*

out to lunch

with DOMINIK DIAMOND

(The Scene: TGI Friday's American Bistro, just off Piccadilly Circus. Dominik is late, and we've already tucked into a starter to stave off serious hunger pangs. He eventually turns up two hours after we'd arranged to meet him.)

MegaTech: Are you going to do the next series of Gamesmaster?
Dominik Diamond: I'm not doing the next series for a number of reasons. First of all, McDonalds is sponsoring it, and that's, er... I've got to pick my words very carefully here, for legal reasons... that's a company which I've refused to have anything to do with, because of my own personal principles...
MT: Are you a veggie, then?
DD: No, It's not to do with that, it's more of an environmental kind of thing – I'm not saying for one minute that McDonalds have ever f**ked up the environment, at all. But I felt I could not be allied to that kind of sponsorship. Then there were all these rumours that McDonalds weren't actually going to sponsor the show after all, so I went into negotiatons to do the series. But we couldn't agree about contracts, insofar as... again, I've got to be careful about what I say... er, they were trying to severely restrict the amount of work that I could do outside the show. For the amount of money they were offering me, I felt it was wrong of them to restrict me so much. I mean, if they want to pay me what Clive Anderson gets, fine – I'll sit on my arse and I won't do any openings or promotions ever, I'll just sit back and cash my cheques. But if they're not going to pay me like that, I have to go out and do other stuff just to make a living.
MT: Do you get any time to actually play many games these days?
DD: Not for my own enjoyment. I mean, I spend a lot of time playing them, but it's nearly always for reviewing purposes. The standard of games these days is so shite that I would say only one game in every forty I'll go back to and play again – and usually they're by Electronic Arts.
MT: So what do you like – sports games?
DD: Yeah, definitely!
MT: What's your favourite one?
DD: Sensible Soccer, definitely. But because I can't use computer joysticks, I tried playing it with a Megadrive pad and I just couldn't get the after-touch.
MT: Yeah, we had the same problem with Super Kick Off. Have you played J League?
DD: No, I haven't. What is it?
MT: It's a Japanese import – the official football game of the Japanese League. You can use it with the Sega Tap – y'know, you can have four players playing at the same time.
DD: Oh, brilliant! Electronic Arts are doing a four-player adaptor too, aren't they?
MT: That's right – things seem to be moving more towards multi-player games. We think it's really good – more players, more fun.
DD: That's right. Take a game like Jimmy Connors Tennis, which I thought was a crap game, but play it in four-player mode and instantly it's brilliant.
MT: What other games do you like?



DD: Oh, anything sporty: NHLPA Hockey, John Madden '93 – I think I'm probably the best player in the world at Madden '93. I'm definitely the best in the world at Super Tennis – I don't think I've ever been beaten.
MT: So would you be up for a John Madden Challenge in the future, then?
DD: Without question. No problem at all! Any sporty games like that. I just whipped Danny Curley's arse on NHLPA Hockey and Speedball 2.
MT: Was this an unofficial whipping or an official whipping?
DD: Well, it was a semi-official whipping. It was filmed, so it might be shown at a later date. Whether or not they show it, I don't know, because the whole point of it is that Danny's brilliant – which he is. He just found it difficult to play because I broke all his fingers beforehand.
MT: What games hardware have you got at home?
DD: Every single thing, just about. My mum bought me a Megadrive a couple of Christmases ago, and everything else I've kindly been given review copies of. But I spend most of my time on the Amiga or PC.
MT: But don't you think that PC games are really samey and boring – they're mostly adventure-type things, aren't they?
DD: I quite like role-playing games – you do get really good ones on the PC – but I am spectacularly shite at adventure games. I always have to get a complete solution faxed to me. But with adventure games, even if you're quite crap you can get to do quite a few things before you die or whatever.

> *"Unfortunately, Sega didn't give me a Mega-CD, probably because they knew I'd say how shit it was."*

MT: What about that 7th Guest game?
DD: Yeah, it's great – a lot of mags slated it, but it's the only CD game that I've seen so far that really uses the CD for what it's for. To me it was like the Crystal Maze, which I love. I think it's brilliant – it's the most important game since Space Invaders.
MT: It's supposed to be coming out on Mega-CD, isn't it? Have you got a Mega-CD?
DD: Unfortunately, Sega didn't give me a Mega-CD, probably because they knew I'd say how shit it was. Mega-CD has to be the biggest disappointment ever. There was some good stuff at the CES in Chicago this year, like Slipheed VR (*sic*), and Terminator on Mega-CD is pretty good, but they'd better be careful or CD could just go down the pan.



MT: Did you see any other good stuff at the CES?
DD: The best thing I saw was Aladdin – it's just awesome!
MT: So what do you think the future holds for video games?
DD: I don't really see why things have to change so much. It doesn't matter what you dress a game up in, if the playability's crap, then it's crap. I don't think it has to change – I don't think there's anything wrong with the technology that's available now, it's just down to good programming. One thing has got to change about the industry – Sega and Nintendo have got to give up this exclusive right that they have to say "Yea" or "Nay" to games. Micro Machines has shown it – all that f**king crap about Sega preparing to sue Codemasters about it, and now they've brought it out and it's the best Megadrive game of the year! And then Sega go and bring out Home Alone – a game that's been universally panned! It's a terrible situation.

The only thing I worry about is if it all becomes tragically unhip soon, because you'll reach the point of complete media saturation. Then you'll get people rebelling against it – not because of this shite tabloid shock-horror "Nintendo killed my son" nonsense, but because they'll get bored and all of a sudden Monopoly will become really cool again. And I think TV has got a lot to answer for in this respect. I mean, I genuinely believe that Gamesmaster is one of the most innovative TV programmes of recent years. But then every other TV show that's remotely involved with video games is a televisual abortion. I mean, look at Bad Influence – whoever thought that up should be shot! It's like: "The girls gave the game this mark and the boys gave it this." It's so completely sexist!
MT: Are you sad that your Gamesmaster run has come to an end?
DD: I'm sad because I bet you any money that if I did the next series they would've put me in really trendy clothes. But I'm glad that I don't have to wear that red jacket again, because that has to be one of the worst TV ideas in history. The person I was on Gamesmaster is completely diferent from the person I am in real life, so I don't mind letting go of that – the Dominik Diamond who presented Gamesmaster was a bit of a dickhead really, know what I mean?
MT: So you don't really make suggestive jokes about joystick-waggling?
DD: No, never, not in real life, at all. That was a bit silly of me – it was just really lazy of me, the most obvious thing to do. But I made a conscious effort not to do any joystick-waggling gags in the second series, though.
MT: What advice would you give to any MegaTech readers who want to get into presenting TV video games shows?
DD: Well I dunno, because I only got into it through pure luck. I applied for the job on The Word and got into the last 12. I didn't get it because I showed dangerous signs of intelligence, but someone recommended me to Gamesmaster. Before that, I'd written hundreds of production companies asking to be a presenter, but got nowhere. My mate David worked at loads of production companies during his summer holidays – for nothing! All he was doing was making cups of tea and photo-copying, but he was always chatting to people, getting himself known, getting contacts, and eventually he got in there because he got to know the right people. The one thing I would say about being a presenter on a TV show is that it's a f**king brilliant job, because it's the only job in the world that requires absolutely no talent whatsoever.

● More inside revelations when we take another prime mover on the Games Scene Out to Lunch next month...

NEXT MONTH:



PROPHET MARGIN

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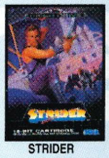
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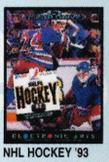
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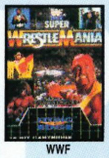

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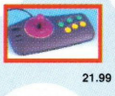
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