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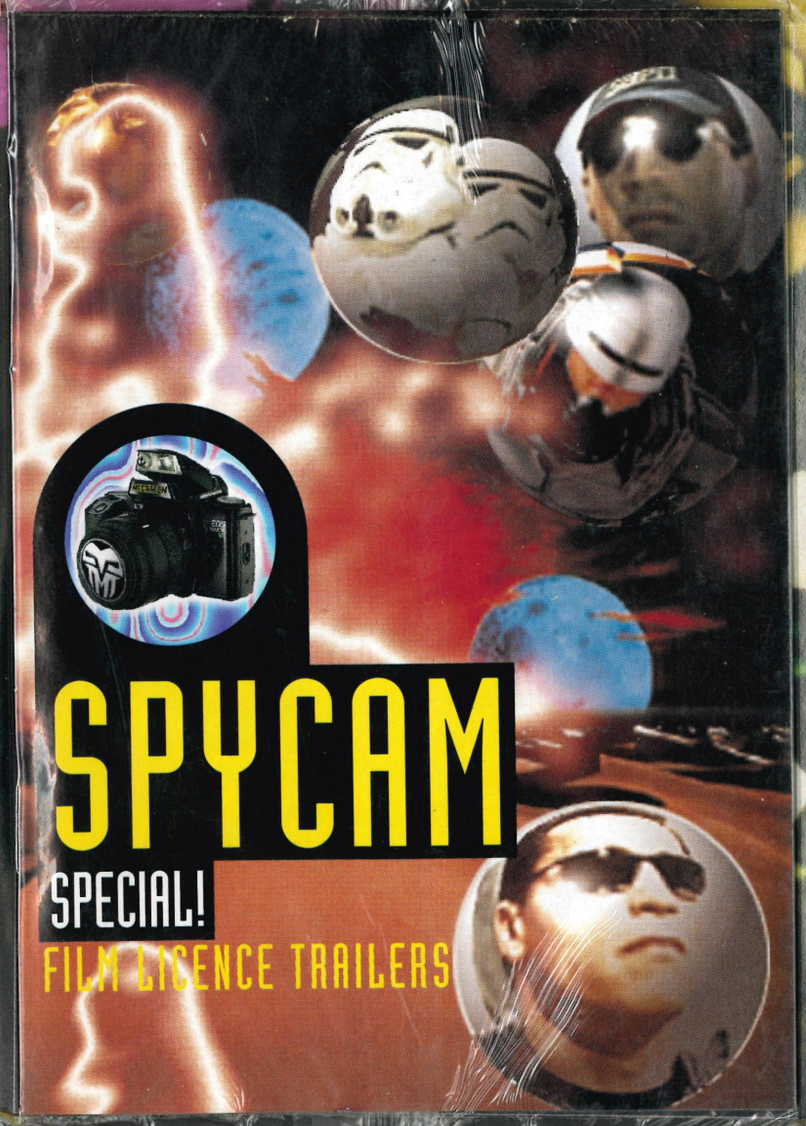
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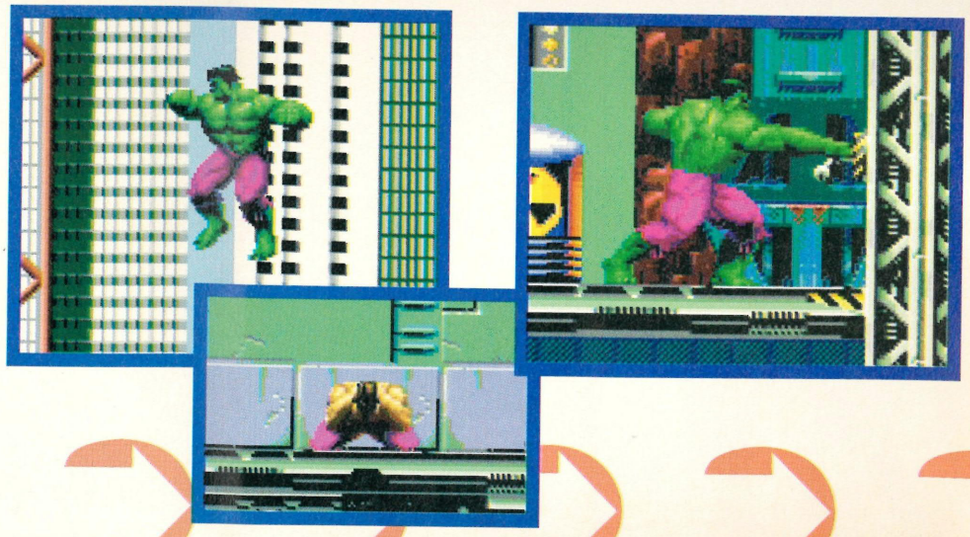
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THE INCREDIBLE HULK – 16

He's mean, he's green – he's about to hit your Megadrive screen! Yep, ol' ripped trousers is back in an orgy of punching and temper-losing, courtesy of the chaps at US Gold. MegaTech goes behind the scenes to see if this licence is going to live up to its potential.



PREVIEWS:

Once again we go into preview overdrive as we unveil all the hottest games currently in the pipeline. Want to know what we've got? Then read on...

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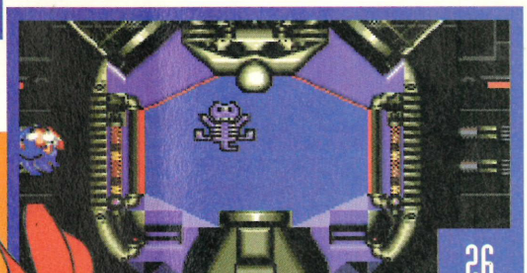


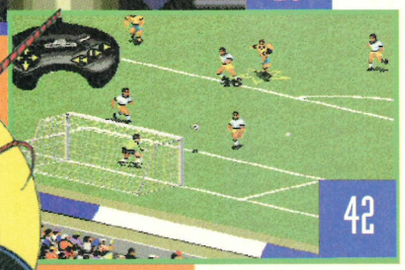


REVIEWS:

Blimey, you can tell it's getting nearer Chrimbo – the software scene is really hotting up! This month, not only do we run onto the pitch with EA's FIFA and Sony's Sensi Soccer, we also go into battle with Zool, the Turtles, and Robocop and his Terminator mates. Oh yeah, we stop off for a McDonalds, too!

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REGULARS

I'm going to resist that crappy 'nice to be regular' gag this time. Anyway, the following appear every month and can be found on pages...

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LUVERLY REPRO PEEPS
Pre Press, London, EC1

PRINTED BY
BPCC Magazines, Colchester

DISTRIBUTED BY
BBC Frontline, Peterborough

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SPECIAL THANKS THIS ISH...
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Gary 'Life-Saver' Harrod
Jeff Zie - for his sterling work on the book...
Beer - for being lovely.

SPECIAL NO THANKS TO...
All the Mac equipment which let us down. Especially Aileen's hard drive. Grrrrr...

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THIS MONTH'S TOP TIPS
1. If symptoms persist, please consult your Doctor.
2. Don't try Meatotomy at home...

MW MEGAWORLD

MEGATECH INTERNATIONAL NEWS NETWORK

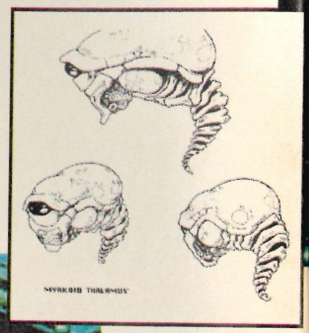
- SOULSTAR
- ROBO VS TERM
- GALAXIAN 3
- MMS BOOK
- ALIEN WAR
- PEAKY BLINDER
- SUPER STREETFIGHTER
- MAXIMUM CARNAGE
- DELPHINE DEEP
- CHARTS
- ACCLAIM PADS
- AND MORE !

EXCLUSIVE! CORE'S NEW MEGA-CD BLOCKBUSTER

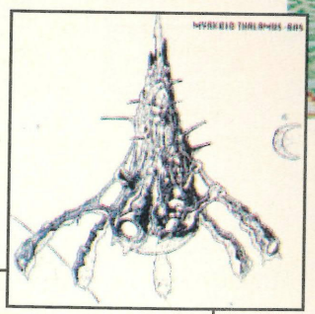
With Thunderhawk well and truly established as THE best game for the Mega-CD, Core are currently busy working on their next CD title. Entitled Soulstar: Malice of The Myrkoids, the game is a massive space-based blast in which one or two players are given the choice of three space veterans and three different ships in their continuing attempts to destroy the evil Myrkoid empire.

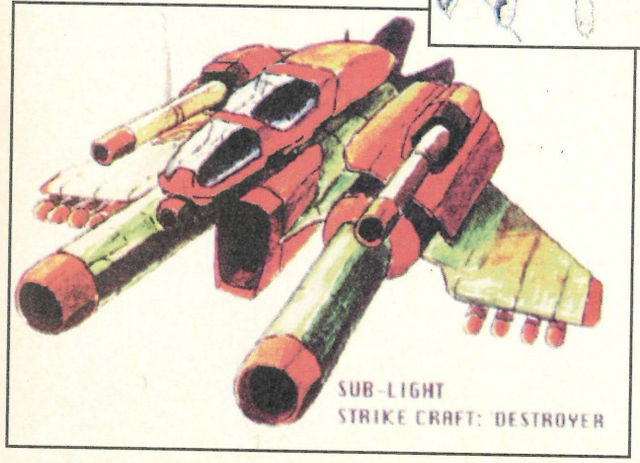
The game's scenario tells of a distant star system called Soulstar, which is made up of six planets. From the depths of space, a mothership of the brilliant but evil Myrkoid race has arrived on a reconnaissance mission. Past records regarding the Myrkoids indicates that the mothership is a forerunner for a full invasion, and contains a fleet of ships which contain the technology needed to sap each of the six planets of their very life force – this will give them enough power to engage their Warpgate system, which will allow the rest of the Myrkoid race to beam into the system to finish it off.

And this is where you come in. Soulstar casts the player as one of three Cryo-Commandos – a special army which has been pursuing the Myrkoids for aeons. Having witnessed the devastation they caused in the Maldrum Tau and Viridium Plush starfields, it looks as if the Soulstar system will be the final battle ground.





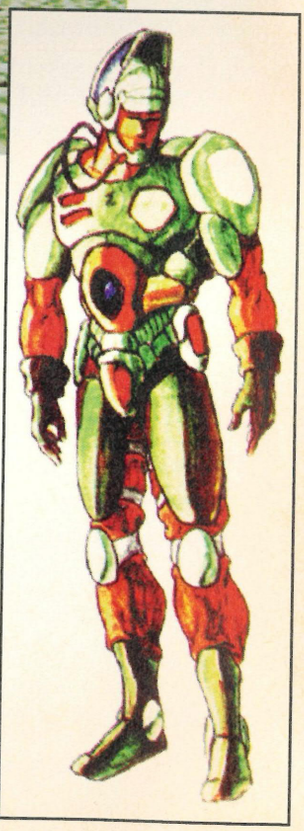


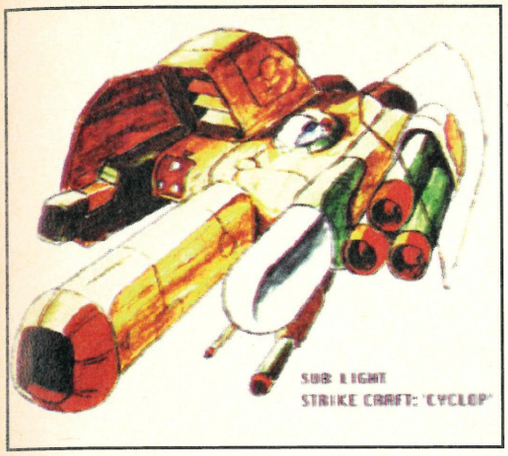


LET THE BATTLE BEGIN...

At the time of writing, Soulstar is at a very early stage indeed. The graphics shown around these pages have only just been finalised, and are currently being incorporated into Core's 3D engine. The basic style of game is that of a progressive blaster, with the player leading one of the three Cryo-Commandos from their mothership in one of the three ships available. Each ship has different abilities, and optimising these is essential if you are to maximise the damage inflicted on the Myrkoid fighters. The main bulk of the game is viewed from above and behind your craft (Afterburner-style), and the various planet surfaces whizz past in a similar style to those in Thunderhawk... only faster!

Each of the ships is armed with a beam laser which can be powered up by depressing the firebutton for a few seconds, and extra weaponry is also given whenever a mission is completed and the player returns to their orbiting space station, The Avatar. Similarly, the programmers are also tinkering with the idea of a more advanced weapon system, which will include droid-assisted guns and missiles.

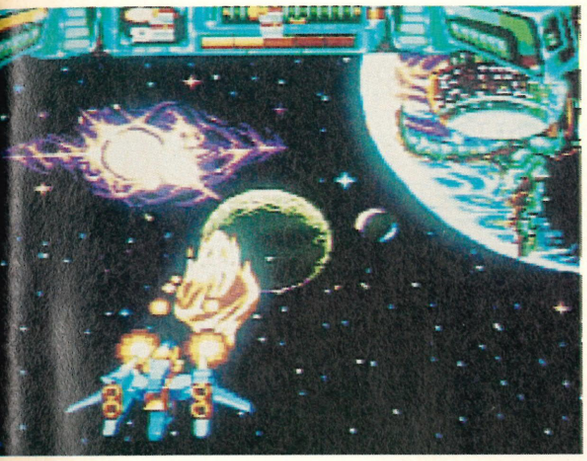


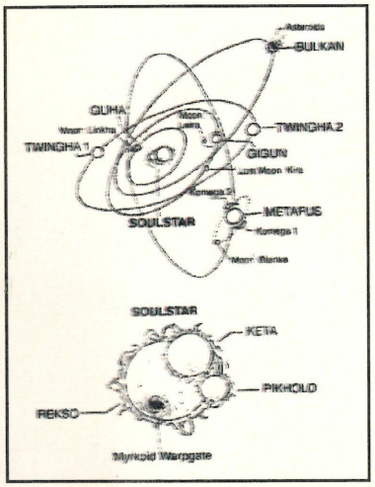


THE STORY UNFOLDS

Core claim the biggest difference between Soulstar and other 3D blasters is that it's a true 'progressive' blast. Between each mission, the player is updated on developments within the Myrkoid camp via a series of full-motion-video sequences. Any damage you cause to key Myrkoid targets also has a continuing effect later in the game, slowing the completion of the Warpgates, for instance.

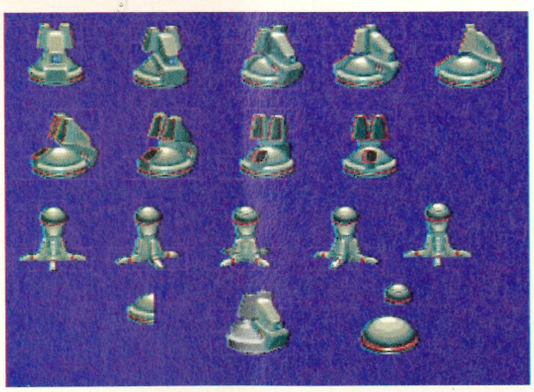
Soulstar is at a very early stage indeed, and don't expect to play it before the end of 1994. Core's development team are currently beavering away on improving the 3D engine and designing the many Myrkoid ships. From the little we've seen, though, it seems likely this could be one of the best blasts the Mega-CD has seen. A full, exclusive behind-the-scenes report will follow as soon as the game is up and running...

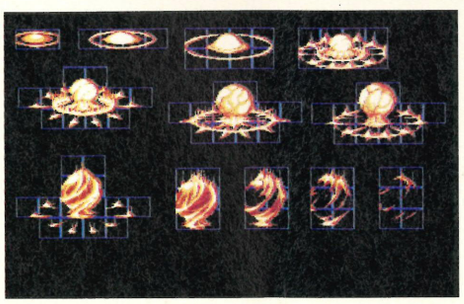




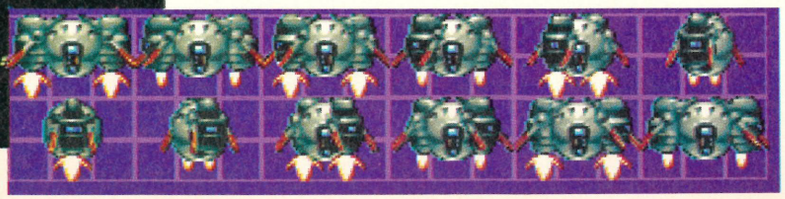
GETTING IT DOWN ON PAPER

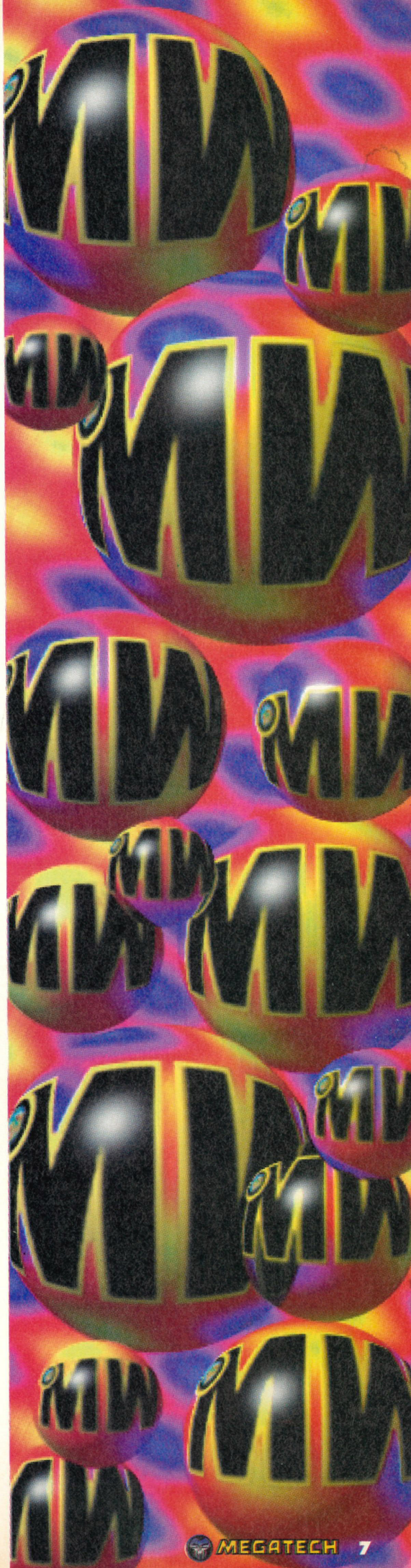
As with all their games, Core have put together a comprehensive storyboard which details every aspect of the Soulstar galaxy. Starting with a detailed synopsis of the plot, every character and ship has been laid down on paper, paying particular attention to detail in piecing together the planets and their orbiting patterns. From here, the programmers can then decide on the memory allocation and scaling requirements needed for each ship and character, and keep a constant check on the plot details as the game progresses. A definite Anime style runs through the game – the three Cryo-Commandos are depicted as typically square-jawed guys and the girls are all Miss World lookalikes, whilst the Myrkoids are true B-Movie baddies with loads of tentacles and pulsing brains.











ACCLAIM'S MAXIMUM CARNAGE

No, it's not the sequel to the Total Carnage coin-op – Maximum Carnage is the name of the latest Spider-man game from those guys and gals at Acclaim. Carnage is a sinister creature created from a bit of Spidey's black costume (or something), and his powers are even better than those of our web-slinging hero. Well, such is his popularity that he's now the arch villain in Acclaim's new platformer. There are no concrete details as of yet, but, by golly, as soon as there is you'll see 'em here, and that's a fact



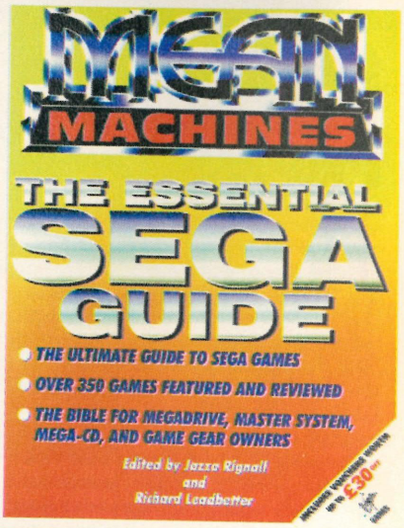
DELPHINE DEEP

It's been a busy month at Acclaim's Kensington offices this month, as they've also been scuttling off to France to sign up Flashback developers, Delphine, for a series of games. It's early days yet in terms of future projects, but a little bird told MegaTech that it seems likely that Delphine will handle all future Marvel licences – Maximum Carnage perhaps! The combination of Marvel heroes and Delphine's stunning graphical style sounds like a match made in heaven to us, and we'll be keeping an ear to the ground for any further details.



BOOK EARLY

Written by the busy chaps at our sister mag, Mean Machines Sega, comes The Essential Sega Guide. It's a massive mixture of previews and reviews which scores virtually every game available for the assorted Sega systems. It's being published by Virgin and is available from all good book shops (and probably a few crap ones too) at a very reasonable £12.99. Stick it on your Chrimbo list as soon as you can.



RAVE ON!

Ever heard of Peaky Blinder? No, neither had we until Storm signed him up to star in a forthcoming Megadrive game. Apparently, Peaky is a cult hero on the rave scene and features on loads of T-shirts – so popular was he with Storm's resident ravers that the powers-that-be decided to base a game around his adventures. As of yet, the actual game design hasn't been finalised, but initial details seem to indicate a platformer of some sort, although we doubt whether the dodgier side of the rave scene will be included! No pics just yet, but expect Peaky's debut in Spycam pretty soon.



COSMIC SPACEHEAD™



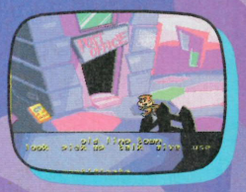
"A groovy experience in arcade adventuring"
Mega Machines magazine



Electric Shocks



City Streets



Teleport Key



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Planet Detroitica



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Sega Pro magazine

"The interaction is great and the puzzles are really sharp"
Mega Power magazine

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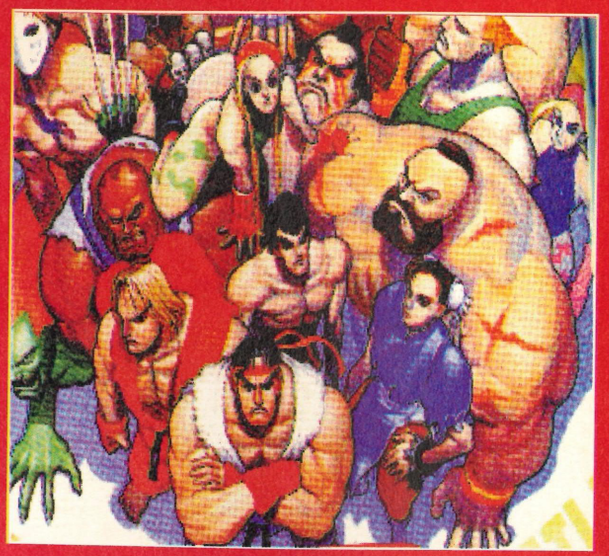
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SUPER STREET FIGHTER - IT'S ON ITS WAY!

The biggest news in the UK's arcades at the moment is, of course, Super Street Fighter 2: The New Challengers. Featuring four new characters, a host of new features and bucketloads of new moves, it's a vast improvement on the Turbo Edition, and it's heading for the Megadrive! Capcom have announced that they are currently converting the coin-op ready for a late 1994 release, and it will be released simultaneously alongside a Super NES version just to keep everybody happy. Alongside Super's four new characters – Cammy, Dee-Jay, T Hawk, and Fei Long – it also contains several new ideas, such as a first hit bonus. Cart size and a confirmed release date have yet to be decided, but we'll keep you posted.



NAMCO GET GALAXIAN 3

If you're a regular arcade-goer, you can't have missed Namco's absolutely huge Galaxian 3 machine. It's a massive six-player unit which is as far removed from the original Galaxian game as Worlds Apart are from a hit single. Seated within the machine, the six players are invited on a journey through some of the best vector landscapes ever seen. Armed with a combination of pulse lasers and missiles, the basic aim of the game is to kill as many of the Galaxian as possible, before heading into their base and wiping that out, too. At a quid a go it certainly isn't cheap, but it features the smoothest 3D and it's an experience worth checking out. But why mention it here? Well, strange as as it may seem, Namco are currently converting the game to the Megadrive, with a release date set towards the end of 1994. Quite how they'll cram the game into a cart we're not sure – although a CD version is more than feasible thanks to the Mega-CD's scaling capabilities – but we're certainly looking forward to seeing the first pics as and when they become available. Keep an eye on Spycam for more details.

SEIZE CONTROL

Taking a breather from the cart scene for a while, Acclaim are about to unleash a new joypad on the market. The Dual Turbo Remote Controller is an infra-red pad which allows the user to stand some twenty-five feet away from their Megadrive and still play the game – if your eyes are up to it, that is! It features all the usual rapid-fire modes and a slow motion feature, and it's in the shops now for just under fifty quid for a set of two and the receiver too.

SENSI GO TO WAR

With the Amiga version complete, Sensible Software are now busy converting their rather smart war-gamer, Cannon Fodder, to the Megadrive. Resembling Mega-Lo-Mania, Fodder is a slick strategy-based blaster, with the player controlling a small band of troops as they blast their way across a series of missions. As with most Sensi games, there's a rather nice element of humour thrown in for good measure, and this includes a selection of rather neat deaths! Virgin are the bods releasing the Megadrive version, but there's no news of a release date yet.

THIS TIME IT'S WAR!

The rumourmill is in full flow as word reaches us that Acclaim have teamed up with Mortal Kombat developers, Probe, for a new Aliens game. Provisionally titled Alien War (although nothing to do with the new attraction at the Trocadero), the game is going to be a real-time 3D exploration game, with the player scouring an alien hive in search of the Queen within. Starting at the very edge of the hive, the player encounters more aliens as they venture ever deeper, with assorted eggs and facehuggers also thrown in for good measure. From what we've heard, it sounds a little like the rather smart Space Gun coin-op of a few years ago, but we're assured that it'll be considerably more atmospheric and will require a certain amount of skill on the player's part, as ammo gets very hard to come by. More news as we get it.



ROBO VS TERM GETS RATED!



Just a quickie. Following the hoo-hah surrounding the violence in Acclaim's Mortal Kombat conversion, Virgin's ultra-violent shoot 'em up, Robocop Vs Terminator, has been given a '16' rating by Sega. The rating has been given because of the large number of bloody corpses Robo leaves in his wake, and the general violent nature of the game (its body count is higher than most of the Friday The 13th films put together!). What is surprising, though, is that although Robo Vs Term is a violent little number, it isn't quite as graphic as the assorted decapitations and spine-ripping seen in Mortal – yet it receives a higher rating! It's a strange world sometimes, isn't it? Er, that's it. Thanks for listening.

MEGATECH RECOMMENDS

Each month, the MegaTech panel put their heads together to debate which games are worthy of the 'MegaTech Recommends' status – the top accolade which signifies the 'best of the best' out of all the games that have been reviewed over the past few months. And here's this month's shopping list for the discerning games player...

STREET FIGHTER II: SPECIAL CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION

The 'will-they-won't-they' speculation is over at last! Megadrive Street Fighter II weighs in at a massive 24Meg – the biggest Megadrive game so far! Including the latest Hyper Fighting version with 10 different game speeds, plus Championship Edition, this is without doubt one of the closest coin-op conversions we've ever seen. With the new six-button joypad, the game plays identically to the coin-op. All the moves and combos, all the speed and responsiveness – they're all there. Easily the best beat 'em up on any console, and well worth the wait!

MT RATING: 95%

GAUNTLET 4

OK, so it's a conversion of a 10-year-old coin-op, but Tengen's conversion of the Atari classic proves that true brilliance will stand the test of time. For the young or initiated, Gauntlet is an RPG-based maze game, with up to four players legging it through a series of dungeons in search of treasure and adventure. As the game progresses, so the dungeons get trickier, with warp zones, locked doors and pools of acid throwing assorted problems in your way. An excellent conversion, identical to the coin-op, with a few new ideas thrown into the mix by Tengen. It may not look much, but it plays like a dream.

MT RATING: 94%

LANDSTALKER

Gorgeous-looking RPG with a heavy arcade adventure slant. Forget all that boring, statistic-based stuff, this game follows the progress of your hero, Nigel(!?) and his adventures in a massive, isometrically-viewed world. There's an incredible feeling of 'being there' as you discover more and more of this fantasy world – entering houses, fighting against baddies and talking to any interesting characters you meet along the way – and the storyline really gets you hooked. All hail the Megadrive's answer to Zelda!

MT RATING: 93%

PUYO PUYO

Behind the familiar, Columns-like facade of Puyo Puyo lies a devilishly playable one or two-player game (soon to be officially released over here as Dr Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine). The gameplay involves linking up three or more similarly-coloured blobs in order to clear parts of the screen. However, every time two or more sets are cleared, your opponent's side of the screen is filled with glass balls which hinder their clearance methods. The computer opponents are tough, it's brilliant as a two-player game, and it proves incredibly addictive. What more could you want?

MT RATING: 91%

THUNDERHAWK

A cross between countless 3D coin-ops and a simple flight sim, putting the player in the cockpit of a state-of-the-art combat helicopter. Numerous missions stand between you and loads of medals, each one one is a fast-paced affair similar to the likes of the Afterburner and Galaxy Force coin-ops, but with more depth. Some of the missions are a little samey, but there's no doubting the fact that Thunderhawk is a milestone in Mega-CD advancement which blows the competition away. Jolly well done, those Core Design chappies!

MT RATING: 91%

ALADDIN

Quite simply one of the best-looking Megadrive games you're ever likely to see. The Disney pedigree really shines through, with incredible attention to graphic detail and tons of neat little animation touches and ideas. There's a very playable game underneath all the flash graphics too, but anyone who's played programmer David Perry's last two efforts – Cool Spot and Global Gladiators – will experience a case of platform deja-vu, because the gamestyle remains very much the same.

MT RATING: 90%

MEGAWORLD CHART

THE UK MEGADRIVE TOP 20

Golly, it's chart time again. Well, there's not a great deal that can be said without getting into the old 'Let's see if Street Fighter 2 is still number one' scenario, and you're probably going to do that anyway. Well, here's the top twenty in all its glory. Enjoy.

POS	LAST MONTH	NAME	COMPANY
1	NE	STREETFIGHTER CE	SEGA
2	NE	MORTAL KOMBAT	ACCLAIM
3	1	JUNGLE STRIKE	EA
4	2	MICRO MACHINES	CODEMASTER
5	RE	STRIDER	SEGA
6	NE	ALADDIN	SEGA
7	15	LEMMINGS	SEGA
8	NE	NHL ICE HOCKEY94	EA
9	3	PGA GOLF 2	EA
10	NE	F1	DOMARK
11	NE	DAVIS CUP TENNIS	TENGEN
12	NE	GUNSTAR HEROES	SEGA
13	NE	LANDSTALKER	SEGA
14	8	SPEEDBALL 2	VIRGIN
15	6	COOL SPOT	VIRGIN
16	4	FLASHBACK	US GOLD
17	NE	POPULOUS 2	SEGA
18	11	ECCO	SEGA
19	5	NHLPA ICEHOCKEY 93	EA
20	NE	BUSBY BOBCAT	ACCOLADE

THE MAKING OF MEGATECH

Have you ever wondered how your favourite games magazine is created? Bet you reckon it's just one big laugh, don't you? You probably think we just spend all our time lounging around playing games, eating sweets and giggling, and then dictate our reviews to our personal secretaries, who design the mag and print and distribute it, too. But you couldn't be more wrong – the creation of an issue of MegaTech is a Herculean task, involving a finely-balanced team of skilful media professionals working in perfect harmony, like a well-oiled machine. This is how it really works...



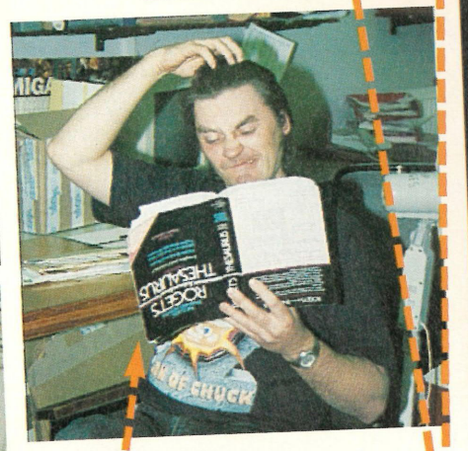




STEVE MERRETT, MegaTech Editor, TV personality and cake aficionado, starts the ball rolling each month by deciding which games are to be featured in the issue. This is an arduous process involving many a high-pressure phone call to leading software houses, top-level negotiations to secure the best games and being taken out to lunch by games company PR people a lot. When he's managed to fill the issue and has reviewed and previewed all the best games himself, he delegates the remainder to the rest of the writing team and retires to his well-stocked cake cellar in Croydon.



Staff Writer **TOM GUISE**, MegaTech's resident Romeo and part-time wordsmith, takes on the task of writing most of the remaining reviews and previews. But his flirty nature means that most of his time is taken up indulging in amorous liaisons with as many of the lovely females that float around the MegaTech office floor as he can fit in during work hours. Finally, two weeks after the deadline for his copy to be due has passed, he goes into a flurry of activity. Forsaking the pleasures of the flesh, he stays up all night to finish his reviews, discussing the finer points of gameplay and parallax scrolling with his pet Tyrannosaurus, who goes by the name of Sonic.





And here are the Freelance Writers, **PAUL GLANCEY** and **GUS SWAN**, those mercenaries of the written word who aren't actually part of the team, but perform a valuable function when Steve, Tom and Mark haven't got the time to write all the reviews. In other words, we give them the crappiest games to play and then laugh at their reviews behind their backs.

When the writers have written all their stuff, they hand their work to Deputy Editor **MARK HOLMES.** By now, he will probably have written a few reviews himself, but Mark is a man of many talents – his lynch pin position also involves checking over all the stuff the writers have written. When he's satisfied that there are enough spelling mistakes and grammatical errors in each piece of writing, he passes it over to the art department, along with any necessary screen grabs.

And now the crucial part – the design. Art guru, **Jeff Zie,** and his mad sidekick, **Aileen O'Donnell,** retire to the smoking room to discuss how they can make the pages look great. Sadly, after Marlboro's and Silk Cut's shares have risen tenfold, it's too late to spend any time on them, so they whip out the Crayolas and do what they can. From here, the mag is sent to film – just don't ask us how – and then on to Colchester, where a crack team of printers beaver away with their incredible selection of potato sets working until Dawn to get the magazine out.

THERE ARE NO HOLDS BARRED WITH QUICKSHOT



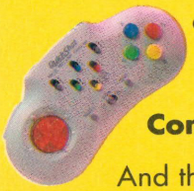


There's only one joystick for the serious gamehead - **Quickshot.**

With over **30,000,000** sold already, it doesn't take a genius to see how popular they are. And it's just as easy to tell why. There's a choice of over 30 different styles and levels (8 and 16 bit), with prices from only **£9.99** all the way up to **£29.99**.



They're compatible with just about every system available – **IBM, Nintendo, Sega, Atari, Commodore, Amiga,** you name it.



And they all have serious standards of control that are the equal of any arcade you've ever seen. So make sure you have the joystick that's a real thrill to handle.



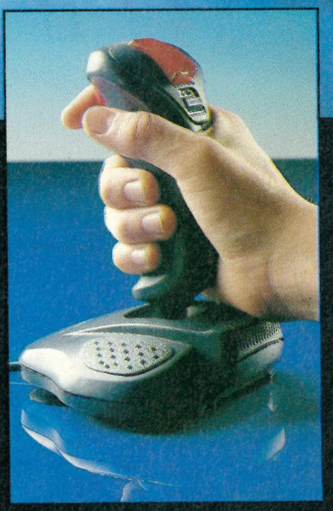


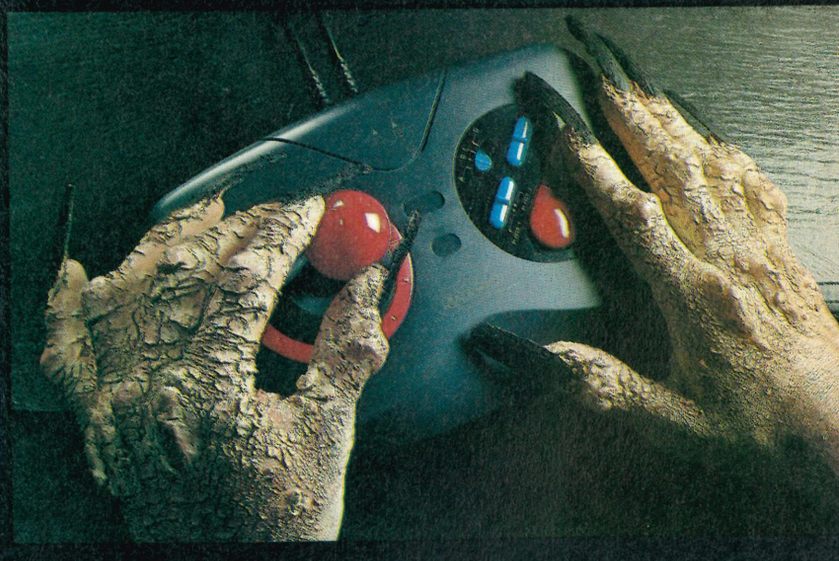
Make sure you have a **Quickshot.**

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super kick
flashba







Flashback puts the 'MEGA' into Mega Drive. There's hardly an Earthling left who hasn't been addicted by the mesmerizing gameplay, scorching graphics and stunning animation... so if you've not added Flashback to your collection yet, join the human race and experience the mega THRILL. Just remember: it didn't hit the Gallup Charts' No. 1 spot by being tame!



"Just awesome!... best Mega Drive game I've ever seen or played!" (Mega Drive)
MEGATECH





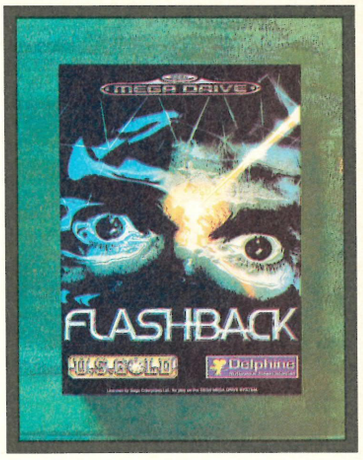
Flashback: Creation and development: Delphine Software International. © 1993 Delphine Software International. © 1993 U.S. Gold Ltd. All rights reserved. Super Kick Off: 1991, 1992 ANCO GAMES. All rights reserved.
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AVAILABLE ON: MEGA DRIVE

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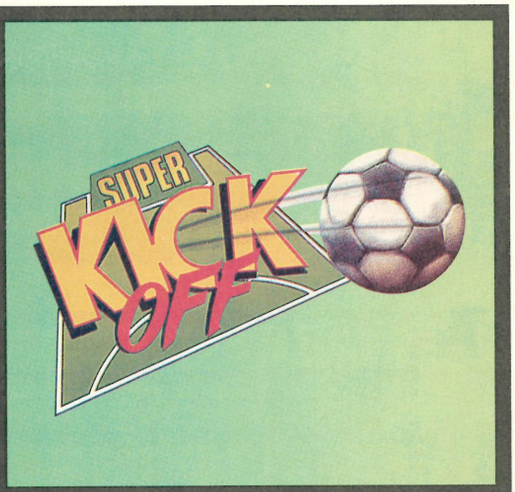
"The level of control and degree of skill you can develop on this game are incredible. The best football game going." (Mega Drive)
MEAN MACHINES - 95%











It's the Console Game which KICKED the others into touch to top the Gallup Charts' premier league! Hand pick your own team and kit, plan your set pieces - then push your skills to the limit with high performance ball control. Action replays...big cup competitions...penalty SHOOT outs...all wrapped up in a frenzied pace that'll leave you gaspin'!

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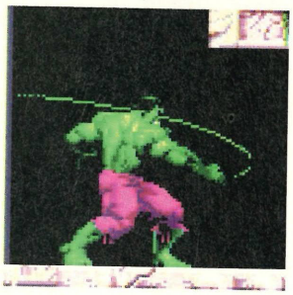




BY: US GOLD

price: £44.99
developers: PROBE
release date: TBA

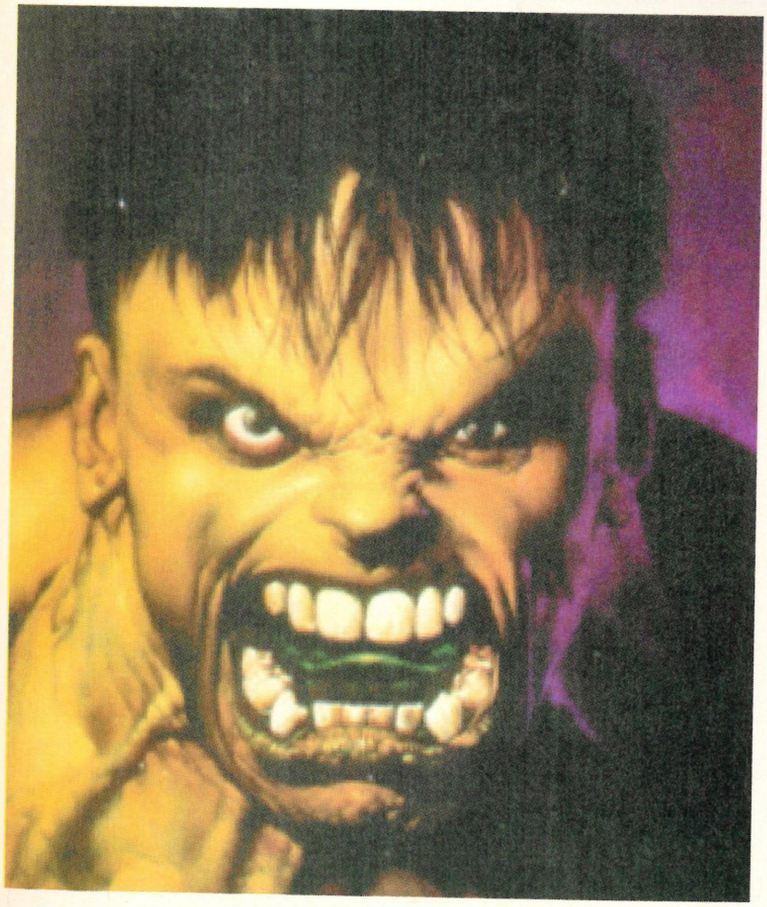
Whereas these days the only weekend TV escapism comes in the form of Gladiators and the dreadful Seaquest DSV, in the past essential Saturday viewing included the likes of The Dukes Of Hazard (ask your Dad – especially about Daisy!), Buck Rogers, The A-Team, and, going back even further, The Incredible Hulk, starring Bill Bixby as Doctor Bruce Banner. Millions of kids used to watch avidly as, every week without fail, some idiot would ignore the warnings and make Banner angry, which would have the effect of turning his eyes funny and his body all muscular and green. And after his transformation into The Hulk was complete, everyone would change over to BBC1 and see what Doctor Who was up to instead! Of course, there's more to The Incredible Hulk than a dull American series. This year, Bruce Banner is celebrating thirty years of ripped trousers and lost tempers, and US Gold are helping him celebrate by giving him the chance to smash his way on to the Megadrive.





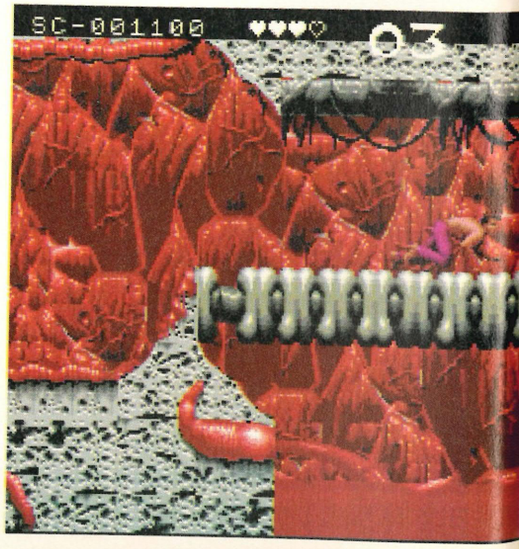


THE INCREDIBLE HULK



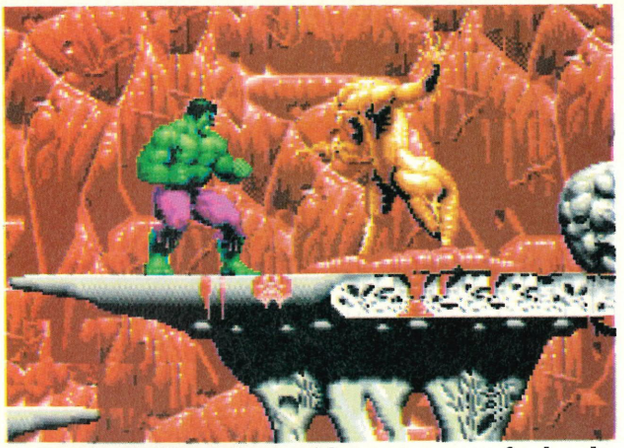
THE STORY SO FAR...

The Hulk's arch enemy, The Leader, has returned to Earth after a lengthy exile, with the intention of becoming its ruler. Recruiting more Hulk foes – Tyranus, Absorbing Man, The Abomination and The Rhino – he has started constructing a massive robotic army, with which he plans to use to overrun all the world's major cities. However, as his troops begin their war against humanity, the ever-reliable Hulk is ready to stop them – with his fists! Thus, what follows is a massive beat 'em up set across five scrolling stages, with The Hulk bashing his way through Leader's mechanical army before taking each of the 'Boss' foes on in turn.

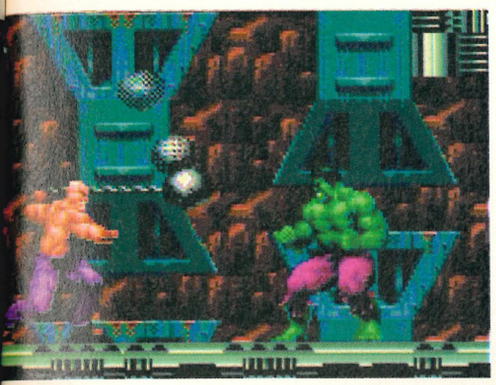


DON'T MAKE ME ANGRY

In addition to the devastation The Hulk leaves in his wake, the game also allows him to pick up and lob objects at the enemy. So, as well as punching seven barrels out of Leader's robot army, he can also trash virtually anything else he encounters. Jeeps can be stopped in their tracks, walls transformed into piles of rubble, and buildings made open-plan all at the swing of a mighty fist. However, should the unjolly green giant concede too many hits, his powers wane and he reverts back to his puny Bruce Banner form. As Bruce, he cannot move as fast as his Hulk persona, and his strength is massively reduced – he can't even fight back! In fact, certain doom is inevitable unless Bruce can find one of the Gamma pods left around the play area, as these are the in-game equivalent of making the TV's Hulk angry – they restore him to full greendom.



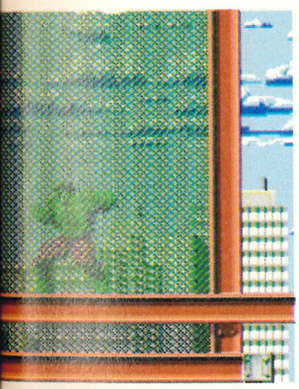
▲ **No, sir, I will not dance with an overgrown fowl such as yourself. Now please leave me alone...**



n then, if you think yer 'ard enough.

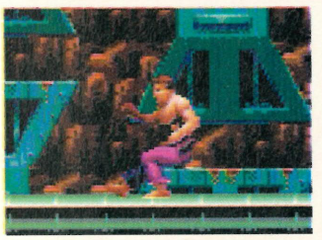
THEY MADE HIM ANGRY

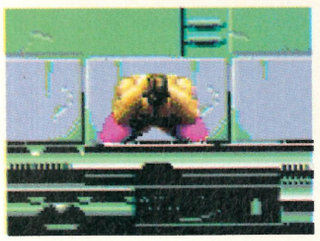
The team developing The Hulk for US Gold are veteran coders, Probe Software. During the game's nine-month development period, most of the time has been spent perfecting the assorted sprites and animations needed to give the game a comic-book feel. In his quest for wanton destruction, ol' Hulky can smash virtually anything in his path or lob it elsewhere on the screen – useful, as this normally reveals the all-important Gamma pods. In addition, Probe have also taken the chance to add a new idea to The Hulk's inventory – the Sonic Clap. This can only be achieved when sufficient Gamma pods have been collected, and takes the form of a massive uppercut. However, you won't see any humans on the receiving end of this, or indeed any other of the green one's moves, as Marvel Comics got a bit squeamish at the thought, hence the addition of The Leader's robotic army.



l his years of fighting bad ittle did The Hulk realise rategically-placed net s would bring about his ill. But, yes, it looked like corative netting had got ter of him...

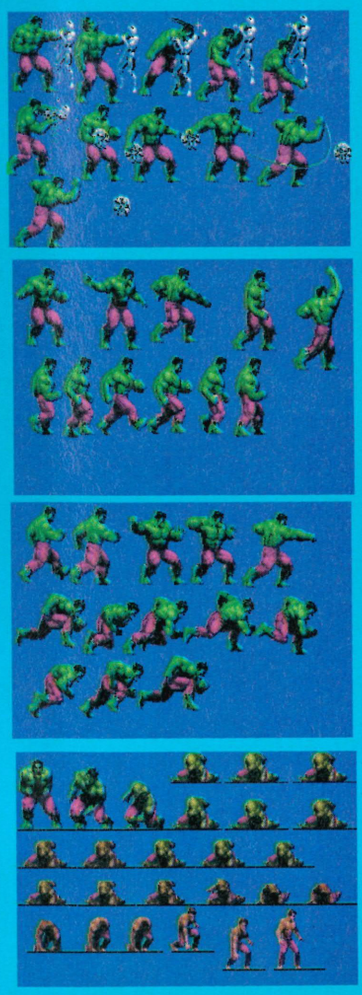








▲ **Collecting Gamma Pods turns Banner back into his Hulk alter-ego.**



The Hulk in all his animated glory. In all, the unjolly green giant features over 80 frames of movement, ranging from collapsing and reverting to his weedy Banner form, to his devastating uppercut 'super weapon'. In addition, even ordinary things like running and walking take over eight frames each.

THE INCREDIBLE HULK: HIS STORY!

It was during the superhero boom of the 1960s that The Hulk first burst on to the comics scene. Following the huge success of their first creation, The Fantastic Four, Marvel Comics' writer Stan Lee and artist Jack Kirby decided to create a monstrous creature, not dissimilar to the Fantastic Four's own misfit, The Thing. Stealing ideas from Frankenstein and Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, and drawing on the looks of Boris Karloff's famous 1931 film version of Frankenstein, they designed the raging anti-hero who finally made his comic book debut in May 1962 – The Incredible Hulk.

GOING DOWN A BOMB

Using the fashionable theme of radioactivity, the first issue followed the testing of the 'gamma-bomb', invented by a military scientist called Bruce Banner. Through the meddling of a communist spy called Igor, Bruce was caught in the blast and The Hulk was born. In this first issue, The Hulk was actually grey, but due to limited printing technology at the time The Hulk became green in his second issue. Other changes also took place during these early issues. The original crafty Hulk was soon turned into a dull-witted monster. Also, the original stories saw the Hulk as a creature of the night, transformed by the setting of the sun. This plot device was soon dropped in favour of having Banner's raging temper trigger the transformation.

The Incredible Hulk was a huge success, and in 1966 he appeared in a half-hour animated cartoon series, 'The Marvel Super Heroes'. However, it wasn't until the late Seventies that he appeared in his own TV series with muscleman Lou Ferrigno playing the green-skinned monster, and Bill Bixby in the role of his meek alter ego, strangely renamed David Banner for Television. Then came the smash-hit Saturday morning cartoon series in the early '80s.

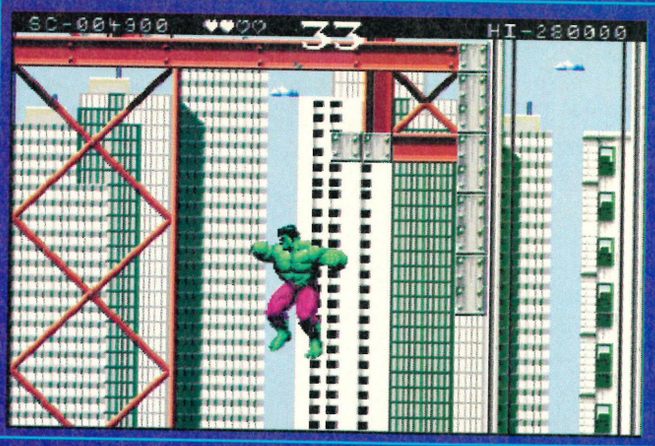
NEW, IMPROVED HULK

Meanwhile, the comic books continued to draw in the readers, with The Hulk's greatest claim to fame being the debut appearance of Wolverine within the pages of The Incredible Hulk #180 (October 1974). To date, Wolverine is Marvel Comics' most popular superhero of all time!

More recently, The Hulk has undergone some more dramatic changes, first reverting to his original intelligent grey form, before actually separating himself from Bruce Banner completely. In the latest issues of The Incredible Hulk, however, the green-skinned monster and Banner have rejoined to produce a single intelligent Hulk, now with dashing looks and a fashionable haircut. Gone are the tattered purple trousers – for now at least!

THOSE LEVELS IN FULL

The Hulk's missions are set in each of his enemy's newly-acquired bases. Here's a quick peek of what to expect...

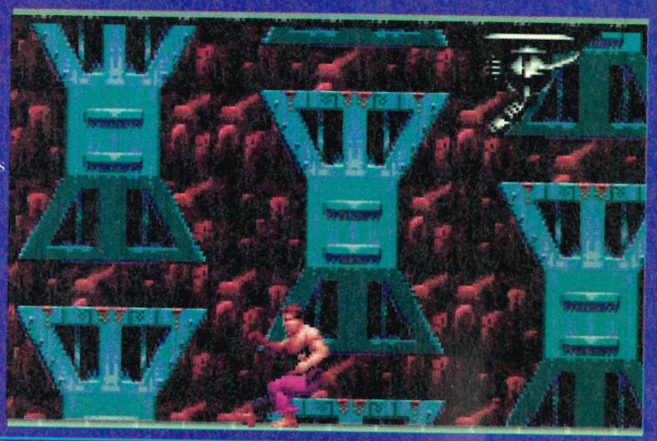


Urban Cityscape:

The home of the aptly-named The Abomination, our green hero begins this stage tied up. Tearing himself free, a city full of Leader's mechanical men stand between Hulky and payback time.

Industrial Cityscape

There's immense danger of our hero getting a few stubborn stains on his nice purple strides next, as he enters the sewers in search of Absorbing Man. As he explores the stage, though, Hulk discovers the robot cohorts are building something extremely fiendish indeed.



Tyranus's Labyrinth:

Standing in a seemingly deserted forest, the floor gives way to reveal Tyranus's underground lair – with the determined foe awaiting his arrival behind an army of droids.





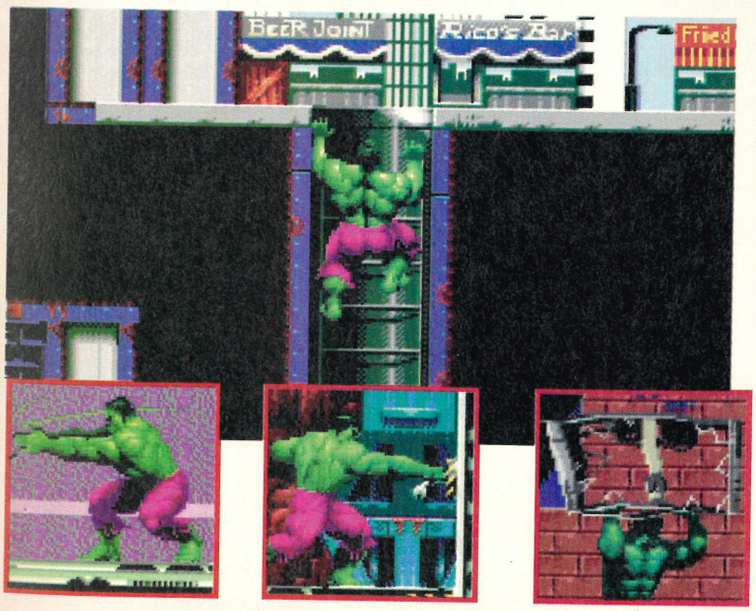
The Leader's Fortress:

As can be expected of such an evil-doer, The Leader has holed himself up in a sprawling building which is guarded by a series of laser turrets and a security system. Perse-verance, however, will see our hero through to...

The Leader's Fortress Interior:

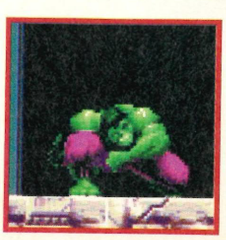
Once you're in here, your greatest foe squares up for a fight to the death.





▲ **Life's funny sometimes. I mean, despite his enormous muscles, The Hulk is just asking for ridicule in those purple trousers. It's like Big Daddy. His real name is Shirley Crabtree, whilst John Wayne was called Marion something – and with names like that you just have to become a big wrestler or a big tough actor or you're asking for trouble.**





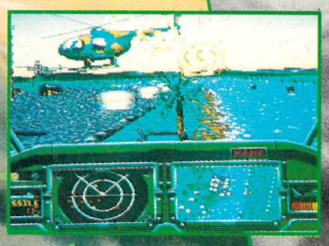
▲ **I'm a big Hulk, look what I can do. I can pull down buildings too. Shown here are The Hulk's assorted methods of carnage. Punching walls, throwing phone boxes, he does it all – it must be all the red meat in his diet..**

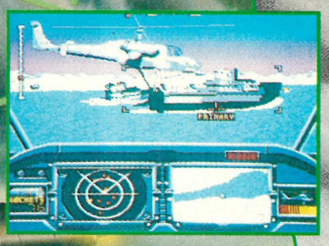
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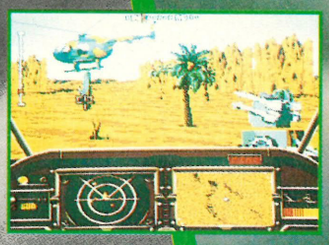












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PREVIEW






BY: SEGA

price: £TBA
developers: IN-HOUSE
release date: DEC 1993

The original was a top contender for a 'weirdest game' accolade, and now, some two years after the original, an older and wiser Toejam and Earl have returned for a sequel. Actually, the wiser bit is a lie, but you get the gist...



Those grooving funkmeisters, Toejam and Earl, have really gorn and done it now! Having made it back to Funkotron after their escapades on Earth, their return has coincided with a terrible invasion of Earthlings. Sitting around their TV, the pair can only watch as numerous tourists, builders and brattish kids harass the people of Funkotron – can only watch, that is, until the newsreader happens to mention that the Earthlings got there by hanging on to the outside of Toejam's ship! So, to avoid the wrath of Funkotron's hierachy, the pair arm themselves with Trap-O-matic jam jars with the intention of capturing the errant humans and sending them back to Earth via a handy shuttle service. Of course, by the time the clueless pair have formulated this cunning plan, the said humans have scattered themselves across Funkotron's many continents, necessitating a journey of epic proportions for our funky alien friends as they attempt to round up the Earthlings and curtail the mess they're leaving in their wake...

TOEJAM AND



WORLDS APART

Each stage contains a set number of rampaging humans, and the basic aim of the game is to encase them in the jars Toejam and Earl carry. Either character can be selected at the start of the game, and a two-player mode also allows for simultaneous jar-related larks. The levels are eight-way-scrolling affairs, and the humans are a varied bunch which range from brattish little girls who try to escape by kicking our heroes in the shins, to troublesome tourists whose camera flashes prove surprisingly deadly.



Luckily, since the first game, Toejam and Earl have added jumping and warping skills to their repertoire, whilst the B button is used to lob Trap-O-Matic jars at the humans until they are eventually encapsulated. It's not quite as simple as it sounds, though, and each world also contains a series of hidden and bonus rooms, within which the humans are fond of hiding, and as the game progresses, both the landscape and the Earthlings get considerably nastier.





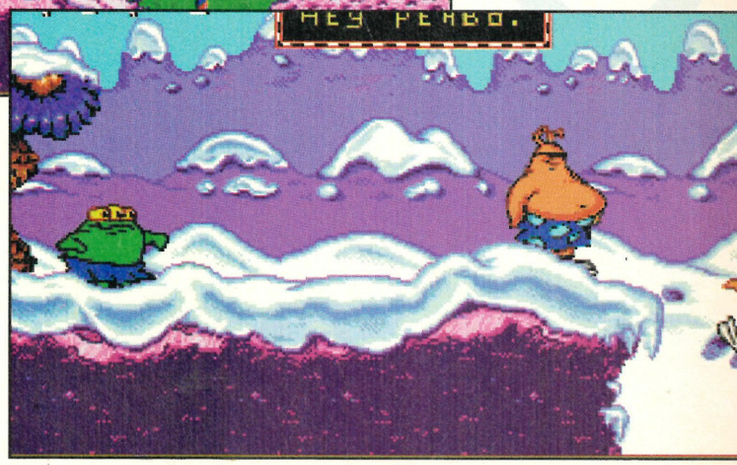
▲ Hah! Humans are such easy prey. Roughly four of our heroes' special jars are needed to encapsulate a human, but after a while the invaders start arming themselves with all manner of trash to make life harder.

WUMMAGIE WUMMAGIE

As Toejam and Earl wander funkily through the levels, some of the weirdest flora and fauna scrolls past in glorious parallax. However, rather than acting as decoration, Funkotron's vegetation actually plays a key role in the game. By pushing up on the joypad whenever one of the two is standing directly in front of a plant, they then proceed to rummage through the undergrowth in true Bellamy style. As the trees and bushes are vigorously shaken, assorted objects flop out – presents act as bonuses, whilst the likes of bowling balls and dustbins sap the pair's energy on contact. Also lurking within the undergrowth, though, are several of the missing humans who proceed to run around like loons when disturbed.



▲ That object resembling a Barber's Shop pole is, in fact, an information post. Shaking it reveals tips on how to protect yourself from the invaders and the whereabouts of bonuses.



▲ Dance fan Peabo appears every now and then, offering bonuses for anyone who can match his fancy steps. The three pad buttons are used to activate Peabo's three moves, and what follows is basically a funky version of the old Simon electronic game.

EARL 2

MISTER SOFT (WHY IS YOUR WORLD SO STRANGE?)

It's a weird old world is Funkotron, and nothing is quite what it seems. Take, for instance, the parking metres and lights which punctuate the landscape. To the ordinary human, these may seem like objects placed there to stop people obstructing the town's many roads. But nay, they actually act as the key to another dimension. Yes sirree, by searching one of these as you would one of the many trees, a gateway opens in the sky above and, if entered, takes one of our heroes to the weird world within. Once inside, the Toejam and Earl sprites appear all smudgy as the hidden room's weird gravity effects them, but the numerous bonus pressies just awaiting collection more than compensates.



▲ Oi, I hope those bubbles escaped from your mouth, young man, or there'll be trouble...



▲ The ultra-weird hidden rooms defy all laws of gravity and reality. On entering, both characters are reduced to a pixellated mess as they scour the rooms for bonus goodies.







BY: ELECTRONIC ARTS

price: TBA
developers: IN-HOUSE
release date: MARCH 1994

ASPECT WARRIORS

Within the board-game-based wargaming fraternity one company reigns supreme – the Games Workshop. Realising this, EA have snapped up the rights to the workshop's existing titles with the intention of releasing them for the Megadrive. Here's a sneaky peek at the first...

DANGEROUS MISSIONS

No, it's not a game set within a landscape made up of that horrible jelly which fills the corners of a Spam tin – that'd be Aspic Warriors. Instead, EA invite you to enter the 41st Millenium and tackle a series of danger-filled missions from the safety of someone else's body. Confused? Well, as the game's assorted missions are displayed, you can then decide which of the three superheroes at your disposal is the best equipped to deal with the hazards described. Having selected your task, your chosen warrior is subsequently dropped into the game's isometric play area and left to blast a way through to the designated targets.

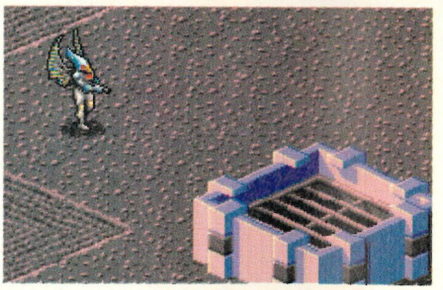
WAKEY-WAKEY!

As opposed to a series of unrelated sections, Aspect's many missions are all tied into one main goal – the waking of the great god, Avatar. A huge 15ft statue, Avatar needs to be reunited with his magic spear before he revives, and the three bodies under your control must then be sacrificed to provide the life force he needs to live. Of course, before this happens, the trio are faced with all manner of dangers and foes, and only their skill with a handy selection of swords, guns and vehicles will see them through.

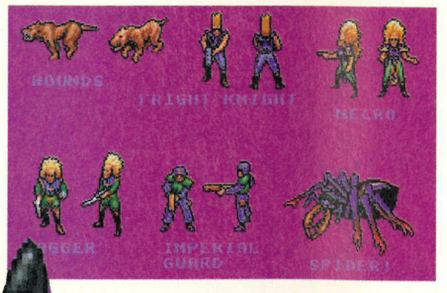
At the mo, Aspect Warriors is at an extremely early stage. The basic game engine is up and running, but the later parts of the missions are still being confirmed. A more detailed preview will follow nearer its release date, so see you then...



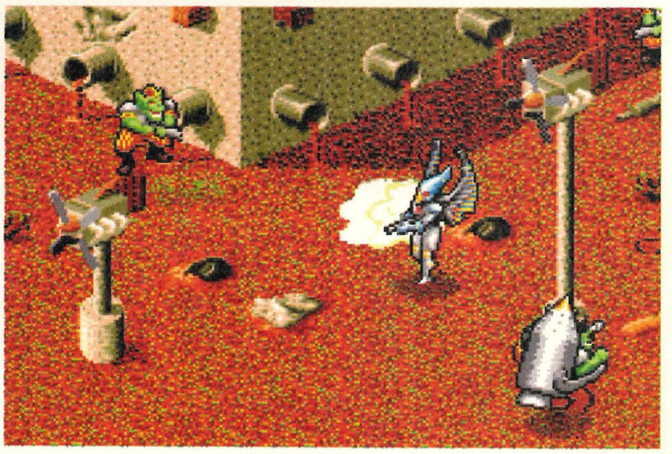
▲ **What a lovely aspect...**



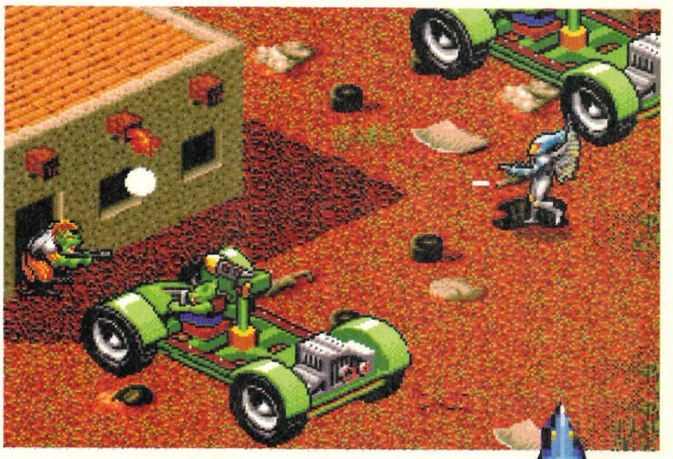
▲ **... and here's a warrior...**



▲ **... and here's some more...**



▲ **... now you know why it's called Aspect Warriors!**



▲ **Look at this guy's buggy – it looks like Neil Armstrong's golf cart.**

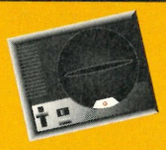
▼ **Chucking-out time at the MegaTech offices.**





YOU

are ABOUT TO FACE THE ULTIMATE TEST OF YOUR MEGA DRIVE SKILLS.....





BY: ACCLAIM

price: £TBA
developers: IN-HOUSE
release date: FEB 1994

NBA JAM

Basketball fever is starting to grip the UK, with Shaq from the Pepsi adverts paying us Brits a visit, and ITV showing NBA matches as a rival to the goings-on in Albert Square. Always ones to spot a bandwagon, here come Acclaim with their official NBA licence...

OFFICIAL DUNKING

Sporting a full complement of NBA sides, Acclaim's licence is played across a horizontally-scrolling court, with two teams trying to out-basket each other. Having decided to play against a mate or team up against the computer-controlled sides, NBA Jam offers a two-on-two match with each side's top players legging it up and down the court strutting their stuff. Massive sprites are used to portray the assorted dribblers, and stacks of aniimation contribute to make sure they move as realistically as possible.

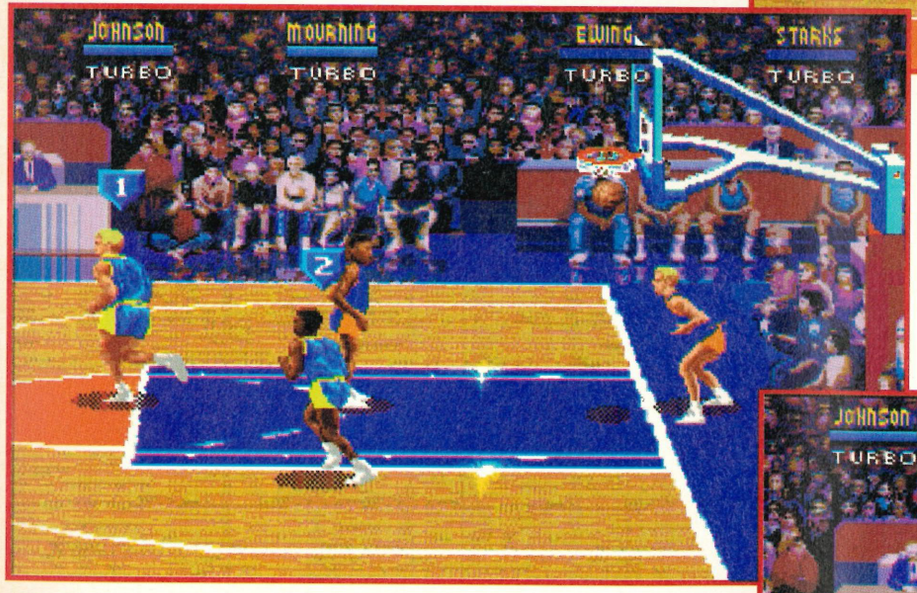
All the most important features of the sport have been included, so there's plenty of dribbling, dummying and long shots. In addition, bearing in mind the offical NBA licence, some of the players are also equipped with some rather fancy moves – thus, in the course of the game, you can expect to see some rather acrobatic slam-dunks.



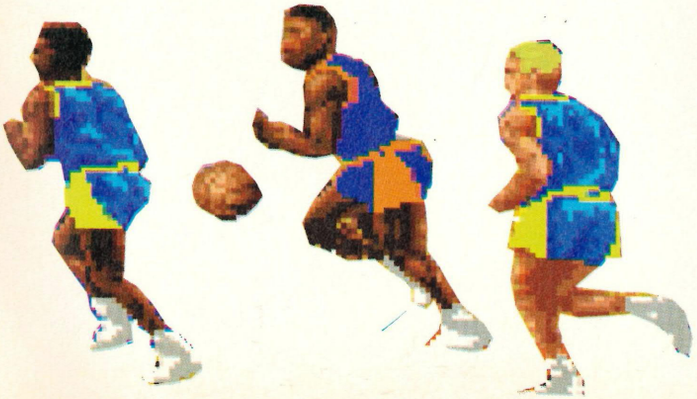
▲ "Gee, these jet-powered sneakers are great, huh?"

AH, REF!

Overseeing each match is a referee sprite, and he keeps an eye out for the odd bout of pushing and travelling. Full NBA rules apply, and other punishable offences include passing back past the halfway line and keeping hold of the ball for too long. Currently filling a 16Meg cart, NBA is just having the finishing touches added. Acclaim are aiming for a February release, so expect further updates sometime soon.



▲ "Quick, run away – I'm gonna fart! Hnnnnnnn..."





▲ While showing off his 'balancing one player on his fingertips and another on his backside' trick, Magic Johnson completely forgot about the ball.

FORTUNATELY

you WON'T HAVE TO FACE IT ALONE



Safety in numbers? Forget it. Even with the new 4-player adaptors and pals by your side, you're about to embark on the most lethal challenge of them all. Gauntlet IV has arrived on the Mega Drive. And the word is, it's only for Mega masters.

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Gauntlet IV from Tengen. So much for safety in numbers.

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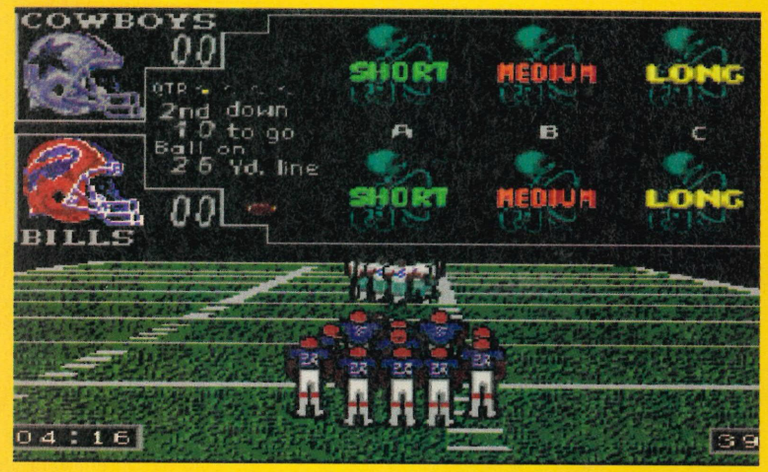
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MEGATECH

SPYCAM UPDATE

Another month, another massive batch of early peeks at forthcoming Megadrive games. As soon as there's something to see of a new game, this is where you'll see it first. So let's unveil this month's stuff...

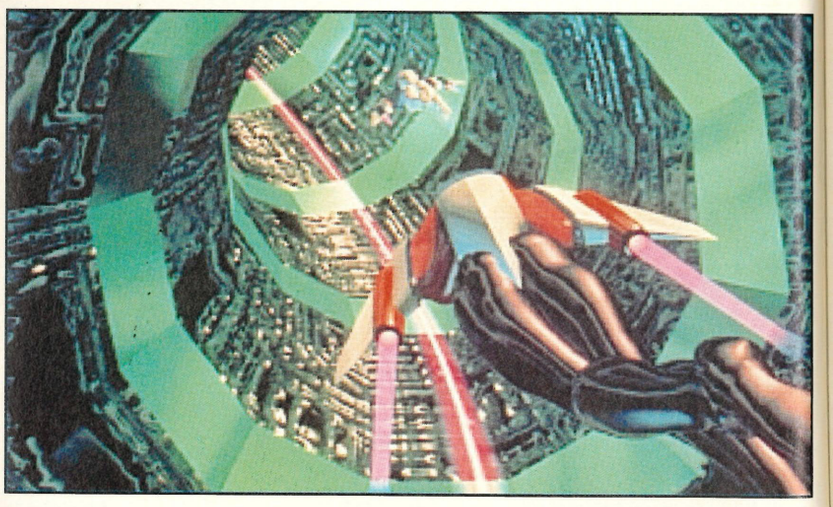


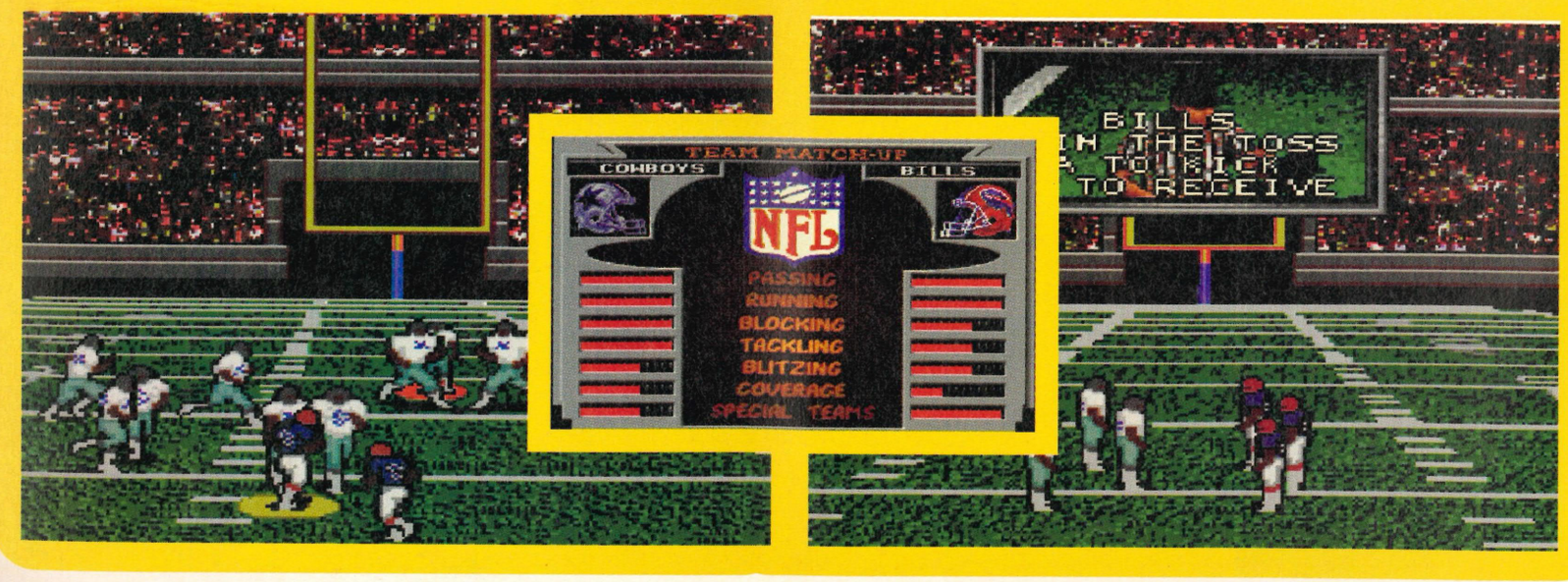
NFL - ACCLAIM

Hut! Hut! Ready to go head-to-head with the likes of John Madden and Bill Walsh licences comes Acclaim's official NFL American Footy sim. Featuring the usual array of sides and tactics, and using the customary behind-team viewpoint, NFL is aiming for a slightly more arcade bent than its competitors, with real precision needed if long passes are to be intercepted. At present, the game is roughly 70% complete and seemed to be quite a laugh, but you can see just how well it does when it's reviewed next issue.

LAWNMOWER MAN CD – STORM

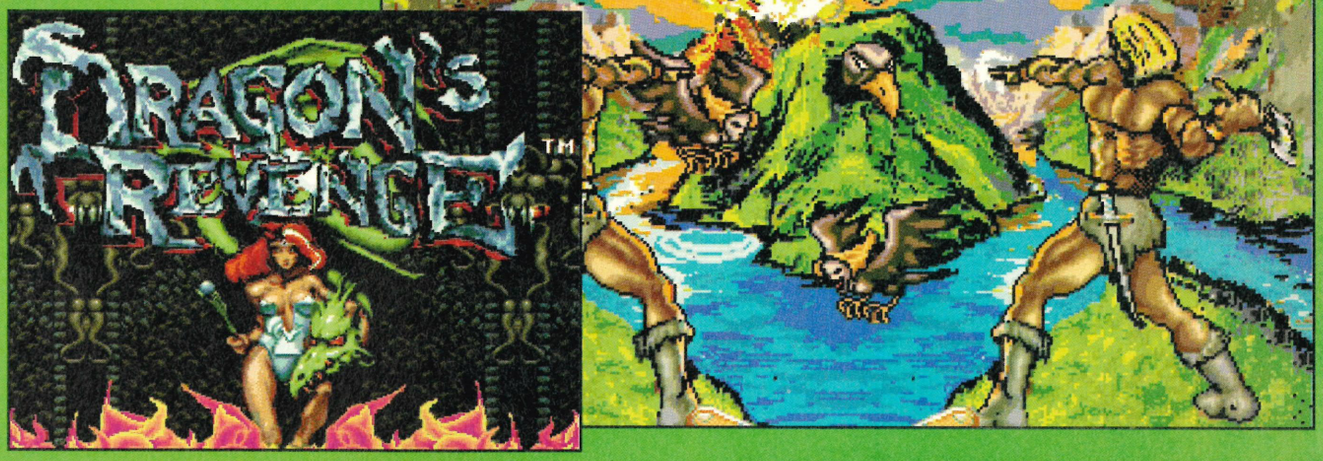
Although Storm have yet to win their Sega licence, their Mega-CD interpretation of The Lawnmower Man is already well under way. Loosely following the film's plot, the player is cast as either Jobe – the retarded gardener-made-superman, and Lawnmower Man of the title – or Doctor Angelo, the guy who augmented Jobe's brain. Whereas the forthcoming cart-based game is a mixture of platform and 3D sections, the Mega-CD's scaling capabilities are being exploited to make the most of the VR parts of the film. In



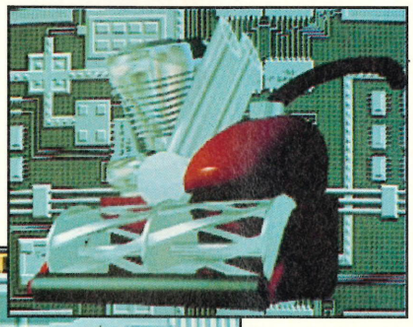


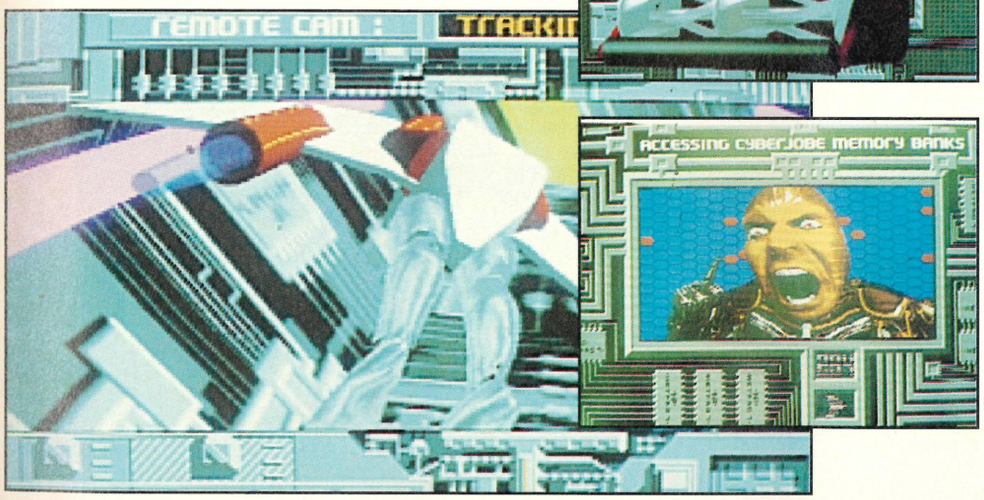
DRAGON'S REVENGE – TENGEN

All you pinball wizards should mark January 15th, 1994 in your diaries. Why? because that's the day Tengen release their long-awaited sequel to Dragon's Fury – Dragon's Revenge. Spanning three main tables, Tengen are promising a game full of hidden features and bonuses, and a special scaling feature which zooms in on the ball during key sections. We've played a very early version, and it certainly seems to knock the socks off most of the competition (although in the case of Virtual Pinball that's not exactly hard!) A full review should follow in the January issue of MegaTech.

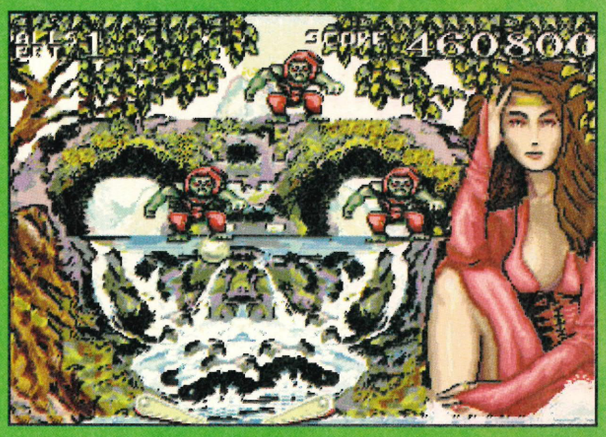


addition, Storm are also using clips from the film to enhance the linking sequences between levels. Oddly, though, although the action is predominantly based on the the first film, Storm have also secured the rights to produce a game based on the forthcoming sequel, Mindmeld, although plot details regarding this are very thin on the ground. Storm have yet to licence the game out to an official third party developer, so there's no release date as of yet, but we'll keep you posted.



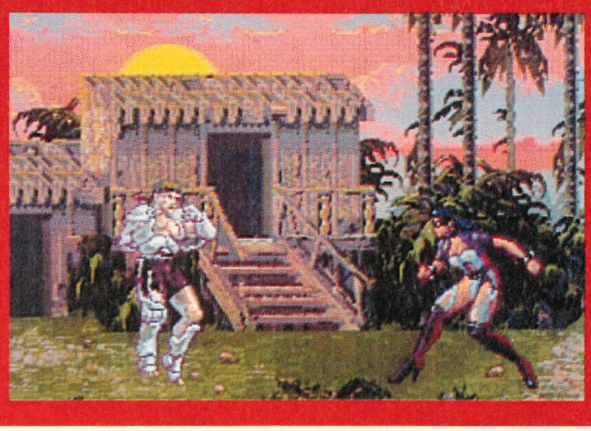


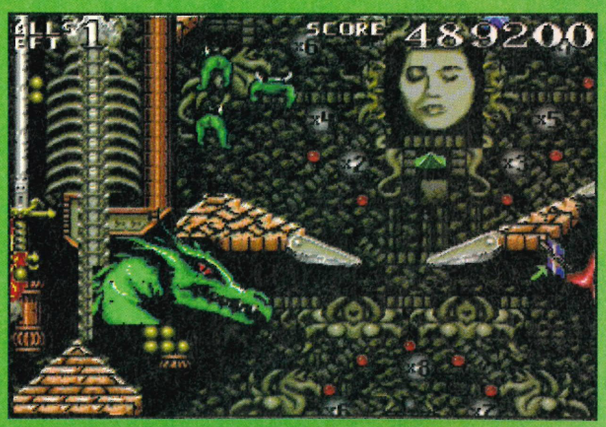




ETERNAL CHAMPIONS – SEGA

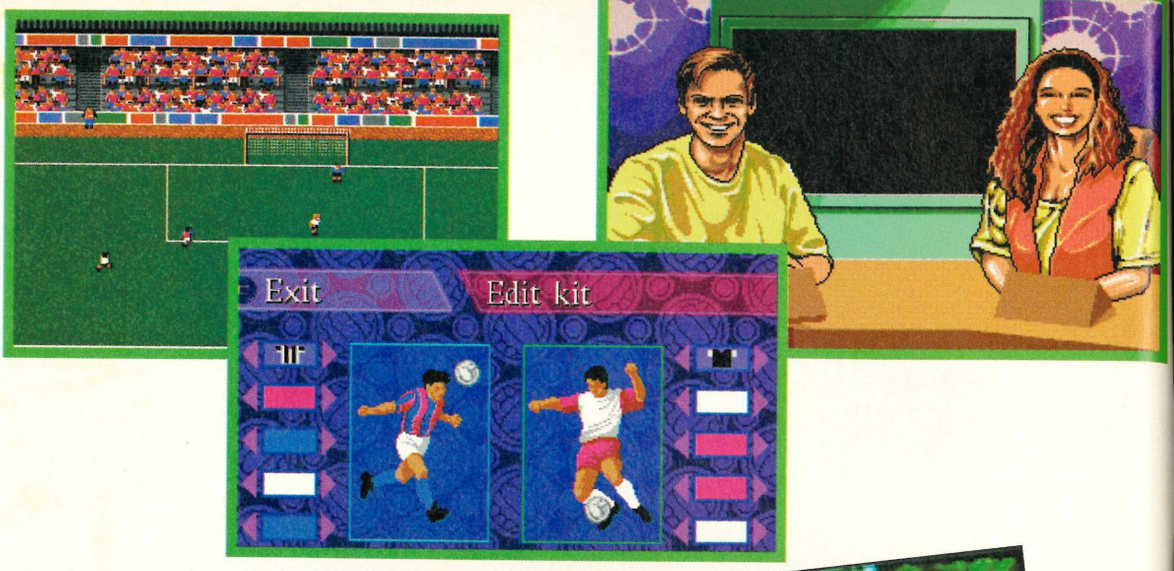
Following the long-awaited release of Street Fighter 2, Sega are soon to bring out yet another one-on-one beat 'em up. Clocking in at 16Meg, Eternal Champions pits eleven of history's greatest warriors against each other. From a Special Forces commando to a ninja and a Thai Boxer, all are battling to become the Supreme Warrior of All Eternity! So far, so Street Fighter 2, but hang on, because Eternal Champions is a beat 'em up with a difference – you can actually fight your on-screen opponents by punching and kicking FOR REAL! Yes, Eternal Champions is one of the first games too be made for Sega's full body joypad. Known as the Activator, it's an octagonal ring that the player stands in the middle of. By punching and kicking, they break infra red beams, which causes your computer fighter to copy the moves. Beat 'em up action and a free work out too! Could this be the future of beat 'em ups? Find out when the game is released in December.





WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER — CODEMASTERS

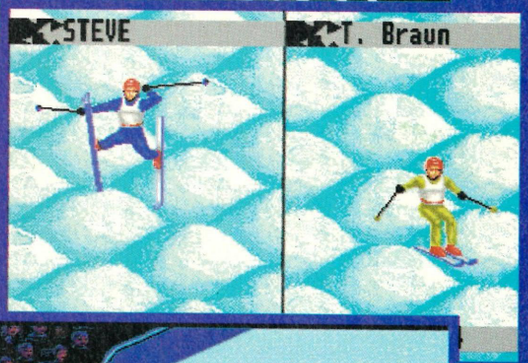
Having taken a good, long look at the plentiful number of Soccer games doing the rounds, Codemasters have now unveiled their rival to the likes of Sensi and FIFA. World League Soccer has been in the works for over a year now, and allows the player to control any one of a number of real-life international squads. A full complement of stats, strips and playing formations are on offer, and mastering these is integral to progressing through the many competitions on offer. A Sensi-style viewpoint has been used, with similarly-sized sprites (ie. tiny), and the whole shebang is linked via a pair of TV commentators who offer the usual witticisms and criticisms on the day's play. It's too early to say just how well World League will play, as there's still another six months of development to go, but a full preview is on its way.



WINTER OLYMPICS — US GOLD

Taking us way back to the days when developers Epyx were the kings of sports game, US G have unveiled their Winter Olympics licence. Spanning ten events across its 16Meg cart, Winter Olympics allows up to four players to compete in a variety of snow-bound events. Starting with the luge and the bobsleigh, the players are then invited to participate in assorted hot-dogging and slalom events, before heading for the ski-jumps and, eventually, the biathlon. As the official licensees of the '94 games in Lillehammer, US G have incorporated all the presentation ceremonies you'll see in the real thing, and have also ensured they milk the licence as much as possible, thanks to the inclusion of ad boards along the many ski and sleigh routes. A January release, expect a review nearer the time.



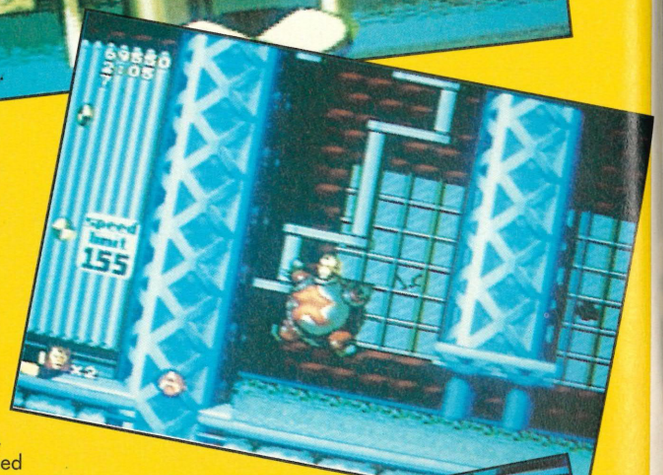


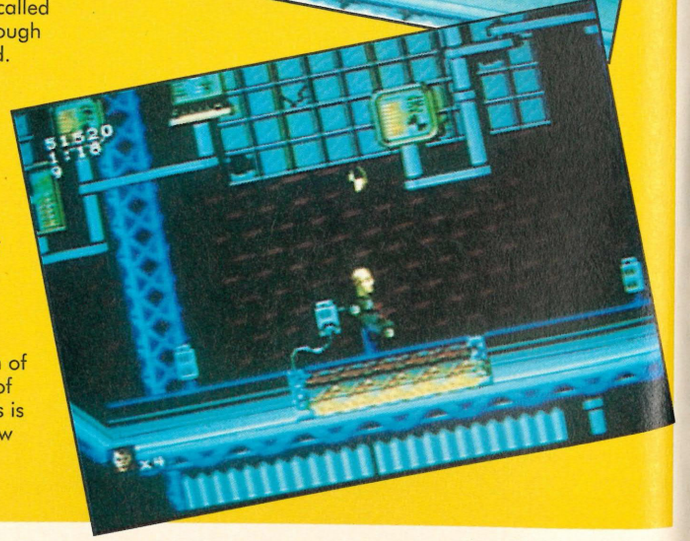




CRASH DUMMIES — ACCLAIM

Fresh from their adventures smashing up Volvos, the Crash Dummies are now heading for the Megadrive, with Acclaim at the wheel. Cashing in on the new Dummy toys (which fall apart as they collide with things), the player controls a dummy called Slick as he makes his way through a danger-filled platform world. With all manner of cars and hazards standing between Slick and the end of the stage, our hero's lifespan is determined by the number of limbs he has remaining. For instance, whilst he initially begins with a full complement of arms and legs, repeated contact with cars and associated flak removes his extremities until he's just a bouncing torso. The basic aim of the game is to reach the end of the stage in one piece, but this is easier said than done. A review should appear next issue.





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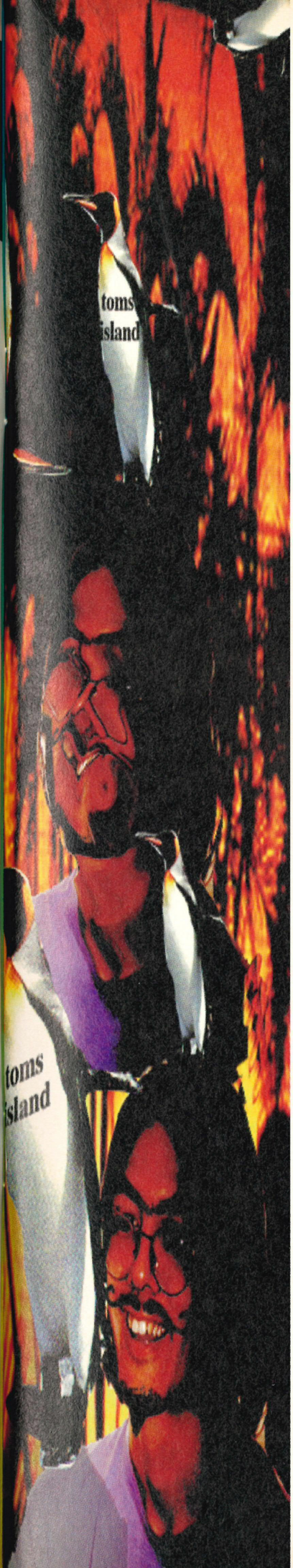
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Please TEL (021) 459 97576 for big list. Streets of Rage 2 £30, J. Madden '92 £25, Mercs £15, Desert Strike £20, Megatech issue 1 £15, Issues 1-10 £30, Issues 1-present day £40 (o.n.o) TEL Steve on (0482) 631719 (Hull) Go on, make my day! Buy the lot! (After 6pm).

SWAP

Swap mint condition Micro Machines Mega Drive for NHL 94. Write to Tim Graham 17 Nent Grove, Hexham, Northumberland NE46 1DN>

Swap World of Illusion, Olympic Gold, Castle of Illusion for Ghouls and Ghosts, Streets of Rage 2, Alien 3, Mega Lo Mania Anything considered. TEL (0742) 307527 and ask for Paul.



Tom's Island

Howdy folks, Robo-Tom here! That's right, I'm an android. Ever since Tom was first stranded on this island he's been plotting his escape. Unfortunately, he's always been unable to act, because that evil MegaTech crew have been watching him. Cameras in the coconuts, bugs behind the picture frames, periscopes poking out of the water, that kind of thing. When he stops working, they just activate the MegaTech club membership bracelets around his ankles and give him a sharp electric shock. What rotters! But, Tom has not been idle. Recently, he's been placing a black-painted coconut on his pillow, and while they watched that decoy, he built me. Identical in every way to the original, except for this faulty beard. Well, no matter, because Tom has escaped! He left by coconut-raft this morning. Ha, you fools will never find him, he could be anywhere by now. Still, you can always write to me at TOM'S ISLAND, MegaTech, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU. At least you could have done, if Tom hadn't planted this detonator in my chest. Goodbye, humans. Klik.

GREAT QUESTIONS.

Dear TOM,
Could you answer the following questions please.
1. What percentage would you give Cool Spot, as you have not yet reviewed it?
2. Have you heard anything more on Virtua Racing?
3. Why not put a poll in your mag for the best game. etc. Like a golden cart award thing?
4. In issue 23, Andrew Sawyer asked what you do with the photos on the Flashback game and you didn't answer him, or don't you know?
And keep up the the quality of your mag. It's excellent.
N Donlan, Padgate, Warrington.

TOM: Of course I can answer your questions.
1. What gibberish. We reviewed Cool Spot in the May issue of MegaTech and gave it 89%. So shut your gob.
2. Oh yes.
3. We have done. Way back in May we printed voting slips for the Golden Joystick awards. You really should have bought that issue you know.
4. As far as I know, the photos do nothing. So there. Phrrt!

BLOODY MORON!

Dear Technique Zone,
I am a proud owner of a Megadrive imported from Bangkok. I have just purchased the wicked game 'Mortal Kombat'. I was quite disappointed when I noticed there was no blood or guts like the coin-op, though I was very pleased with the other aspects of the game. I have written to Technique Zone, because I knew there would be other cold-blooded murderers out there that would want to see blood and guts just to add some flavour to this game. I call this the blood code. When you turn on your machine the makers of the game –'Acclaim' or 'Probe' or whatever– screens will be shown. Then a grey screen will appear telling you about the codes of 'Mortal Kombat'– ethical code, honor code and secret code. When the writing stops press the buttons A, B, A, C, A, B, B, the screen should then go red and you'll hear a voice say 'get over 'ere'. The cheat is now activated.
Yours bloody sincerely,
Steven Reid, Australia.

TOM: Gosh Steve, what an interesting cheat. It's not like we printed it in our Mortal Kombat review or anything. Hey, but don't you worry, I won't get at you. Being a butthead must be punishment enough.

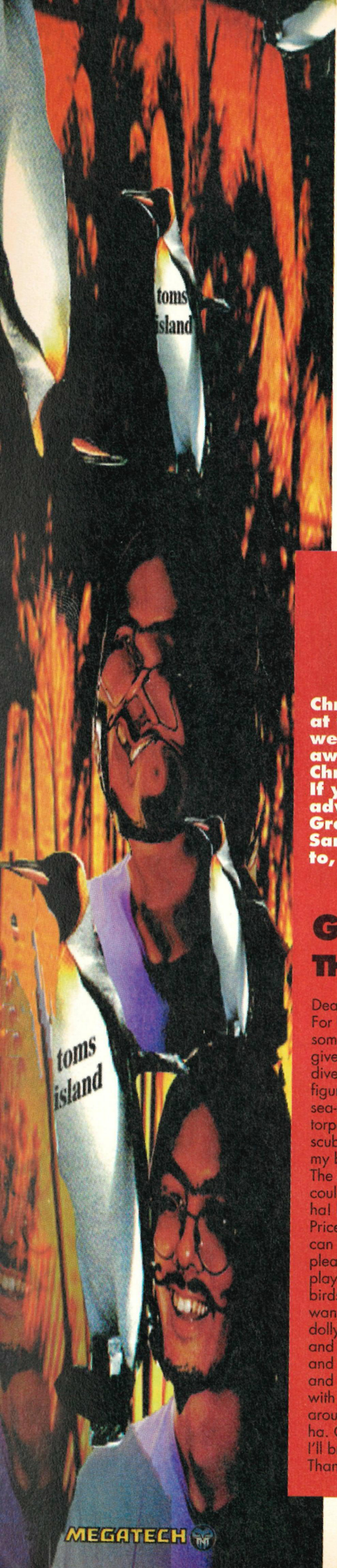
COLOURFUL LANGUAGE!

Dear TOM,
I have a few questions that need answering please, because they're driving me mad. Firstly, I was reading a report from the CES show last week in another mag and they were interviewing a bloke from Sega and he said they have found a way so that the Mega-CD can put up to 512 colors on screen at any one time and have full-screen, full-motion video. Is this true, because the Megadrive only has 512 colours? Secondly, when are you going to show us some Mortal Kombat pictures from the Mega-CD version, because I think it will be arcade perfect or near enough? Thirdly, when are you going to review Street Fighter 2 and Mortal Kombat on the Megadrive?
And finally, when I was looking at Street Fighter 2 on the Megadrive, I notice that the timer and energy bars weren't mixed in with the graphics. They were in an oblong box. Will this be sorted out now that Capcom have got a 24 M-bit cart to put the game on, as I think it would look better.
PS. Please print my letter, because I've written to you about 4 times now and I have never had my letter published.
Thank you for your time.
Darren Rowley, Nuneaton.

TOM: It's true. Sega have indeed found a way to increase the Mega-CD's capabilities. The new upgrade is known as Cinepak. Stored on CD, this program loads into the Mega-CD ahead of the game and compacts the game data as it comes in, allowing more information to be processed at any one time. Effectively this allows the Mega-CD to display full-screen, full motion video and up to 512 colours on-screen. What's more, it looks like the first game that'll get to use it will be none other than Jurassic Park CD. So there you have it.
No pictures of Mortal Kombat CD have been released as yet, so whether it's arcade perfect or just a conversion of the cartridge version remains to be seen. As for your other questions, well you should know the answers to those. We've reviewed both those games. In fact, Mortal Kombat was reviewed as long ago as issue 21!

EH?

Dear MegaTech,
The spot the pic this month was Sonic Spinball on the Megadrive. If I win I would like a copy of Sonic Spinball or Street Fighter 2. Any other good game would do instead.
Aaron Oliver, Bangor, N. Ireland.



TOM: What the devil are you talking about? What Spot The Pic? The last time we did a Spot The Shot competition was way back in April and the answer then was Rolo To The Rescue. You're mad, go away!

IN A PERFECT WORLD...

Dear TOM,
Last week, while sitting at home, I came up with a brilliant idea. Why don't Sega set up a reviewing board made up of professional game reviewers. And before each game is released, they review the game and give it an overall score taking into account all the graphics and sound etc. like in your reviews. Then if the game scores under say 70% it cannot be sold and the programmers must take the game back and improve it. This would mean that crap games like Dark Castle and Night Striker could not be released, because at the moment companies know that all they have to do is release a game and some idiots will buy it, even if it is a noughts and crosses game. It would also mean that there is less of an argument for people who say the price of video games is too high, because all the games are good quality. What do you think?
Joe Jewitts.

TOM: You might find this hard to believe, but software houses do perform quality control tests on their games. Don't you think that the companies behind such dross as Dark Castle and Night Striker probably had a fair idea that the games were awful before they released them? They must have done. The thing is, games companies put so much time and money into developing new games, that they can't afford not to bring them out. It's the only way they can make back the money they've invested. And like you said, there are always going to be some idiots (or 'poor suckers') who buy these games and as long as this happens, sub-standard games will continue to fill the market. I don't want to turn this reply into an advert, but that's why magazines like MegaTech exist, to tell you what's good and what's not. Mind you, if what the next letter says is true, then I'm lying.

SHOCKING UNTRUTHS!

Dear TOM,
I've recently been told something that shocked me, although I hope it's not true. My dad told me that MegaTech and all other computer and console mags work for the big companies that make games, eg. Sega, Nintendo, Electronic Arts, Virgin, etc. giving their games a good name. But I thought, what about the crap games you review? So surely this cannot be true. Me and

SANTA'S GROTTO

Christmas is just around the corner and nobody is busier at this time of year than than dear old Santa. However, we've managed to drag the pissy-smelling old fart away from his annual chores to answer a few celebrity Christmas letters.
If you've got a problem that you think Santa Claus can advise you on, write to this address: Santa Claus, Magic Grotto, Lapland, The Arctic Circle. Unfortunately, Santa's busy schedule means that, much as he'd love to, he can't answer your letters personally.

GILIUS THUNDERHEAD

Dear Santa,
For Christmas I wood like some toys. Please give me a deep dive Batman action figure with special sea-sled and torpedo-launching scuba gear, so I can battle evil in my bath. And I also want an Ariel The Mermaid what sings. "Wish I could be part of your world!" Ha ha! I like that song. And a Fisher Price Mini Chef Kitchen Centre so I can cook just like Mummy. And please give me a Thunderbird playsuit, because I like Thunderbirds and I want to be Virgil. And I want a Kevin from Home Alone dolly, because it looks really ugly and says 'My family's in Florida and I'm in New York" and "Come and get me!" I can play Exorcist with it and turn its stoopid head around and put poo in its gob. Ho ha. Give me my toys, old man or I'll break your skull with my axe. Thank you. Gilius.



SANTA: Ho ho ho. What a cheeky little scamp you are. Ah, I do like Christmas, it's my favourite time of the year. Giving all you little children presents really does make me happy, especially when I get to see the smiles on your little rosy faces. And I do get to see those smiles, oh yes. I have special monitoring equipment here in Lapland that shows me all your happy faces on Christmas morning. Sigh. Of course you can have your presents, little Gilius. Now please, can I have my wife back.

BLANKA

Dear Santa.
Blanka want christmas present. Want Rustler Trolley Barbecue.
Blanka want to cook burgers and sausages and lamb chops. Yum yum. Blanka good at cooking. Yes. Blanka better at eating. Blanka also want Clairol Big Shot hair dryer so he can make groovy ginger quiff and impress mutant girlies in jungles. Hur hur. Blanka like girlies. He like deyr big muscles and short fat legs. Often Blanka naughty. He sneak into girlies rooms late at night. Get caught by girlies mums and chased out with big broom. They call him uglee beast. Hur hur. Blanka like being called bad names. Make Blanka feel dirty. Sharoooga! Your sincerely,
Blanka.



SANTA: Good grief. What a disgusting, despicable creature you are. Abhorrant in every way, with revolting, scaly green skin and unsightly tufts of repulsive body hair. Your arms are unseemingly long and your posture of more that of an ape than a man. Never in all my life have I come across such a grotesque, misshappen creature. You truly are an unloveable freak. The very sight of you brings bile to my mouth. You smell of excretion, posess all manner of unspeakable skin disorders and have the mental capacity of a simian. The fact that you were not killed at birth is a miracle. You are a monster! Anyway, of course you can have your presents, Blanka. And just like every writer to my grotto you receive a tin of delicious Werther's original toffees. Ho ho ho!

DONATELLO TURTLE

Yo Santa!
Festive high-threes, most excellent dude! I'm not gonna shark for any toys or anything, man. I'm

my Megadrive friends are worried if it is true. I also would like to congratulate you on such a high quality Megadrive mag, it really is the best around. I also like how you really slag people off who write stupid letters, eg. the person who wanted to do the Mr Nasty column,



what a thick git! Anyway, please print my letter, pleeaaase...
G Hague, Rotherham.

TOM: Bah, what a load of old trollop your dad is spouting. MegaTech is an independent Megadrive magazine and our reviews are totally impartial. We draw our opinions on games solely from playtesting them. Not through being influenced by software companies. As such, every mark we give a game, whether good or bad, is fair and unbiased. So there's no need for you and your little Megadrive buddies to get all paranoid. Next thing, you'll start believing that we're all shape-changing aliens, sent to Earth by our sinister commanders to prepare for the coming outerworld invasion. Rubbish, I assure you. Gurgle.

THE SAME, BUT DIFFERENT!

Dear TOM,
Let's get this straight. You work at the same offices as the Mean Machines crew, considering your address is the same, right? So you obviously receive the same games as them at the same time, right? Then how come you don't end up reviewing games till 2 months after they do sometimes, or vice versa? For example, Landstalker. MM reviewed in September, you didn't even have it reviewed in October, never mind September. It's so perpetually irritating. Oh and by the way, what happened to the 'definitive review' in the October issue of Sonic CD?
I thought it was only just over two-thirds completed.
Oh well, enough grumbling for now and don't tire that microscopic organ that you call your 'brain' too much in answering my question.
AA*?!A+AA!, Huddersfield.

TOM: Just because we share the same offices as Mean Machines, it doesn't make us clones. Both our magazines come out at different times of each month and as such we both work to different deadlines. Thus, whereas one mag might be able to fit a new game into their latest issue, the other mag might have got the game too late and have to wait until the next issue. On top of this, both magazines aim to get exclusives of big games and when this happens, the magazine in question gets to cover the game first. As a result, sometimes we get to cover games first and sometimes Mean Machines do. It's just the luck of the draw.



FRUSTRATING FIGHT!

Dear TOM,
With regards to Final Fight on the Mega-CD, it has one major draw back– you cannot play it in two-player mode all the way through as there are only three credits, two of which are used when you just writting to tell you what a real fly job I think you're doing, giving all the kiddies toys and stuff. Truly awesome attitude, Nick. Keep at it, bro'!
Yours most festively,
Donnie.



SANTA: God, people like you make me want to puke. Coming round here trying to blag toys and sweets. It was alright in the old days when I used to make the toys myself, like wooden spinning tops, toy trains and little puppets. But nowadays it's all Crash Dummies, WWF, Terminator 2 and Monster In My Pocket. These toys cost a fortune! Do you ever think about where the money comes from? No. It's always I want, I want. Well let me tell you something. Last year I had to sell Dancer and Blitzen off as packet meat just to stump up the cash and this year my wife has sold her left kidney to feed us. And you talk about toys. Anyway, I've checked the Good Behaviour Files and you were too bad to get anything this year, so push off. Ho, bloody ho!

ROBOSONIC



Dear Santa,
Krrk. I want toys, old man. Here is my booty list. A fun bucket of Duplo bricks, a Fisher Price bubble mower, one Tomy Lullaby Light Show and a Texas Instruments Clarence the Clown. He says "Take my rings off one by one. That's the way to start the fun!" Rings, bah. Also, I would like a pair of Mario Bros slippers and the new Kim Wilde album. She's a funky chick. My stocking will be hanging outside Robotnik's Fortress. If all the items listed are not there on Christmas morning, I will burn down your puny grotto and feed your elf-helpers to the wolves. Do not defy me, Claus, or you will pay the price. Over and out.
RoboSonic.



SANTA: What a marvellous little clockwork monkey you are Sonic. Are you one of those clever little gadgets from Hong Kong or something? Well whatever, I must get my little helpers to make some toys like you in my magic workshop. Every child should have their very own Sonic the Monkey. Ho ho ho! Alas, I myself am more clockwork toy than man now. As I've grown older, my body parts have failed on me one by one, but I have refused of die. I am Santa Claus, Lord of the Thundercats. With the collapse of each vital organ, I have replaced it with a newer, better, toy organ. The resulting combination of man and machinery is ugly, but necessary to perpetuate my blessed existance. I must live. Brrp. Now if you'll excuse me, little clockwork monkey, I have to empty my colostomy bag. Ho ho ho!

ALTERED BEAST



Dear Father Christmas,
I don't want any toys or anything, but I was wondering if you could help me out. I used to be a real big star, you know – way back in the old days, I was Altered Beast. Yes, THE Altered Beast. My game was really good, you know. I had this famous trick where I'd eat pods and turn into monsters. Then I'd fly about blowing up eyeballs and zombies. Yes, I was a real hero. Everyone played my game. Anyway, I want to make a comeback, do my old act again. Turning into beasts and stuff – I can still do it, but I need you to help me, Santa. Please wave a bit of your magic dust in my direction. My wheelchair-bound sister reckons I'm mad, mentally unstable. But I showed her – I tied her up and locked her in her bedroom for a year. Nobody is going to stand in my way. Do you hear me? Altered Beast will live again!
A Beast. XXX



SANTA: Altered Beast? Oh yes, I remember you. Geez, your game was absolutely bloody awful. The trouble was, I couldn't get rid of the darned thing, because everyone got a free copy with their Megadrive. Yeh, you were a real troublemaker, you were – the sort of loser who gives decent toys a bad name. We don't like your sort here in Toyland, so just clear off – and don't think I'm going to help you. I may be a smelly old hermit, but I know a bad egg when I see one. I only pray you never, ever star in another game again. Oh, thanks very much for the mince pies and sherry last Christmas Eve. Well scrummy, except the sherry tasted a bit on the salty side. Urp.

ECCO THE DOLPHIN



Bong Thang Santa,
Heeey, old dude. How's it hangin'? Cool man, real cool. Anway, I was wondering if you could extend a bit of brotherly love in my direction. Help out a fellow Earth-dweller, so to speak. You see, last year, I did a real dum thing. Yes I did. I got some tattoos, a couple of stars on my forehead. They seemed, like, ace at the time, but now, well I just can't dig them no more, they really hype me. Hey, take a chill pill, Ecco. Calm, calm. Anyway, I was wondering if a wise old goat like yourself might have some advice on how to get shot of the things, because I feel like a real wazzock. Thanks Santa, you're a real safe geezer.
Ecco. Dolphin.



SANTA: Ah, tattoos. There's no better man to come to than Santa Claus, if you want to know about tattoos. My body is a living work of art. Take this huge dragon one that curls from my bum cleft right up to my neck. I got that one when I was in Thailand with the Navy. Played havoc with the lasses out there, they wanted to see where it went. Ho ho! That's when things got really saucy! Then there are the ones on my arms. The names of all my reindeer, neatly framed in boughs of holly. Most of my face and head is covered in tattoos too – little birds, butterflies and Homer Simpson. Now about your tattoo. Simply hide it with a large white beard and red-hooded romper suit with wool trim. That's what I do. Shwing Shlong, Ecco.

select the first two-players, so when one person gets killed the last one is used up and the other player is unable to continue, which is very frustrating. Could you tell me if there is any way of getting more credits or more lives, so you don't get killed so quickly. Also, do you know whether there are any plans to release more sports games on CD, for example, golf, English football, baseball or tennis or any other sports? Thanks.
Davina Nicholls, Paradise, Coventry.



TOM: It's funny that. The import versions of Final Fight CD have a full quota of continues, but it seems they removed them from the UK version. Maybe they did it because they thought the British public want that extra challenge. Then again, maybe they didn't. Alas, I don't know any cheats for the game. Sorry.
Sports games for the Mega-CD? Well Joe Montana CD is coming soon and that looks pretty good, but apart from that and an unplayable Japanese golf game, I've seen little else.

IT'S JUST AN IDEA

Dear TOM,
With so many games now being based on comics and films, I wondered if you'd considered using a couple of pages a month for news concerning comics and films, which will more than likely appear as games someday.
John Gould, Stourbridge.

TOM: Mm. Maybe? It's not a bad idea. What do other readers think?

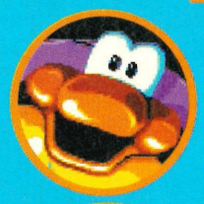
BITCH OF A SWITCH!

Dear TOM,
This is a desperate plea for help. No, I'm not stuck on the first level of some poxy platform game, I am in a bit of a dilemma and you are the only source of infomation I require. Let me explain my problem in a little more detail: Recently I had my Megadrive altered in such a way that it is able to run at both 50Hz and 60Hz (I'm sure that you are aware that such a procedure is possible by putting a switch between a connection inside the Megadrive). Well I thought that after having this minor and uncomplicated piece of surgery carried out I would be able to enjoy the prospect of playing all my games on a 'full' screen and 17.5% faster. But, to my shock and horror, I found that when I switched my switch so that my Megadrive would be running at 60Hz I got a picture on the screen that was out of synchronisation, ie. it was crap. Not what I had expected at all! I checked my SCART lead and that was in perfect working order so that wasn't the problem. I eventually discovered that some TV's are incompatible with my new set up, but I have seen plenty of TVs that do work, but these are quite expensive sets. So my plea to you is: What TV do you use? (If you have one of these switches, which I'm sure you have) and could any of the readers of this most illustrious publication please write in and tell me what TV sets they use with their 50/60 Hz switch-adapted Megadrives. This would really help me out of a hole because the last thing I want is to buy a TV that will again be incompatible with this set-up. Thank you for all your help and your mag is excellent!
Yours switching in vain-ly,
Andrew D Goodall, Cosham, Portsmouth.

TOM: That'll teach you, won't it? Tampering with the dark laws of Sega without a clue what you're doing. Actually the problem is quite simple- you're using a PAL TV. This means that it can only display a signal running at 50Hz, the speed that all TV's run at in the UK. However, America, Japan and most European countries use the NTSC system, which runs at 60Hz. As long as you buy an NTSC-compatible TV you shouldn't have any trouble playing your Megadrive at 60Hz. On the other hand, you could do what we do and use a Philips CM8S Monitor. The choice is yours.



LET'S COOK!





It's time to put on your aprons and heat up that skillet once again, for yet another top cookery session with Messrs Joe Musashi and James Pond. Let's cook!

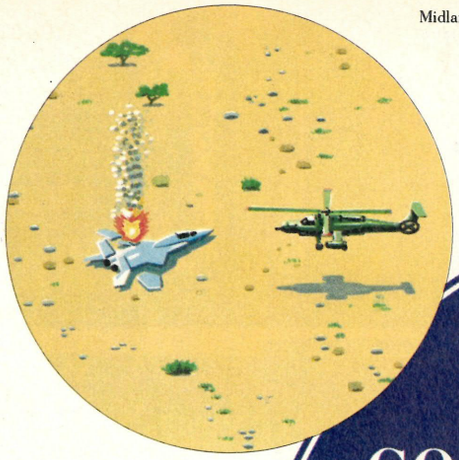
JOE: Harro Sports Fans. I'm Joe and this is my partner Jim!
JAMES: Harro! And we here to teach you...
JOE AND JAMES: ...HOW TO COOK! Haha!
JOE: So without further ado, ret's rook at today's tasty lecipe – Spanish lice with fish. Yummy!

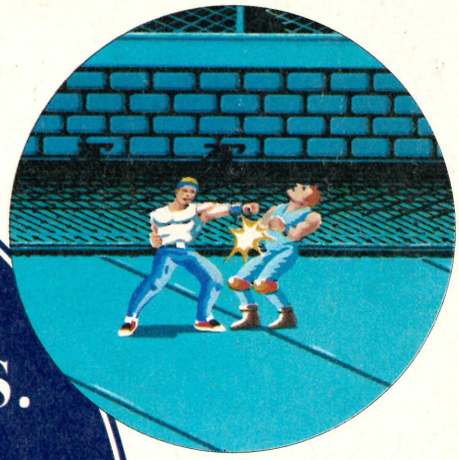
INGREDIENTS

olive oil
1 filleted fish.
1 1/2 cups of chopped yellow onion
6 green onions, including green tops, sliced.
2 red sweet peppers.
2 tablespoons minced or pressed garlic.
2 cups of peeled and chopped ripe or canned tomatoes, drained.
1/4 cup minced fresh parsley.
3 cups short-grain white rice.
5 cups homemade chicken stock
1/2 cup dry white wine.
salt .
freshly ground black pepper
an assortment of clams, mussels and prawns
asparagus tips

JOE: Rooks pletty good, eh Jimmy?
JAMES: Hang on. It's fish.
JOE: Haha, indeed it is, old chum. Okay, first heat 2 tablespoons of orive oil in a skirret. Now take fish!
JAMES: Hey!
JOE: First we must lemove Lobocod outfit. Peel off with fingers. Don't fight, Jimmy.
JAMES: Ow, ouch, ow.
JOE: Now trow fish in pan. Banzai!
JAMES: SCREAM! SHHHH!
JOE: Yummy. Smell that lich aloma. Sauté until opaque. Now leduce heat to a medium and pour 1/4 cup of oil away. Add yerrow onions, gleen onions and sweet peppers. Cook until soft and golden. It takes about 15 minutes. Now drain lice.
JAMES: Urgh! What's going on? Where am I?...Aaargh! My body! Look at my body!
JOE: Uh oh! Rooks rike Jimmy is still arive. Better lemove his head and spine.
JAMES: No, no, no, noooooo.
JOE: Boy, he sure put up a fight! Add lice to skirret and cook for 3 minutes. Leduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes. Flve minutes before lice is done, add assorted shellfish.
Finarry, garnish with asparagus and sweet peppers. Mmm, rip-smackingry good!

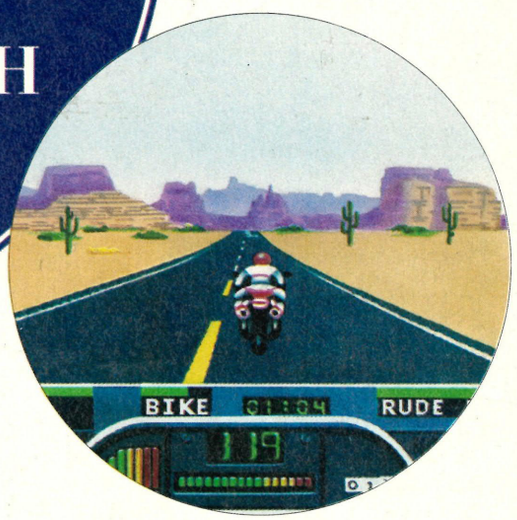
Midland Livecash is available for 11-18 year olds. You must be 16 to receive the driving lesson vouchers and 17 to use them. ©MIDLAND BANK plc. 1993.





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MEGADRIVE REVIEW





BY: SEGA



8-MEG

STYLE



PINBALL

PRICE £49.99

PLAYERS 1-4

SKILL SETTINGS 2

RELEASE DATE

NOV 1993



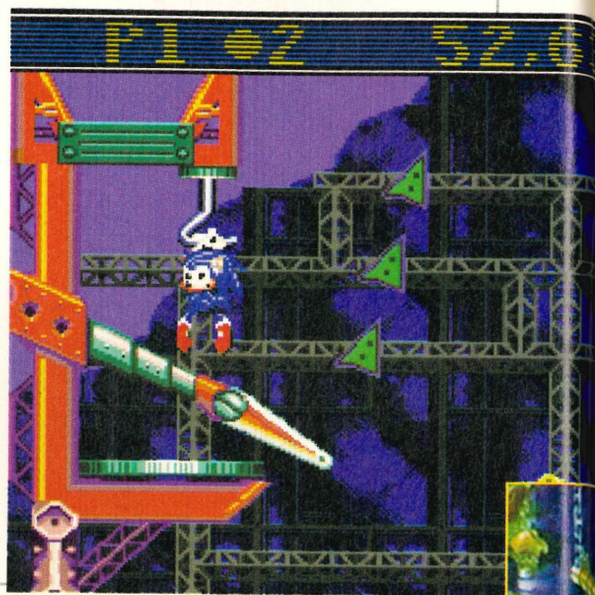
TOM GUISE will never forget the day he saw his pal, Tails the Fox, catch his neck between those pinball flippers in a tragic Pinball accident. The little blighter hung on for hours. Now the time has come to face that grief.

SONIC S

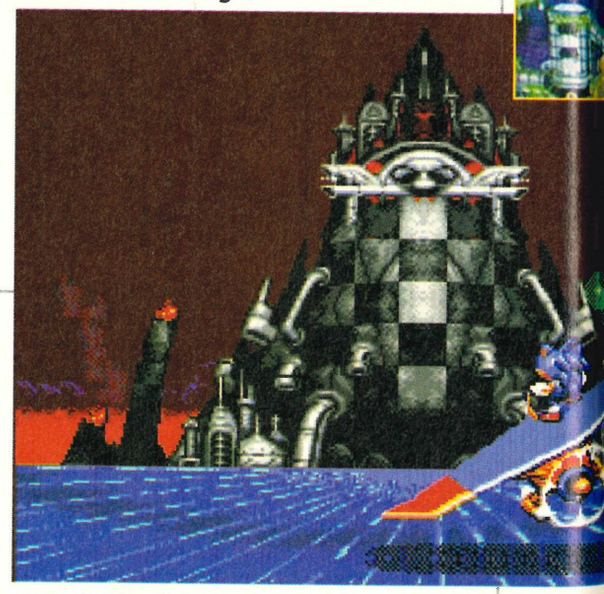
Pinball. That titan among arcade amusements, that godfather of the gaming world. Long before the likes of Space Invaders and Pac-man, people could travel to their local pier or funfair and enjoy the delights of pinball. With its simple ball-flipping, bumper-spanging, table-top fun, it appeals to everyone, young or old, male or female, bunny or badger. Yes, even woodland animals enjoy it. In the Green Hill Zone, pinball is one of the most popular pastimes. After school each day, young squirrels, raccoons and foxes race down to the Springyard Amusement Arcade - their pockets filled with rings - ready to play on the latest pinball tables. So you can imagine the excitement when, one day, all the young woodland creatures were offered a free trip to the newly-opened Pinball Island. Free pinball for all the boys and girls. Golly! But it was all a trap set by that evil Dr Robotnik. Driven by his insatiable lust for young furry animals, he lured them to his volcanic hideaway to turn them all into lunch-sized pies and junior mittens. There is only one hope – Sonic the Hedgehog. Trained in the art of pinball ever since his pal Tails was killed in a tragic pinball accident, he set off in search of his woodland chums. The time has come for Spinball!

SPINACH !

Sonic's third outing on the Megadrive, Sonic Spinball, is quite a departure from the blue hedgehog's previous games. For starters, it's not a platform game. Nope – as the name suggests, this a Sonic pinball game. Based around the popular Springyard and Casino Night Zones from the first two Sonic games, each level is set out like a massive pinball table, with yon Sonic as the ball. Using various sets of flippers, Sonic can be batted about each level. However, unlike real pinball, you can actually guide the porcine prince around by moving him in the air. There are even certain places where he can run, jump and even use his super speed-up to fire himself through tunnels.



▲ **Hanging on for dear life, Sonic smiles for the camera. Flash git.**



▲ **Sonic hits Club Tropicana, where drinks are free. Fun and sunshine – there's enough for everyone.**

SPINDERELLA

Starting in the caverns deep beneath Robotnik's island, the aim is to get to the evil professor's penthouse at the top. There are four levels in total, each one requiring our hedgehog hero to do the same thing – collect all the Chaos Emeralds and then beat the boss at the top. Of course, this is easier than it sounds, because each Chaos Emerald is protected by various defence systems which have to be deactivated before the emeralds can be reached. For example, on level one, Sonic has to clear away Robotnik's toxic waste and open a rail-bridge so he can get to the emerald in his minecart. Tough work when the only way to do all this is with a pair of pinball flippers.



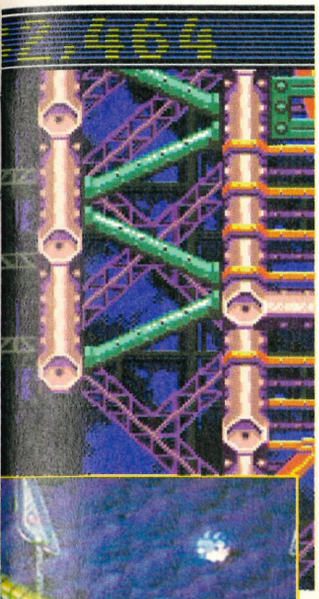


▲ **Witness the look of fear as Sonic misses both flippers. What you can't experience, though, is the horrid eggy smell he leaves in his wake.**

THE SPIN DOCTORS

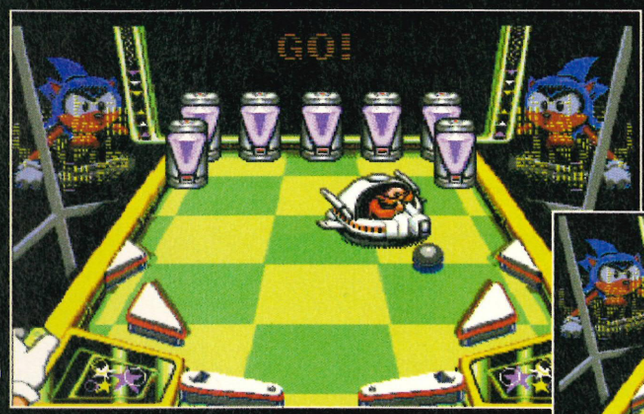
If you're expecting a game that recreates realistic pinball, you'll be disappointed. Sonic Spinball just uses the pinball theme to create a backdrop for the spiky one's adventures. The aim of real pinball has always been to clock up loads of points, either by bouncing the ball off loads of bumpers or by jamming the ball in secret bonus rooms. However, Spinball doesn't really give you any incentive to earn points. The only thing that matters is getting through each level, and this is done in a very linear fashion. There are hardly any bumpers or bonus holes to add that 'big-points' pinball feel to the game. This really is very much a Sonic game without the platforms.

PINBALL



SPIN, SPIN AND WIN!

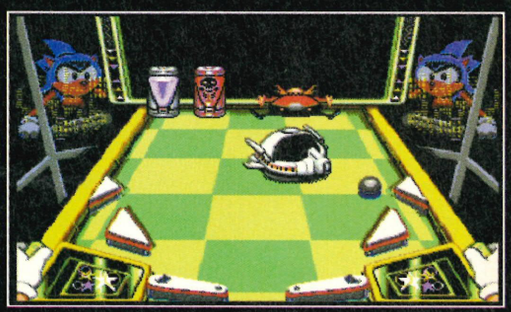
As with all the Sonic games, Spinball has a set of special zones in between each level. These take the form of a set of mini pin-tables with Sonic in control of the flippers. You can even see his reflection in the window behind the table!



▲ Bonus table number one. Free all the animals by smashing their prisons.



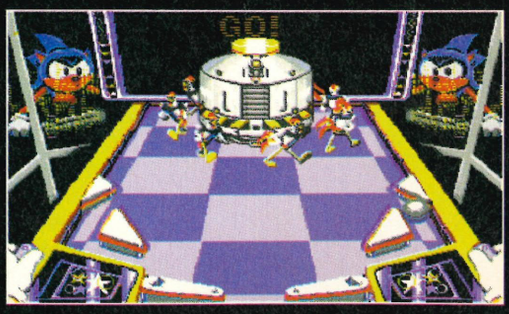
▲ Hey, look – it's Tails! No wait, it can't be. He's dead. Must be some other two-tailed flying fox.



▲ By using Robotnik as a bumper, the ball can be kept at the end of the table.



▲ Once all the animals are freed, take out the bad guy. Game over Robotnik!



▲ Kill the badniks and break open the creature-container on table three.



BARRY SPINNAKER

One of the strangest things about Spinball are the graphics. It seems quite likely that the people behind the previous Sonic games had nothing to do with this game, because Sonic has been completely redrawn. Precisely why this has been done remains a mystery, though, because he looks quite awful. Gone is that slender, almost Virtual Reality-style hedgehog, replaced by a fat, badly-shaded and very garish blue character. Also, the old trademark ring-collecting sound has been replaced by a new one. However, although quite off-putting when you first play the game, this new looking, new sounding and somewhat inferior Sonic soon grows on you.



▲ **Wahey! Sonic shows off after colecting one of the elusive gems.**



▲ **Having been bounced to death, the evil Doctor Robotnik exits stage right.**

ALTERNATIVELY

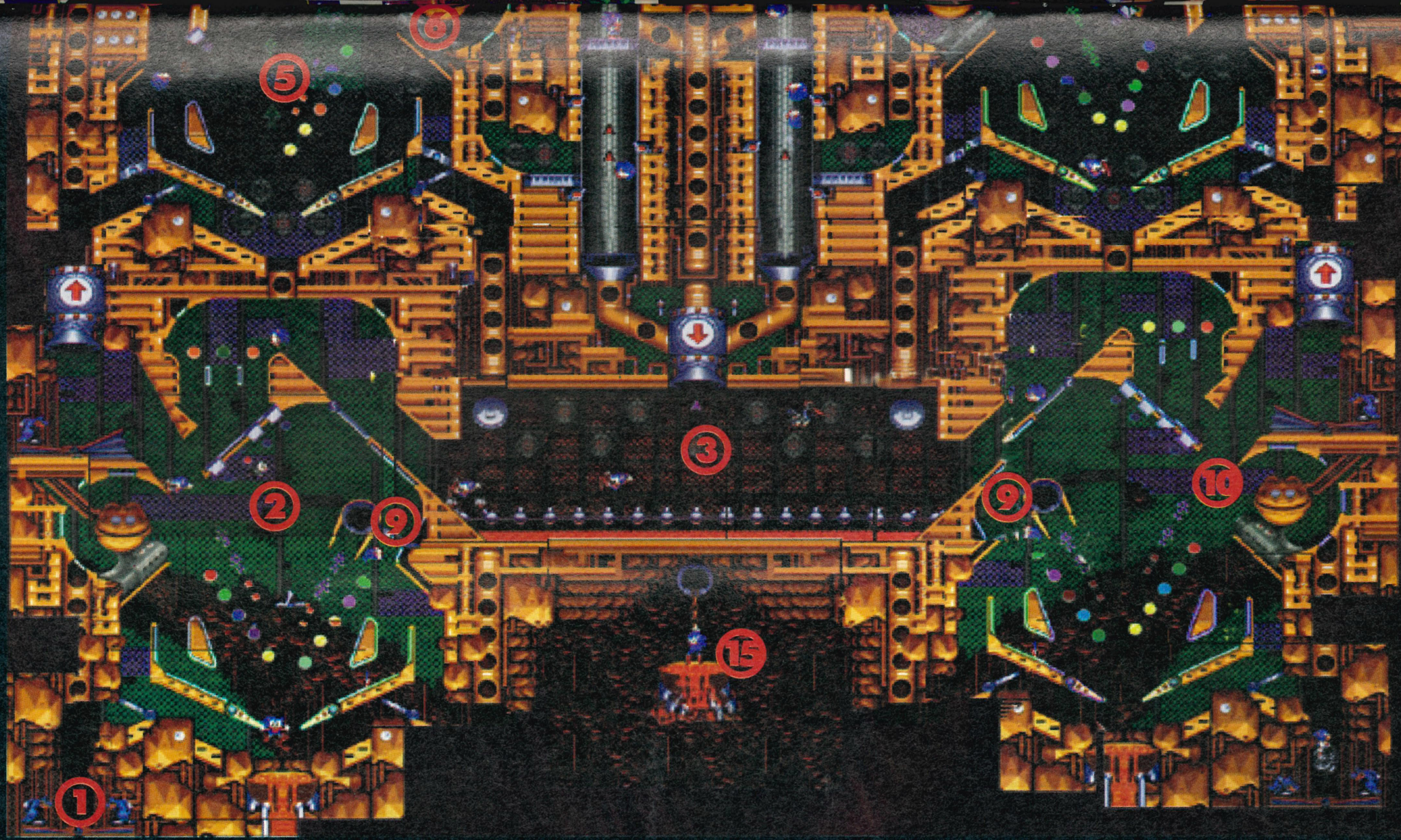
95

SONIC 2
By SEGA
Price £39.99
It may not be a pinball game, but it's still Sonic and it features the Casino Night Zone, a brilliant pinball based level and the origin of Spinball. You've got to have this.

LEVEL 2: THE BOILER

After negotiating the underground caverns of the first level, Sonic reaches the second tier of the fortress, right in the heart of the volcano, and comes face to face with the Robo-Boiler, the massive engine that runs the whole fortress.

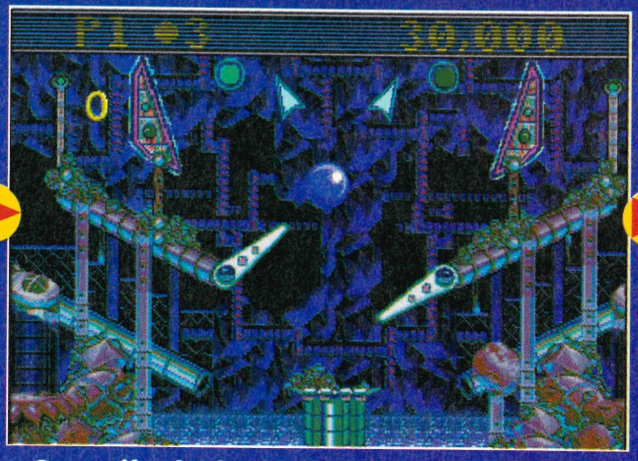




1. Sonic enters the level here. The bellows fire him into the main arena.
2. The first ventricle of the heart. From here Sonic must break open the door and enter...
3. The Steam Arena. Using the power of the steam Sonic can enter the main valve sending him up to...
4. ...the first Chaos Emerald!
5. He now enters the top left atrium.
6. By bashing at the securing pin here, Sonic can enter steam tunnel one..
7. ...and reach the second Emerald.
8. The third and final Emerald can be reached in the same way from the other side.
9. Bonus points can be gained by entering these portholes.
10. Super loops can be performed for big points.
11. By entering the Bumper Tube, Sonic can accumulate masses of points.
12. The final atrium can only be entered when all the emeralds have been collected.
13. The Robo-Boiler! Enter it from the top and destroy each of the robot heads individually, but beware...
14. If Sonic falls down this hole...
15. ...he plunges all the way down to the bowels of the level, hanging desperately onto a chain before plunging into the deadly vat of superheated magma below!



▲ The plunger sends Sonic into the game. Go, Sonic, go!



▲ One swift whack with the left flipper propels him up...



▲ ...and he hits the targ from the Emerald Cham



▲ Now he can grab the shelf as he passes it...



▲ ...and drop into the minecart...



▲ ...sending him right down to the first emerald.



▲ Now Sonic drops between the flippers into a floating oil drum...



▲ Which he rows toward the Emerald Chamber. One jump...

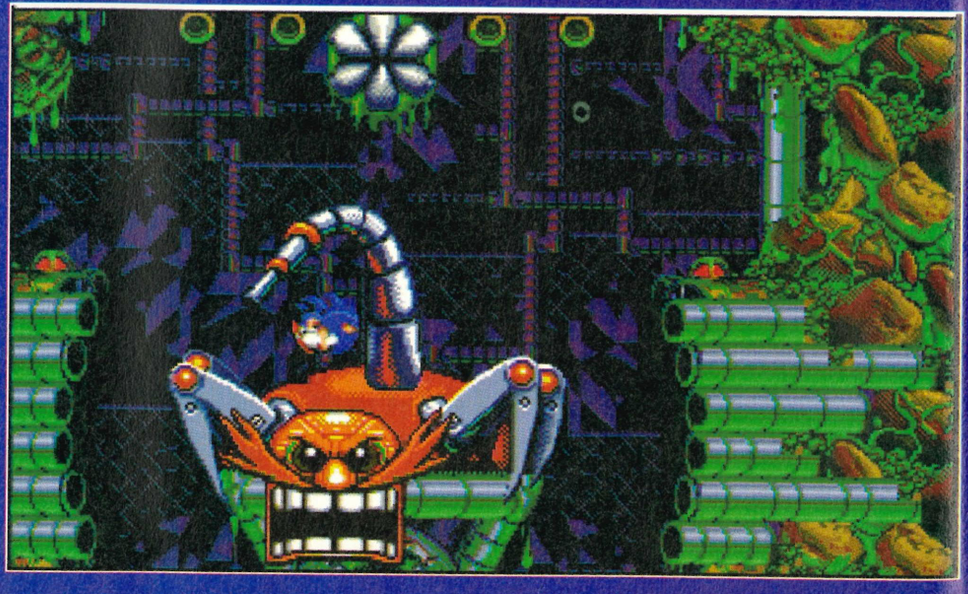


▲ ..and he's got the final emerald!

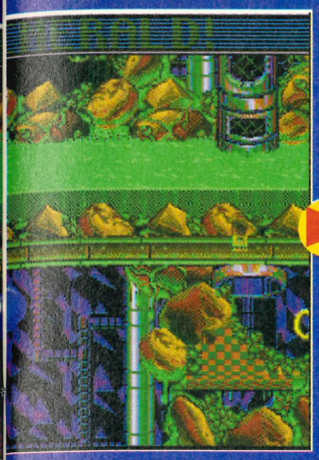
LEVEL ONE:
THE TOXIC CAVES

Having swam through an underground river, Sonic finds himself right underneath Robotnik's fortress, in the bowels of the mountain. A wretched, slimy catacomb of tunnels filled with the toxic waste Robotnik's machines produce. This is level one.





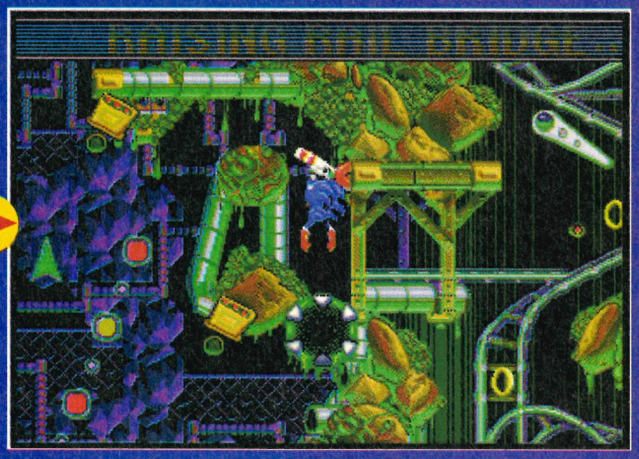
▲ Now he can enter the boss room and face Scorpius. Aim for the tail!



t! Draining the slime r



▲ Now he's flipped up to the next arena.



▲ An accurate shot and Sonic reaches the rail-bridge lever.

SPINDLE

Actually, Sonic Spinball is really quite enjoyable. Rather then creating each level as a progression of the last one, the programmers have spent time crafting each one separately. The result is four absolutely huge and cleverly-designed levels, each one better than the last. You'll be amazed by the size and ingenuity of each level. Each one requires different tactics and skills to get through and it can take ages working out what you're supposed to do to get those Chaos Emeralds.

However, brilliant as each level is, the four of them just aren't enough. In fact, it seems virtually impossible to die on the first and third levels! It's only when you get to the final level that things get really tough, but by then you've seen most of the game.

If only there had been two or three more levels, or perhaps tons of similar looking levels, even some bonus sub-rooms, it would have felt like you were getting more game. But as it stands, four levels is a little sparse. Granted, that's more than Dragon's Fury has, but Dragon's Fury is an ongoing game. In Sonic Spinball, once you've collected the emeralds, there's nothing left to do in each level.

SPINDRIFT

I really enjoyed Spinball. The flippers and Sonic-ball all move and react perfectly. The playability is just brilliant and each level is great fun to get through, but unfortunately I don't think there's enough of it there to warrant the asking price. Four levels for fifty quid is a lot to ask. A shame really, because what is there is brilliant. If only there was more. If you're after a good pinball game, I'd put Dragon's Fury above this, but if you've already got that or you fancy a Sonic game with a difference, then this is certainly worth a look at. Just bear in mind that you won't be getting a lot for your dosh.

ALTERNATIVELY

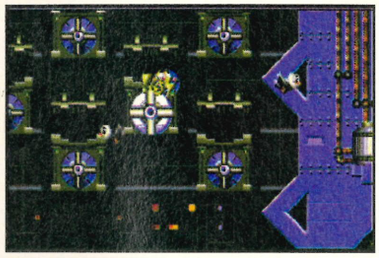
91

DRAGON'S FURY
by TENGEN
PRICE: £39.99
It may be old, but this is still the best pinball game for the Megadrive. Neatly blending fantasy and reality with stunning gameplay. Thoroughly recommended.

LEVEL FOUR: ROBOTNIK ESCAPING!

Sonic finally reaches the summit of Robotnik's volcano, but it's too late – the evil doctor is escaping in his spaceship and the volcano is erupting! Smash open the securing bolts to free the emeralds and then it's a final showdown aboard Robotnik's ship!

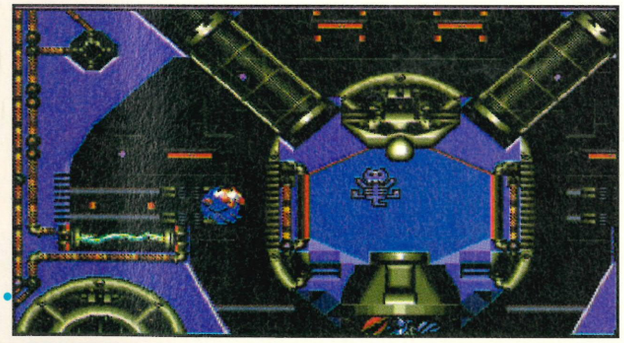
LEVEL THREE: THE ROBOT FACTORY



▲ **The dread Animal Prison. Smash open the pens!**

The third tier of Robotnik's veg-o-fortress holds a dark secret – the Badnik Construction Plant. With electrical circuitry crackling and hydraulic machinery whirring and buzzing all around, Sonic has to free all the woodland creatures from the Animal Prison, collect all the emeralds and then face the boss, the dreaded Veg-o-matic – a machine that turns cute animals into evil badniks!

BOSS 3: THE VEG-O-MATIC!



▼ **Break open the supply tubes to set the animals free and then enter the machine and destroy it!**

THE SECOND OPINION

STEVE MERRETT



I like Sonic, me – oh, I used that intro last month... actually, that's a bit of a lie, as far as Spinball goes anyway. It's not that it's a terrible game, just not very long and, bearing in mind the Sonic tag, we've come to expect more from the spiky-furred one. In terms of presentation, Spinball also seems a classic case of missed potential. Anyone familiar with the Super Mario Bros pinball table will know that it uses sound effects taken directly from the Nintendo games, adding to the atmosphere immensely. With Spinball, though, even the ring sounds have been changed, and – gasp! – Sonic has even changed in appearance. So far, this sounds like a bit of a slagging, but on the positive side Spinball still proves to be an extremely playable pinball game which takes the chance to add a few features normal tables couldn't handle. However, whilst these innovations are welcome, there just aren't enough stages to keep you going and this will result in people whizzing through to Robotnik and wondering where the hell the rest of the game has gone...

%RATINGS



89% PRESENTATION Not much in the way of options or intros, but well put together.

92% GRAPHICS A dodgy Sonic sprite, but fantastic-looking levels.

90% SOUND Good tunes and trashy pinball-style sound-effects. Spot-on!

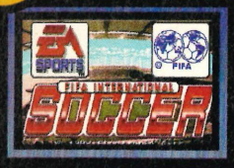
92% SHORT TERM PLAY Highly responsive controls make it instantly playable and addictive.

82% LONG TERM PLAY Only four levels. It doesn't take long to see all of them.

OVERALL 86 A highly playable pinball-style game and a new twist on the Sonic theme.

MEGADRIVE REVIEW





BY: EA



STEVE MERRETT can often be found punting a ball around Regents Park on a Thursday night, surrounded by like-minded, out-of-breath mates. But he had to get to grips with playing on a level pitch, without two coats acting as goal posts, when he tackled EA's new FIFA licence.

FIFA INTE SOC

EA SPORTS ELECTRONIC ARTS

16-MEG

STYLE

SPORT

PRICE £44.99

PLAYERS 1-4

SKILL SETTINGS 3

RELEASE DATE

DEC 1993

You know when you're standing at a bus stop or waiting for a tube and someone you know makes you jump by tapping you on the shoulder? Well, that's the sort of effect FIFA has had on the soccer-mad fraternity. From out of nowhere, EA have pulled a game which we are led to believe is the most comprehensive footy game available. They have abandoned the customary Sensi/J-League overhead perspective, and claim that this is the most instinctively playable footy game – allowing the use of bicycle kicks, turning volleys and shimmies with only a modicum of effort on the player's part. Big words indeed. After all, how can a game with such detailed graphics be fast enough to compete with the small, but fleet-footed Sensi players? Here's how...



DURATION: 30 SEC.

TIMED SEQUENCE



▲ A seemingly harmless goal kick to the centre of the pitch is met by a midfielder who backheels it to...



▲ ... an awaiting attacker. Having evaded a tackle, he then turns on a sixpence to punt the ball upfield.



▲ As the ball floats towards the penalty area, it starts to dip in front of the team's striker...



▲ However, just as the ball is about to go off for a goal kick, it's intercepted by a fleet-footed striker.



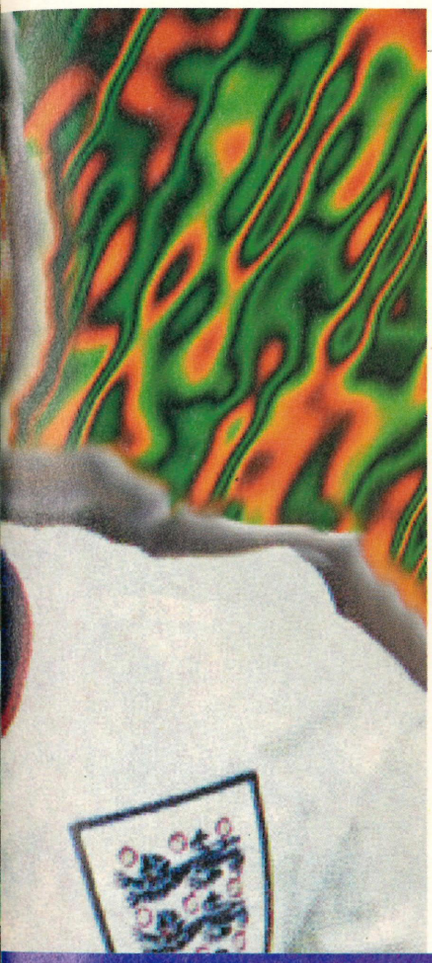
▲ Turning instantly, he lets fly with a brilliant right-footed shot which could be nodded in.



▲ But no! Despite the narrow angle, the goalie has to close in with a last-minute dive...

RNATIONAL CER







▲ Whoops! The midfield whizz slips on a patch of ice shaped like a star.



▲ The match goes into extra time with leapfrog replacing the usual penalties.



▲ Such is FIFA's realism, that diving headers send the ball spinning away as players fail to make proper contact.



▲ ... but even a diving header can't connect with the ball, which now seems to be heading out of play.



▲ ... all to no avail. Miraculously, the ball slots into the far post with the goalie stil in mid air.



▲ By the time the goalie has hit the ground, the opposition are already whooping with glee!



IT'S THE REAL THING

Let's face it, you'd be hard-pushed to outdo Sensi when it comes to the options front, but by golly EA have tried. As soon as the customary divvy commentator has been obliterated with a press of the B button, FIFA shows its wares. The usual international sides are on offer – watch our for new boy, Brian Plank, in the German defence! – and every aspect of the game can be altered in some way. There are also two play modes – Action and Simulation – but the difference between the two is minimal, and basically all the Sim mode offers is that the players get tired as the game drags on. Personally, I would have preferred to have had more control, but more on that later...

SIZE IS EVERYTHING

EA have obviously taken a good, hard look at their on-field opposition, and the decision to base their game around an isometric pitch is a very brave one – but thankfully it's one that works extremely well. The main problem with a game such as J-League or Ultimate Soccer is that the player towards the bottom of the screen always has their goalie obscured by the netting, making goalkeeping accuracy quite tricky. However, when playing on an isometric pitch such as FIFA's, every angle is clear. The fast-scrolling pitch ensures that long-balls are easily intercepted, and there's never any doubt as to the whereabouts of a team-mate. Similarly, it also allows EA to show off the many frames of animation they have used for each player, so when a striker nods a ball down for a volley or a player turns and has a crack at goal, it's like viewing it on the telly.

UNDER CONTROL?

Of course, it's all very well looking pretty and featuring bucket-loads of slick animation, but the crunch comes with the playability. Weeeeeeell, there's no doubting FIFA is a playable footy sim, but I just didn't feel that I was in complete control of the action. It's good that the developers have incorporated so many moves – you can even chest the ball – but whenever one of my players produced such a silky skill, I was always unsure whether it was actually my doing. This doesn't affect the playability in any way, as the three buttons are used in the traditional way – to tonk the ball upfield, pass, or switch to a different player respectively – a tried, tested and thoroughly effective system. However, in making the game so user-friendly, it seems that complete control has been sacrificed in the name of appearance – this doesn't give you a feeling of disappointment, just occasional bewilderment.

GORDON BANKS, TRA-LA-LA

FIFA's goalies are hyper-intelligent chaps, who respond to every shot with a breath-taking dive or an extended fist to punch the ball back into play. However, when controlled by the computer, they prove to be just too infallible, so for a more realistic and playable game it's always best to switch them over to manual

control – then you've got no one to blame but yourself when the ball dribbles through your 'keeper's legs. As with the players, though, it often seems that the goalies aren't always under complete control, and the ball is often scooped up without the player actually doing anything! Still, the typical EA realism is well in evidence – a brilliant goal kick system has been included, using a clever box system (see panel), and it's even possible to roll the ball out to a nearby defender.

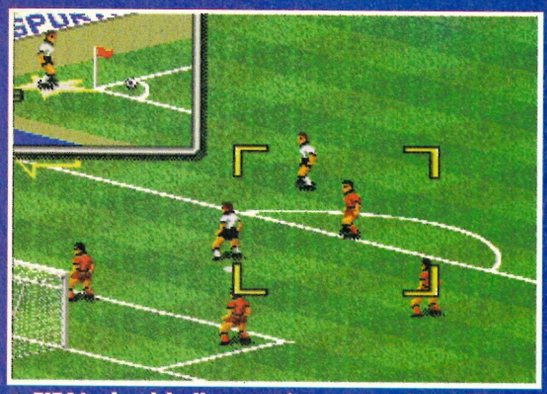
HE DIVED, REF!

If there's one thing that is greatly enhanced by the isometric viewpoint, it's the fouls. Iin past footy games, all the hacked players do is skid along for a couple of seconds and then get back up and run about. Not so in FIFA. No, Sir! As the two teams bustle around waiting for a corner kick, over-zealous attackers can often be seen shoving a defender out of the way! What's more, if a sliding tackle arrives a little too late, the crocked player rolls around the floor clutching his shin in true Oscar-winning fashion!



CAN I KICK IT?

One of FIFA's nicer ideas is the system used whenever the ball is booted out of play. Whenever a corner, throw-in or goal kick is given, a large yellow box is super-imposed on to the pitch. This acts as a rough guide, so that your attackers can be lined up, but it's only really useful for corners because goal kicks are basically just an opportunity to boot the ball as far upfield as humanly possible.



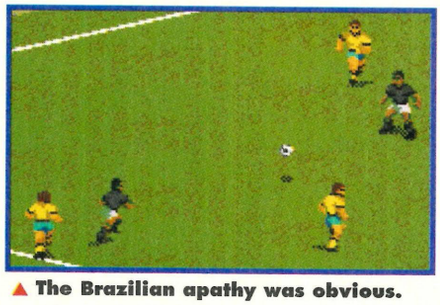
▲ FIFA's dead-ball targetting system in action. Hang on, this corner's aimed at the wrong man!



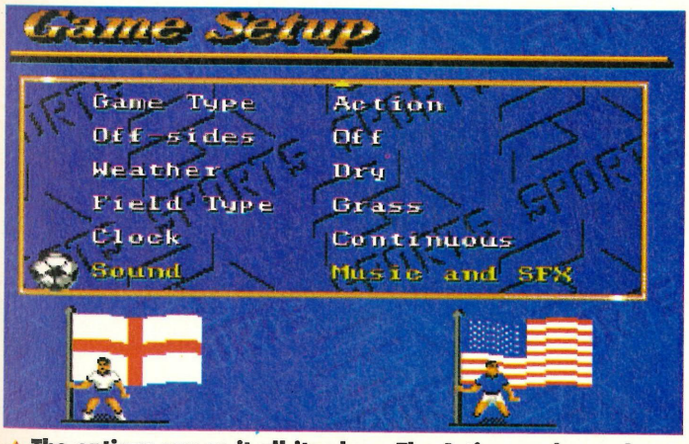
▲ You get the same control over the direction of goal-kicks and throw-ins too.



▲ Ooh, that'll sting when it hits him...



▲ The Brazilian apathy was obvious.



▲ The options screen it all its glory. The Action mode can be swapped for Simulation, which means that, as the game progresses, the players get steadily more knackered.



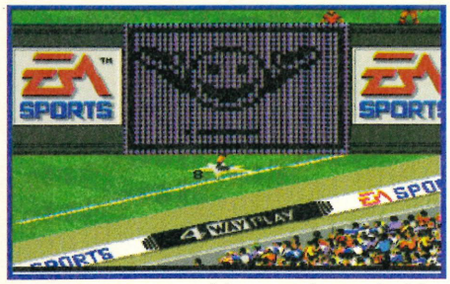
▲ Bored of the 4-4-2 formation? Then change it via this easy-to-use system. In fact, this is so easy to get to grips with, even Graham Taylor could do it. Then again...

MORE FOUR-PLAY

As with all recent EA Sports games, FIFA is compatible with the 4 Way Play adaptor. This allows two players to team up against another pair, or other combinations – including four against the computer! During the one-player game, the player under control is indicated by a large yellow star, which automatically shifts to the player you are passing to. However, for the four-player game, each participant is given a different-coloured star, which proves confusing – it's rather tricky to piece together flowing moves because of the confusion caused by swapping between players. In addition, if the ball is punted towards your goal, it often proves tricky to switch control to the 'keeper to save it, resulting in goals which would embarrass Stevie Wonder. Stick to the two-player mode we say...



▲ Honestly, those Swedish chaps get so carried away. All we did was mention that Abba Gold was quite a good party album...



▲ Whenever a goal is scored, a suitably jolly scoreboard display interrupts the celebrations.



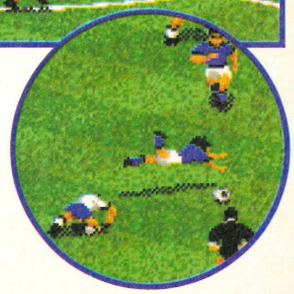
▲ Get up, you big jessie! Yup, FIFA even includes a crash-course in acting via its fouling option.



▲ Hmmm, keep an eye on that German, he's bound to try and nick the coin...



▲ Man on! Man on!





AT THE END OF THE DAY

There's no doubt whatsoever that this is the King of footy games. In terms of appearance, nothing comes close, and its many features also raise it above the rest. It's just how a 16-bit footy game should look – EA took a bit of a risk with the large sprites, but they've managed to get them moving about the field at a fair old rate. Every aspect of soccer seems to have been incorporated, and the goal kicks, diving headers and volleys appear far more realistic, thanks to the viewpoint. Another major factor in its favour is the sound. The crowd roar, sing-songs and the atmosphere generated is just perfect. I can honestly say that, whilst FIFA was being played, admiring crowds gathered around the office Megadrive. This sound is also carried through to the assorted effects, and whenever a player punts the ball it is accompanied by a terrific thumping noise which really gives the impression of putting power behind a shot. I also feel the need to mention that the realism extends to mis-timing headers so that they glance back into play rather than towards the goal. All these moves combine to make a stunning footy game and, although it would certainly benefit from a little more control over the players, there's nothing that can even touch this. The (pre-booze) George Best of soccer games. 'Nuff said.



THE SECOND OPINION

MARK HOLMES

The first time I saw FIFA Soccer was at the ECTS trade show in Islington – playing it on a video wall two metres wide, with the sound pumping through mega speakers turned up to number eleven, was brilliant. The radical new isometric viewpoint, the superb animation and trick moves of the player sprites, and above all the incredibly atmospheric crowd roars and chants, marked this game out as the new footy game league-leader. Now, a few months and many play-testing sessions later, my first impression holds true – to a point. There's still no doubt in my mind that this is the best-looking, best-sounding, most atmospheric footy game I've ever seen. Steve's commented on its crowd-drawing capabilities, and I'm sure a lot of people will buy it as soon as they see it playing, simply because it looks and sounds so amazing. But I've also got to agree with the point Steve made about the amount of control you have over the players – there's just not enough. In short, you don't need much skill to play FIFA soccer – the players seem to do a lot of the work for you, which means that, after you've played a few games and you've got over the visual and sonic gloss, you'll be itching to play a footy game that makes you feel more involved in the action. With fully controllable players, FIFA would be a classic, but as it is, it really doesn't draw me into the game enough. You'll have to excuse me now – I'm off for a game of J League...

%RATINGS



PRESENTATION 93%
Everything a footy fan could need. And then some.

GRAPHICS 94%
A brilliant combination of large sprites with isometric perspective and speed!

SOUND 91%
All the cheers, jeers and songs of an England international. Brilliant.

SHORT TERM PLAY 92%
Simplicity itself to play...

LONG TERM PLAY 92%
... And more than enough action and teams to draw you back.

OVERALL 92
THE best footy game for the Megadrive. Basically, FIFA makes the rest look like first division stragglers.

MEGADRIVE REVIEW

SONY IMAGESOFT

BY: SONY

8-MEG

STYLE

SPORTS

PRICE £39.99

PLAYERS 1-2

SKILL SETTINGS 3

RELEASE DATE

NOV 1993

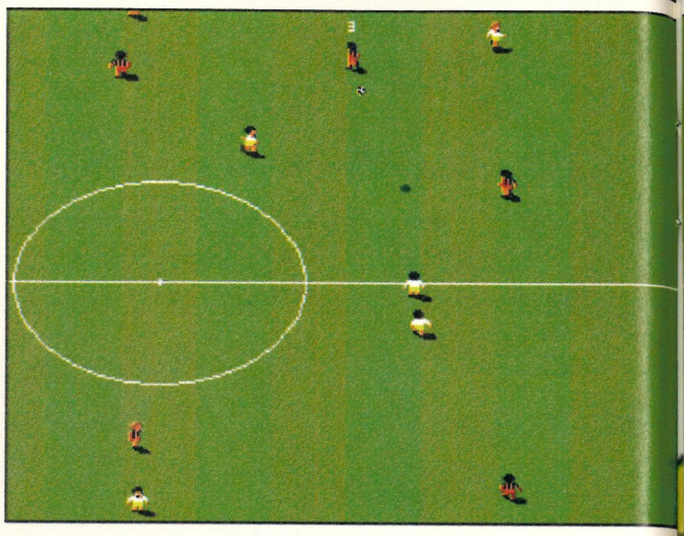


STEVE MERRETT's mad about football, in fact he's always doing his one-man Mexican Wave around the office while singing his repertoire of footy chants. But singing the praises of Sony's Sensible Soccer didn't come quite so easy to him.

SENSIBL

"He's football crazy, he's football mad. Football's gone and taken away the little bit of sense he had." - The Bard Of Rochdale.

Ah yes, the great football songs. Varied in their content and subject matter, but always eminently memorable. After all, who can forget the meaningful lyrics of "We hate Tottenham, we hate Tottenham," and "Who's the *@!$er in the black?" Of course, all you Megadrive-owning footy fans out there have good reason to be singing at the moment, as the tide of soccer games shows no signs of drying up. Now, with FIFA already running up and down the sidelines (and reviewed this issue, no less), Sony's conversion of the Amiga classic, Sensible Soccer, has run on to the pitch. Selling countless copies on the Amiga alone, Megadrive Sensi is a slightly enhanced version with all the features of the floppy game ported over, along with new additions such as a 'Star Player' feature and more tournaments than you could shake a ref at...



▲ Sensi Soccer's player sprites are real teeny tiny tots.

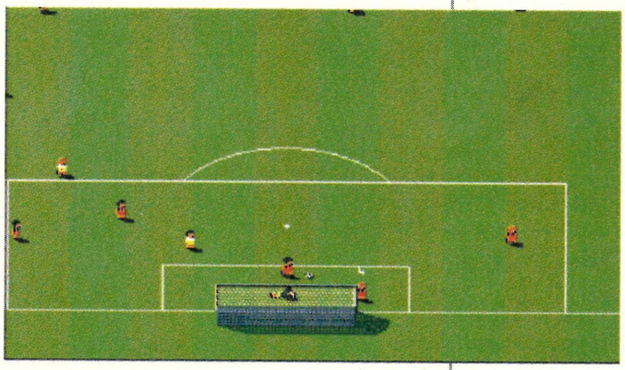
GETTING STARTED

Before you even wander on to the pitch, Sensi unveils wave after wave of options. On inserting the cart, you get the basics such as difficulty level and a selection of league modes, but selecting one of these reveals a larger array of sub-options. By far the most impressive of these relates to the number of teams on offer – none of which are based on real sides. Sort of. Y'see, to get past the intricacies of licensing, Sensi's England eleven contains the likes of Peul Once and Lea Doxon rather than the defensive pairing of Messrs Ince and Lee Dixon.

That said, though, there's more than enough teams in here to keep you busy, including a particularly neat Custom League which features the likes of 'At The Chippy' FC (home of Sausage In Batter and Large Cod Piece) and 'Nasty Words' Albion.



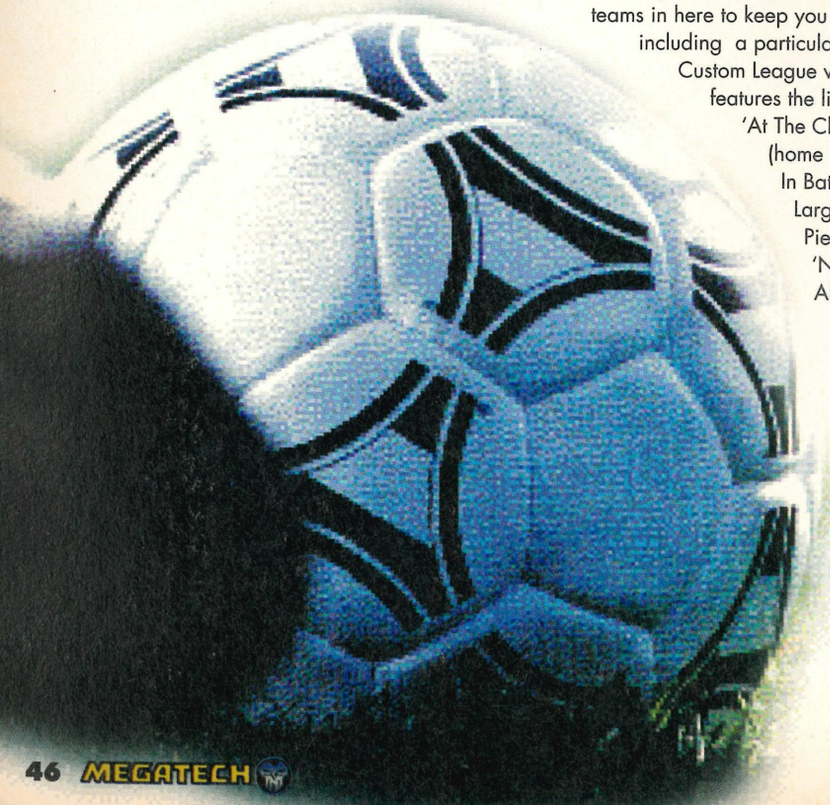
▲ Team names and players – not at all sensible.



POINTS OF VIEW

The actual match is viewed from above, and the sprites used for the players must be the tiniest ever to hit the Megadrive. Honestly, these puny potential Keegans would be hard pushed to stretch themselves across eight pixels in width and height!

As is the norm with bird's-eye-view games, Sensi's pitch scrolls around the player currently controlling the ball, and the small size of the sprites in relation to the pitch means that nearly a quarter of the play area is always in view, which allows for a genuinely skillful passing game and really cracking long-ball set pieces.



E SOCCER

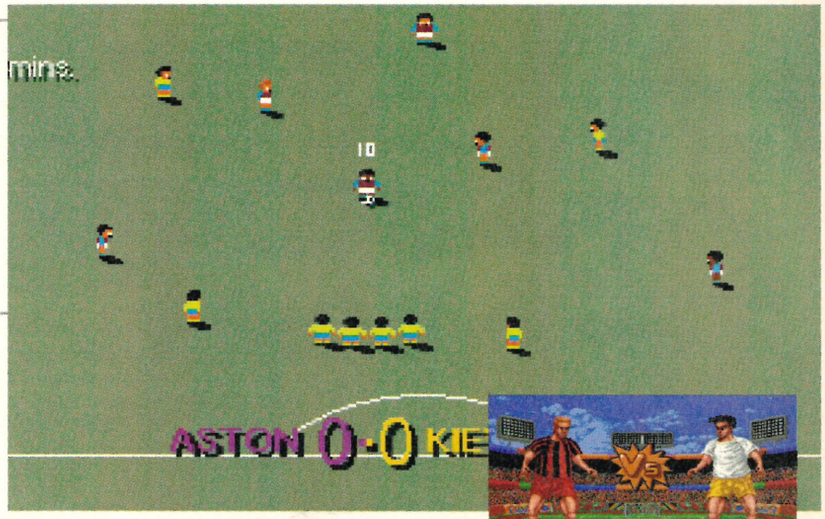


BALL CONTROL

Control over the players is simpler than Vinny Jones. The three buttons allow for huge, stonking punts (complete with aftertouch for those Brazilian-style banana shots), medium-powered shots and accurate passes but, whilst this sounds – and, indeed, is – very simple, Sensi also features a new 'Star Player' mode to toughen things up a little. Basically, Star mode means that, whenever one of your key strikers gets the ball, a star appears directly above him. This indicates that he stands more chance when attacking goal than unmarked players, as his shots are more powerful and accurate.

THE REF NEEDS GLASSES...

As you'd expect, Sensi contains the full monty when it comes to rules. Corners, throw-ins and free kicks are all there, and an invisible Ref ensures the tackles don't get too, er... boisterous. One key addition to Megadrive Sensi over the Amiga game is that a player can now be sent off for a first offence, so crunching tackles are definitely a bit of a no-no. Also catered for are substitutions – whenever the ball is knocked out of play, the player is invited to summon their reserve bench and bring a fresh pair of legs into play. And, unlike most of the existing footy games, changing players does actually have a bearing on the game – they run faster, for a start!



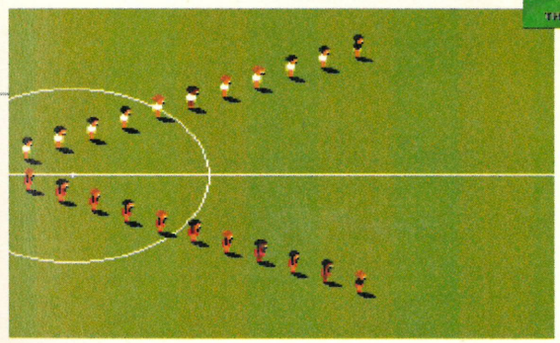
▲ **The icy pitch – grey and hard.**

FIFA LAS VEGAS!

It's obvious that Sensible Soccer was going to draw comparisons with EA's FIFA licence, and to be honest Sensi is left flagging in most departments. But don't discard it without a thought. If there's one thing going in the Sony game's favour, it's that it's extremely playable, in an arcade game sort of way. There's no way it can be classed as a true sim – the action is too fast, and when was the last time you saw someone bend a ball in from the halfway line? But it's remarkably instinctive to play, with some of the best sliding lunges you'll ever see, and a brilliant passing system which is second to none.

Now for the downside. This is not exactly pushing the Megadrive is it? I mean, it does have a few more features than the Amiga original, but, hey, they're not expected to pay nigh-on forty quid for the privilege. Another gripe is with the graphics. Whilst the small sprites are well animated for their size, it's often difficult to see who's got the ball, and this means that an element of confusion often wrecks a carefully-planned move. Similarly, it's also far to easy to sweep the ball from your opponent's feet just by running at him. And whilst I'm griping, I just have to mention the dire sound – the crowd 'roar' is more like the sound you get when you put a shell to your ear. Yuk.

Quite simply, whilst it isn't really fair to compare this to FIFA (after all, there are some two years of development between the two), it was always going to happen. And in the cold light of day, Sensi is left looking like an outdated, once-great player – Trevor Brooking, for instance – in the shade of EA's wannabe Ryan Giggs.



WEATHER OR NOT?

One of the many options at the start of the game allows the player to determine the match's weather conditions. Obviously, a dry pitch means the ball behaves relatively predictably, but a wet pitch means it slows down much faster. An icy pitch swings the other way, and makes it harder to control the ball as it skates across the surface.



▲ **As you can see from this grab, weather conditions really do affect play.**

THE SECOND OPINION

MARK HOLMES



If Sensible Software had got this game out six months ago, they could really have cleaned up in the Megadrive footy stakes. The big advantage of the game is that it is so playable, despite the drawbacks that Steve has mentioned – tiny sprites, difficulty in seeing who's got the ball and the poor sound – and it's a lot of fun too. But the Megadrive footy world has moved on in leaps and bounds just recently, and Sensi has been overtaken in looks and playability by the new breed of football League leaders – J League and FIFA.

%RATINGS



PRESENTATION 92%
More options than you can shake a stick at.

GRAPHICS 69%
Miniscule, but well animated sprites.

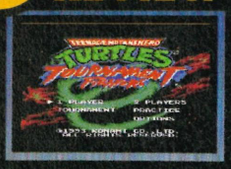
SOUND 46%
Nowt, really. The odd whistle and that's it.

SHORT TERM PLAY 83%
Extremely easy to get into and a doddle to control.

LONG TERM PLAY 79%
Although it's simplistic, it's fun to return to.

OVERALL 80
Good, but too little, too late and for too much.

MEGADRIVE REVIEW



BY: KONAMI

SEGA

16-MEG

STYLE

BEAT 'EM UP

PRICE £49.99

PLAYERS 1-2

SKILL SETTINGS 8

RELEASE DATE

DEC 1993

TURTLES:



The Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles: Leo, Don, Mikey, Ringo and TOM GUISE. Yes, the legendary fifth hero in a half-shell takes a look at the latest exploits of his ex-pals and remembers the shame he felt when they discovered he wasn't really a turtle. Just a teenage mutant.

Yo, puny Earth-dudes, listen up! We are the evil Turtle clones, totally heinous replicas of your accursed Heroes in a Half Shell. Sent by our most villainous host, the dreaded Krang, we have kidnapped Master Splinter, rat friend and mentor to the Hero Turtles, and taken him back to Dimension X to be diced into rat cutlets. Aww, totally bogus, dudes. Bwa-ha-ha! Come, Heroes in a Half Shell, come and rescue him, if you dare. Face us! We will crush your most non-excellent shells and turn you into turtle wax! We have visited your insignificant planet and munched most wholesomely on your awesome Pizza Rolla, a new way to experience pizza. We too are Ninja Turtles possessed of raw Turtle Power. Until we meet, Hero Turtles. Cowerbanga!

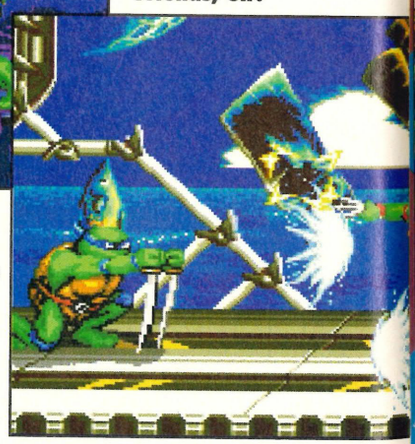


RAT-NAPPED!

First there were the comic books, then came the action figures, followed by the Saturday morning half-hour commercials, and now... evil clones! Yes, it's all in the plot of Konami's latest Turtles game. Krang, the evil alien brain from Dimension X, has created four evil clones of the half-shelled fab four, identical in every way to the originals except that they're purple and can't say Cowabunga. These evil dopplegangers have kidnapped Master Splinter in a bid to lure the goodie turtles to Dimension X, and the plan has worked! With the Hero Turtles racing to the rescue, our game begins and the thin plot device ends!



▼ **...whilst Leonardo and Raphael dust each other's fat green butts with fireball attacks. Friends, eh?**



▲ **What pals those turtles are. Here, Michelangelo breaks Donatello's stupid turtle jaw with a spinning nunchuka attack...**

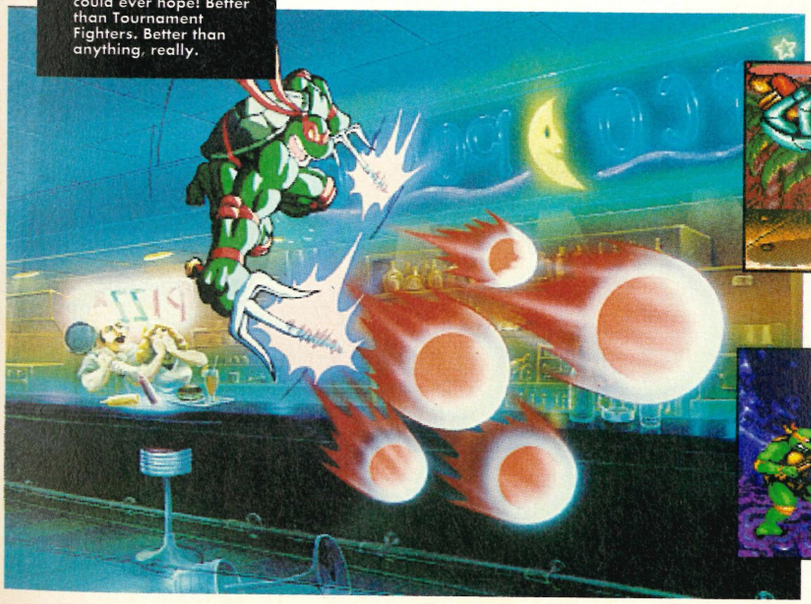
TURTLE FIGHTER 2

So, how do our heroic turtles go about rescuing their ratty pal? Do they negotiate a series of scrolling levels, punching, kicking and cowabunga-ing their way through hordes of foot soldiers and baddie robots, just like they've done in every other Turtles game released? Nope, surprisingly they don't. You see, Tournament Fighters is a Street Fighter-style one-on-one beat 'em up, only this one features turtles. Oh.

ALTERNATIVELY

95

STREETFIGHTER 2: SCE by SEGA
PRICE: £59.99
The king of beat 'em ups arrives on the Megadrive and it's about as good as you could ever hope! Better than Tournament Fighters. Better than anything, really.







ROUND ONE: FIGHT DUDES

Turtles aside, this is still the age-old beat 'em up formula. Each fight is made up of a series of one-on-one rounds between two fighters. The first combatant to claim two rounds being the winner.

There are eight combatants to choose from. The four Turtles: Leonardo, Raphael, Donatello and Michelangelo, plus their buddies: April O'Neil, a news reporter with a lust for turtles; Casey Jones, owner of the popular burger chain; Sisyphus, a mutated giant beetle; and Ray Fillet, a blue sea-beast who probably has no bones. Apart from the basic punches and kicks, each fighter has their own unique set of special moves, ranging from back slams, charging attacks, spinning torpedos and fireballs. Casey Jones can even drop bombs.

To win the game, your character simply has to beat all seven of the other characters, or rather, the twisted evil clones of the other characters, and face the final bosses, such as Shredder himself. Um, cowabunga!

TOURNAMENT FIGHTERS

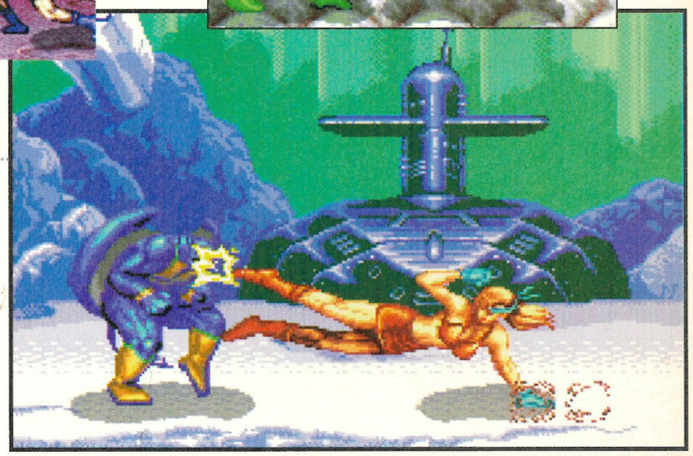


A BIT BOGUS !

Tournament Fighters is pretty good fun to play, but it does have its faults. For starters, the moves are too limited. It's almost impossible to fight using the basic attacks – there just aren't enough of them. Each fight soon becomes just an exercise in pulling off special moves. This, in itself, wouldn't be so bad, except that the moves are quite tricky to pull off, because the controls are a tad unresponsive. Many was the occasion when I'd be trying to pull of one of Leonardo's hurricane attacks, only to lose the game because he'd keep waving his sword around uselessly. Very annoying!







▲ **Blimey! April was never like this on the Saturday Morning Cartoons. She'll catch her death of cold in that skimpy bra thing!**



SHELL SHOCKED!

Why didn't Konami make Megadrive Tournament Fighters more like its brilliant Super Nintendo counterpart? That game features better characters, better moves, more responsive controls and greater speed. Even if the graphics and sound had been inferior, the actual gameplay would still have been a vast improvement.

As it stands, the graphics and sound on this version aren't great. The sprites are pretty good, but the backdrops are very boring, with hardly anything happening in them. As for the speech, all the characters sound like they've had a tracheotomy (must be all that funny air they breathe down in the sewers), although I must confess, I do like the way the clone turtles say: "Cowerbanga". What a laugh!





▲ **High-three, dude! A neat snowball attack right in the chops for Sisyphus!**

COWABUNGA! NOT!

On the whole, Tournament Fighters isn't a bad game, although, it doesn't match up to the standard set by some of the more recent beat 'em ups to hit the Megadrive, namely Mortal Kombat and Street Fighter 2. It's actually quite similar to Fatal Fury, both in graphics and gameplay, and that's not such a bad thing, as Fatal Fury is quite good fun. But the limited array of moves and dodgy controls stop this game from being brilliant.

LET'S KICK SHELL!

If you don't fancy putting your turtle-hide on the line just to rescue that cruddy old rat, Master Splinter, then you don't have to. There are other fighting options available. For starters, you can hone your skills in the practise battles – one-off fights against specially-selected opponents. There's also the tournament option, a sort of endurance option made up of 88 single-round battles against each opponent. Finally, and most important of all, is the two-player option. Both combatants can choose their fighter from all eight opponents and, as is standard these days, play the same characters against each other.

PLAY IT AGAIN, DUDE!

One rather novel feature of Tournament Fighters is the Action Replay option. At the end of each fight, you can replay the whole battle – backwards and forwards, in fast or slow motion – giving you a chance to examine the the whole sordid brawl, blow for blow. Very useful for helping to work out good combinations, it also gives you the chance to humiliate your opponents by replaying their defeat to them over and over again.



▲ **Good Gravy! April has knocked Sisyphus for six. But how did it all happen?**

▼ **Well, using the nifty action replay option, we can see that she attacked him with a deadly super-slap attack...**





▲ **...before finishing him off with a lethal turbo-charged elbow attack. Kooyay!**

LEO VS THE BURGER KING CLONE!

As Leonardo races to the rescue of Master Splinter in his spaceship, Casey Jones enters the bridge. But something is wrong. This is not the famed inventor of the doner kebab burger, it's an evil burger clone!



▲ The fight begins! Casey is the fella in the hockey mask, Leo is the turtle.



▲ The evil burger-clone moves in with a vicious leg attack, known as a kick!



▲ Leo fights back! A devastating sword slash right in the pickle!



▲ Hai-ya! Casey leap-kicks, neatly avoiding Leo's sword-wave...



▲ ... before dropping down on the turtle, throwing him down to the level below.



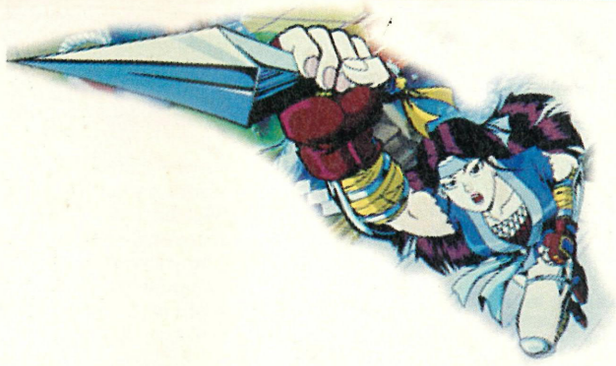
▲ But Leo's up and slashing with twin swords. Casey moves in for the kill...



▲ ... but instead gets caught by the turtle's high-speed whirlwind attack!



▲ It all seems over for the burger-clone, but a well-timed hockey stick swing and the turtle is defeated. Evil has won. Hyuk!





THE SECOND OPINION



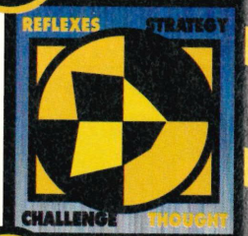
STEVE MERRETT

Putting the Turtles and their many foes together in a one-on-one beat 'em up sounds like the perfect setting for their assorted fighting skills – certainly more so than a series of Double Dragon clones. However, whilst Tournament Fighters does indeed have all the hallmarks of a Konami classic – large, detailed sprites and superb attention to detail – the actual fight scenes are a little limited and there's no real flow of action or skill involved. Granted, there are a number of neat moves, but Street Fighter 2 and its array of combos has set a very high standard, and Turtles doesn't quite match it. In the end, Turtles boils down to braving it out in a nose-to-nose (snout-to-snout?) slugging match until one of you keels over. The true potential of the Tournament Fighters idea has ben realised in the stunning Super NES version, but sadly the Megadrive game just doesn't measure up.

STICKS AND STONES!

With only three buttons on the Megadrive joypad, it's vital to make the best use of them, in order to give the player the maximum amount of moves. For this reason, Tournament Fighters uses the the A and B buttons as punch and kick respectively, and the C buttton is used to... taunt. Yes, press C at any time during a battle and your warrior stops what their doing and issues a stinging remark such as "So long, loser!", "That's a laugh!" or even "Come on, baby!" Not only does this abuse inflict no damage whatsoever on your opponent, it also leaves your character vulnerable to attack. However, the risk is worth it, because nothing is more hurtful than a rude comment. The pain is on the inside.

%RATINGS



PRESENTATION 72%
Bland intro, basic options, ugly-looking selection screens.

GRAPHICS 84%
Reasonably animated, good-looking sprites. Boring backdrops.

SOUND 86%
Decent enough tunes, good spot effects. Awful speech. Cowerbanga!

SHORT TERM PLAY 82%
High difficulty makes it tough to progress. Controls are quite fiddly.

LONG TERM PLAY 76%
Tough one-player option. A reasonable two-player option. Limited lasting appeal though.

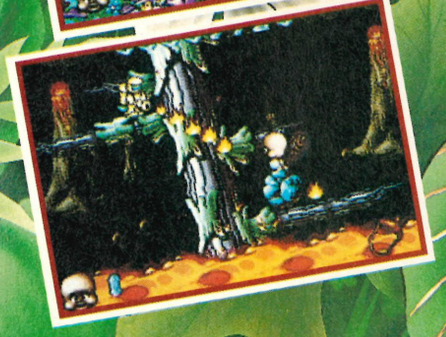
OVERALL 78
A mediocre beat 'em up. The basket-case brother of SNES Tournament Fighters.

HASTA LA VISTA, BABY

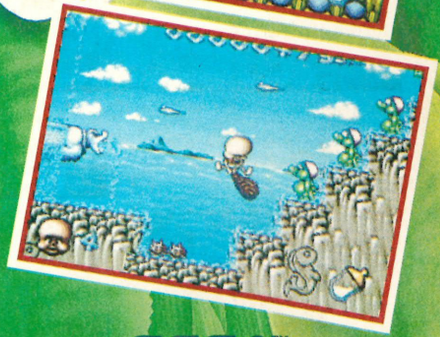


CHUCK ROCK II
SON OF CHUCK









Eighteen months after his victory over Gary Gritter, Chuck Rock is now the owner of the hugely successful 'Chuck Motors' and has become a father. Kidnapped by his evil enemy Brick Jagger, Chuck Rock is likely to become Chuck Dust unless somebody rescues him .... A sudden crash as Chuck Junior bursts from his play pen " Goo Goo Gaa, I'll be back".

CORE
DESIGN LIMITED

Available on: MEGA-CD MEGADRIVE MASTER SYSTEM GAME GEAR

SEGA™

Core Design Limited, Tradewinds House, 69-71A Ashbourne Road, Derby DE22 3FS. Tel: (0332) 297797 Fax: (0332) 381511

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MEGADRIVE REVIEW

ROBOCOP VERSUS TERMINATOR

BY: VIRGIN

Virgin GAMES

8-MEG

STYLE

PLATFORM/SHOOT 'EM UP

PRICE £TBA

PLAYERS 1

SKILL SETTINGS 3

RELEASE DATE DEC



PAUL GLANCEY tries to think up some good Robocop/ Terminator film quotes to put in his review of Virgin's new shoot 'em up, but seeing as it's based on the comics anyway, he decides to drop it and stay out of trouble.

ROBOCOP V

Time, as Tom Guise knows, can be a confusing subject. Ask Tom how come he always turns up two hours late for anything and he'll explain his theory that his physical body was actually born in a dimension which is two hours out of phase with this one, so you'll just have to live with it. I mention this to substantiate current scientific thinking, which suggests that the time/space continuum is filled with a multiplicity of different dimensions, all occupying the same space, and yet all different. Baloney? Well, this 'alternate dimensions' theory was used by comic author, Frank Miller, when he wanted an excuse to throw together Robocop and The Terminator, two of the rock-hardest science fiction heroes ever, for a dramatic fight to the death in his series of graphic novels which formed the basis for this shoot 'em up.

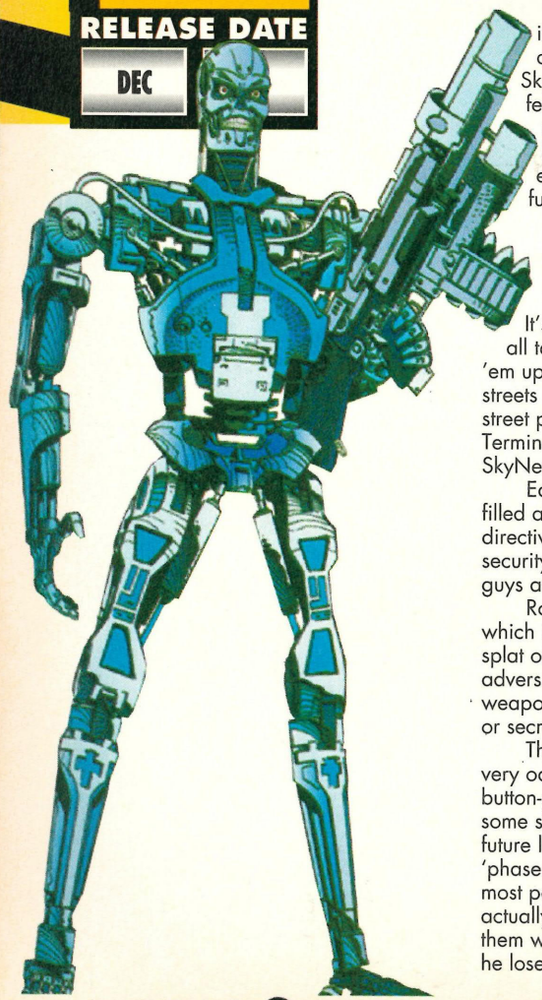


▲ **Oh no! It's Robocop and he's brought his – gulp! – Robo-diddy stick! Aargh!**

DIRECTIVE ONE : TELL READERS ABOUT PLOT

The story goes that, in this alternate future, Omni Consumer Products' work on the Robocop Cyborg Law Enforcement Unit becomes part of the SkyNet Defence Computer project, which started the war that practically wiped out mankind. This technology also went into production of SkyNet's army of cyborg Terminators, and to further that technology, SkyNet has sent a squad of Terminators back in time to steal it from the OCP offices in downtown Detroit.

After fighting off the Terminator invasion in the present day, Robocop downloads his consciousness into the SkyNet computer, then hangs around for a few years until after the war has started and uploads his consciousness back into his body so he can destroy SkyNet and its entire army of Terminators after it becomes fully operational.





▲ **Hi there, skinny robot fella! Join my fitness program and, in five days, you can have a body just like mine.**

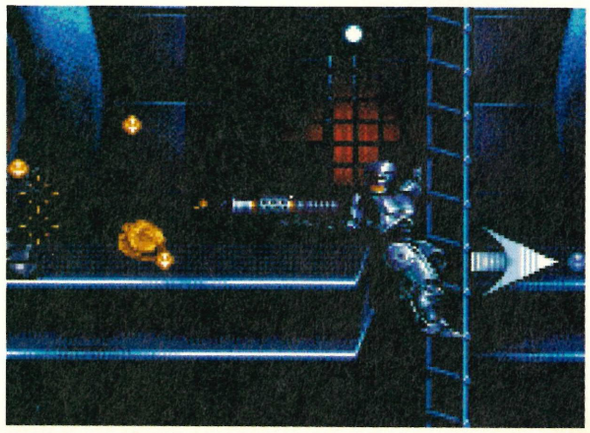
DIRECTIVE TWO: DESCRIBE GAMEPLAY

It's probably not surprising that, in game terms, this all takes the form of a hardcore, big weapons shoot 'em up in which you have to get Robocop from the streets of Old Detroit and Delta City, through waves of street punks and heavily-armed criminals to deal with the Terminator invasion, to the post-holocaust future and into SkyNet's central bunker.

Each of the ten levels is a large, scrolling platform-filled arena in which Robo has to complete a prime directive, such as rescuing hostages or destroying security cameras, while eliminating as many of the bad guys as possible.

Robo's standby weapon is his Beretta Auto-9 pistol, which is fine for wiping out human criminals (in a gory splat of red pixels) but isn't so effective on tougher adversaries. Mind you, there are all kinds of megadeath weapons to find if you know which baddies to wipe out or secret passages to search.

They start off with stuff like homing rockets and the very odd grenade launcher (which fires slow-moving, D-button-guided grenades, though this actually looks like some strange wandering-sprite glitch). As you enter the future levels you get laser rifles and, naturally, there's the 'phased plasma rifle with a 40W range', which is the most powerful weapon in the game. Robocop can actually carry two weapons at a time and swap between them with the press of a button, but if he should conk out he loses the gun he was using at the time.



▲ **What's that noise behind me? It sounded just like mum's puff pastry, but of course it couldn't... aargh!**

S TERMINATOR

ROBOCOP VERSUS THE TERMINATOR™

HYPER! HYPER GAME AWARD



DIRECTIVE THREE: FILLIN A FEW DETAILS

As well as giving Robocop hordes of Terminators to deal with, the programmers have also included some of Robo's old enemies who guard the exits to the early levels. For example, the Delta City building site is patrolled by no less a foe than Robocop 2, who stomps around the girders, letting off volleys of mini-gun fire, and at the end of the OCP office complex Robo runs into ED-209!

The sampled sound effects which accompany these encounters, and the way the characters are animated just like their movie counterparts, make things all the more enjoyable, and there are other little details which add something to the game. For example, the guy who carries the Cobra Assault Cannon on the early levels is the spitting image of Emil, the baddie who melts at the end of Robocop, and the OCP building is full of video walls and those metal sculptures seen in the movie. Also, in the background of the Underground Bunker level, you can see burning TV sets, just like the one that was keeping the kids amused in Terminator.



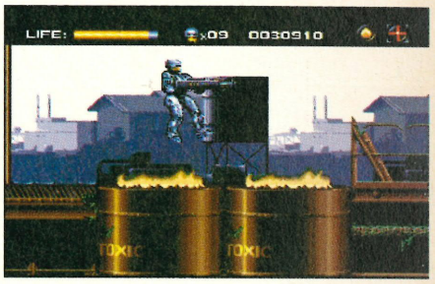
▲ **Hoi pal, you've dropped your deep-heat massager. Oh, it's your wife's.**



▲ **What a great snowman! Now all I need is some coal for the eyes.**



▲ **Quick Robie, my husband's back! Oh no, you've left your hips on the sofa!**



▲ **Now watch, stunt-fans, as Evil Knievel clears two vats of toxic waste!**

DIRECTIVE FOUR: TELL THEM IF IT'S ANY GOOD



I must admit, I started off not caring much for this game. What, another platform shoot 'em up from Virgin? Yeah, great. But after playing past the first four levels (which are pretty easy), I really found something to get my teeth into.

All those weapons, the smart graphics, the sampled gun effects and smashing glass and explosions do create a good atmosphere of heavy weapon carnage, and the big levels full of tough enemies make it a game that's hard to beat, even on the wimpy level.

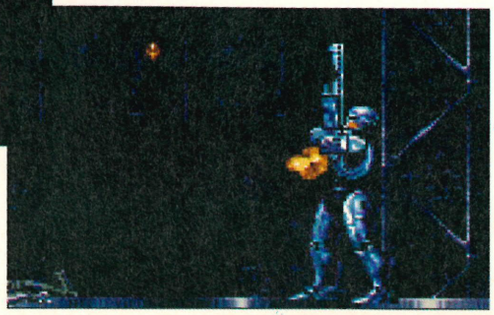
On the surface it's not a sophisticated game, and underneath the surface it's not very sophisticated either, but there are enough nice touches, such as the bits from the movies and the way you can explore the levels for secret rooms, to make Robocop vs Terminator more than simply a good blast.





▲ **Ah, Mr Higgins, if you'll just lie down next to that large gingerbread man, I'll examine your bowels with this large hydraulic bolt-gun.**

▼ **Don't move, creep. Urf... poop! Damn and blast! – what a time to fill up my colostomy bag!**



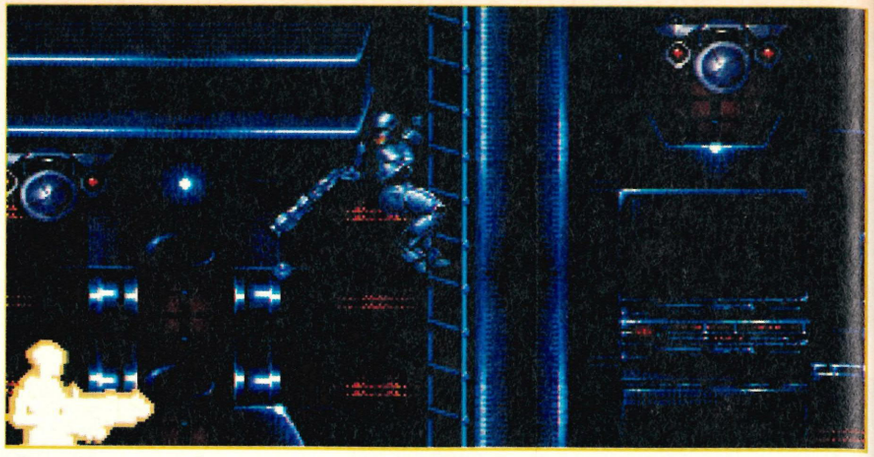


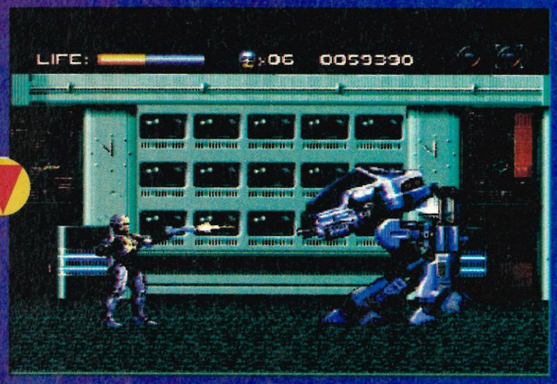
REPLAY SEQUENCE:

ROBOCOP VS ED-209!

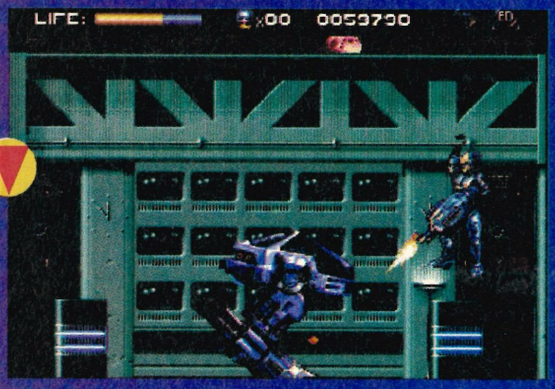
At the end of the OCP Office Complex, Robo runs into an ED-209, tooled up with his 'arm' machine guns and rocket launchers! Sparks are bound tto fly!

DURATION: 30 SEC.





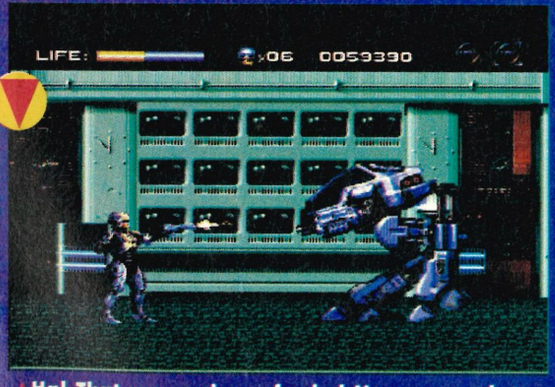
▲ That mechanical growl... those heavy, clanking footsteps. Why, it can only be my old nemesis - ED-209!



▲ My sustained and impeccable marksmanship severs ED's gun arm. Hmm... I wonder if I can use that myself?



▲BLAMMO! ED's lid explodes! But what's this?! His leg section is still going! Kill! Kill! Destroy!

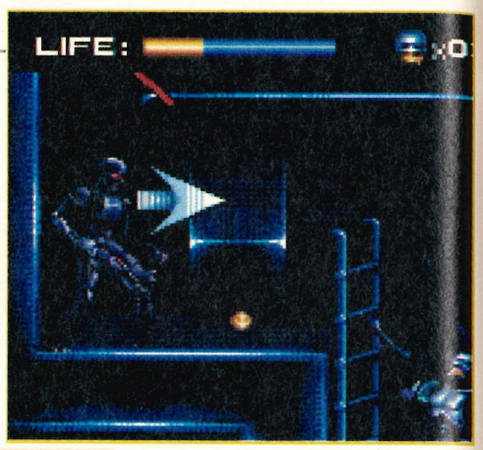


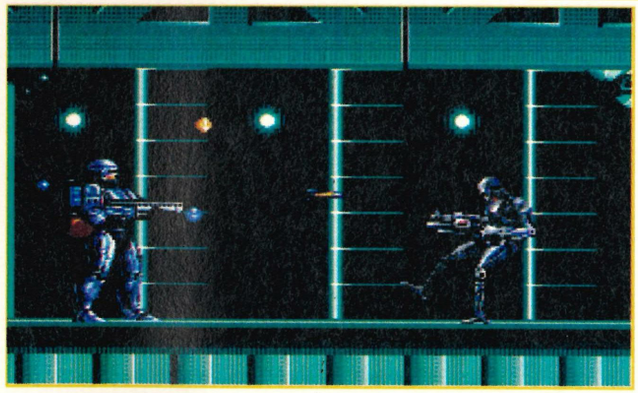
▲Ha! That was a piece of cake! Now, onward, to the Terminator Outpost!

CLASSIFIED DIRECTIVE: SECRET LEVELS

Coming up to a boss, without a heavy weapon? Running low on energy, but not a pot of reviving baby food to be found? Try jumping into a blank wall or taking a less direct route to the end of the level and you might well find a secret stash of goodies, or even a hidden level, full of extra lives!

There are two such levels that we found – one in the OCP office complex, and a secret remote base in the SkyNet bunker. Both provide different routes to the end of the level, but enemies patrolling these routes are no easier to beat. However, most of them leave behind an extra life when destroyed, so you stand a much better chance against the boss when you do confront him.





THE SECOND OPINION



TOM GUISE

This game may well feature two of the greatest action-movie stars of all time, but to be honest I wasn't expecting it to be any good at all. It's just that, as a rule, film licences tend to be a bit naff. Well, I'm glad to have been proved wrong, because Robocop Vs Terminator really is a damned good blaster. Okay, so predictably enough, it's just another platform shoot 'em up, but the key element – the shooting – is top grade blasting fun. From the way Robocop's arm judders with the power of each shot, to the excellent digitsed gun sounds, it all captures the action-packed atmosphere of the blockbuster movies to a tee. What's more, it's a real challenge, especially when Robie goes into the future. To top it all, the graphics are brilliant and extremely gory, with blood-splattered body parts flying all over the shop. So much so that it's earned the game a '16' rating. Simple blasting action it may be, but it's also plenty big fun.

%RATINGS



PRESENTATION 88%
Eye-catching right from the start, when the title blasts onto the screen. Good options.

GRAPHICS 91%
Excellent sprites, especially on Robo and the Terminators. Detailed back-grounds too.

SOUND 92%
The music is good, and the sampled effects and speech add a lot to the game.

SHORT TERM PLAY 91%
Basic stuff, really, but the spriteicide is great, as are the graphics and sound.

LONG TERM PLAY 89%
Starts off easy but finishing the game is tough, even on WIMPY level.

OVERALL 90
Not very original, but the combination of excellent graphics, sound and big guns gameplay make this a very satisfying blast.

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MEGA-CD REVIEW

MEGADRIVE REVIEW



BY: SEGA

SEGA

8-MEG

STYLE

PLATFORM

PRICE IMPORT

PLAYERS 1

SKILL SETTINGS 3

RELEASE DATE

OUT NOW

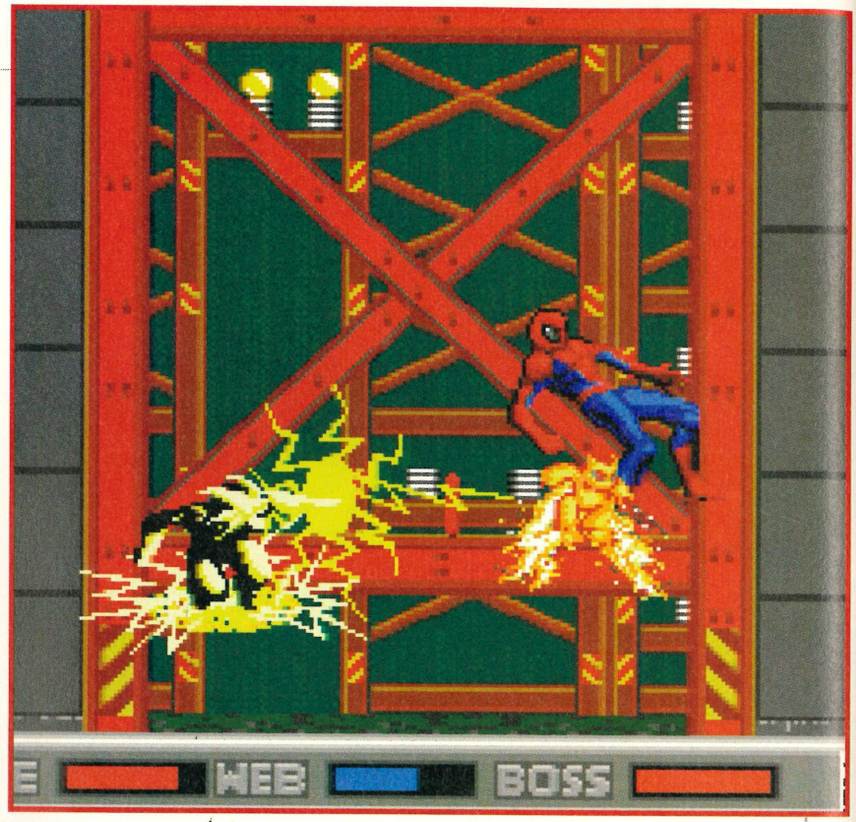


TOM GUISE will never forget that fateful day when he was bitten by a spider. For days he was bed-ridden, vomiting, until his face hatched and millions of baby spiders came scuttling out. Then he ate a radioactive potato...

SPIDERMA

The Amazing Spiderman. He may not be the most powerful of super-heroes, but when it comes to superpowers his are easily the most fun. As a kid, I always hoped that I would be given a chance to become Spiderman. I spent many a lunchtime detention dreaming of how I would don my blue and red costume and crawl across the ceiling , right above the noses of the teachers, to reap my revenge on the headmaster, tying him up in webbing and dangling him from the window. As the other teachers burst into the Head's office, answering his cries for help, they would see me jump out of the window and swing off into the distance and they would whisper under their breath: "Who was that skinny kid in the Spiderman playsuit?"

Well now I can stop dreaming. The time has come for me and other like-minded Spiderman-wannabees to live out our wall-crawling, web-spinning fantasies, thanks to the web-slinger's very own Mega-CD game. Now all I need is that Wonder Woman game and my fantasies will be complete.



▲ Oh dear – looks like he's plugged himself into the National Grid!

IMPORT WARNING!

The version of Spiderman CD used for this review was an American Import. This will only work on an official Mega-CD using a CDX, although the sound is out of synch. Also, it may not work on converted Mega-CDs. You have been warned.

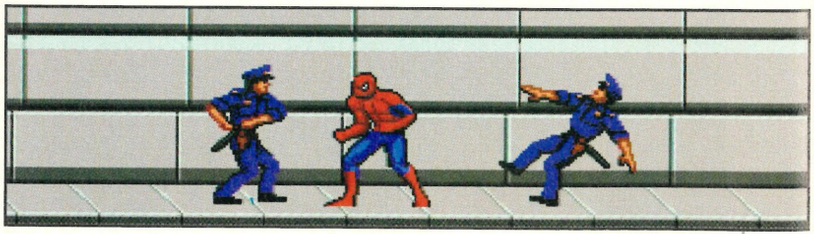




SPIDERMAN! SPIDERMAN!

Things are not looking good for everyone's favourite friendly neighbourhood Spiderman. The Kingpin, New York's top crime boss, has framed the web-slinger for a terrible crime! Appearing on national television, he claims that Spiderman has planted a nuclear bomb somewhere in the city, set to explode in 24 hours. What's more, he has offered a $500,000 reward for the capture of the web-slinger. A fugitive from the law, Spiderman has to find the bomb and deactivate it, all within the 24 hours.

However, this is easier than it sounds, because, to top it all, the Kingpin has hired the help of eight supervillains. Each of these arch-criminals holds a key – or a clue to the whereabouts of a key – necessary to deactivate the bomb. Spidey must find and defeat each one of these old rivals before he can face the Kingpin and clear his name.



▲ Spidey took out one of the cops with a vicious Spider-guff.

DOES WHATEVER A SPIDER CAN

Now, for anyone who has played the popular Spiderman platform game that appeared on the Megadrive a few years back, this plotline will seem supiciously familiar, and so it should, because it is EXACTLY THE SAME plot! Yep, following in the footsteps of Batman Returns CD and Ecco CD, Spiderman Vs Kingpin is the latest cartridge game that Sega have converted to the Mega-CD. So, what's new about it?

N VS KINGPIN



SPINS A WEB ANY SIZE!

Well, for starters the game now has over 45 different levels. Instead of just tackling one level after another, as you did in the cartridge version, Spidey must now search the baddies out by picking levels from a large map of New York. In 'Normal' mode this is made easier by the large super-criminal faces that hover over their locations, but in 'Nightmare' mode there are no clues as to where the super-baddies are. However, it's not as difficult as it sounds, because each super-criminal can normally be found in one of six different locations.

On top of all this, Spiderman himself has also been revamped. He can now perform extra moves including a Mega-Web attack and a somersault kick. And, as you'd expect from the Mega-CD, the whole game is packed with cartoon intermissions. However, if you're expecting animation akin to the old 'Spiderman and His Amazing Friends' cartoons, forget it! This stuff is closer to Bananaman.



▲ **Streetplan of the Farringdon area, showing the MegaTech office.**





▲ **"Thanks to you, Spiderman, I have apprehended this old lady masquerading as Ronald McDonald."**

CATCHES THIEVES JUST LIKE FLIES!

For all the additions made to this game, there have been a number of rather surprising ommisions. Spidey can no longer set up his camera to take pictures for the Daily Bugle (previously a vital means of making cash to buy more web-fluid). Also, when injured, Spidey can't return to Peter Parker's flat to recuperate at the cost of valuable time. Instead, extra web-fluid and life energy are splattered generously throughout the levels. And as for the race against time, well, thanks to a new password system, you need only restart using your last password to carry on with the time reset to 24 hours. This all spoils the strong comic-book atmosphere of the game, although the animated intermissions make up for it somewhat.

INCY WINCY SPIDER

There's no denying that Spiderman CD is a very playable game. The extra moves, together with improved animation and speed, build on the already high playability of the cartridge version, making for a very enjoyable platform game.

However, apart from the tweaked playability there's not a great deal to set this game above its cartridge-based predecessor. The animated intermissions, although great the first time round, soon get boring and the extra levels are just loads of identical-looking subway and street stages which, together with the pinball level, aren't even essential to play.

Basically, this is a two year old cartridge game on a CD. Fortunately though, when Spiderman first came out it was a great game and although it has aged, it still stands amongst the best of todays platformers. The graphics might looked dated, but with its improved playabilty this Mega-CD conversion is definitely worthy of purchase. It's about as good a Spiderman game as you could ever hope for!

MY SPIDER-SENSE! TINGLING!

In his quest to save New York, Spidey has to face some of his worst enemies: Dr Octopus, the corrupted scientist with eight arms; The Lizard, a human lizard with a hatred for mankind; Electro, the human toaster; The Sandman, a man made from living sand; Hobgoblin, a Halloween reject; and Venom, a psychopath in a living alien costume. What's more, if you're expecting them to be as easy to beat as they were on cartridge, think again! Each one has all-new tactics, especially Venom, who really provides a few surprises! Plus, there are two NEW baddies on this CD-version: Mysterio, the Master of Illusion; and The Vulture, a flying freak. Beat all these shady characters and it's time for the final showdown with the Kingpin himself!

IT'S SWINGTIME!

No Mega-CD game would be complete without a CD-quality soundtrack, and Spiderman CD is no exception. However, the soundtrack for this game is a little different from your average in-game music, because it features a song by Eric Martin, famous old rocker and lead singer of American rock group Mr Big. Entitled 'Swing Time', the song features some of the corniest rock lyrics you could ever wish to hear, and all using Sega's new Q-Sound system. Get the rock outta here!



▲ **Spidey rocks out to his own Q-Sound soundtrack.**

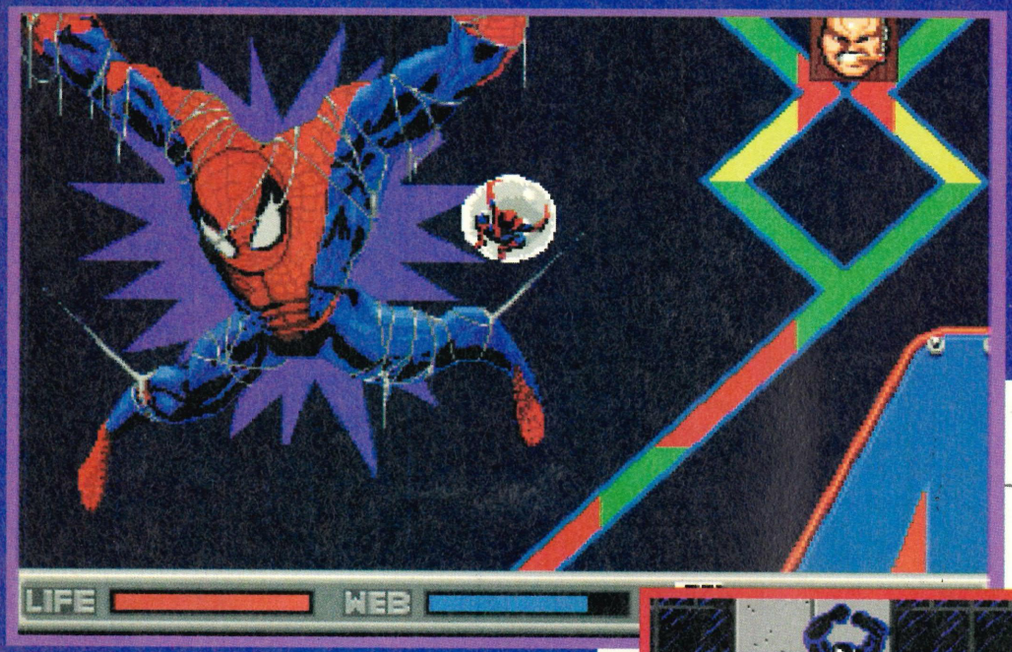
ALTERNATIVELY

94

BATMAN RETURNS CD
by SEGA
PRICE: £44.99
More superhero-related platform action, but far inferior to Spidey CD. However, it's the driving sections that make this game.

SPIDEY SPINBALL!

Following the current trend, Spiderman Vs Kingpin features a pinball sub-game. Having tracked down Mysterio to his hideout on Coney Island, Spidey is minaturised by the master illusionist and placed inside a pinball. His only way of escaping is by beating the pinball table. This is harder than it might seem, however, because the flippers are awful to control. What an evil scheme!

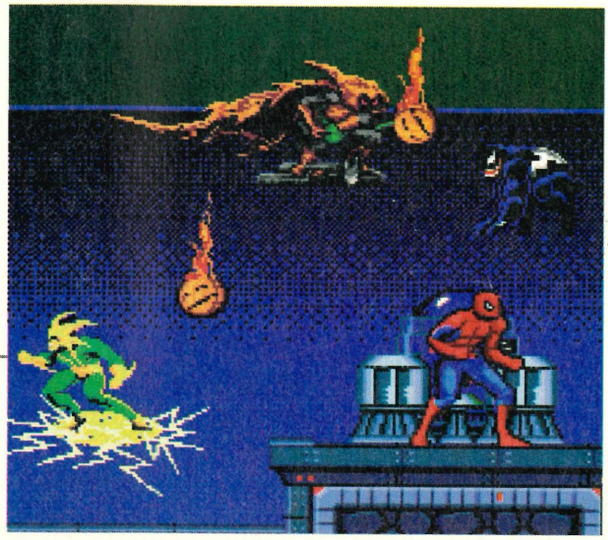


SPIN, SWING AND WIN!

Scattered throughout the many levels of the American version of Spiderman CD are 21 Spiderman comic-book covers. Although they aren't necessary for completion of the game, there is a reason behind them. By collecting them all and finishing the game in record time on 'Nightmare Mode', you can enter the Spiderman Scavenger Hunt and win BIG PRIZES such as Marvel Masterwork comics, Spiderman T-shirts, Game Gears and even a Ibanez electric guitar signed by Mr Big themselves. Whether this competition makes it into the official version of the game remains to be seen...



▲ **"I WILL have a go on your skateboard!"**



▲ **"Hey, keep off the thin ice!" Said Hobgoblin.**

THE SECOND OPINION

STEVE MERRETT



Although this is no great shakes in the graphics department, Spidy CD is still an entertaining platformer. Sega have taken the time to tweak the original Spiderman game, and the result is a much smoother title with a host of nice touches. Granted, the inter-level animations are the only thing which necessitates putting the game on CD (and some of them resemble a kids' cartoon as opposed to Marvel's graphical style), but this is a playable enough little number - if a tad over-priced for what it offers.

%RATINGS



PRESENTATION — **92%**
A fair smattering of options. Fantabulous cartoon story sequences

GRAPHICS — **82%**
Looks good, but dated. Not enough variety of sprites. Spidey is good though.

SOUND — **92%**
Good spot-effects, especially for the web-slinger. Great tunes, dreadful lyrics.

SHORT TERM PLAY — **88%**
Very playable. Very addictive. The levels tend to be a bit samey though.

LONG TERM PLAY — **72%**
Tough in Nightmare mode, but unlimited continues and passwords spoil the challenge.

OVERALL — **84**
Effectively a two-year old cartridge game with fancy trimmings, but a good platformer nonetheless.

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MEGADRIVE REVIEW

LOTUS



PAUL GLANCEY, well known for his skill at the three-point turn, reverses out of the abandoned car park of his fantasy world to test drive EA's latest driving extravaganza.

MEGADRIVE REVIEW

LOTUS II

BY: GREMLIN



8-MEG

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DRIVING

PRICE £44.99

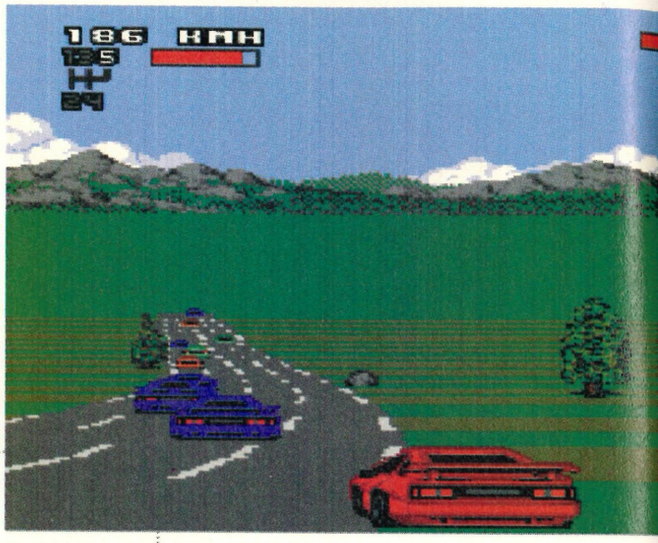
PLAYERS 1-2

SKILL SETTINGS 3

RELEASE DATE

DEC 1993

I've got a Lotus, I have. Yeah, six of 'em. And a Porsche 911. One of the new ones. And a Jaguar XJ-220. And the Batmobile. Both of them. The old one and the new one. And I've got all of James Bond's old cars. I have. And I race them all round my massive country estate on the weekends. Ho ho no, that's not true of course – it's just one of my sad fantasies. But HEY! Who needs to spend a couple of hundred thousand on flash cars, because for the price of this cartridge it's JUST LIKE HAVING THREE LOTUSES TO DRIVE WHENEVER YOU LIKE!!!! Oh dear, there I go again. Actually, Lotus II is just like a Megadrive racing game called – I think you may have heard of it – Lotus Turbo Challenge. So, is this Electronic Arts back to their old 'Release The Same Game With A Couple Of New Bits' antics or what?



▲ **The 'Wind' option summons up a hurricane-force gale which makes it pretty hard to stay on the track.**

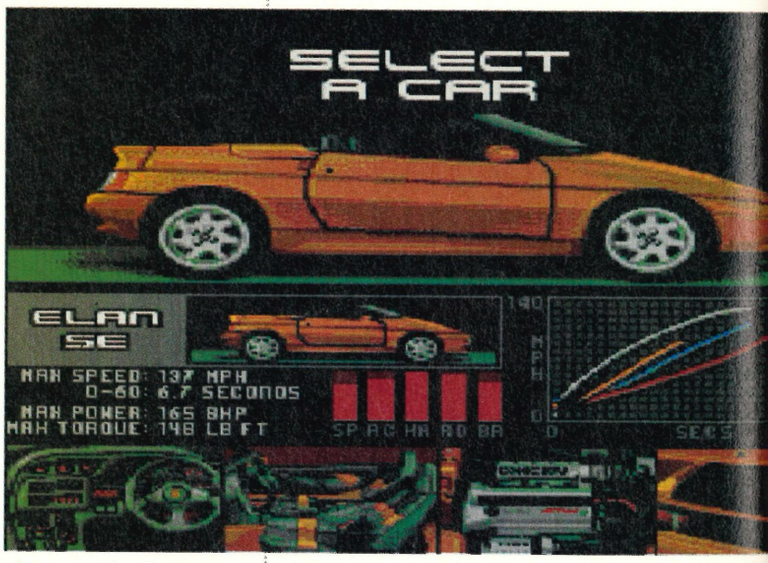
REALLY EASY CONSTRUCTION SET ?

Like the original game, Lotus II puts you at the back of a field of 20 other Lotus drivers, and your objective is simply to finish the race – in first place if possible. Two players can take part in the same race, via the split-screen option.

The courses in the first game were simply long roads with checkpoints set on them, and to stay in the race you had to reach the checkpoint before a timer ran out, rather like in OutRun. Lotus II gives you the option of this style of course, or a proper circuit, where the challenge is to stay at the head of the pack without running out of fuel.

As before, the tracks themselves are pretty nondescript, but they all have different weather conditions – such as fog, which drastically limits visibility – or you have to drive on them at night, or they have all sorts of obstructions which block off parts of the highway.

The combination of these features is up to you, because as well as having a set of built-in tracks, Lotus II has its own track designer called RECS (Race Environment Control System). Unlike the track designer in Jaguar XJ-220, you don't actually construct the course, you simply call up a parameters screen and set how hilly you want the road to be, how sharp the bends are, what sort of scenery to have at the roadside and what general

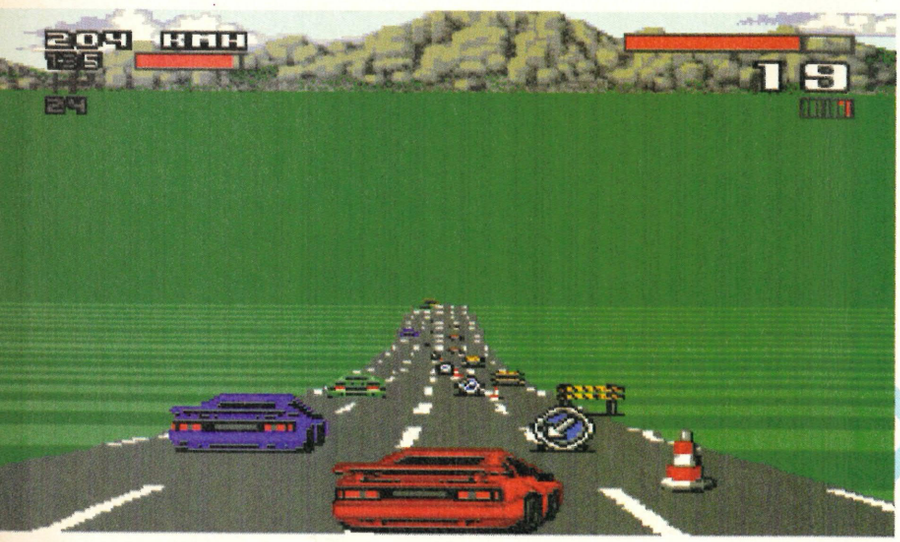


▲ **Lotus Elan? Naaah, don't like the colour.**

scenario you want to race in. Once you've set these up, you get a password which describes your creation so you can reconstruct it whenever you like. It's not a very creative system, but it's at least simple – half-a-minute of twiddling results in a playable track.

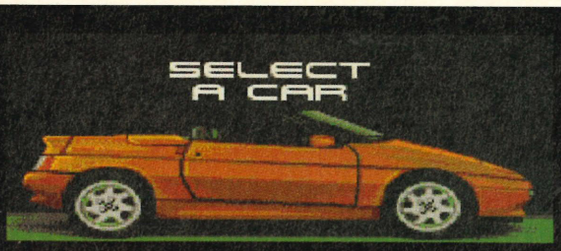
So, the RECS bit is quite flash, but is the game itself any good? Well, it would have been if you needed to use any kind of driving skills to play it successfully. Now, I've done a bit of driving and I noticed that if you want to get round corners you need to slow down beforehand. Not in this game.

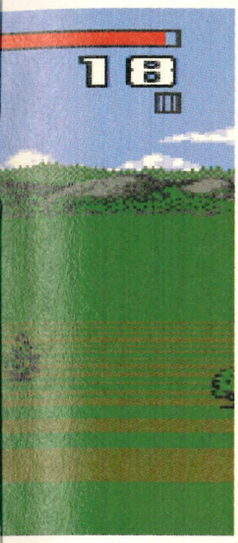
The only time you need ever release the accelerator is when you're suddenly confronted by an obstacle in the road and you don't want to drive straight through it. Just weaving left and right while holding down one button is, not surprisingly, rather tedious, and it even makes the two player game quite unexciting.



▲ **Aiiiieeeee! Watch out for those traffic cones and barriers, Mad Paul!**

I: RECS





REALLY EVERYONE CORNERS SAFELY

Not that it's easy, mind you. Okay, the easy level is easy, and you'll finish that first time out, but the other levels are made more challenging by the fact that the other cars favour the Mad Max school of driving, and tend to charge into you as you pass them or just block up narrow carriageways where there's no room to pass. And sometimes when you take a corner, you run straight into an obstacle you hadn't a hope of seeing or avoiding, and lose those valuable seconds which cost you the whole race.

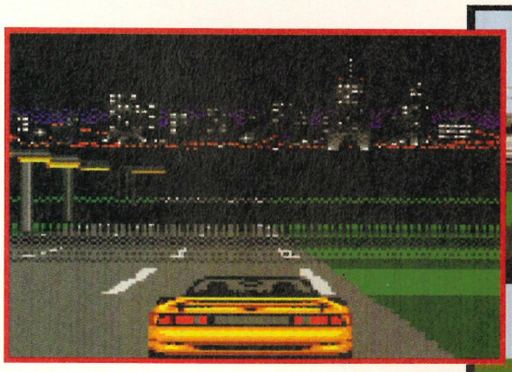
ROAD EFFECT, CRAP SOUND

Graphically, the game isn't so bad, though. Admittedly, some of the sprites are a bit chunky and the old 'Stripey Landscape' feature has been revived, but the 3D effect is speedy and fairly convincing. Some of the weather effects are nicely done, especially on the foggy and dark tracks.

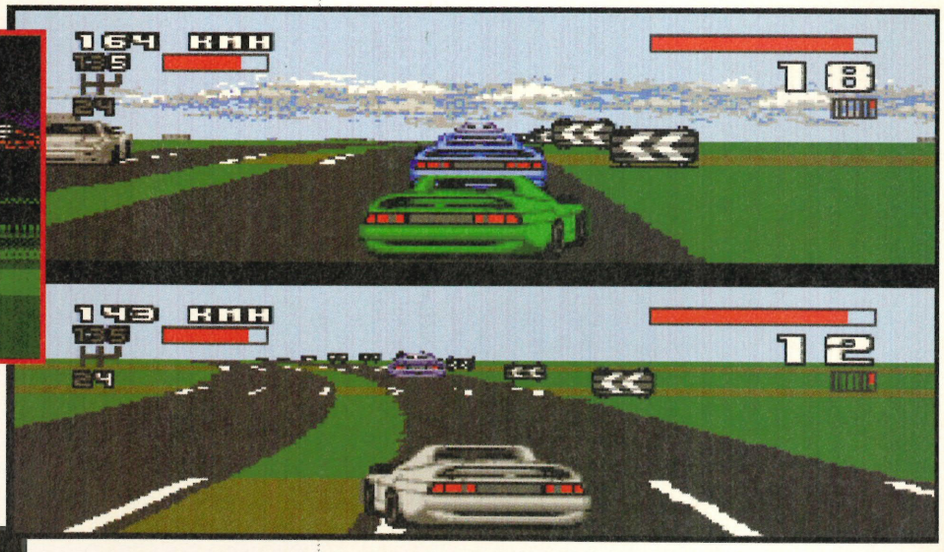
The sound doesn't score so highly, though. The sound-tracks are insipid and the engines of the on-screen Lotus cars emit a drone more befitting a radio-controlled model aeroplane.



▲ **Two player head-to-head. Player one storms ahead in the race to Santa's factory at the North Pole (oops, sorry – wrong game), er, here's a shot of the two player head-to-head option under snowy conditions. Yeah, that's right.**



▲ **"He drives through the city at night, he sees the city's ripped backside."**



▼ **The Options screen. Wow.**



RECOMMENDATION EXCELLENT CAR STIMULATION ?

Lotus II isn't so much a racing game as a Dodgems simulation. In fact, it's not even as exciting as Dodgems and just ranks as pretty mediocre in the fun stakes. If you want a good driving game, check out Formula One World Championship, which has a much better feel and provides loads more thrills (and it has a brilliant two player mode which leaves Lotus II's standing in the pits). Unfortunately, Lotus II scores another own goal for Electronic Arts.



▲ **A motorway bridge yesterday. Cor.**



PICK A CAR, ANY CAR

Hey, you get the pick of three shiny new Lotus models in this game! Mind you, the only practical difference between them, as far as the game goes, is that they look different on the road. You always race against a field of the same cars, so choosing the fastest – the Esprit – gives you no advantage.

LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO SE

The fastest car of the lot. Unfortunately, this model doesn't have missile launchers in the boot, and the submarine fittings are now discontinued.



M200

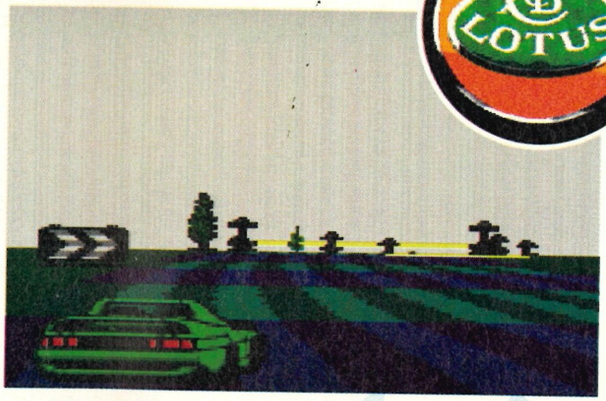
This one doesn't actually exist... except in the game of course. Faster than the Elan but slower than the Esprit. Quite flash, isn't it?



LOTUS ELAN SE

The top speed of 137 mph doesn't beat the Esprit's or the M200's, but then if you pick this you just race against other Elans anyway, so, er, that's not really a problem, is it?





THE SECOND OPINION



MARK HOLMES

Zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz.... Oh, sorry – I just fell asleep at the wheel there. What was I doing? Oh, yes – playing Lotus II. It's all coming back now – my thumb went numb after ten minutes of holding down the accelerator button virtually constantly, and then I must have blacked out, giving way to the effects of extreme boredom. It all started out so well – before I put the cart in the slot, I was thinking: "This can't possibly be as dull as EA's first Lotus game," but I was wrong. As soon as I started to control the clonky cars along what seemed like strips of tartan or ploughed fields, I realised that this is an even poorer game than the first one. For me, road racing games should give you an incredible sensation of speed, tracks that test your driving skills to the limit and an engine sound like a tractor with flatulence, and Lotus II provides none of these. Well, maybe I'm being a little harsh, because, as Paul has said, reaching your checkpoints after the first few levels is not easy, but the distinct lack of audio/visual thrills doesn't give you any incentive to rise to the 'challenge', even in two player mode. You just end up holding down the accelerator button and ploughing through any obstructions you hit along the way (often only realising you've hit something because your car slows down temporarily). Buy F1 World Championship instead. This is no fun.

THE FOUR TRACK STEREO

All of the cars come with the same stereo fitted as standard (it looks remarkably similar to the one fitted in the Jaguar XJ-220 – what a coincidence!). Before each race, you can select a track on the 'CD player' which is loaded with four tracks of limp rock 'n' roll and hip-hoppy stuff which wouldn't make it into my CD player if they paid admittance. These classic cuts also cut off the engine sounds, which I admit aren't particularly good, but at least they tell you when to change gear if you're using the manual box, and you can tell when you've just crashed into something. Best play it safe and keep the CD player set to track zero.

%RATINGS



PRESENTATION 90%
Every optional extra your heart could desire. Track construction is easy to toy with.

GRAPHICS 84%
Fast and effective 3D, but some of the car sprites look a little chunky.

SOUND 66%
A selection of unlovable tunes and feeble sound effects.

SHORT TERM PLAY 68%
The driving requires no skill, and is rather tedious.

LONG TERM PLAY 70%
You'll probably dig out the cartridge for a brief two-player stint when a mate comes round.

OVERALL 69
A bland and unexciting driving game which provides neither thrills nor spills.

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MEGADRIVE REVIEW



BY: GREMLIN



8-MEG

STYLE



PLATFORM/SHOOT 'EM UP

PRICE £39.95

PLAYERS 1

SKILL SETTINGS 1

RELEASE DATE

DEC 1993



Stick legs, a bulbous body and a penchant for sweets and goodies. Yep, that's STEVE MERRETT, and his uncanny resemblance to Zool makes him ideal to review Gremlin's new platform extravaganza.

ZOO

In its original Amiga form, Zool was Gremlin's attempt to rival the success of Sonic, as until then the Commodore machine hadn't seen a decent, fast-moving platformer. Now things have turned full-circle, with Zool about to appear for the machine it was originally competing against! For the uninitiated, Zool is an ant-like 'Ninja From The Nth Dimension' and self-proclaimed defender of the solar system. His galaxy is currently under siege by the evil Krool and his sidekick, Mental Block, who have sent armies of minions to invade each of the seven planets in the system. Armed with a sword, his incredible jumping prowess and a rather handy gun (not to mention magical powers), Zool is dropped off on the first planet in the system. His mission – to systematically cut a path through to where Krool is holed up and save the galaxy from the clutches of the evil tyrant.





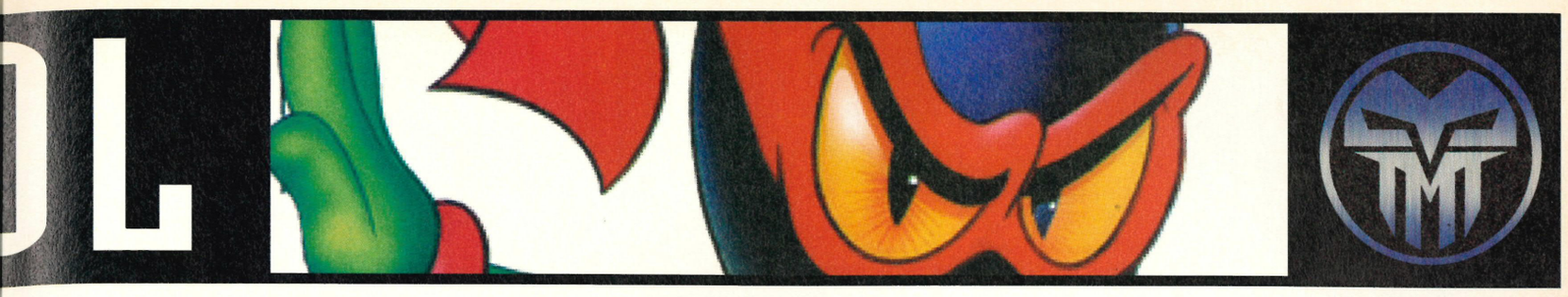
▲ **Zool uses what appears to be half a flake to make his way across the dangerous chocolate river. As you do...**

EXIT STAGE RIGHT

Zool's task is extremely simple – there's none of this 'collecting-objects-to-progress' stuff. Instead, all the little Ninja has to do is fight his way to the exit, which is located to the far right-hand side of the eight-way-scrolling play area. Obviously, Krool has placed all manner of deadly foes in his path, and these take the form of both air and ground-based foes, all of which sap Zool's energy on contact. For someone who's supposed to preside over the galaxy, Zool is a bit of weakling – there's no long-lasting energy bar to dictate how long he'll survive, it's simply a case of three hits and he turns his toes up.

ANOTHER WORLD

Rather conveniently, in terms of nasty design, the galaxy Zool inhabits consists of a number of themed planets. For instance, the Nth's greatest Ninja begins his quest on a confectionary-based world where he is constantly assailed by Liquorice Allsorts and other such sugary delights, whilst simultaneously legging it across a landscape made out of cake! Moving on from here, the other worlds are then based on tools, fruit, music and a funfair, with the nasties in each one similarly themed around hammers, semi-quavers and the like.





GOODIES (GOODIE, GOODIE YUM YUM)



SHIELD: A short-term improvement, and one which grants temporary invincibility.



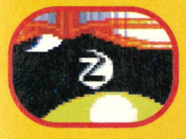
BOMBS: A smart bomb. You know the sort of thing – 'Kaboom! Screen Cleared!'



HEARTS: Occasionally, a dead enemy splits in half to reveal one of these, which conveniently replenish one of the ninja's three energy capsules.



JUMPING ZOOL: Only a temporary enhancement to Zool's abilities, but one which allows him to jump across a greater distance.



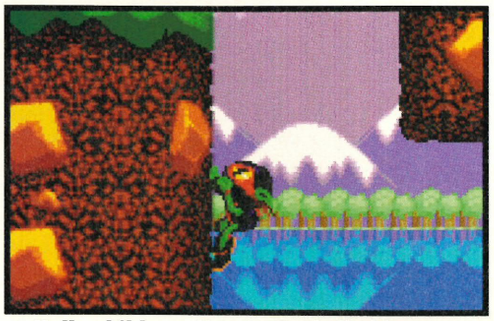
1UP: No, I absolutely refuse to describe this one. It's obvious enough.



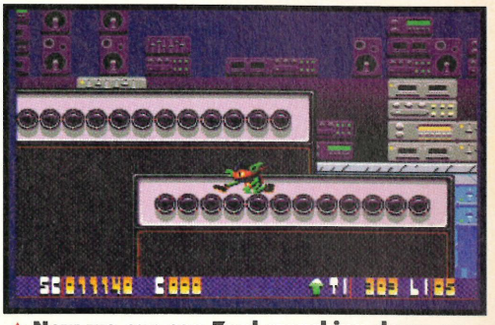
RESTART POINTS: Punching one of these traffic light-style objects activates it, it saving Zool from restarting the stage whenever he loses a life.



TWOZOOL: Splits our hero in two. The second Zool then mirrors the first's moves, doubling his effectiveness.



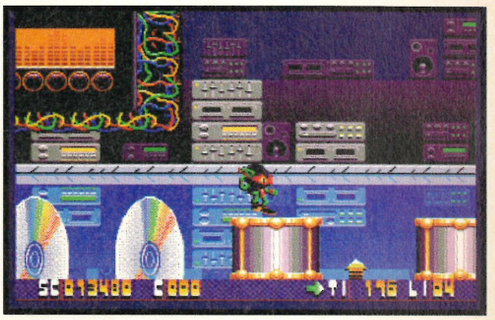
▲ Hello children. Here's Zool climbing a wal. Don't try it at home, though.



▲ Now we can see Zool crouching down on a conveyor belt. Don't do this either.



▲ And as for playing near precariously-placed axes. A definite no-no.



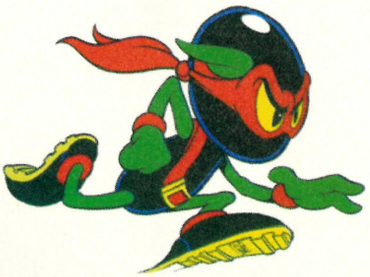
▲ As for the dangers of jumping on drums. My, what a bad example he's setting.



▲ Ah, that's cute. He's dancing, bless him.



▲ Suggs was surprised to see the rest of Madness weren't following his zany dance.



DIDN'T HE DO WELL?

Thankfully – and bearing in mind how many foes he'll meet in his quest for Krool – Zool is a little dynamo when it comes to dishing out death and destruction. In addition to his running and jumping skills, the little wonder also has the ability to stick to walls, allowing him to scale seemingly impassable obstacles (providing the walls aren't covered in spikes, that is!) On the weapons front, Zool is armed with both a sword and a gun, which come into effect depending on the proximity of a foe. However, if by some fluke the oncoming nasties still keep coming, a quick Nth Dimension right-hook should finish them off.



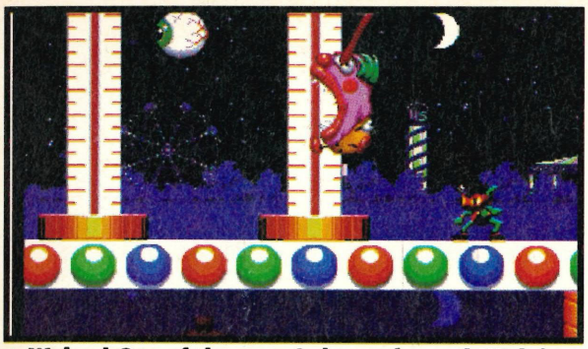
▲ Look a record. I wonder if it's one of Mark Holmes' favourite Wham! singles?



▲ Look a piece of fruit. I wond... No, actually I think I'll stop this rubbish right now. Sorry.



▲ Zool looks pensive. Hmm, then again serious captions are pretty dull, too. What a dilemma.



▲ **Wahoy! One of the game's larger bosses! Wtch in awe as he attacks out here. Then kill him.**

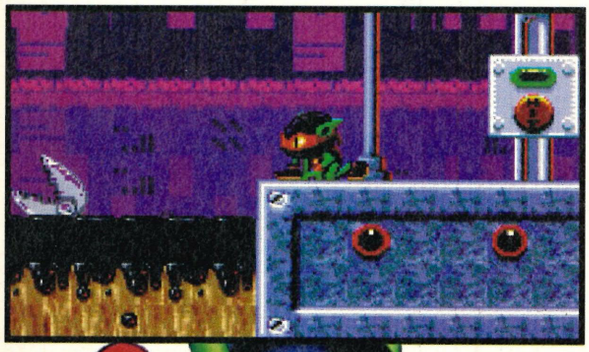
BOSS AND OVER

Of course, a progressive platformer such as this would be nowhere without bosses. Each of the planets Zool explores is split into five sub-levels, but a larger creature stands between our hero and the exit at the end of the fifth area. These bosses take the form of an enlarged version of the flying foes Zool encounters if he dawdles during a level, and require several direct hits before they eventually explode, warping Zool to the next zone in a flurry of sprite activity.

MOVE OVER SONIC?

Zool's greatest failing is that it is a bit of a 'Jack Of All Trades, Master of None' platformer. Gremlin's initial aim was to produce a more action-packed version of Sonic by combining the speed of Sega's heroic hedgehog with hectic blasting scenes. Sadly, whilst there is indeed more to kill in the Gremlin game, doing so necessitates the player picking their way through the level, as opposed to sprinting around dicing anything that comes remotely close. The fact that Zool can only concede three hits also puts the brakes on the player going hell-for-leather in search of fast-paced action. In fact, if I was to give this a scientific name, it would be called 'The Bubsy Factor.'

It's a shame, because Zool certainly has the potential to be a new video game hero – but he just doesn't pull it off. There are too many annoying factors – such as the extremely irritating airborne creatures which prevent Zool from jumping at vital times – which crop up to spoil this smart-looking platformer. Sadly, niggles like this leave a nasty taste, and in the end playing Zool is like having a really cool glass of Coke on a hot day, only to find a wasp floating on the top of it.



▲ **Hmm, let's see. I think Zool's kneeling down to meditate. But I'm not sure.**

TAKING THE FIGHT TO KROOL

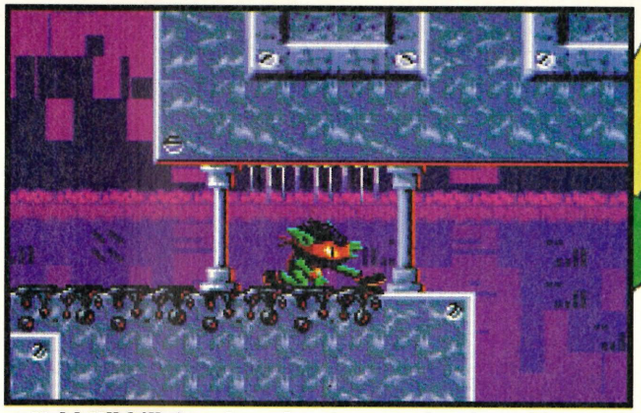
With each of the game's worlds liberated, a number of shoot 'em up levels must be completed. Seated within his Zoolship (which looks rather like our ant-like hero's head), wave after wave of Krool's cronies attempt to blast him out of the way, necessitating either fast shooting or simple evasion techniques. At the end of all this awaits Krool as the final boss, and if you get past him reward comes in the form of... well, let's just say that Zool's a bit of a family man...



▲ **The end zone in all its, er, glory.**



▲ **Let's play a game: which lolly manufacturer is Zool's sponsor?**



▲ **Yuk! I'll kill that dog when I get my hands on him. And I've got ridged soles on these shoes, it'll take ages to get it out of the grooves...**

THE SECOND OPINION

MARK HOLMES



As Steve says, on first impressions, Zool seems to have all the right components for the perfect platform game: a charismatic main character (well, more charismatic than Bubsy the Bobcat, anyway) who carries death-dealing weapons and can zip around at a fair rate of knots, loads of themed levels with lots of platforms to hop on, and a whole bunch of baddies to dispatch. Yes, it's got all the right ingredients, but it's another case of a mouth-watering recipe that turns out to be a meal which gives you indigestion. The 'frustration factor' is unnecessarily high because, although Zool is capable of zippy bursts of speed, you can't really use this acceleration to its full advantage for some supersonic platforming due to the fact that he can only take three hits from the omnipresent baddies before buying the farm. As Steve says, it's a case of picking your way through the levels with a frown on your face, rather than storming through them at breakneck speed with a big grin. Very much sub-Sonic, I'm afraid.

%RATINGS



PRESENTATION 77%
Bold title screen gives way to a decent enough smattering of options.

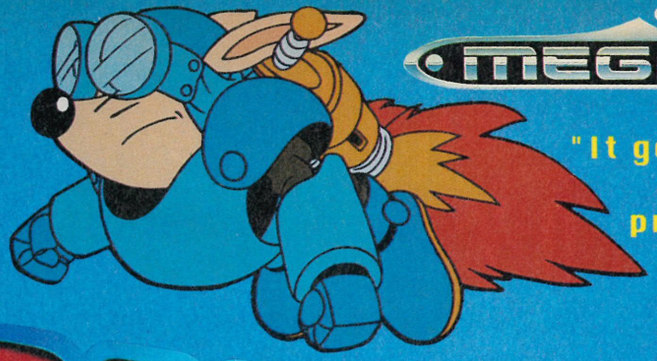
GRAPHICS 87%
Bold sprites set against some excellent and varied-looking backdrops.

SOUND 75%
A bit weak, but there's a nice enough ditty on offer.

SHORT TERM PLAY 72%
Initially frustrating, but there is some compulsion to continue.

LONG TERM PLAY 69%
There's a lot to explore, but the game's unfair nature is a real pain.

OVERALL 71
All the potential to be one of the best platformers to date, but it falls at the first, very basic hurdle.



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Mega Action, September 1993

94%

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Games Master, September 1993

92% "...Rocket Knight is a dead cert winner, it's a long time since we've seen a game of this quality on the Megadrive...Buy it."

Mega Tech, September 1993



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MEGADRIVE REVIEW



MEGADRIVE REVIEW



BY: MICROWORLD

LORICIEL
MICRO WORLD

8-MEG

STYLE

BEAT 'EM UP

PRICE IMPORT

PLAYERS 1-2

SKILL SETTINGS 1

RELEASE DATE

OUT NOW



After several apple juices, STEVE MERRETT will fight anyone for a tenner. Thus, armed with a king-sized carton of Just Juice, he asked Microworld's beat 'em up outside...

THE KICK BOXING

My what an exciting title – The Kick Boxing really summons up all the excitement of this fast-paced and skillful sport, doesn't it! As an Amiga game this was known as Panzer Kick Boxing and on the Super NES and Game Boy it had the even better title of Best Of The Best in a vain attempt to tie it in with the low-budget film of the same name. But, no, we Megadrive owners get The Kick Boxing. What next? The Bowls?

PUNCH HIS LIGHTS OUT!

The Kick Boxing started life an Amiga game several years ago, and this is a slightly souped-up version, featuring larger sprites and more fluid animation. As an up and coming Kick Boxer, you are given the chance to hone your skills via a series of training sections before entering the ring in an attempt to punch your opponent's lights out – literally. You see, rather than use a Street Fighter-style energy bar system, each fighter's energy is shown as a cluster of lights at the top of the screen and, with every kick and punch your opponent concedes, these are snuffed out one at a time.



▲ **The Kick Boxer demonstrates The Kick.**

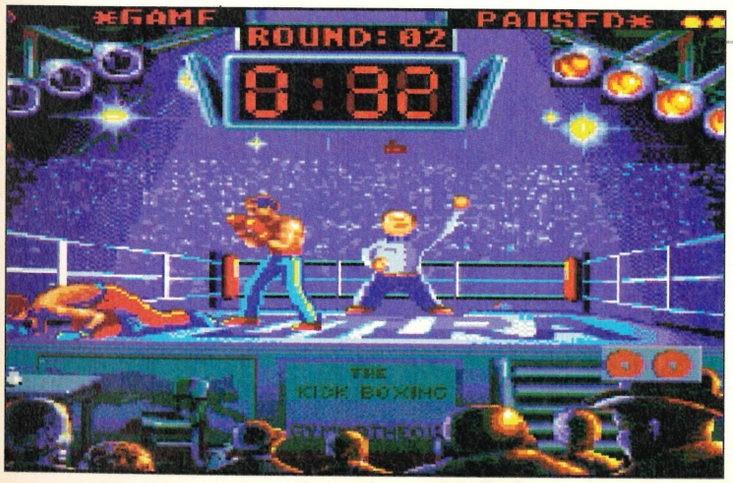




▲ **The Kick, The Ring and The Referee.**

PUNCH DRUNK

Now, if the manual is to be believed, The Kick Boxing is a game requiring genuine skill on the player's part. Yes, you can slug it out nose-to-nose if you want, but true Kick Boxing fans will also be able to master the game's many moves for an optimum performance. What crap. Whilst the moves available do indeed closely resemble those of the real thing, at the end of the day the controls are far too limited to allow for anything close to skill. This in turn is Kick Boxing's greatest fault. If it did actually require a modicum of genuine skill it would have been raised above the stack of average beat 'em ups already doing the rounds. But it doesn't so it doesn't.



OUT FOR THE COUNT

In these days of Street Fighter and its many wannabes, a beat 'em up has to be something else to even warrant a look these days. The Kick Boxing misses the mark by a mile. Whilst it bravely attempts to recreate the fast-paced action of the real thing, its moves are too slow and clumsy to execute, and its punches often confusing to use. In addition, although the players have a number of fighting moves at their disposal, they're too slow when it comes to basic moves – ie. turning around! – and this results in frustrating times when nobody can actually get it together to deck their opponent. Let's face it, if there's one beat 'em up on most people's shopping lists, it's SF2. And this certainly ain't going to change that...

◀ **The Crawl, The Poise, The Knockout!**

% RATINGS



84% PRESENTATION Good array of options for training and moves. Good selection of opponents.

75% GRAPHICS Good animation on the characters, but they're dwarfed by the over-large ring.

53% SOUND Not all it could be. Barely adequate thwacking noises, and ropey speech.

62% SHORT TERM PLAY The promise of genuinely skilfull gameplay tempts you in...

41% LONG TERM PLAY ... but when it fails to arrive, you won't bother going back for more.

OVERALL 50 Tries to add realism to the beat 'em up genre, but fails miserably. Obscurity here it comes...

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MEGADRIVE REVIEW



MEGADRIVE REVIEW



BY: TREASURE



8-MEG

STYLE



PLATFORM

PRICE IMPORT

PLAYERS 1

SKILL SETTINGS 3

RELEASE DATE

OUT NOW



Ten years ago, McDonald's were a rare sight in Britain, but now they're on every street corner. Resident MegaTech clown TOM GUISE can often be found hanging around on street corners too, so he's the ideal candidate to review the first Megadrive game to star Ronald McDonald.

MCDONAL

No, you're not dreaming. This really is a game starring Ronald McDonald, everyone's favourite mad burger clown. So what possible plot could you have for a game about a fast food icon? Could it be like Burgertime, that old game where you had to make hamburgers whilst being chased by pepper and fried eggs? Or like a football manager game, where you have to pit your store against the others during a busy season and hopefully become Burger-manager of the Month? No, don't be silly – you have to guide Ronald on a journey through a magical kingdom in search of hidden treasure. Ha! Of course!



HAPPY MEAL

Not surprisingly, it's a platform game. There are four levels, each one split into around eight seperate sub-stages, and the aim of each stage is simply to reach the exit sign at the end. Simple enough, except that each level is packed with Burger Baddies. Fortunately, old Ron isn't helpless. First of all, he can attack the baddies with some magic sprinkles (probably the stuff they use on the cappuccino donuts), and secondly he has a special set of hankies up his sleeve which he can use to reach handles and pull himself up to higher levels. On top of all this, the Daddy Mac can also collect rings and gems to increase his life energy.

TWISTING SPORTS

Now here's the big surprise – TreasureLand Adventure is pretty good. It's actually been programmed by Treasure, the people behind the totally cool Gunstar Heroes, and it shows. The graphics are excellent, with brightly-coloured backdrops and well-animated sprites. Ronnie is particularly good, loping around in his big boots and doing the splits when he leaps. He moves exactly how you'd expect a mad burger clown to.

However, it's not just a pretty face – the game is well put together, with some very clever levels. One level is made up of a giant waterfall which keeps stopping and starting. Ronnie has to move from one sheltered safety zone to another before the waterfall starts up again. Another level sees Ronnie trying to climb a building whilst sumo wrestlers stomp their feet on the supporting girders. Every time they stomp, the building twists out of shape, and Ron has to change direction to stay on the building. Every level has some added twist to it that puts it above the herd of average platform games.



DURATION: 5 MINS.

TIMED SEQUENCE

BIG MAC AND THE BUNNY GIRLS

It's off to the Magical Town with old Ronnie, as he catches the Burgertime Express...



▲ Hi there, Ronald McDonald here! Ooh gosh! It's nasty in here. Look at all these ugly beasties. We certainly won't use them to make our burgers. Only the finest beasties go into those.



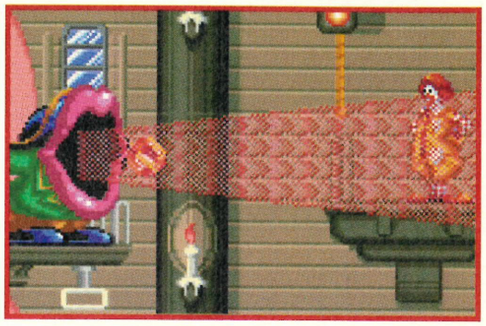
▲ So, caught in a circus eh? Wi haven't seen you in my restau for many a Sunday now anywa heathen one. I hope those nas gypsies do all sorts of things t you. And that Billy Smart!

'S TREASURELAND ADVENTURE





▲ Hey there, big-lipped fella. You've given me an idea. McDonalds hot-dogs.



▲ Say Ron, that sure was a great burger. In fact I, urpf...Bleurgh! Hyoik! Graaah!

FILLET O' FISH

What's more, the game has such a great atmosphere to it. There are so many neat little touches. In between stages, there are tons of story sequences where Ronnie's friends save him from crashing trains, or aliens beam him aboard their ship. It really adds to the game. One particularly good bit takes place on a train level. The screen goes dark, and when the lights come back on there are all these bunny girls dancing and pirouhetting to Swan Lake – Ronnie has to jump between carriages using their heads as stepping stones. It's bizarre but quite excellent, and the music is great too.



▲ Yipee, another day in the burger-kingdoms. Wow, there's Sally the Onion Ring, she's so beautiful. Ronnie boy, you dog, here goes nothing!





▲ So McDonald, my old friend, we meet again. Ever since you inflated my lips with that hot bag of fries I have waited for revenge. Now you will taste hot fries!





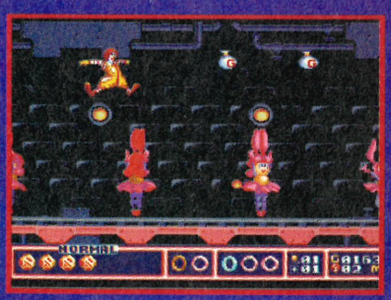
▲ Come lovely bunnies, climb into my McOvens. Soon my new range of McRabbit Stews will ready!



▲ Aargh! Kenny, my pet onion, reach for my hand! Without you my burgers will wither and die!



▲ Ha ha! Here I am on top of the train. Gosh, the air is all clean up here! I don't like that at all. Far better that it be all smokey and greasy from the grill. The more your eyes water, the better! Ha!



▲ Oo-er! It's dark and spooky in this tunnel! This must be sort of what it looks like the back-rooms of all those nasty abattoirs. Not that I'd know. All my beef is grown from magic beef trees!



▲ Wowee. It's the front of the train. Please Mr Driver, can I sit in the cockpit? If you let me I'll hold a special happy meal party for your kids at my restaurant. Otherwise I'll turn them into pies!



▲ Mac Attack! The train has stopped. My frail, unhealthy burger-meat body has been tossed from the train. I can only pray I land safely! Great gods of Burgeron protect me!

THICK SHAKE

McDonald's TreasureLand plays really well too. Simple, responsive controls, coupled with the fun, innovative levels, really do make for addictive gameplay. This is definitely one game you'll want to play right through to the end.

Unfortunately though, playing it right through to the end won't take you very long at all, because TreasureLand is way too easy. Easy-to-get continues and a password system make it a doddle to finish in as little as one sitting. If only they'd been left out, then the game would have been fairly challenging. This really is the pickle in the burger, so to speak.

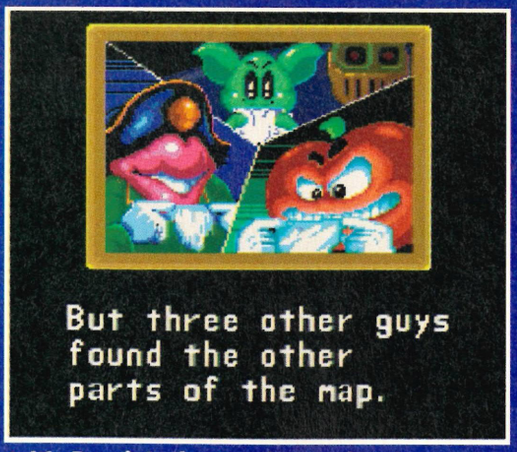
McCHICKEN SANDWICH

The biggest problem with McDonald's TreasureLand is the fact that it's a McDonald's game – it really puts you off the whole thing. You just feel like you' re playing one big advert, except you've had to pay nearly fifty quid for thr privilege. It's a shame really, because underneath that obnoxious commercial is a really good game. If this had been a Mickey Mouse licence, for instance, it would have been brilliant. However, the chilling thing is, since I completed the game I've become strangely fond of Ronnie and his pals. When the adverts come on TV, I actually take time out to watch them. It's scary that this game has the power to turn you into a burger-fan.

Nonetheless, it's still a fun, addictive game with ingenious levels and superb bosses. However, the dreadful nature of the licence and the fact that it's way too easy prevent it from being a classic game. If that doesn't bother you, then give it a go, but be warned – you too could become a diehard burger-fan!

THE BURGER HILL MOB

As you'd expect from the people behind Gunstar Heroes, TreasureLand features some pretty impressive bosses. From a huge tomato-headed creature, to a giant green-headed monster and even a pirate with a pair of lips for a face. However, unlike in most games, the only way to injure these bosses is to let them steal some of your energy first and then hit them while they're feeding. Good luck, burger clown!



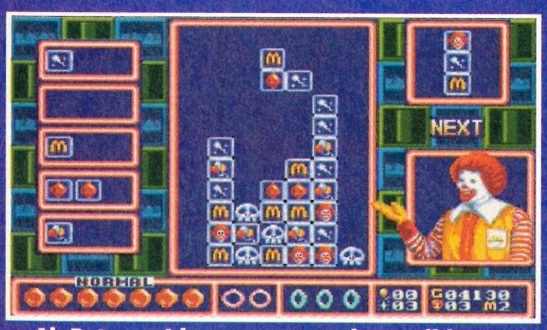
▲ It's Ronnie's three arch-enemies- Burger King, Mr Wimpy and the dreaded Starburger.

MEAL DEALS

Whenever you're in need of refreshment, you can always guarantee there's a McDonald's nearby. A good thing too, because even a mad burger clown needs to eat. These mini-McDonald's branches take two forms: one allows Ron to buy himself extra energy, power-ups and continues, the other takes the form of a McDonald's Tetris game, where Ronnie has to line-up McDonald's-related shapes to win his burger-clown goodies.



▲ Hello. Eat in or take-away? Ha, just kidding. I'm Ronald. I don't do menial tasks like serving.



▲ Ah Batman. I have constructed an evil burger-trap. Beat it or Robin eats the happy meal.



▲ Deep in the catacombs beneath McDonalds Mansion, Ron prepares to make ketchup out of living tomatoes!



▲ Bwa-ha-ha! The ketchup is ready, burger-fans!

THE SECOND OPINION



MARK HOLMES

Aaaagh! It's Ronald McDonald, that ghastly old bag lady who masquerades as a clown, starring in his own platform game! Being the sort of person who can't stand 'Big Ron' or the produce he helps to peddle to the world, that's a combination that would normally send me running for the cover of my Megadrive fallout shelter. But, much as I hate to admit it, this is, in fact, a better-than-average platformer. And, much as I hate to admit it, I'm going to have to agree with Tom on just about all the points he's made about the game. The controls are certainly simple and responsive and some of the levels are positively surreal – witness the ballerina bunnies in the train level that Tom's used as his sequence on the previous pages – makes you wonder what they've started putting in the burgers! Luckily, unlike Tom, I haven't fallen under the spell of the clown and become one of Big Ron's slaves, and I couldn't recommend this game because it's way too easy. Phew, that was a close one!

ALTERNATIVELY

85 BURGER KING
They may not be hand-cooked by a mad burger clown, but they're still tasty burgers and they serve 'em your way. Extra mayo? Nix on the pickle? You got it! You want the bouncers in pink? You ask 'em yourself.

RATINGS



PRESENTATION 90%
Plenty of story intermissions throughout. A highly polished feel.

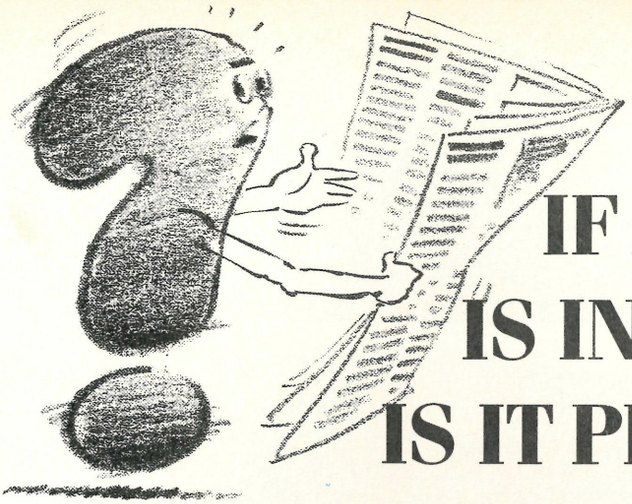
GRAPHICS 90%
Excellent backdrops and some superb sprites, especially the bosses.

SOUND 91%
Great sounds. Tons of tunes and decent spot-effects.

SHORT TERM PLAY 90%
Fun, addictive platform action. Very easy to get into.

LONG TERM PLAY 52%
With passwords and continues, it's way too easy to complete.

OVERALL 84
A visit to McDonald's makes your day!



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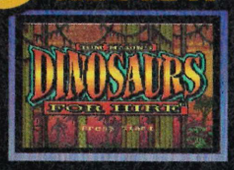








MEGADRIVE REVIEW



BY: SEGA

SEGA™

8-MEG

STYLE

PLATFORM/SHOOT 'EM UP

PRICE IMPORT

PLAYERS 1-2

SKILL SETTINGS 3

RELEASE DATE

OUT NOW

THANKS TO...
George from Ice Distribution for loaning us the copy of the game used in this review. You can contact him on (0302) 340 079.



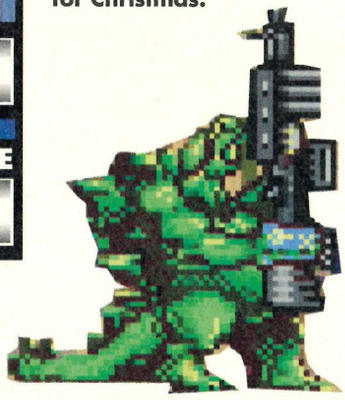
Why has TOM GUISE dressed his Jurassic Park dollies in Hawaiian shirts and rocket launchers? Who knows, but it's probably nothing to do with this game.

DINOSAU

Imagine if we could genetically recreate dinosaurs. Bring back to life those giant rulers of the Earth from a bygone era. What would we do with them? Put them in a zoo, perhaps? A dinosaur game park on a tropical island? Nah, that's a silly idea. How about breeding them for food? Just picture the size of those huge Stegosaurus steaks, or the massive Gallimimus drumsticks. And it doesn't have to be just food. You could make massive dustbins out of Brontosaurus feet, and think of all the shoes and handbags you'd get from the hide of one Diplodocus. Or it could be like the Flintstones – we could replace machines with dinosaurs. Brontosaurus' could act like cranes, and we could use baby Pteradactyls as the needles on record players. Of course, this is all rubbish. It's obvious what we'd do with dinosaurs – we'd dress them in Hawaiian shirts, arm them with automatic machine guns and send them into treacherous missions against enemy dictators in foreign countries. At least, that's the plot of the latest Megadrive shoot 'em up, Dinosaurs For Hire. Then again, we could always keep them as pets, but don't forget – a dinosaur is for life, not just for Christmas.



▲ "I'm a high-steppin, gun-totin' dinosaur, me!



JURASSIC PLOT!

Taken from the obscure Malibu comic books of the same name, the Dinosaurs For Hire are three futuristic, but prehistoric, mercenaries – guns-for-hire who'll do any job, no matter how dirty, as long as the price is right. Now their special brand of Jurassic justice is needed on the Megadrive. An evil dictator has created an army of dinosaur freaks. With this unholy legion of Mesozoic mutants, he intends to conquer the world! Enter those dino dudes with major attitudes. Only they stand in between him and complete world domination. Welcome to Jurassic Warzone!



▲ "I can leap off tall buildings too!"

DINOSAURS: FOR HIRE!

If you've got a problem. And no-one else can help. And you can find them. Maybe you can hire the Dinosaurs For Hire!



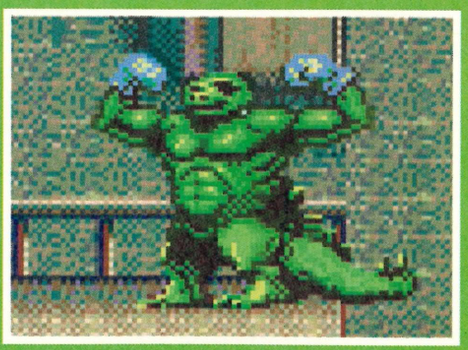
ARCHIE

King of the tyrant lizards, Archie is none other than a Tyrannosaurus Rex. As with all blue-blooded dinosaurs, he wears a leather jacket and a carries an automatic machine gun.



LORENZO

He's a Triceratops, a name that means 'three-horned face'. In prehistoric times, Triceratops used these horns to defend themselves. Lorenzo uses a .50 calibre elephant gun and wears Hawaiian shirts.



REESE

The oldest species of the team, Reese is a one-eyed Stegosaurus. These plate-backed dino's had brains the size of walnuts. Not a good thing when they're armed with pulse cannons.

RS FOR HIRE

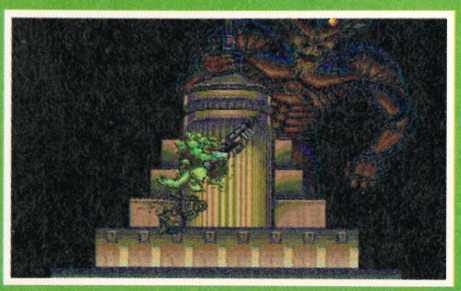




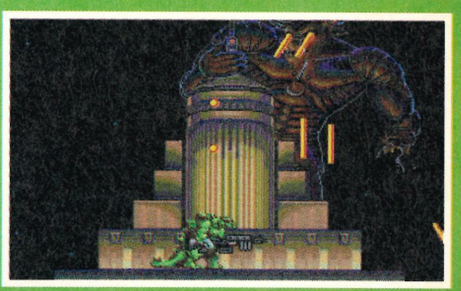
BOSS 1: THE MINOTAUR!



▲ Look! On top of the Empire State Building! Aaaaargh!



▲ Avoid his deadly whip and blast away at its arms!

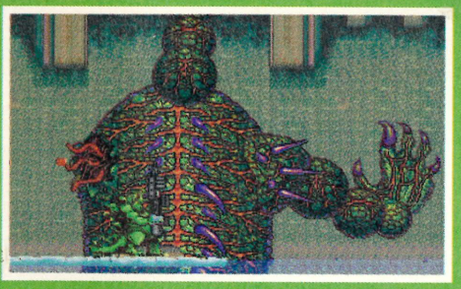


▲ Ha, not so hot without your arms, eh pal? Yipes!

BOSS 2: GIANT LIZARD!



▲ Gosh, what a beautiful view of the dam. Scream!



▲ One arm gone. Now if I can just reach the other side...

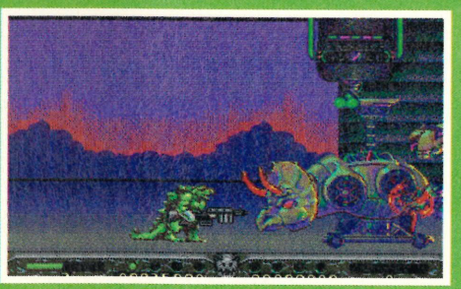


▲ I think I've pooed my pants (it weighs about five stone).

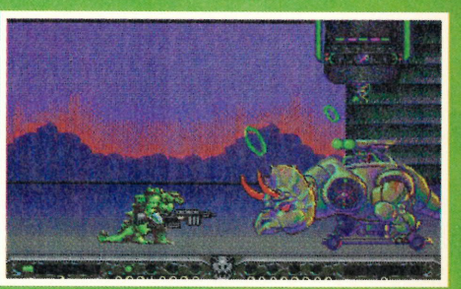
BOSS 3: DINOBOT!



▲ What's this? An enormous robot triceratops. Help!



▲ Ha, I've blown his legs off! That should sort him out.



▲ Oh no! That nasty machine is repairing him. He's... unstoppable!

LET'S KICK TAIL!

As you'd expect, it's a platform shoot 'em up. Two players can join the fight, playing as any of the three hireable, desirable dino dudes. The aim of the game is simple – just stroll through each level, blasting everything in sight with your high-powered dino-guns.

Starting in the slums of New York, you have to face bikers, ninjas, hang-gliding gunmen and even flame-throwing tenants. Then it's down into the subways to deal with skateboarders, armoured cars and giant cockroaches, before taking a trip to the top of the Empire State Building to face a huge Minotaur with laser-beam eyes. All that, and it's just the first level!

The game soon progresses to the Hoover Dam to face a giant lizard, befor our prehistoric pals take a jet-ski ride to Hollywood, battling against miniature army vehicles on a film set. Later levels see the dinosaur warriors atop an express train, in a toy factory, and eventually battling elemental ninjas in Japan. Not bad going for a bunch of reptiles who supposedly died 65 million years ago.

DINOSAUR ATTACKS!

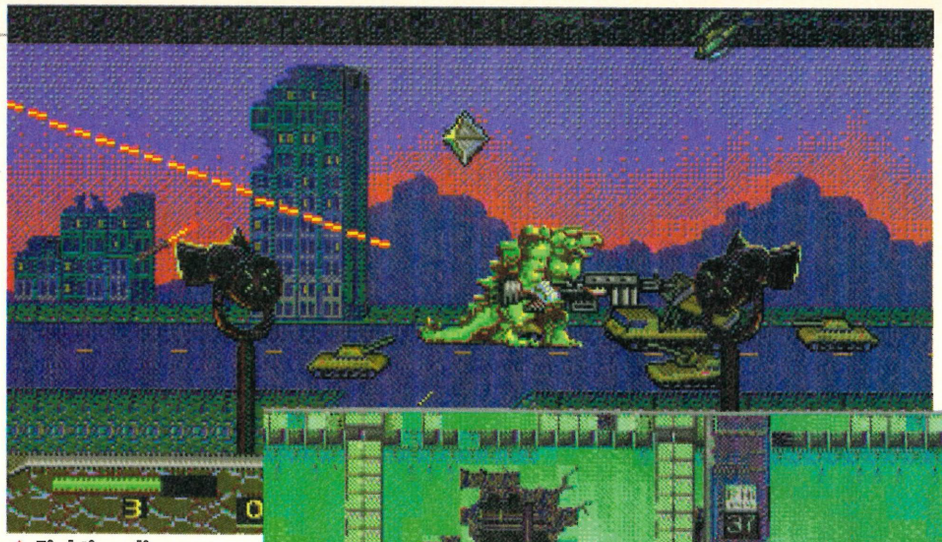
The most impressive feature of Dinosaurs For Hire is the huge bosses. Biogenetically-created mutant dinobeasts from Hell! Here's a look at some prehistoric beasties you'll never see at the Natural History Museum.



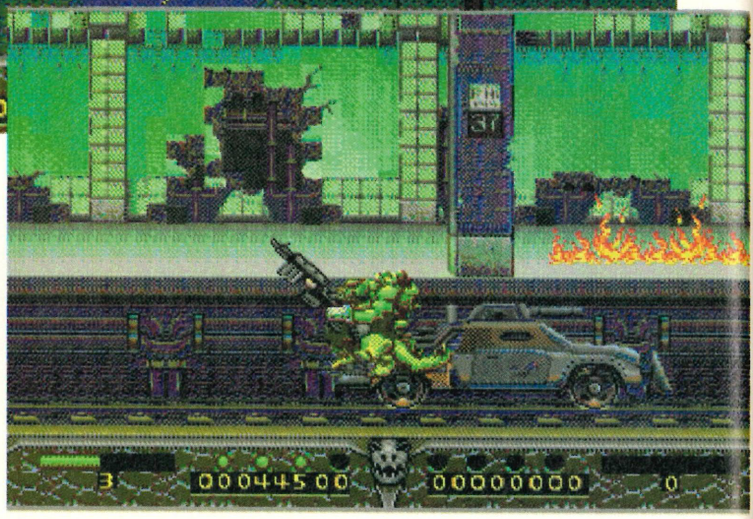
DINOSAUR POO!

You might think this all sounds like a top blaster, but you'd be mistaken. It's really quite average. Yes, there are tons of baddies, but they're just puny little sprites with no fight in them. There's no thrill in the killing of this kind of villainy. Likewise with the bosses. They're huge! They're mean! They stomp and snarl and everything! But all you have to do is shoot their arms off first and then keep aiming at the head – most disappointing! Even the wide variety of levels fail to impress. Traintop rides, jet skis, the Hoover Dam, the Empire State Building, all rendered in dull grainy graphics. It really does lower the whole image of the game.

On top of all this, the controls are quite fiddly. It's extremely hard to aim the gun diagonally without the dinosaur shuffling in that direction, right off the edge of a platform. This is made even worse in two-player mode. Should one player fall off a platform or fail to make it up a ladder with the other player, the computer doesn't throw them back onto the screen with the customary loss of energy. Nope, it deducts a life and then sticks them back on the screen after a long delay. To be honest, the game is almost unplayable in two-player mode.



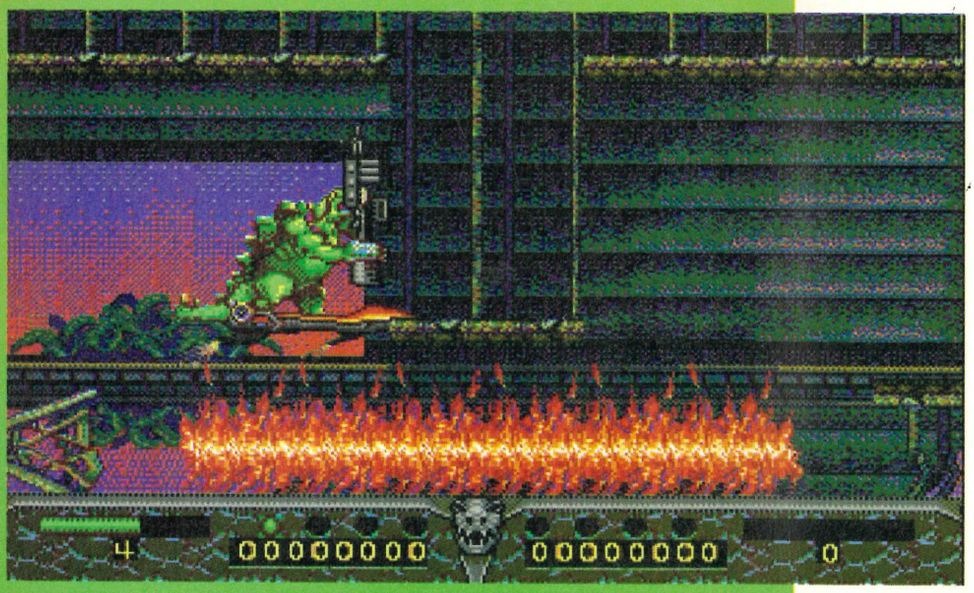
▲ **Fighting dinosaur on the film set! Aiee!**



▲ **The mid-level boss on the first level – a tank.**

LOAD OF OLD FOSSILS!

After playing it for some time, I did glean some enjoyment from Dinosaurs For Hire. There's a fair amount of challenge to the game, especially on the harder difficulty settings, and the variety of the levels keeps it from being terminally boring. Also, there's a good sense of humour throughout the game. Fighting on the Empire State Building or stomping through miniature streets filled with tanks, it's all very tongue in cheek. I can see what the programmers were aiming for with this game – an epic blast with loads of big bosses and odd enemies – but, unfortunately, they've fallen way short of the mark and the result is an extremely average shoot 'em up. I expect fans of the comic will enjoy it, , but it's no Jurassic Park.



▲ **One of our dinos is fire-walking! Dino-burgers, anyone?**

IMPORT WARNING!
The copy of Dinosaurs For Hire used in this review was an American Import and will only work on Genesis systems or machines designed to run on NTSC televisions.

ALTERNATIVELY

95

GUNSTAR HEROES
by SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
The ultimate platform shoot 'em up on the Megadrive. Gob smacking graphics, mind-blowing sounds and super-addictive gameplay. BUY!

%RATINGS



PRESENTATION 42%
No intro, basic options. An 'unfinished' feel to the game.

GRAPHICS 68%
OK dino sprites, puny baddies, grainy backdrops, huge bosses, jerky animation.

SOUND 72%
Fair spot-effects, reasonable tunes. Nothing special.

SHORT TERM PLAY 64%
Initially playable, but stunningly unimpressive. Awful two-player mode.

LONG TERM PLAY 66%
Improves as you progress. Well-graded difficulty, but you won't come back to it.

OVERALL 64
A mediocre shoot 'em up. Ambitious in places, but ultimately poor. Leave it alone.



THE SECOND OPINION



STEVE MERRETT
How very, very dull indeed. The Dinosaurs For Hire comics are an entertaining read with loads of in-jokes and comic-related gags and, as such, have the potential for a bit of a smart blast. Big guns, large dinosaur sprites – this game could have them all. Instead, we get small and insignificant sprites tottering across the dullest backdrops known to man – the programmers obviously liked their greens and beiges, as they make up 90% of the game's palette! Only the gameplay could have saved this from a complete kicking, and that's every bit as dull as the graphics. The dinos are sluggish and tricky to control, and firing diagonally proves extremely frustrating at times – especially when the gun turret or foe you're shooting at never seems to miss. A real missed opportunity – this stinks more than a Brontosaurus's bum.

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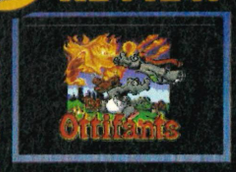
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MEGADRIVE REVIEW



BY: SEGA

SEGA™

8-MEG

STYLE

PLATFORM

PRICE £44.99

PLAYERS 1

SKILL SETTINGS 3

RELEASE DATE

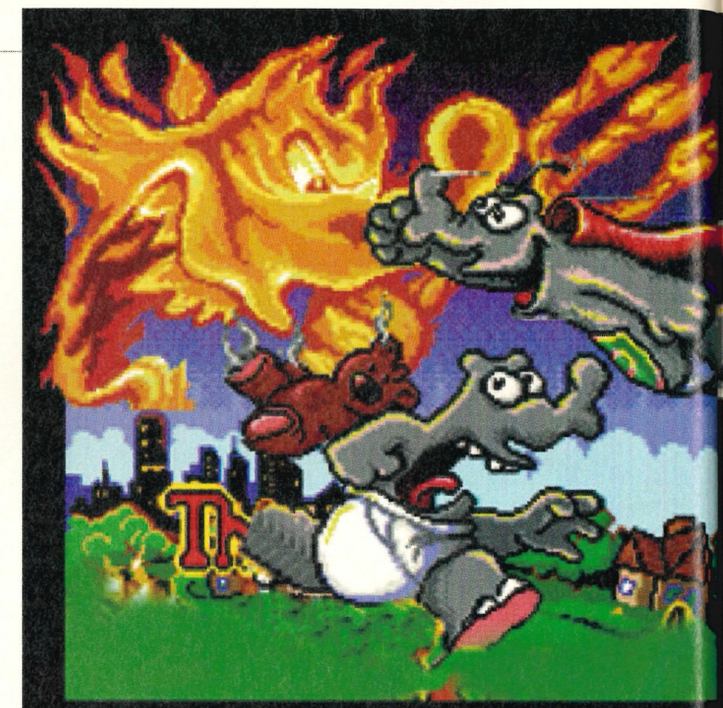
DEC 1993



A game about elephants. Surely this requires someone with a love of animals and a penchant for sticky buns. GUS SWAN fits the bill perfectly, so he was commandeered to check out the lumbering, grey beast that is Ottifants.

OTTIF

It's platform time again. Today's special guests are the Ottifants, a sort of Simpsons for the Germanic sense of humour. The Ottifants are pygmy elephants – the humorous brainchild of Deutscher comedian Otto Waalkes. They have their own TV series, books and a cult following in Germany. And now they complete the set with a computer game brought to you courtesy of Sega and closer links with our European partners. But although the scenario may sound exotic, the implementation is rather staid.



JELLY BABY

Baby Ottifant has to track down his father by following a trail of jelly babies strewn across six areas, each of which is split into smaller zones. An Ottifant waits to transport him from stage to stage, but only when the right percentage of jelly treats has been collected (this percentage depends on the difficulty level selected). Along the way, lots of nasties, apparently the product of the young tusker's imagination, are out to stop him. Despite the imaginary nature of the assorted baddies, the spikes, swamps and swinging blades are all too real when it comes to sapping the little pachiderm's energy. Controlling Ottifant involves using just two buttons, and the word 'basic' is springs to mind where this game is concerned. The action is very simplistic, offering no surprises and it all seems very shallow indeed.

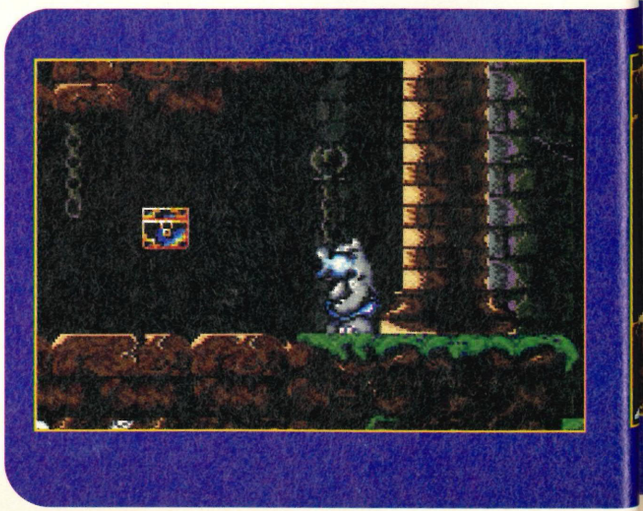


◀ **Aaaaaah... what a cute little baby elephant. Look at his lovely little blue nappy. Oooooh! – did you see that? He spat a ball right out of his trunk – disgusting!**

Ottifant gets into some more trunk-pumping, ball-blasting action as he faces up to an enormous, nasty, horrible, er... thing. ▶







ANTS



PAPPY PACHIDERM

Although Ottifants is extremey basic, it is not entirely devoid of features. Baby himself is capable of some tricks. First of all, he can blow, which sends a stream of little pellets streaming out of his trunk, killing anything in his path. Baby can also rely on the good old bottom-bounce – a la Addams Family and countles others – which kill most monsters instantly. Best of the bunch, though, is the baby's suck mode which alows him to bring platforms closer or carry blocks elsewhere.

And then there's the lollies. Three fruit flavours, just like a Walls' Zoom. Eating three of them gives Ottifant a special power, which depends on the flavours of the three lollies. Most impressive is the caped Super Ottifant that three lemons produces, allowing a limited period of sky-diving.

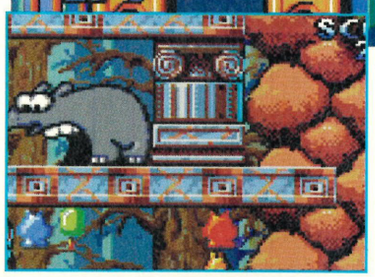


▲ Ottifant finds an elephant dafter than himself – he's wearing a pillow on his head, for Pete's sake!





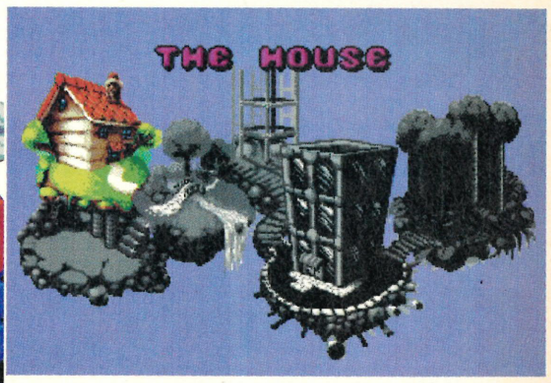
▲ No, Ottifant – please don't get chopped up by that razor-sharp pendulum... please... oh, alright then, go ahead.



▼ All aboard the Otti-train!











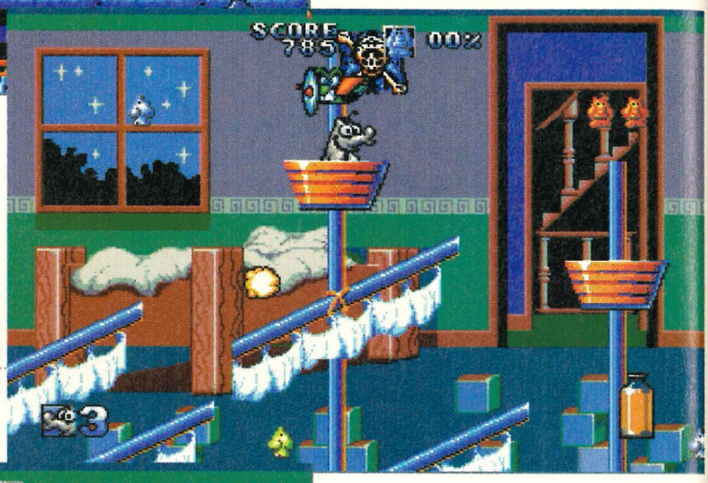
LIFE SENTENCE

The defence is about to conclude, with just a quick mention of features like hidden rooms, bonuses, neat cartoon breaks and graphics that generally improve from the bland toyroom graphics, to impressive the parallax during the later levels. Despite any aesthetic additions, though, the gameplay stays much the same throughout, although it gets quite tough from halfway through. What a bummer.

All this is just a plea of mitigation, however. How can Ottifant be let off by the Console Court when a Rogues' Gallery of recent convictions has been made under the Platform Game Offences Act. Asterix, Addams Family, Superman – all of these are barely passable examples of the genre, but still superior to Ottifants, which begs, steals and borrows all its features apart from the main character. This is pretty astonishing, considering that the perpetrators of the crime are Graftgold – one of the country's top coding houses, responsible for more than their fair share of original classics in the past. Not so here. Ottifants is a transgression from those who should know better and should employ their talents for the good of the community. In the end, a disappointing, formulaic, but competent platform game. The judge's verdict: three years for the programmers, high 60's for the game.



▲ Oh, what a surprise – a platform game with a train level, how novel.



▼ Ho-ho. Look at that funny little elephant. He's up to his silly tricks again. What a character!





▲ Phew! I must have had a few too many fizzy drinks – I could have sworn I saw a flying elephant just then.





▲ Otty creeps up on his best mate from behind.

THE SECOND OPINION



TOM GUISE

I don't like this game – not one little bit. It's not that it's been badly programmed or anything. In fact, technically it isn't bad at all. The graphics are decent enough, with bright, colourful backdrops and neatly-drawn, well-animated sprites. Likewise, the in-game sound consists of smart, apporiately-designed tunes and good spot-effects. Gameplay? Well, there's nothing horrible going on there either. The controls are responsive and there are enough obstacles on each level to keep you on your toes. So, what's wrong with it? I'll tell you, it's just too plain. There's no spark of excitement, no clever innovations or surprises. It's so bloody ordinary and ultimately quite dull. It's the same with the graphics. Nice, neat, colourful, but completely unappealing to look at. It's a sort of Stepford video game. Technically and functionally perfect, but completely lacking any soul. There's nothing here that would make you want this game. For Ottifant fans only. Oh, ha ha ha!

%RATINGS



PRESENTATION 72%
Adequate, with skill levels and a password option.

GRAPHICS 83%
Starting off quite poor, but gradually improving.

SOUND 77%
Jolly tunes, which cycle quite quickly.

SHORT TERM PLAY 74%
Moderately engaging, despite its limitations.

LONG TERM PLAY 66%
Not that easy, but doesn't develop into anything special.

OVERALL 67
Johnny foreigner will have to do better if this is leading a European games invasion.

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MEGADRIVE REVIEW



BY: EA



8-MEG

STYLE



PINBALL

PRICE £44.99

PLAYERS 1-4

SKILL SETTINGS 3

RELEASE DATE

DEC 1993



Ever since he was a young boy, he's played the silver ball. From Berkhamsted to Farringdon, he must have played them all. But he ain't seen nuthin' like this in any amusement hall. This ain't def, fun or a blinder, kid – MARK HOLMES says it's a poor excuse for pinball.

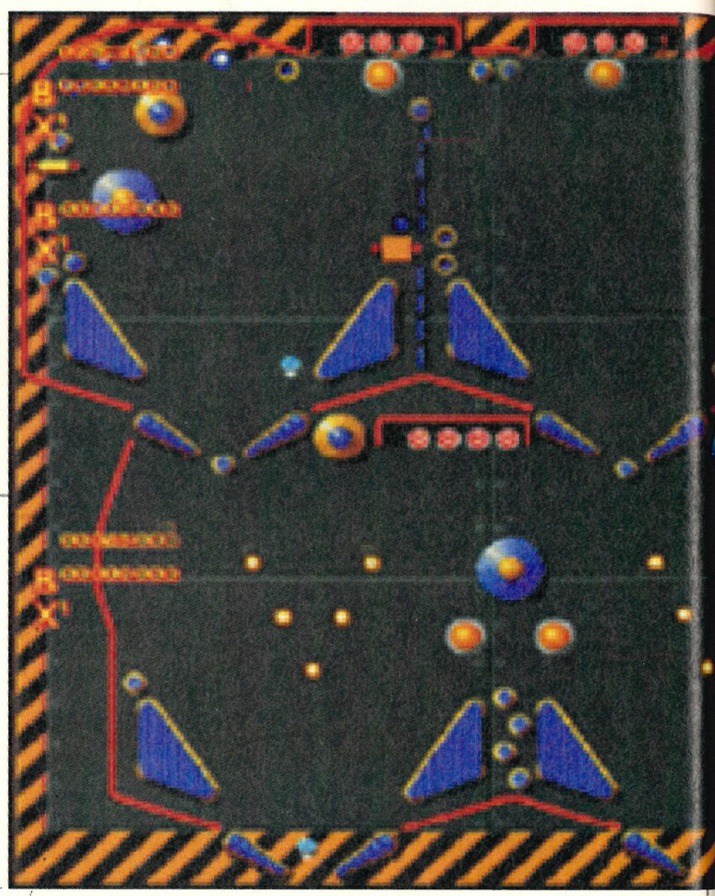
VIRTUAL

Have you ever found yourself playing a pinball table and wishing you could add a few more extra features to the table? You know – an extra 'special' hole with lots of flashing lights, secret passages or maybe the odd small explosive charge, just to liven things up a bit. Well, if you've harboured such desires of constructing your very own personal pinball table, your dreams have been answered by EA with this here Virtual Pinball game. As well as featuring half-a-dozen pre-designed tables, you can also knock together your own DIY custom job (although unfortunately there's no 'explosive charge' feature). Sounds like a pinball wizard's dream-come-true... or is it?

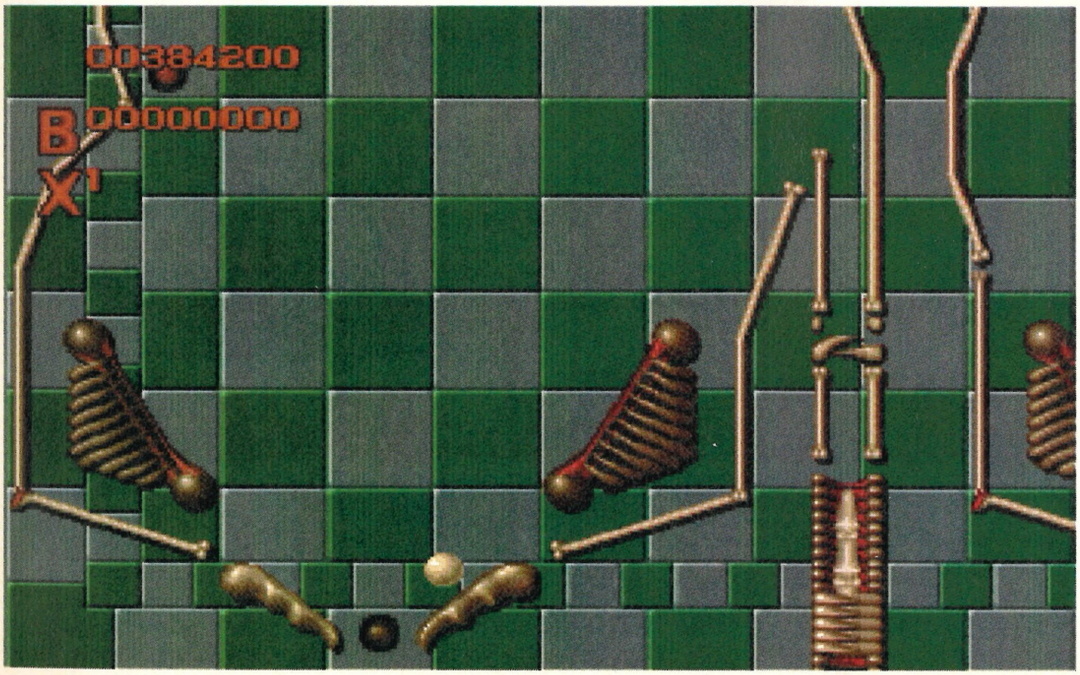
SHAKE SOME ACTION

Start up the game and you're offered the choice of playing with between one and four players (in time-honoured one-after-the-other fashion, of course). You can select one of the half-dozen ready-made tables, go to the workshop to create your own table or do a 'here's one I made earlier' by returning to a previously-customised table (more of that later).

Skill levels can be toggled between easy, fast and superfast, which alters the speed that the ball travels around the table accordingly. The 'action' can also be adjusted, which affects the way the ball ricochets off bumpers and kick walls – on normal setting, the ball bounces as softly as a balloon, but change to 'psychotic' and the ball spangs around like a rubber ball. Needless to say, you've got to set it up on superfast and psychotic to get the ball zapping around fast enough.



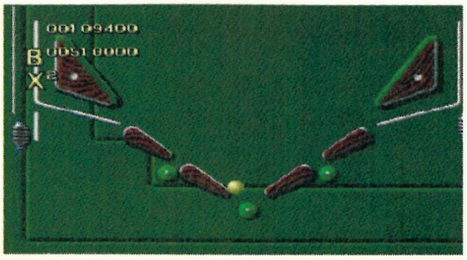
▲ One of the pre-fabricated tables in its entirety. Exciting, huh?



▲ Select the 'Gore' components parts and the table turns into a creepy boneyard.

SPARE PARTS

Whether you opt to play on one of the pre-fabricated tables or constuct your own, you can change the style of the board according to your own personal aesthetic tastes. Choose from a catalogue of super designs, ranging from pool table-style green baize through bamboo and stone effects and on to industrial and steel plate effects. The components which make up the 'active' part of the table – bumpers, flippers, kick walls and all the other components – can also be stylistically altered from classic pinball style through blueprint and onto the gothic gore effect.



▲ The pleasantly woody pool table parts.

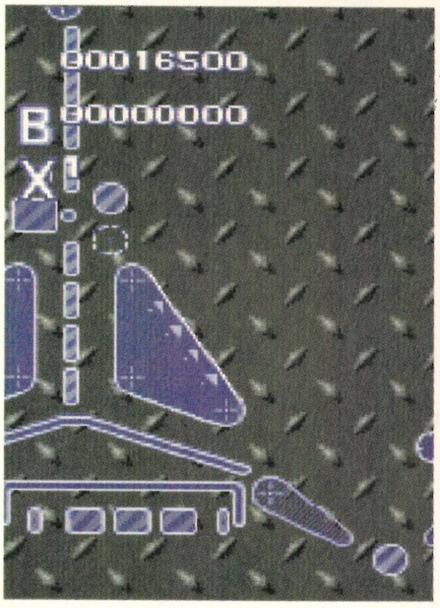
PINBALL



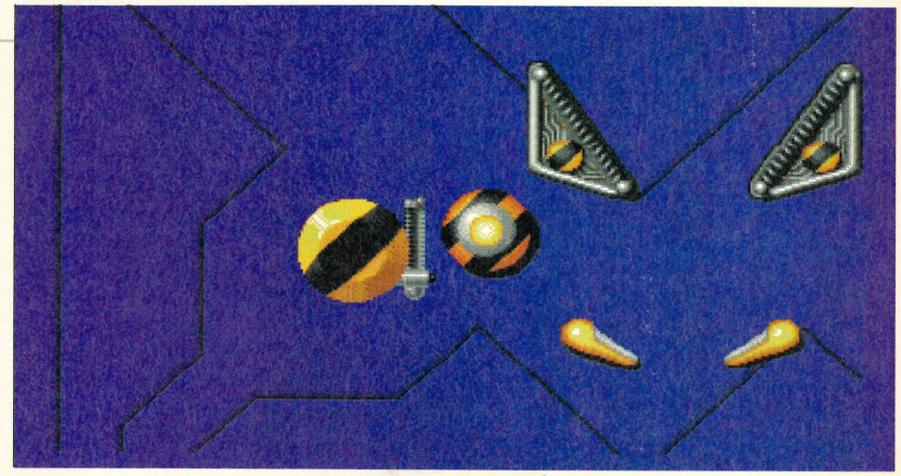


LAYING THE TABLE

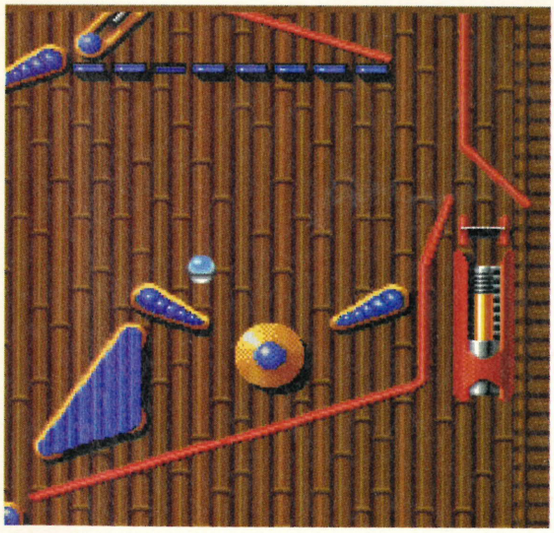
Using the workshop option, you can construct your very own customised pinball table. There are a number of blank plans on which you can create your own design, or you can modify one of the pre-fabricated tables. A circular yellow and black droid moves the components you've selected around the table, controlled by the D-pad, allowing you to locate or delete parts at leisure. When you're happy with your design, you can save it for future reference.



▲ **The blank Blueprint table.**



▲ **In the Workshop, a mechanical droid pieces together your custom table.**



▲ **Ooo, a nice bamboo effect table! Super!**

PINBALL WIZARD?

I was quite looking forward to this game because of the inclusion of one feature – the workshop, which allows you to construct your own table. But unfortunately Virtual Pinball has to join the long list of 'great ideas that never quite came off'. The base tables are just too small to accomodate enough parts to make things interesting, and the component parts themselves aren't interesting enough to make excitingly playable tables.

As for the gameplay, well, it's pinball with all-the-things-that-make-real-pinball-fun taken out. The flashing lights in Virtual Pinball blink sadly compared to the garish Blackpool illuminations effects on real tables, the ball moves around like a rubber sphere rather than a rock-hard steely, and the spanging, ringing sounds of the real thing have been replaced with formulaic 'modern' music tracks. None of the tables are exciting enough to make you want to play them for more than a few minutes before falling asleep through boredom – compared to modern pinball tables, these are real dinosaurs. Even the scoreboard is almost unnoticeable – tiny and tucked away in the top corner – and there's no satisfying clunking as the score tots up either, so there's really very little incentive to get yourself on the hi-score table. Oh dear.

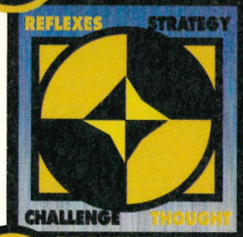
THE SECOND OPINION



TOM GUISE

Ooergh! This game really is awful. The idea of a pinball game that allows you to build your own tables could have been pretty good, but it's all so badly done. If you were hoping to recreate all your favourite pinball tables on the Megadrive, then FORGET IT! With such a small playing field and a very basic range of components, there's no way you can build anything half-decent. And don't think you'll get any fun out of the pre-designed tables – they look like they've been built using the cruddy games-construction option. They're so small and simple that it doesn't take long to get bored with each one. Virtual Pinball just doesn't capture the atmosphere of real pinball. There are no dot-matrix graphic scenes, no speech when you pull off a good shot, no skill-shot arenas to pique your curiosity and no real incentive to reach high scores. Forget this sad effort and go for Dragon's Fury or Sonic Spinball instead.

% RATINGS



PRESENTATION 75
Plenty of options, although they don't do a lot.

GRAPHICS 75%
A variety of different styles, but not visually stunning.

SOUND 50%
Awful, formulaic soundtracks, sad sound effects.

SHORT TERM PLAY 65%
Some enjoyment can be gained in the workshop option...

LONG TERM PLAY 60%
... but not much, and the ready-made tables are boring.

OVERALL 62
A good idea which doesn't work. Go for Devil Crash if you want a good pinball game.

MEGADRIVE REVIEW



BY: ELECTRONIC ARTS

ELECTRONIC ARTS

8-MEG

STYLE

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PRICE £44.99

PLAYERS 1-2

SKILL SETTINGS 1

RELEASE DATE

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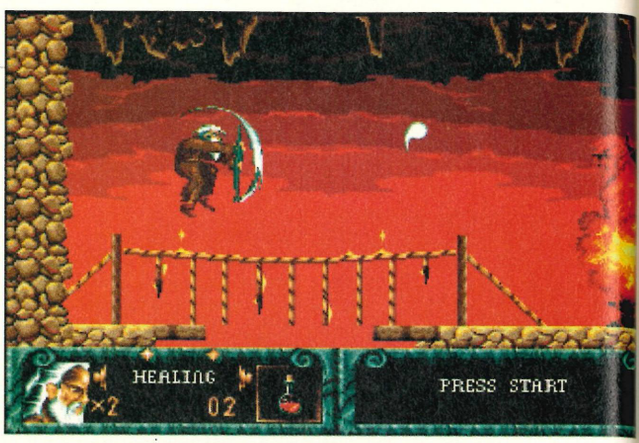
PAUL GLANCEY gets his loin cloth off the washing line and shines up his sword, ready for another hack 'n' slay package tour of Mystical Magicke Worlde, playing wizards, warriors and barbarians in EA's Blades of Vengeance.

BLADES O

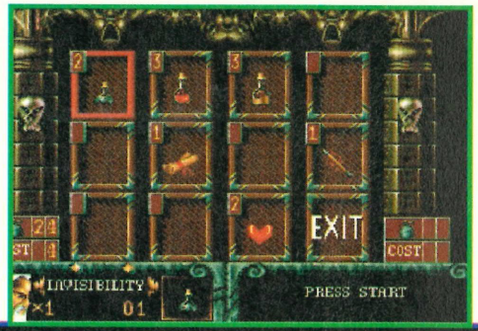
The Scene: The offices of Beam Software, top Australian development house. There they were – the organisation's greatest game-designing brains, trying to come up with a new game to fulfil the Electronic Arts contract, when one of them hits upon the idea that what the Megadrive players really want is another Rastan-style platform beat 'em up. Of course! And why not fix it so that the player can be either a warrior, a huntress or a wizard?

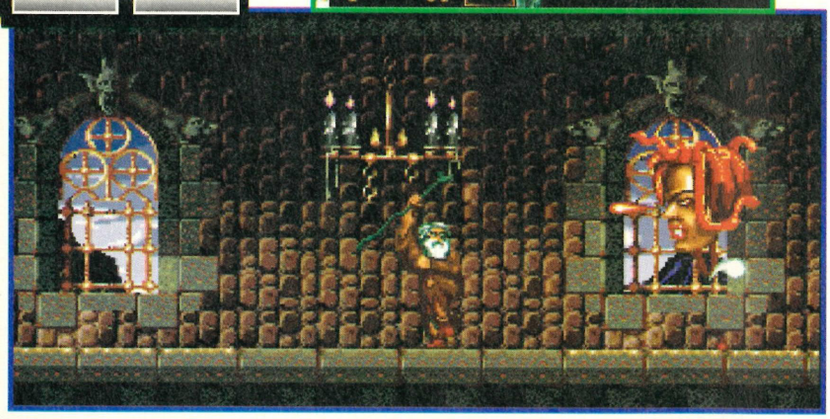
The Scene: Your local software shop, where you pick Blades of Vengeance off the shelf, look at the pictures on the back and swiftly put it back, simply because it doesn't look like it's going to be anything remotely new.

So, are we all just wasting our time here, or what? Let's see...



▲ **After a few too many, the tramp battled with the demon.**





▲ **Oh no, it's The Tramp's old nemesis – Bag Lady From Hell!**

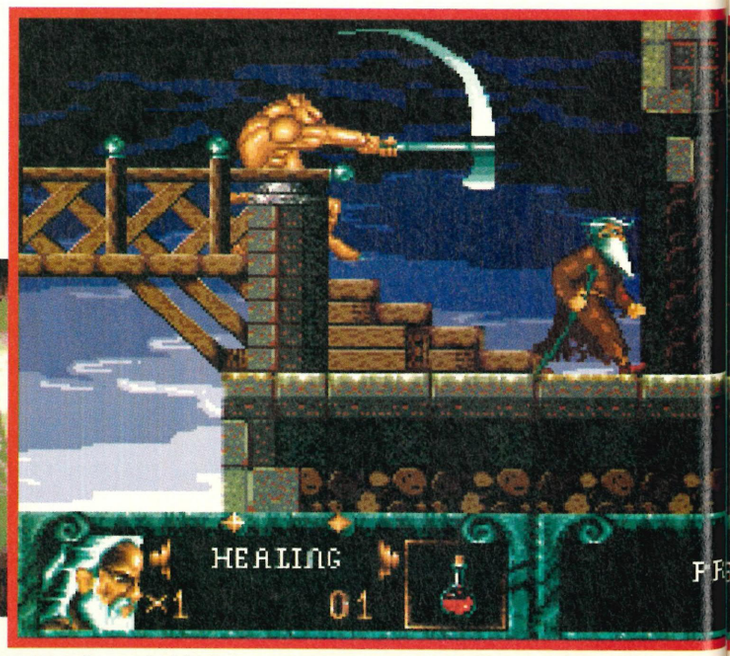
IT'S NOT THAT BAD, IS IT?

Expecting the worst, I plugged in the Blades of Vengeance cartridge and switched on. Bland title screen, basic character selection, briefing from the old wizard, with a wobbly screen effect in the background. Yeah, yeah. Start the game and... hmm, looks just like Gods or Saint Sword or Risky Woods. Try to find the exit to a maze of platforms while destroying wandering monsters with your axe/sword/magic wand and collect a few magic potions on the way.

But I suppose I should shut my cynical mouth, because after a few plays I was surprised to find myself quite enjoying Blades of Vengeance. True, there's nothing original about it, but it at least looks decent and plays quite well. The levels are large and although there's not much skill to decking the monsters – just slash, slash and slash again, while staying out of reach – there's the additional element of trying to find as much treasure as possible before going through the door to the next section.

As well as being able to find cash and health, and invisibility and strength potions in the chests which are lying around, there are also goodies in hidden locations which you can find by jumping through certain apparently solid walls.





▲ **Watch out behind you, Trampy – behiiiiiind youuuuuuu!**

F VENGEANCE



TWO SWORDS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

The game's best feature is the two player option, though this is simply an opportunity for two players to chop away at twice as many baddies as in the single player game. There's not much interaction required between players to get past tricky sections, but you can't move more than half a screen apart so there is a bit of: "Come on! Let's go this way!", "No! This way!", "We've been that way already!", which is quite entertaining. You can actually hand over lives to your partner if they look like they're about to expire, which is a nice touch.

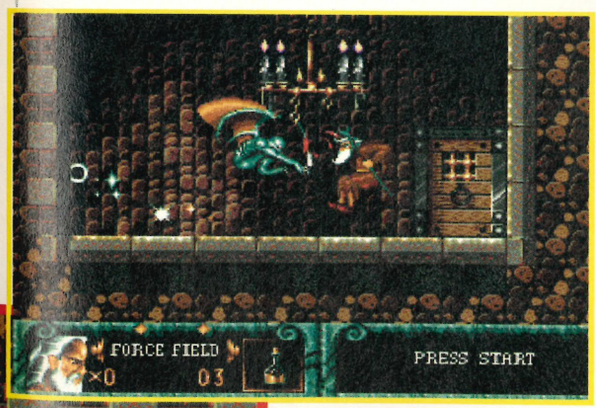
IS IT WORTH BUYING?

Now, after saying all these nice things about Blades of Vengeance, I'm not going to recommend buying it. It's quite good fun and it looks OK, as I've said, but there are loads of Megadrive titles around which are GREAT fun to play and have stunning graphics which make Blades of Vengeance look like something from 1991. And most of them cost less.

Having released only two Megadrive games worth talking about this year (Jungle Strike and FIFA Soccer), maybe it's time Electronic Arts started to look at what their competitors are doing before their good name as quality Megadrive publishers tarnishes any further.

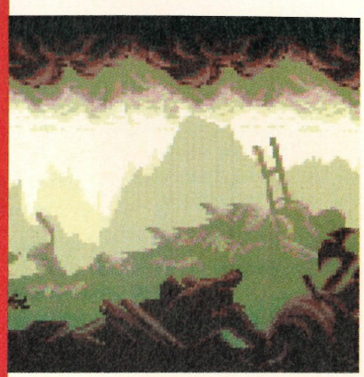


▲ **"Ah, you're me best mates in all the world. C'mon – I'll take on the lot o' you!"**



▲ **"By the Great Lord Special Brew – that's the first time I've found a winged demon in a dustbin!"**







WHICH WARRIOR?

At the start of the game, you get to choose your character. The manual is very skimpy on details regarding the strengths and weaknesses of each, so we've worked it out for you. By the way, the special attacks can only be used when you collect some armour.

THE BARBARIAN SPECIAL ATTACK:

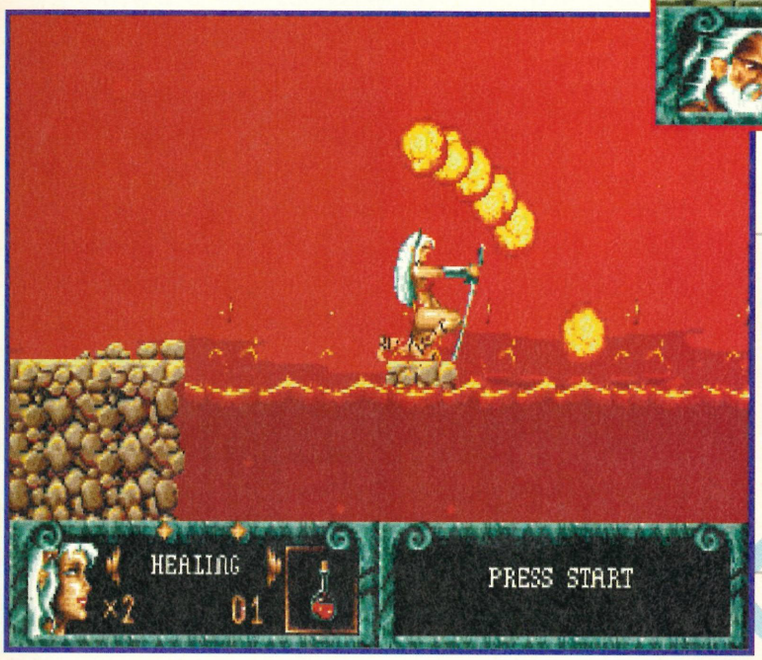


The Whirling Mace Trick
Carries an axe, so his fighting abilities are much like those of the Huntress, except that Barb can attack upwards, and when he's got his armour on, he's the only one who doesn't have to power-up his special attack before he can use it.

FIGHTWORTHY RATING: ***



▲ **"Aaaaaaaah, yer basssa... c'mon – I'll fights yez all fer a tenner!"**



▲ **Oooh, look – flying poppadums!**

THE HUNTRESS SPECIAL ATTACK:

Four-Way Crossbow Shot
Just like the Barbarian, only with a bikini and a sword. She's not bad, but the other two seem to have more going for them because of their couple of extra fighting capabilities. Oh, and you have to wait while she loads her crossbow

FIGHTWORTHY RATING: **

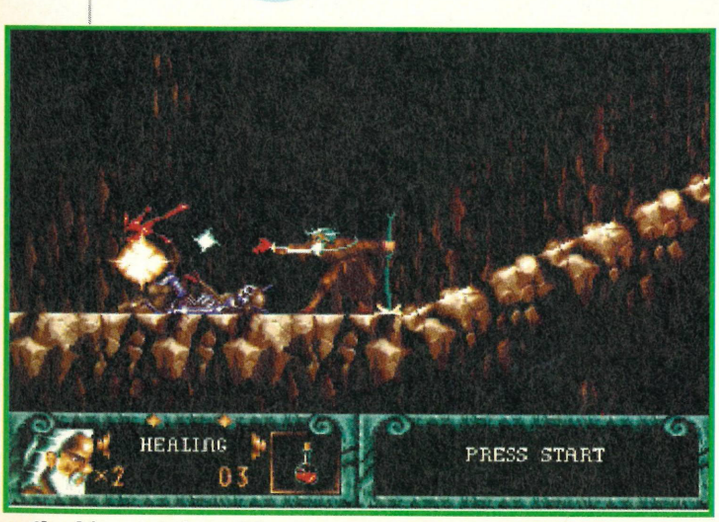


THE WIZARD SPECIAL ATTACK:



Enhanced Magic Blast
Not a bad old stick, thanks to his old stick. Gets into trouble when he has to fight at close range, but his wand fires deadly bolts of energy across the screen so he can attack easily from a distance and even bounce shots along the ground. Definitely the most enjoyable character to play as.

FIGHTWORTHY RATING: ****



▲ **Chucking-out time: "Go on, guv – spare us 20p please."**

THE SECOND OPINION



STEVE MERRETT
Hmmm, deja-vu or what! Blades Of Vengeance may sound like a high-brow RPG, but alas it's just another Galahad/Risky Woods clone, and a very dull one at that. Yes sirree, replacing the little scamp hero of Risky and the armour-clad hero of Galahad are three (count 'em) characters, none of which are particularly different. Idly watch them as they make their way across the familiar territory of collapsing bridges and fiery pits... stifle a yawn as wave after wave of dull skeletons and things line up for instant decapatation... start to weep as you realise that you've spent forty quid on a regurgitated peice of mediocrity. Yes, Blades is a very well presented game which features detailed sprites and pleasant enough sound, but there isn't one new idea in it. EA may be able to update the likes of Madden and Ice Hockey by adding new ideas, but adding a new lick of paint to a tired old platformer just isn't on.

%RATINGS



PRESENTATION 66%
No options apart from the two player game. Intro screens are mediocre.

GRAPHICS 79%
Nothing ground-breaking, but better than average in most departments.

SOUND 73%
The soundtrack has its moments, but the effects are feeble.

SHORT TERM PLAY 74%
Reasonable fun to play, especially in two player mode.

LONG TERM PLAY 77%
Very tough. Perhaps a bit too tough.

OVERALL 72
An above-average hack-and-slay game, but very unoriginal.

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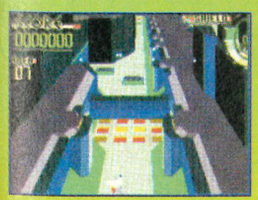
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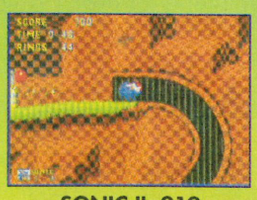
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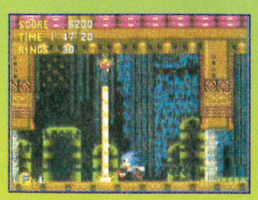
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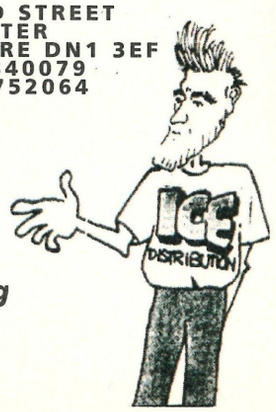
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TECHNIQUE ZONE

We've got the same problem this month as we had last month – too many games to review, leaving very little space for tips. But hell, we're gonna make the most of it, kicking off with this page of all the latest cheats, and following up with the first part of our player's guide to that top Mega-CD blaster, Batman Returns. So, let the technique fest begin!

SHINING FORCE

We've had a number of calls about last month's Shining Force tips, saying that they didn't work! Come on, now – would we lie to you?! Well, to tell the truth, they won't work unless you've got a Japanese Megadrive. Oops – we should have made that clear! But to make up for it, here are three more tips for this top RPG that definitely DO WORK – they're from Sega themselves!

Get the female magic users cavorting around in skimpy costumes! Tao's cossy can be found by searching the cave in Bustoke Quarry, while Anri's can be located beside the snipers in the Battle of the Laser Eye.

Finding some of the better characters hard to locate? You've probably found Domingo and Pao without too much difficulty, but here are a few hints on how to find two of the best characters. The Samurai's a good one – try reading the sign between the two doors in Prompt to find him. Then, go one better by looking behind the bush with the yellow dot as you enter Runefaust, where you'll find the Ninja.

Finally, here's a cheat to let you have lots of laughs changing the names of all the characters. Start off by naming your character, then highlight the word 'End'. Now, on controller two, hold down A, B, C and Start. Next, press A, C and Start together on controller one. Hey presto! – now you can rename the entire cast with the silliest names you desire!



JURASSIC PARK

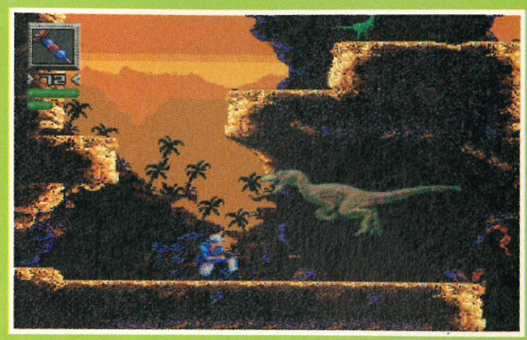
Hurrah! Technique Zone stalwart and regular all-round great geezer, Ed 'Pink Floyd' Lomas is back! – the code-cracker extraordinaire has been hard at work on Jurassic Park passwords, and here are the results of his labour...

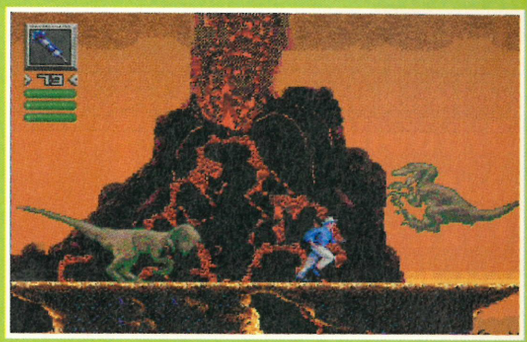
"I'll call the eight places in the password '12345678' to make it easier. basically, you use '*VVVV**' as the main part of the password, and then select your stage and difficulty. Put in the main password and choose your difficulty setting – for easy, put 'T' in position '7' and 'O' in position '8'. For normal, move them both on one (to make 'U' in position '7' and 'P' in position '8'). For hard, move them on one again (to make 'V' in position '7' and 'Q' in position '8'. Once you've done this, put '0' at position '1' to start in the jungle, on your chosen difficulty setting with maximum ammunition for every weapon. The most you can start a level with is 60 units, but you can collect more whilst playing. You can then change the password to put you on any level by adding multiples of 2 to position '1' and doing the same to position '8'. For example: '0VVVVVTO' will start you in the jungle on easy, but move positions '1' and '8' on two, to make '2VVVVVTQ' and you will be on the power station (on easy). It shouldn't be too hard to understand." Yes, I think we got that, Ed.

If you reckon you're really good, you can start any level without any ammo whatsoever. Anyway, here are Ed's codes for Dr Grant...

EASY	MAX AMMO	NO AMMO
JUNGLE	0VVVVVTO	00000011
POWER STATION	2VVVVVTQ	20000013
RIVER	4VVVVVTS	40000015
PUMPING STATION	6VVVVVTU	60000017
CANYON	8VVVVVTO	80000019
VOLCANO	AVVVVVT2	A000001B
VISITORS' CENTRE	CVVVVVT4	C000001D

NORMAL	MAX AMMO	NO AMMO
JUNGLE	0VVVVVUP	00000022
POWER STATION	2VVVVVUR	20000024
RIVER	4VVVVVUT	40000026
PUMPING STATION	6VVVVVUV	60000028
CANYON	8VVVVVU1	8000002A
VOLCANO	AVVVVVU3	A000002C
VISITORS' CENTRE	CVVVVVU5	C000002E





DIFFICULT	MAX AMMO	NO AMMO
JUNGLE	0VVVVVVQ	00000033
POWER STATION	2VVVVVVS	20000035
RIVER	4VVVVVVU	40000037
PUMPING STATION	6VVVVVV0	60000039
CANYON	8VVVVVV2	8000003B
VOLCANO	AVVVVVV4	A000003D
VISITORS' CENTRE	CVVVVVV6	C000003F

On the subject of Sega's dino licence, you may be interested in how to beat the really tough bit right at the end of the game, in the Visitors' centre, as related to us by David Coultone-Cope of Bournemouth: "At the end of the Visitors' Centre, jump down between the exhibits, and don't hit the feeding raptors as they can't be destroyed with weapons. All you need is the five red grenades at the top-left of the screen, which you should have already collected. With these, just throw a couple at the stand of each exhibit to send them crashing down, killing both raptors and thus ending the game.

BARI-ARM

Three tips here for this distinctly average Mega-CD jobbie.
Secret Options: Press Up, B, A, C, A, Down, B, A, C, A on the title screen, and you should hear a noise. Now, enter the options mode and you can make Bari-Arm immortal, and other secret options – stage select and weapons load adjustment – should appear too.
Hidden Graphics: Enter Up, Down, Right, Left, B, A, B, A on the title screen, and previously hidden visuals – featuring a girl in skimpy clothing – will be exposed!!
Hidden Ending: Hey, it's that source of never-ending cheats – the good 'ol title screen – that you have to go to to get this one working as well. Enter Right, C, A, B, A, Left, C, A, B, A and – Halleluja in excelsis deo! – you'll get a completely different end sequence to the usual one! Now leave the game to run after the credits have rolled, and you'll get a congratulations screen, starring the hidden girl from the previous cheat and a super-deformed Bari-Arm. Like, wow!





GOLDEN AXE III

If you're one of those sad unfortunates who actually bought this game, or received it as a particularly cruel present, here's a level select that'll help you get through the whole nightmare quickly and relatively painlessly. On the Character Select screen, move the cursor onto the character you want to select, and press A four times, Start once, and C six times. You've got to be pretty fast in the finger department to pull this one off, so if at first you don't succeed, try again – FASTER!

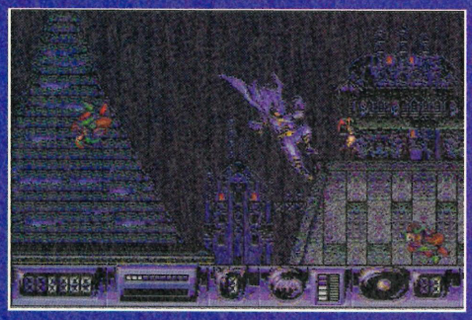
BATMAN

Indeed he does. Yup, Batman Returns CD is undoubtedly one of the best Mega-CD games. However, although the platform levels (taken from the original cartridge version) are no match for the mind-blowing driving sections, they still prove to be a rock-hard challenge. So, to help all you Sons of Batman out there, here's the first part of our complete guide to the game. Next month: The driving game revealed in full!

ACT 1: GOTHAM CITY

Level 1: The Rooftops

This first level is pretty easy. Just travel along the bottom of the screen. This yields the most power-ups and avoids most of the bad-guys. Be careful not to drop off the screen by acccident though. Use your trusty bat-cape to glide across the gaps between the buildings. When you reach the two large girders at the far right, use the grapple-gun to take you up to the roof, to face Catwoman.



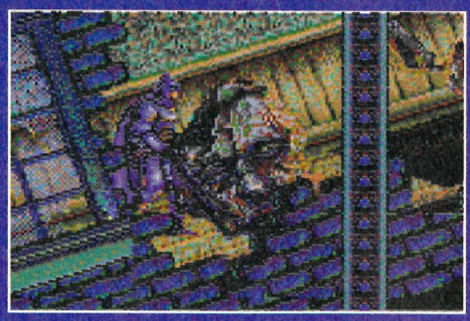
Catwoman

Kicks are the best attack to use against this minx. After your first kick, jump up or down to the other platform. When she follows, repeat the attack. Keep doing this until she collapses. The thing to watch out for is her whip. It out reaches Batman's attacks and can knock him off the screen if he's too close to the edge.



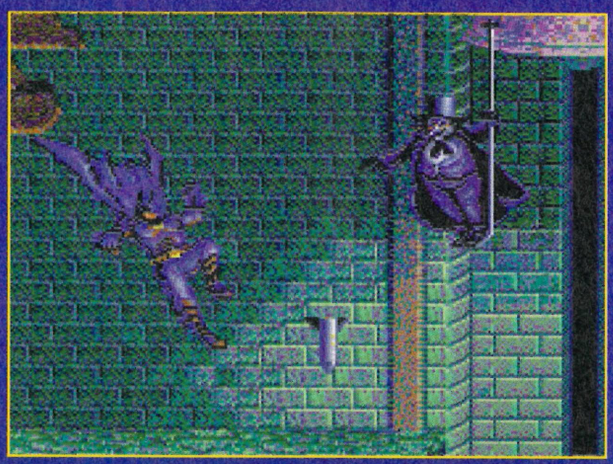
Level 2: The Abandoned Warehouse

Head to the left and drop through the hole in the floor. Now head right, kicking the unicycling clowns before they attack you. Watch out for the geysers of hot air that come through the floor. At the far end, collect the batarangs hidden in the corner before dropping down and heading left. There is a bat-swarm icon hidden in this corner. Drop down again and head right until you come to the statue head. Keep kicking this until chunks of the head break off and block the air-duct. Now drop down and head left by swinging along the ceiling, collecting the power-ups. Drop down and head to the next statue head. Break it up and drop down to face...



The Statues

Leap onto the knee of the statue on the left and keep punching its face. Jump forward to avoid the flying cogs and fireballs. When the statue breaks down, jump onto the knee of the one on the right and repeat the whole process.



Level 3. The Cathedral

Head right, jumping the spikes and bataranging the jesters. At the far end, use the bat-grapple gun to lift him up to the next level. Head left, keeping an eye out for holes in the floor, and go up. Now head right until you come to the platforms with faces under them. Use the platforms to go up, avoiding the demons. At the top, destroy the two gargoyles and jump onto the ledge that appears. This takes you up to the Penguin. However, don't forget to jump off the ledge when it stops!

BOSS 1: The Penguin

Hovering in the air, using his flying umbrella, it's the first confrontation with that pompous, waddling bird of ill-omen. Keep walking back and forth – this stops him throwing rockets at you. When he floats down, keep punching him. Keep doing this until he scarpers.

N RETURNS

ACT 2: SHRECK'S WONDERLAND

Level 1: Schreck's Department Store

Head right, kicking the Skull Riders. Kicks also block their bullets. Try not to use any special weapons as you'll need them to beat the Strongman at the end.

The Strongman

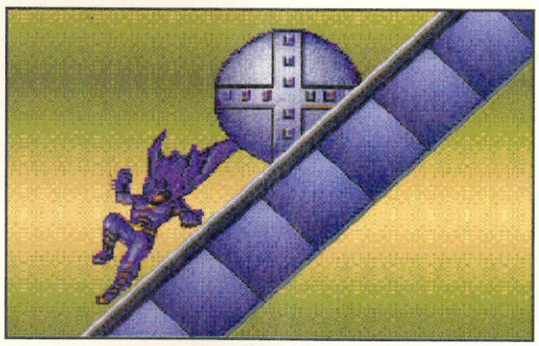
Jump-run (it's quicker) to the ledge at the far end and use your grapple-gun to get onto the roof before he gets to you. It's best to use your special weapons on him. When they run out, jump and punch, low kicking when you land. Keep this up until he's defeated.

Level 2: Inside the Store

Head toward the lift-shaft at the far right and go up it. Walk up the escalator and jump over to the platform on the right. Clamber up the metal framework and use the chandelier to swing across the gap. Climb up further and then head right, using your bat-cape to glide back across the gap. Head up the lift shaft and keep going left until you reach Catwoman.

Catwoman

She's a bit tougher to beat this time. Head for the left corner and stay down, doing low kicks. If Catwoman tries to whip you, jump up to avoid damage. Don't be fooled into thinking she's defeated when she falls over – keep at it until her energy reaches zero.

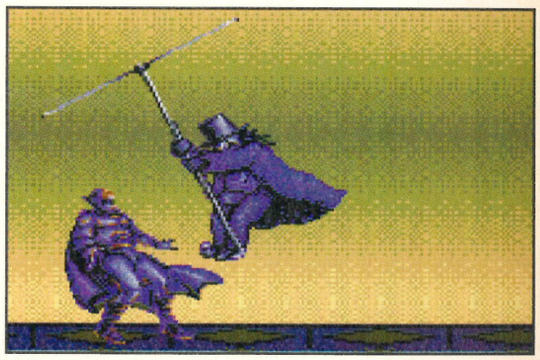


Level 3: The Escalator Run

Jump-run over to the right and jump through the hole. Now keep jumping all the way down the escalator, staying ahead of the ball. Try to pull down and away from the escalator when you jump, as you'll go quicker. When switching from one escalator to another, jump and pull the joypad in the direction of the next escalator as soon as Batman has fallen past the last one. Jump over the hole at the bottom and head left to face... The Penguin!

BOSS 2: The Penguin Renturns !

Yep, he's back, only this time he's brought some circular saw-blades along. Duck or jump to avoid the blades, and then jump and punch the Penguin. Keep this up and you shouldn't have any trouble beating him.



ACT 3: THE RED TRIANGLE CIRCUS

Level 1: Gotham Zoo

Get onto the wall. Walk right and climb up the pillar. Drop into the cage and head to the other end. Use low kicks to beat the shrinking men. Climb out of the hole at the top. Head right and keep repeating the procedure until the end of the level.

Level 2: The Fairground

Climb onto the wall and head right. Jump through the ferris wheel onto the house in the middle. Then leap right, onto the house at the middle of the next Ferris Wheel. Climb onto one of the carriages and when it reaches the top of the wheel, leap right, using the bat-cape to glide to the exit.

Level 3: The Circus

Head right, past the mirrors. Every time a clown appears in one of the mirrors, duck to the left of it and keep kicking. When passing the bunco booths, drop down to avoid getting punched. Two of the booths have power-ups in them.



Climb up the rope and head right, using the bat-cape to glide between the trapezes. Be careful if you fall onto the safety net, because the fire from the devils' tridents can burn holes through it, dropping Batsy into oblivion. When you reach the clown unicyclists at the end, stand at the top of the ropes and keep kicking left and right.

Level 4: The Train

Head across the roof of the train. When Batman gets to the carriage with two white spring-blocks on top, jump over the first block and stand between them, before jumping over the next one. Attack the sword-swallowers by ducking down and kicking. To negotiate the circular saws, wait until they pass each other and then jump between them and over to the other side.

BOSS 3: Clown With Spade

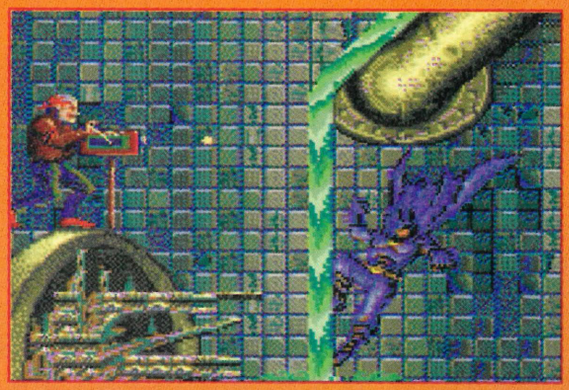
A funny boss this one, because it doesn't look anything like a boss! Keep punching him in the face and move away when he swings his spade. If the flames sap your energy too much, move to the far left and throw batarangs at him.



ACT 4: THE SEWERS

Level 1: The Waterworks

Just keep heading right on this level. Just before you reach the boss at the end, there is a giant heart hidden in the water at the bottom of the screen. When facing the boss, a stilt walker, drop down onto the lowest pipe and keep punching him. Keep this up whilst avoiding the fireballs and you should have him licked.



BOSS 4: The Penguin. Again!

Yep, the foul-feathered fink is back. Go straight up to him and start kicking. When he flies off, destroy his cannon. Now, just keep attacking him with batarangs and other special weapons. He can be beaten using close up kicks, but it's a lot harder.



Level 2: The Sludge Pipes

Head to the bottom of the level and look for a hole. Drop into the hole to collect a horde of power ups. This hole is like a recurring loop, so you can drop down again to collect the ones you missed. Apart from that, just keeping heading up and right.



ACT 5: THE PENGUIN'S LAIR



Level 1: The Ice Cave

The toughest thing about this level are the slippery platforms. Head right until you can see the extra-life icon and use the bat-grapple gun on the air-vents to pull Batman up. Go right up to the top and then head right and down. When your reach the big hole in the ground, swing over it by grabbing the ceiling. Keep going right, drop down the hole and head right, using the little ledges. It's best to duck when you land on each ledge, to avoid being hit by the ladies throwing axes. Use your batarangs on the enemies at this point. Keep heading right and you'll reach the exit.

Level 2: The Icebergs

Stay on the icebergs while they move right. Use kicks to deflect enemy bullets and missiles. The exit is on the right.



Level 3: The Final Cavern

Stay on the iceberg as it floats to the right. When you get to the three-tiered platform, jump onto it, but only after the boss's energy bar has appeared. Start using your powerful weapons on the duckmobile. When the rocket-powered penguins appear, move to the top tier to avoid them. Should your weapons run out, move back onto the ice flow and try kicking the duckmobile close up, jumping backwards along the line of icebergs to stay alive.

BOSS 5: The Final Penguin

The last battle with the bird-brained supervillain. Head right and take out the generator. Now go to the left and duck down, throwing batarangs at the Penguin. Stay out of the way of the red and blue flames, and when the Penguin closes in, kick him continuously. It takes some doing, but you should be able to beat him using this method.



The End

The Penguin is defeated and the end credits roll, but Batman and Catwoman are squabbling until the end. To end the game, beat her or let yourself be beaten, where upon the Batmobile comes to take you away.

CHEATS * TIPS * CHEATS

MERRY CHRISTMAS, TO ALL, FROM THE STAFF AT HOME GROWN

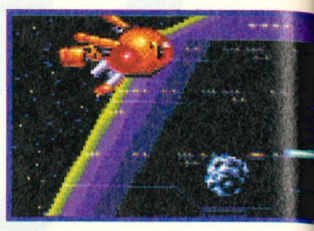
0891 318 400 .....Information Help Line
0891 318 401 .....Swap Shop (swap & sell your .....games & stuff)
0891 318 402 .....Game Gear Cheatline
0891 318 403 .....Desert Strike & Terminator .....1&2, cheats and help
0891 318 404 .....Streets of Rage 2&1 cheats & .....help
0891 318 405 .....Sonic 2 & 1 cheats, help and .....tips
0891 318 406 .....Golden Oldies, loads of cheats .....on the classics.
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0891 318 408 .....Megadrive Cheatline, loads of .....cheats.
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0891 318 415 .....Aladdin solution and help.
813 5003 .....PC bulletin board (view, ...modems only, normal rates)

No music, no frills, just help, Phone the information line to see what new this week.
Calls cost 36p per min, cheap rate and 48p per min, all other times.
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GUNST

Paul Glancey guides you through one of the best shoot 'em ups on the Megadrive, throwing in a comprehensive table with the all-important info on which combinations of weapons make the best toast and loads of other invaluable stuff besides...



CHO

FORCE

● **POWERFUL RAPID-FIRE PARTICLE WEAPON.**
Simply a more powerful version of the basic weapon. Fires an undulating stream of very destructive particles. The wide spread of shots is useful against bosses.



LIGHTNIN

● **POWERFUL LASER CANNON**
Produces a rapid-fire spray of laser bolts. Good range, very wide effect, but only moderately powerful.



● **POWERFUL LASER CANNON**
Fires a very powerful beam of high-energy photons. Long range. But Lightning and Chaser are a more useful combination.



THE BOSSES



● PAPAYA DANCE

LOCATION: THE ANCIENT RUINS
ATTACKS: BALLOON BOMBER, MOTHER ANT

This is easy (but then it is the first boss in the game). Keep shooting at the top of the stalk, while dodging the falling balloons. The glowing fireball hatches into the Mother Ant when it hits the ground, but that doesn't take much to destroy it.

● PINKY ROADER

LOCATION: THE ANCIENT RUINS
ATTACKS: HITMAN SHOT, IRON KNUCKLE

The target here is the cockpit. Keep hitting it and eventually the arm with the Hitman on it explodes... exposing a bomb launcher! Shoot or dodge all the bombs, then climb on the Roader's knee from where you can get a pretty good shot at the cockpit and finish the boss off.



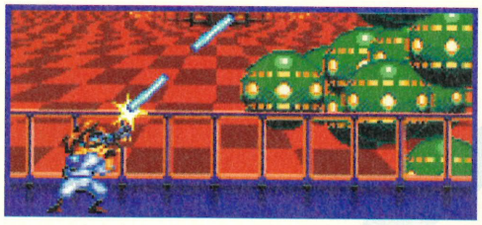
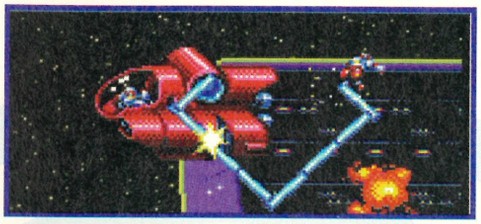


● BRAVOO MAN

LOCATION: THE ANCIENT RUINS
ATTACKS: SPINNING DRIVER, DRAGON PUNCH

Don't bother using your weapons on this Man Of Tea Chests. Just keep launching diving attacks at him (press the jump button twice) and you should inflict about 500 damage points every time. Doing it this way should kill him before he's had a chance to use his dangerous Spinning Driver attack.

AR HEROES

OSE YOUR WEAPONS

FIRE

● FEEBLE FLAME THROWER WEAPON WITH SHORT RANGE

Fire and keep the button held to launch a firebomb. Release the button and the bomb explodes. Powerful, but too fiddly to be much use except in close-quarter combat.



● FEEBLE FLAME THROWER WEAPON WITH SHORT RANGE

Produces a constant beam of laser energy which can be swept across the screen, destroying everything in its path. Very powerful, but its range is very short.



● FEEBLE FLAME THROWER WEAPON WITH SHORT RANGE

Adds a longer range to the standard flame-thrower but is still pretty feeble.



CHASER

● HOMING WEAPON WHICH LOCKS ONTO NEAREST TARGET

Fires high-speed shots which home in on a target and keep battering away until it is destroyed. You do need to aim it in vaguely the right direction, but otherwise this is as effective as the Chaser/Lightning combo.



● HOMING WEAPON WHICH LOCKS ONTO NEAREST TARGET

Locks on to a target anywhere on the screen and keeps inflicting damage until you release the fire button. Doesn't need to be aimed so it's perfect for bosses. The best weapon in the game, overall.



● HOMING WEAPON WHICH LOCKS ONTO NEAREST TARGET

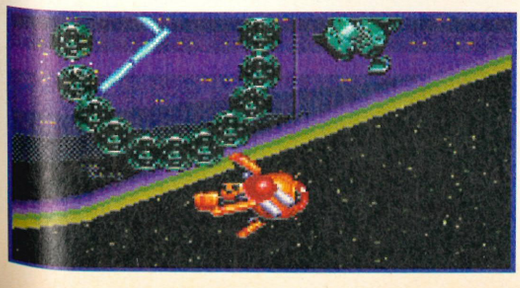
Launches a burst of flame which travels toward the nearest target, incinerating it when it touches. It's slow firing and not very accurate so this isn't a very good Chaser variation.



● HOMING WEAPON WHICH LOCKS ONTO NEAREST TARGET

Fires deadly stars which circle around you until they spot a target. Fast, but not very powerful, although they don't need to be aimed like the Chaser/Force combination.





FORCE LIGHTNING FIRE CHASER

● 7-FORCE

LOCATION:THE UNDERGROUND MINE
ATTACKS: SOLDIER FORCE, TAILS FORCE, TIGER FORCE, EAGLE FORCE, BLASTER FORCE, URCHIN FORCE, CRAB FORCE,

Make sure you have some sort of homing weapon before embarking on this level. The Lightning/Chaser combination is the best. The 7-Force can change itself into any of the weapons below, but on the easier skill levels you will only have to confront a selection.



● SOLDIER FORCE

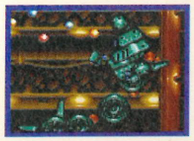
ATTACKS: ARM VORTEX, ARM BOOMERANG



If you have a homing weapon you can just stay at the bottom right corner of the screen, maintaining fire and jumping when it launches the Arm Vortex attack. Move slightly to the left if it fires the Arm Boomerang. Easy.

● TAILS FORCE

ATTACKS: SOMERSAULT TAIL, LIGHTNING ZAP



Avoid this as it does its initial circuit of the screen then, when it swings its head back, get ready to go to the bottom of the screen to avoid the spray of bullets. When it winds up for the Somersault Tail attack, quickly go to the farthest corner of the screen.

TECHNIQUE ZONE

TIGER FORCE

ATTACKS: SIGHT LASER, TRACE ZAPPER



Stay on the top track and keep dodging left and right while it tries to lock its Sight Laser on to you. When it switches to the sweeping Trace Zapper, just watch the stars which indicate where the beam is going to fire and get out of the way.

EAGLE FORCE

ATTACKS: DANCE DANCE, SPREAD LASER



The key thing here is to dodge quickly past the tail end of the Eagle Force when it swings its wings and tail aside, leaving one side of the mine shaft completely clear for you to pass through.

BLASTER FORCE

ATTACKS: GRENADE SHOOT GOLD BULLET



This is rather like dealing with the Soldier Force. Just stay at the bottom left of the screen with your homing weapon firing, then simply jump the bullets as they're fired at you. This boss pauses to reload after every twelve shots so you can get plenty of damage in then.

URCHIN FORCE

ATTACKS:HYPER SONIC SPIN, RUSH AND ROULETTE



This is easy. Dodge around the Urchin Force until he starts banging left and right. When he's decided which side to stop on (usually the side you're on) he'll start following the wall towards you. Just jump across to the other side and repeat. Don't worry if he launches fireballs – they're very easy to avoid.

CRAB FORCE

ATTACKS:CRASH MINE, WILL O' THE WISP



Some very fast jumping is required to avoid the walls which spring up in front of the Crab Force. Aside from that, there's nothing here that the Lightning/Chaser combo can't handle.

SWAPPING REG

LOCATION: THE FLYING BATTLESHIP
ATTACKS: REG VULCAN



You can beat this boss very easily by jumping on to one of its 'feet' as it approaches, then jump up to the bar at the top of the screen. Even if you don't have a homing weapon you can just hang from the bar and keep firing and the Reg Vulcan won't hit you.

ORANGE

LOCATION: THE FLYING BATTLESHIP
ATTACKS:ROTOR PRESS, HARD SHOULDER, BREAK WIND



There aren't really any foolproof tactics here. Most of the time Orange is unaffected by your weapon, but keep shooting him anyway. You can also grab him and throw him off the helicopter (when he's striking his muscley pose is a good time to try it), although he will sometimes grab you first!

LOCATION:THE DICE PALACE



We don't have room to detail all of the enemies to be found in The Dice Palace, so here are the ones that are likely to give you the most trouble.

VALVALION



Pretty easy, as he stays away from ground level for most of the time. Keep shooting his head, but from a safe distance in case he dives down on top of you. His arching attacks are easy to avoid.

PIT



Some people (ie Tom) reckon that it's best to get on top of the moving column but that can be risky. Instead, stay on the ground, sliding under the column if it gets too close. Shoot the balls and hit them with more effective diving attacks whenever you can.

TIMERON



Stay away from the bombs and, more importantly, the spinning explosions. Watch for the moment when the action seems to freeze as the bombs explode again, reassemble and fly back into the core.

MINION SOLDIER



If you don't have a homing weapon, use sliding attacks to destroy him and his miniature cohorts.

DESTROY!



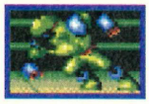
For the fastest time, use sliding attacks, rather than your weapon, to destroy the enemy craft. Smash the box on the left for some extra energy.

MELON BREAD



Easy. Just keep shooting him... anywhere.

PHANTOM



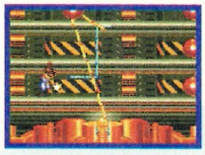
Commander Phantom is one of those soldiers best fought hand-to-hand. Avoid his grenades.

ABERENBOU GEL



Use sliding attacks to destroy this boss in no time.

VORTEX BASE



There are set routes that the beam takes around the reflectors, but the routes are chosen at random. It's best to stay on one side of the middle platform (or hang from the platform above) and try to spot which way the beam is going to go.

CURRY AND RICE



No weapons allowed here, but you don't need 'em. When he's standing still, jump towards Curry And Rice (not close enough to hit him) and he'll start his arm-waving attack. As soon as you hit the ground, slide towards him to knock him down. Repeat this until he explodes, then watch out for his head!

SUPER GONDOLA



Aim for the turrets dropping the bombs first, and try to shoot the bombs before they hit the floor and break it up. After that, just keep firing and dodging!

TECHNIQUE ZONE

BLACK BEAT STEPPER

LOCATION: DICE PALACE
ATTACKS: RED FIREBALL, GREEN CUTTER, BLUE CRACKER, YELLOW LASER



After the dice has been rolled, watch for the colour of the flashing blocks around the sides of the screen. They will tell you which attack is coming and from where, so quickly get to a safe position. If you find yourself trapped right by Black's robot, take the opportunity to get in some diving or sliding attacks and you stand a good chance of beating him before you peg out yourself.

SMASH DAISAKU

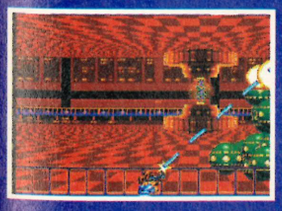
LOCATION:KILL THEM ALL!
ATTACKS:SPIRAL HEAD, AFTER BURNER, BRAVOO REG



Keep shooting Daisaku while he's in mid-air, then when he comes down to ground level and his rocket thrust turns blue, get ready to jump as he charges. When his rocket pack explodes and he draws his gun, stand just over half a screen away from him so that the spiralling double flames just miss you. You'll have to jump the standard shots, but that isn't too difficult. Get ready to slide underneath him when he jumps or he'll get you with his extending leg!

CORE GUARD SYSTEM

LOCATION:ENEMY BATTLESHIP
ATTACKS:UNIT OF THE HAMMER, UNIT OF THE DRAGON, UNIT OF THE RUNNER



Keep firing with one of the homing weapons. Also keep running to dodge the hammer unit, and when it looks like it's about to strike, slide. Keep firing again when the dragon unit appears and you should destroy it before it's had the chance to launch many of its plasma bombs. The core then releases exploding spacecraft, so keep moving to dodge them, then get ready for the runner unit. Fire at it when it gets close and then, when it runs away, it winds up for its main attack. When it moves towards you again, it releases a plasma shot which you have to avoid. The first shot should go over your head, but you have to jump the next one, and it continues in this sequence until the runner is completely destroyed.

DUCK BATTALION

LOCATION: ENEMY BATTLESHIP
ATTACKS:HEAVY VULCAN SHOOT, WALKING PRESS EDDIE



Stay on one side of the screen and you should be able to avoid its guns by ducking. Keep shooting, then when it powers-up for a charge, get ready to slide under. When the machine is destroyed, the Hitman will get out and shoot at you with the Vulcan cannon. Keep firing at him and when you get close enough, keep sliding at him.

PINK LOBSTER

LOCATION: ENEMY BATTLESHIP
ATTACKS:SLASH CHOPPER, SLASH NIPPER, BUBBLE BOMB



You can't shoot this beast while it has its claw up to protect itself. The best way to beat it is to avoid the bubbles until it has stopped firing them, then get closer to it, and do a fast double slide underneath to attack from behind. It will turn around again, but when you get the chance slide underneath again and keep doing this until you've destroyed it.
If you can't hit the Lobster for the bubbles (if you'vre using a homing shot, say), slide in close, get in a few shots, then slide out again before it can bring its claw down on your head.

ORANGE

LOCATION: ENEMY BATTLESHIP
ATTACKS: FINAL BIG BANG, GROUND BURNING DRAFT



Once again, Orange is very tough to beat. The best tactic here seems to be to stay away from him and just keep on firing. If he's on the top level, stay on the bottom, and vice versa, unless you see blue fireballs circling around him, which means he's about to launch his Ground Burning Draft which follows whichever floor you're standing on. Also, don't stand directly above or below him or he'll blow you away with his spiralling energy attack.

BLACK FLY

LOCATION: ENEMY BATTLESHIP
ATTACKS: PSYCHIC GAMBIT, SHADOW HURRICANE



This is very tricky, but you can dodge the first wave of balls, and destroy the second. The real problem is the spinning Shadow Hurricane, which you can only dodge by jumping in between the 'blades' then following them around the screen, jumping on the dropping platforms at the side, then leaping on top of the Black Fly itself. A Lightning/Chaser combination is very handy for this boss.

GREEN



LOCATION: ENEMY BATTLESHIP
ATTACKS: THE GUNSTAR'S ACTION

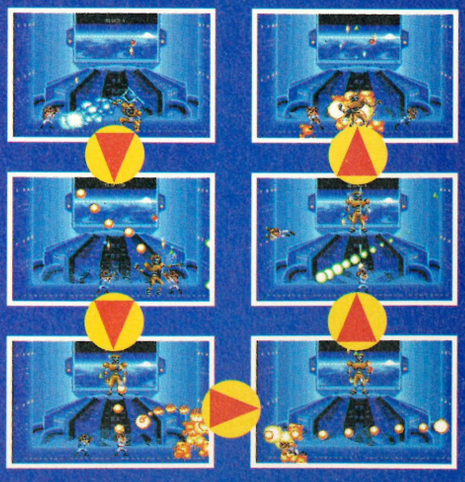
This former Gunstar isn't too difficult a foe to beat. He is resistant to your weapons for some of the time, but as long as you keep firing you should injure him. As with Orange, try to stay on a different level from him, especially when he starts to fire his star shots.

GOLDEN SILVER



LOCATION: ENEMY BATTLESHIP
ATTACKS: GOLDEN BLAST NUCLEAR JEWEL STRIKE EARTH RESOLVER

Your targets here are the jewels, so concentrate on shooting those and dodging the Destructor's attacks. When he's about done, the jewels come down and attack you individually so be ready to duck or slide under their attacks. After the second jewel, though, you should have done enough damage to destroy the jewels and can watch the end sequence unfold.

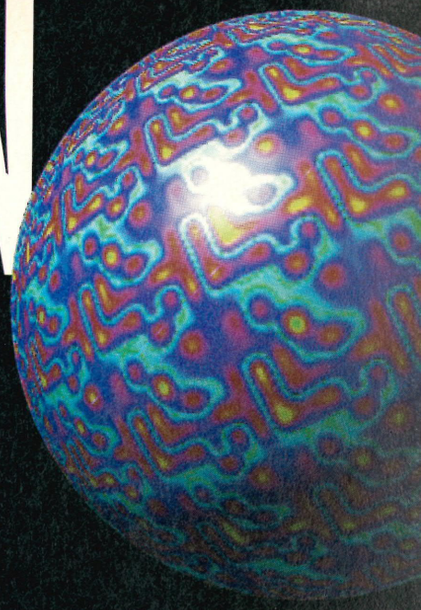


Thanks (yet again) to George at Ice Distribution for the procurement of this game. If you want to get fine games such as this one, ask for George on 0302 340079 – he's a very nice bloke, and is always happy to oblige.

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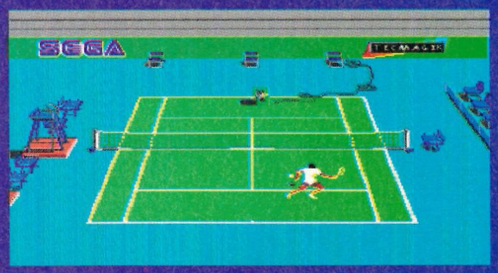
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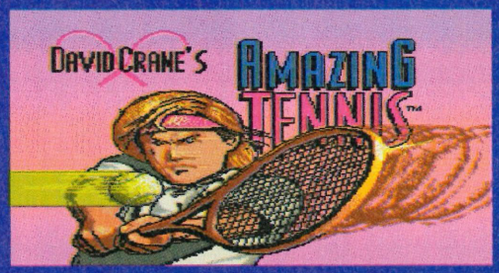
VS MODE

anyone for TEN

It's over six months until Wimbledon and the ensuing bout of Tennis fever. But why wait? Take a gander through another Vs Mode par excellence and pick up a Tennis game for your Megadrive. You don't have to be fit and you don't even have to shave your chest... not unless you want to, anyway!



NAME: Andre Agassi's Tennis
BY: Tecmagik
PRICE: £39.99
NO. OF PLAYERS: 2
First came the gaudy clothes, followed by the TV ads and the celebrity appearances – Andre Agassi was hot property before he'd even won anything in this country, but does his game match up to the competition?



NAME: Amazing Tennis
BY: Absolute
PRICE: £44.99
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-2
Coded by veteran programmer David Crane, this is supposed to be the last word in console Tennis sims. It's big, bright and colourful... but is this enough to raise it to the position of top seed?

GRAPHICS

Without decent player sprites, a tennis game is a load of old balls. It's not just how the players look, it's how well they're animated. You just can't get a good feel for a game where the pros stagger around like Douglas Bader with a rust problem.

ANDRE AGASSI'S TENNIS

Over-sized sprites jerk and shudder their way acround the non-scrolling court in a most unconvincing fashion (for a human, anyway). The backdrops are ugly, especially the speckling green and yellow grass court. However, Tecmagik have been kind enough to include Agassi's lank locks in the deal, so you can tell him apart from the other seven contenders.
1/5

AMAZING TENNIS

Part of the game's 'Amazing' tag refers to the massive foreground player. Apart from towering over every other computer tennis player to date, the animation is equally stunning. Unfortunately, the programmers don't appear to have spent as much time drawing the graphics for the player at the top of the court, who's a sad, small, blocky sprite by comparison.
4/5

WIMBLEDON

Puny sprites trundle around the court like old grannies and the ball often floats unrealistically. As if that wasn't bad enough, the screen doesn't scroll fast enough so the action often out-paces the screen, especially when the player at the bottom is lobbed. However, the various playing surfaces look pretty good.
3/5

DAVIS CUP TENNIS

They may not be the most detailed of players, but they're certainly well-animated. Each player features an impressive array of moves, all executed smoothly, and the player(s) at the far end of the court are a decent size, so there's no excuse for missing the ball.
5/5

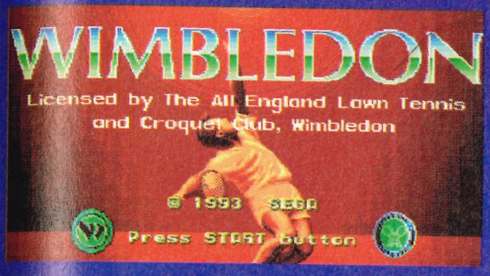
SPEED

With players like Goran Ivanisovic serving at 120mph, a tennis game needs to be fast if it's going to be anything like the real thing.

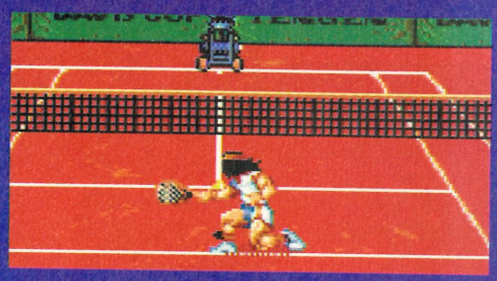
AMAZING TENNIS

Large graphics aren't always a good thing for a programmer when he wants to make them to move rapidly – fortunately, that's not a problem here. Although this isn't the fastest Tennis game, if it had any more speed the chosen viewpoint would mean is would be impossible to play. Smashes have a satisfying pace, without being impossible to return.
4/5

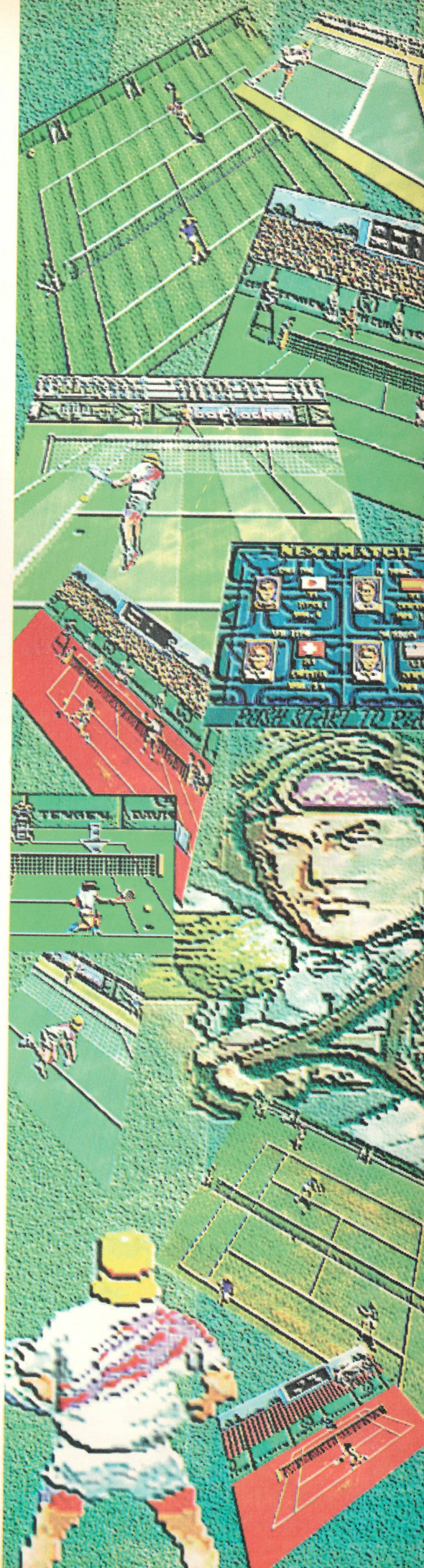
NIS?



NAME: Wimbledon
BY: Sega
PRICE: £39.99
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-4
Sega's latest tennis effort makes use of the Sega-Tap four-player adaptor, allowing you to get your mates round and impress them with your match-winning lobbing skills. (Or get beaten beyond belief.)



NAME: Davis Cup Tennis
BY: Domark
PRICE: £39.99
NO. OF PLAYERS; 1-2
Experience the cutting edge of competitive Tennis as you travel the world in search of action, run out of money, and get stuck playing in some backwater tournament in a country where flares are still the in-thing.



WIMBLEDON
Oh dear. Someone call Oxford Dictionaries, we've got something that redefines the word slow. The players run like they're wading through a vat of particularly thick treacle as they 'chase' after a ball which hangs in the air waiting to be hit. This leads to all sorts of problems and cursing as you can't get your player across the court in time for what should be an easy shot. Definitely the most arthritically slow tennis game for the Megadrive.
2/5

ANDRE AGASSI'S TENNIS
The game is played at a moderate pace from the baseline, especially if you use mainly forehand shots. Disappointingly, the action doesn't speed up significantly when you move towards the net. Consequently unfeasibly long net rallies are possible. It could have been faster, but as it stands it's hardly disastrous.
4/5

DAVIS CUP TENNIS
Speed is paramount in Davis Cup, especially during the frantic doubles matches. Only a fool would venture to the net if they weren't sure of their next shot. This makes for some excellent action and necessary joypad breaks between sets as you nurse your aching wrists. You couldn't ask for a faster tennis game.
5/5

GAMEPLAY

Tennis games fall into three categories: realistic, arcade-style and crap. It's all down to the programming and the amount of thought which has gone in the process of designing the game.

ANDRE AGASSI'S TENNIS
Many big licences, no matter what type, often result in a less-than-good game, and Andre Agassi is no different. The control are unresponsive and the struggling players are hardly able to move in a straight line. However, there's a half-decent array of options, although a few more opponents wouldn't have gone amiss.
1/5

AMAZING TENNIS
The programmers were instructed to make this game as realistic as possible, and it shows... most of the time. For some reason, whether it's sloppy bug testing or the game being rushed, a good shot has to be timed just as the ball misses the racquets. It's not a big problem when you get used to it, but irritating all the same. Apart from that, there are no major niggles in what is a well-designed product.
4/5

WIMBLEDON
The lack of speed instantly puts the mockers on what

SMOES

would otherwise be reasonable gameplay, but the problems don't end there. Ropey collision detection results in many dodgy line calls. What's more, rallies can often go on for ages because the computer players are super-human, but unfortunately not in a challenging way.
2 /5

DAVIS CUP TENNIS
Stacks of features go perfectly with what is a genuinely very playable Tennis game. There are so many elements in addition to the gameplay, you end up wondering why no-one else has attempted something like this before. The control system is well worked, the action fluid and there's plenty to do.
5/5

SHOTS

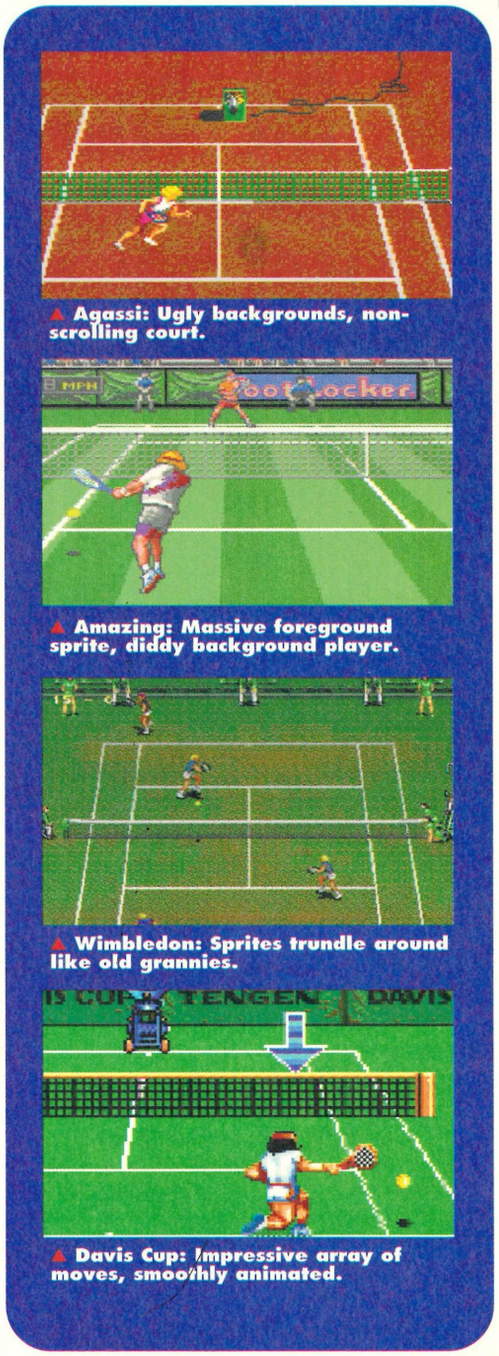
No player worth his salt would enter a tournament armed with a limp-wristed smash and ineffectual backhand.The kind of shots you can perform are all important if you want to make your mark in the serve-and-volley world of competitive tennis.

ANDRE AGASSI'S TENNIS
Agassi features a fair smattering of tennis moves. In addition to the usual array of back-court passing shots and lobs, there's a decent selection of net shots for smashes, drop-shots and floating top-spinners. However, actually being able to perform the shots is another matter entirely.
3/5

AMAZING TENNIS
The standard bag of tricks is on offer here. From the net you can execute drop-shots and lobs, while the baseline is perfect for practising accurately-positioned forehands and backhands. This is where the game's shot strength lies. Rather than win through variety, you need to be able to place the ball right on the line if need be.
4/5

WIMBLEDON
Despite the game's other faults, Wimbledon doesn't limit you when it comes to returning the ball. In addition to the usual ones, there's a neat defensive stroke which involves your player shoving the racket between body and ball. It's not pretty, but it usually takes your opponent by surprise. Shot timing is essential in light of the fact your players move so slowly.
4/5

DAVIS CUP TENNIS
The most commonly used shot in this game, next to the forehand, is the excellent diving shot. What's normally a trick move in most games is an essential part of the player's arsenal as the spend more time off their feet than on. For the most part though, there's the normal slices, hooks, volleys and a few more powerful strokes if your make good ball contact.
5/5



▲ Agassi: Ugly backgrounds, non-scrolling court.

▲ Amazing: Massive foreground sprite, diddy background player.

▲ Wimbledon: Sprites trundle around like old grannies.

▲ Davis Cup: Impressive array of moves, smoothly animated.

FEATURES

Most people can only take so much of computer tennis, so your chosen game needs to offer something more than action alone. This is where the features come in. Tutorials, tournaments and multiple players all add to the variety of the game.

ANDRE AGASSI'S TENNIS
With the standard two-player mode for doubles or singles games and the bog-standard choice of courts, Agassi's doesn't offer anything out of the ordinary. One nice touch, though, is you can practice your shots against one of those machines which revs the ball up to ballistic speed before it spits it at you. There's also a skins match, where points turn into cash as two players battle it out in a grittier version of the normal game.
3/5

AMAZING TENNIS
This is one area where this game comes a little unstuck. Apart from a similar ball machine feature to Agassi's, Amazing Tennis has very few extras to offer. The biggest surprise is the lack of a doubles mode, a feature which is common to almost every Tennis game under the sun. There's the obligatory choice of surfaces, but this isn't enough to make up for inadequacies elsewhere.
2/5

WIMBLEDON
For all its faults, Wimbledon does feature many good ideas. For starters it's a four-player game, which redeems it slightly. It also has a help mode, which makes the ball change colour or signals with a beep when it's time to swing, and you can instruct it to show you where the ball's going to land ,which makes it easier to position your player.
4/5

DAVIS CUP TENNIS

Once again, Davis Cup has the upper hand. In addition to the doubles and two-player mode, it also involves an element of strategy as you try to earn enough cash to travel the world in search of matches. Best of all, if you think a line call is a bit dodgy, you can argue with the umpire, who, if it's a reasonable claim, will give you the yay or nay on the point.
4/5

ANDRE AGASSI'S TENNIS

The shots are well distributed across the three buttons, so you're never short of a slice or backhand. As with the other tennis games featured here, the angle of the shot you make is determined by your position when you hit the ball. However, neatly laid-out controls are pretty useless when they don't respond to your command.
2/5

AMAZING TENNIS

Stroke play is easy in this game – the problem is timing your shots to account for the quirky collission detection. How good you become depends on how well you get to grips with the fact that the ball doesn't have to touch the racket for you to hit it. It makes the game difficult to play at first, but it isn't a disastrous problem.
3/5

WIMBLEDON

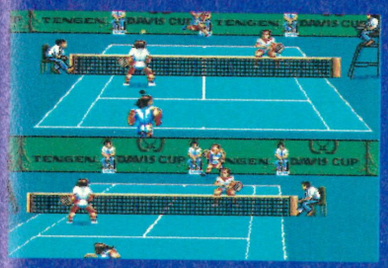
Whilst there's a good array of shots on offer, executing them is a pig. No matter how many times you think you've cracked the timing, it never seems to come good. Bad programming means most of your placed shots spang off in the wrong direction, while the darned computer hammers them in with inch-perfect accuracy.
2/5

DAVIS CUP TENNIS

It's clear from the off that the game's designers spent a lot of time playing this game before they completed it. The timing is spot-on, and it's easy to execute all manner of shots without the game becoming too easy. The only short-coming is that the size of the player graphics makes it a little difficult to see what's happening when the action speeds up.
4/5

CONTROLS

All the shots in the world won't mean a thing if you can't execute them properly. This category deals with how easy it is to hit the ball, and also the degree of timing involved to do so.



▲ Davis Cup: Tops. Highly playable with loads of good features.



▲ Amazing Tennis: A pretty good game, but lacking in fun.



▲ Wimbledon: Four player action, but a distinct lack of speed.

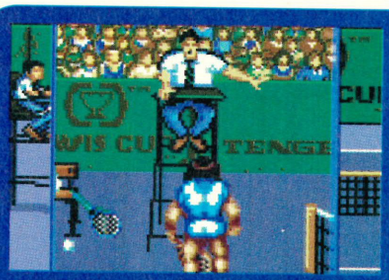


▲ Andre Agassi Tennis: Oh dear.

THE CHAMPION!

	GRAPHICS	SPEED	GAMEPLAY	SHOTS	FEATURES	CONTROLS
ANDRE AGASSI	1	4	1	3	3	2
AMAZING TENNIS	4	4	4	4	2	3
WIMBLEDON	3	2	2	4	4	2
DAVIS CUP TENNIS	5	5	5	5	4	4

	PASSWORD	DOUBLES
ANDRE AGASSI	YES	YES
AMAZING TENNIS	NO	NO
WIMBLEDON	YES	YES
DAVIS CUP TENNIS	YES	YES



THE WINNER!
DAVIS CUP TENNIS

28/30

SEES SUMMARY BELOW FOR THE FULL VERDICT...

DAVIS CUP TENNIS

This is without a doubt the premier Megadrive tennis title. Not only does it have great and playable action, but the wealth of features and good ideas which have been crammed into it make this a game you won't become bored with in a hurry. Game, set and match goes to Davis Cup!
28/30

AMAZING TENNIS

In the attempt to make this the most realistic Tennis game around, David Crane has cut back on one feature – fun. It's not a bad game by any means, but when placed head-to-head against Davis Cup, the Domark game is far more playable and will keep you glued to your screen longer.
21/30

WIMBLEDON

Four-player it may be, playable it ain't. Wimbledon features many neat ideas which are retarded by flaws in the programming. A lack of speed, coupled with the bad collison detection, dodgy scrolling and over-skilled computer opponents, fail to make this game a serious contender.
17/30

ANDRE AGASSI'S TENNIS

Bringing up the rear is Andre Agassi. The graphics are ugly, the sprites are badly animated and the controls are unresponsive. This all results in a hideously unenjoyable game. Definitely not the best thing served to us all day. Stay away.
14/30

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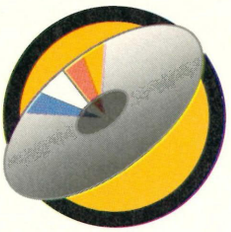
GAME INDEX

Welcome to the MegaTech Game Index, the top buyers' guide to the best Megadrive and Mega-CD games, with new compos added just for you, 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:
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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. Fly your deadly fighter de jet through wave after wave of oncoming planes. Lots of Mega-CD sprite scaling and rotation in evidence here.

▲ Er, pass.
▼ Complete crap.

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 vehicles.

▲ Just play the driving sections – they're excellent and are a game in themselves! The sound is stunning.
▼ It's a shame the platform bits weren't improved.

MT RATING: 94%

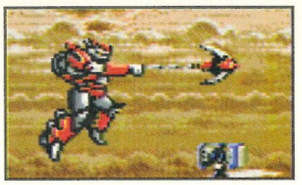
BLACK HOLE ASSAULT

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.
▼ 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 animations.
▼ Seen-it-all-before, nothing new.

MT RATING: 62%

ECCO CD

BY SEGA
PRICE: IMPORT
REVIEWED: MT21

CD retune of the underwater puzzling classic. Exactly the same as the cartridge game, except for the addition of a full motion video intro, seven extra levels set in a sunken galleon and improved music and sound effects thanks to Sega's new QSound 'surround sound' system.

▲ Extra levels and souped-up sound.
▼ The rest is just like the Megadrive version.

MT RATING: 92%

EARNEST EVANS

BY WOLF TEAM
PRICE: IMPORT ONLY
REVIEWED: MT 3

Ernie is a sort of Indiana Jones-type adventurer, complete with whip, 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.
▼ 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 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!
▼ 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 fly his way past Hook's men.

▲ Really nice graphics and the CD music is most impressive. Plays quite well too.

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 graphics, ace music and the two player mode is great.
▼ Single player mode gets a bit boring.

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 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.

▲It's fun in an unusual sort of way.

▼There are only three songs.

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 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 watch out for the vile kidnapping Oggers who are lurking around the house, and capture them before they nab the lovely damsels.

▲An hour and a half of fairly entertaing full-motion video exploits.

▼The gameplay is mostly trial and error.

MT RATING: 79%

NIGHT STRIKER

BY TAITO
PRICE: IMPORT ONLY
REVIEWED: MT 20

Sad 3D shoot 'em up, featuring a transforming flying car.

▲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.

▼ 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 atmosphere created makes the game. Once you get into it, it's good fun.

▼ If you make a 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.

▲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.

MT RATING: 79%

SHERLOCK HOLMES II

BY SEGA
PRICE: IMPORT
REVIEWED: MT21

Exactly the same concept as Sherlock Holmes I, but consisting of three longer cases on two CDs.

▲ Three new, longer cases to solve for Holmes freaks. Added options.

▼ Limited long-term playing potential.

MT RATING: 84%

SILPHEED

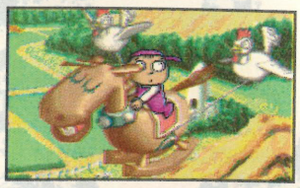
BY SEGA
PRICE: IMPORT
REVIEWED: MT21

Undoubtedly one of the best games yet for the Mega-CD. Awesomely smooth and detailed animated intro sequence matched by visual cortex-warping 3D graphics. Guide the starship Silpheed through enemy spaceships, giant meteorites and other floating space junk, blasting away as you go. The combination of realistic graphics and QSurround sound really give you the feeling that you're in the thick of the action, providing thrills despite the fact that the gameplay, although challenging, is nothing revolutionary or spectacular.

▲ Amazingly smooth 3D graphics, QSurround Sound, challenging gameplay.

▼ Basically, it's another spacey spaceship shoot 'em up.

MT RATING: 94%



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. There are over 1,000 gags stored on the disc and the fun comes from waiting for the (very) unexpected to happen.

▲ Excellent variety and humour.

▼ If you don't have a rather odd sense of humour you probably won't see the point - if so, stick to The Upper Hand.

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 stuff.

▲ Quite a playable platform shoot 'em up.

▼ Nothing really new.

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 planets by hopping around platforms and dodging hostile weirdoes. This will be available officially in the summer.

▲ Great graphics and sound.

▼ It's quite easy to beat.

MT RATING: 82%



MEGADRIVE GAMES

If you're after a game for Sega's 16-bitter, these are the top titles to look 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, 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: 82%

AEROBIZ

BY SEGA
PRICE: IMPORT
REVIEWED: MT21

An airline management sim for the Megadrive! And it's really good, too! This game takes you into every aspect of running your own airline. Strategy buffs will cream over it!

▲ Massive potential for devising and revising strategy.

▼ Dull if you're not a strategy fan.

MT RATING: 90%

ALIEN 3

BY ARENA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 9

Nothing like the film, this puts you in control of a mega weapons-toting Ripley on a platform crusade to waste the aliens and rescue the humans.

▲ Excellent sound effects, music, graphics and gameplay. Really challenging too.

▼ It's so good it's suspicious.

MT RATING: 94%

CURRENT HIGH SCORE
15,570,450 (Hard level) by Robert Guthrie, Galashiels

ALISIA DRAGOON

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 4

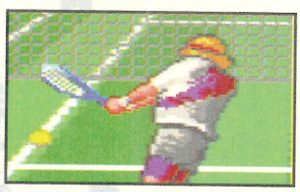
Become mistress of a multitude of mythical monsters in this lengthy and unusual platform shoot 'em up.

▲ Superb graphics + novel gameplay = good fun.

▼ Hardly a downer in sight.

MT RATING: 85%

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. Plenty of strokes to master and opponents to beat, and there's the two player mode.

▲ Very playable, smart graphics.

▼ In the two player mode, the guy at the far side can't see what's going on.

MT RATING: 82%



ANOTHER WORLD

BY VIRGIN
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 14

WIN!

SONIC WATCHES



Having got his face on everything from lunch boxes to rulers, Sega's spiky blue hero is now adorning the faces of a new batch of Sonic watches, and we've got ten to give away. Released by Inter-City Watches, there are three watches in the set, and each sports a neat blue strap. If you'd like to win one of these fine time-pieces, simply answer the following question and send the answer into the address below:

● Name Sonic's foxy mate:

A. Keith
B. Ralph
C. Tails

Now write your answer on t he back of a postcard, and send it to:

I WANNA WATCH COMP,
MEGATECH,
Priory Court,
30-32 Farringdon Lane,
London,
EC1R 3AU

WIN!

THE LATEST FROM MANGA



Just out from those busy chaps at Manga Video, is the second part of the 'Heroic Legend Of Arislan' set, and we've got ten copies of the latest episode to give away, partnered by a copy of the first (in case you missed it). An everyday tale of heroism and fighting, Arislan is a PG certificate, and will eventually build up into a six-part story. Want to win the first two? Get your brain round this, then...

● Which of the following is not a Manga film:

A. Akira
B. Bambi
C. 3x3 Eyes

When you've worked that out, send the answer in to:

MANGA MACHINATIONS COMP,
MEGATECH,
Priory Court,
30-32 Farringdon Lane,
London,
EC1R 3AU.

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.

▲ 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.

MT RATING: 90%

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.

MT RATING: 76%



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.

▼ Not a lot, really.

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 make for loads of game variations, all of which are excellent fun.

▼ Sometimes the game slows down and the controls go a bit dicky.

MT RATING: 91%

CURRENT HIGH SCORE
435,311 (Level 0-I, Flat Fun) by Lee Nixon, Sheaford

BUCK ROGERS

BY ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £19.99
REVIEWED: MT 4

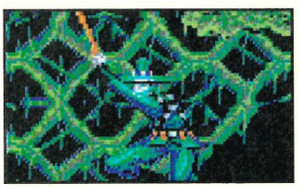
Role-playing game based on the TSR board game in which you have to lead your six rookie troopers around numerous space scenarios in a quest to vanquish the evil RAM organisation. Lots of gun battles, strategy-based spacecraft battles with a soupçon of puzzle solving.

▲ 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%

C



CHAKAN

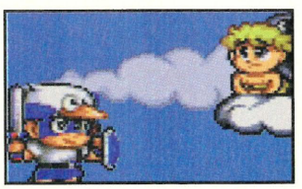
BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 15

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.

▼ Too much challenge - not enough fun.

MT RATING: 73%



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 coin-op's two player mode .

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.

▼ Sometimes success is by sheer fluke.

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 that well.

MT RATING: 87%

CHUCK II: SON OF CHUCK

BY CORE
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT21

The sequel to Chuck Rock doesn't feature Chuck himself, it stars his son, a Stone Age toddler with a deadly club. The wacky Stone Age graphics are of the same high standard as the original and althought he gameplay is far from original, it's still great fun to play. Bonus levels add welcome variety to the platform-based gameplay. This provides a real challenge to the avid platform-player.

▲ Fun to play, smart graphics, pretty challenging.

▼ Nothing revolutionary or gob-smackingly inventive.

MT RATING: 86%

D

DAVID ROBINSON'S SUPREME COURT BASKETBALL

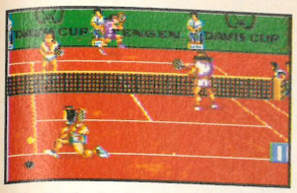
BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 6

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.

▲ 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. 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 a great two player option.

▼ Nothing major.

MT RATING: 90%



DESERT STRIKE

ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 3

Lay waste to a dictator's desert army, rescue hostages and blow up his 'baby milk factories' in this ace 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

DRAGON'S FURY

BY TENGEN
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 1

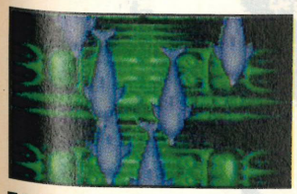
Originally reviewed as Devil Crash (the Japanese version) this is a pinball game which lets you bash a ball around a three-screen-high table and eight bonus sub-tables, all populated with little devils and ghostly monks.

▲ Superb graphics and sound and it has a superb pinball feel to it.

▼ Coo. Satanic sprites...

MT RATING: 91%

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.

▲ Amazingly engrossing gameplay makes this a classic.

▼ Gets VERY tough.

MT RATING: 94%

EX-MUTANTS

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 12

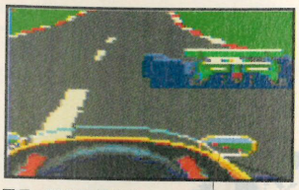
A platform game based on the cult comics, in which you play a heavily-armed hero or heroine on a mutant-mashing mission to rescue your fellow heroes.

▲ Challenging and fun.

▼ Graphics are 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. It's the best racing game money can buy – an incredible sensation of speed and lots of thrills 'n' spills in one-off races or a 12-race tournament. Choose between Arcade mode or normal racing. And there's a superb two-player mode too!

▲ Quite simply the best of its kind.

▼ Nowt.

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 train before being sent on 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 shoot 'em up than a sim.

MT RATING: 88%

FLASHBACK

BY US GOLD
PRICE: £44.99
REVIEWED: MT 18

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.

▲ Excellent gin every department!

▼ Finishing it doesn't take that long.

MT RATING: 94%

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 occupieds.

▲ Smart graphics and it's pretty tough.

▼ It's not amazingly original.

MT RATING: 84%

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 plot to plunge the city into the seventh level of Hell.

▲ 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 and nasty , spooky, ghouly things to use them on. Smart.

▲ Just great.

▼ Price is also great.

MT RATING: 93%

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. Accolade have snaopped this up for official release.

▲ Really slickly done, with excellent graphics and decent gameplay.

▼ Extremely dodgy controls.

MT RATING: 89%

GUNSTAR HEROES

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT21

Mega-blasting arcade shoot 'em up action – one or two-player mayhem as you guide your Gunstar Hero(es) through a variety of graphically superb backdrops swarming with blastin' baddies and frighteningly impressive bosses. Incredible animation, superb sound effects, plenty of high-octane action and a high degree of originality.

▲ Fast blastin' action, incredible graphics & animation, smart weapons, mega bosses, exciting gameplay, innovative game design, great sounds.

▼ Er... can't think of any downers.

MT RATING: 95%

GYNOUG

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 5

Gynoug the 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%

CURRENT HIGH SCORE

2,345,760 by Wesley Thomson, Fife

H

HELLFIRE

BY SEGA
PRICE: £34.99
REVIEWED: MT 5

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. Great fun.

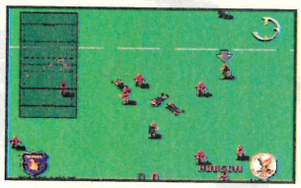
▼ What downers?

MT RATING: 92%

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 cleve conversion of a sport which doesn't lend itself to computer conversion.

▼ The computer teams are a little too good.

MT RATING: 75%

ISHIDO

BY ACCOLADE
PRICE: £35.99
REVIEWED: MT 2

A board game based on some other ancient puzzle game in which you have to fill squares on a board with tiles by matching shapes and colours.

▲ Unlike most puzzle games it doesn't appear to have its roots in Tetris.

▼ Blimey it's difficult.

MT RATING: 80%

J





WIN !

NEW JOYPADS FROM QUICKSHOT!



Those oh-so-busy chaps at QuickShot have gone into joypad overdrive this month and have unveiled no less than three new Megadrive controllers. Shown above is the all-singing, all-dancing Starfighter 3. In addition to the customary three buttons, the Starfighter also has three autofire buttons – not to mention a useful slow motion system, should things get a little too hard for you. Of course, this being within our Games Index, we're going to offer you the chance to win one of these stunning pads – we're good like that, y'see. Fifteen Starfighters are up for grabs, and all you have to do is answer the extremely easy question below. What could be easier?

Which of the following is not a platform game?

A. Aladdin
B. Gynoug
C. The Addams Family

When you've racked your brain over that (and it really shouldn't take over three seconds), write the answer down on the back of a postcard and send it to us at:

HOT PADS COMPO,
MegaTech,
Pirory Court,
30-32 Farringdon Lane,
London,
EC1R 3AU

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. 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 many options and the amazing playability make this the best footy game on the Megadrive at the moment.

▼ It's a shame that all the text is in Japanese.

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 full spoken commentary, the different pitch views and all the teams and plays you'd expect from an American Football game.

▲ The speech is just gob-smacking!

▼ Not as good 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 tactics and plays.

▲ 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.

▲ 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

After a long, long wait of over a year, EA's excellent sequel to their awesome Desert Strike finally weighed in as a big 16-meg cart. 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. Stunning graphics and number of different vehicles, including a stealth fighter and a hover craft, to pilot.

▲ Impressive graphics and tons of missions action. Even better than the first game.

▼ Shock, horror! None at all!

MT RATING: 95%

JURASSIC PARK

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT21

The Megadrive version of the mega-grossing dinosaur blockbuster is a bit of a disappointment. Basically it's a platformer, with the novelty of being able to play either the hero or the villain – fossil-hunter Alan Grant or a velociraptor – with the type of baddies you encounter depending on which you choose to play. The dinos look pretty good, but sadly the game doesn't capture the atmosphere of the film. The action is slow and predictable, and there's nothing here to tempt you for another go.

▲ Dinosaurs look great. You can choose between playing as a human character or a velociraptor.

▼ Dodgy control system. Unimaginative gameplay.

MT RATING: 77%

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 mega-selling classic puzzle game, which has all the features of the original and more levels.

▲ Tons of levels, but sometimes it's more fun watching the Lemmings die.

▼ 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.

▲ Two player game is excellent.

▼ The weather effects are nice but as a whole the graphics look like they could have been better.

MT RATING: 85%

M



MAZIN WAR

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 18

Dash along a series of 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 well.

▲ Incredible bosses.

▼ Apart from the bosses it offers few surprises.

MT RATING: 90%

MEGA-LO-MANIA

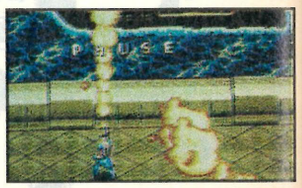
BY VIRGIN
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 13

Populous-style strategy game in which you have to lead your race of people out of the Stone Age by teaching them to build weapons and implements which help them conquer nearby races. Scores over Populous with its excellent animated combat scenes, easy-to-use interface and sense of humour, including hilarious digitised speech.

▲ Very easy to get into.

▼ There are only nine levels.

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, tanks, gunboats, etc, buying more destructive weapons as you go. This version includes a second game variation in which you have to recruit new allies to fight alongside you.

▲ A really good blastfest.

▼ Lacks the coin-op's two player feature.

MT RATING: 90%

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 to fight various environmental threats (n 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.

MT RATING: 84%

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 around tracks set up on the beach, the breakfast table, in the garden and more.

▲ Tremendous fun.
▼ Zilch.

MT RATING: 92%

MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: PRE-MEGATECH

Commandoes-on-platforms blasting action. Lots of add-on weapons and bad guy.

▲ Good guns 'n' destruction action.
▼ Too easy and no two-player mode.

MT RATING: 85%

MIGHT AND MAGIC

BY ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: PRE-MEGATECH

Massive 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.

▲ Vast depth should keep hardened role players going for ages.
▼ Iffy monster graphics and long-winded combat system.

MT RATING: 79%

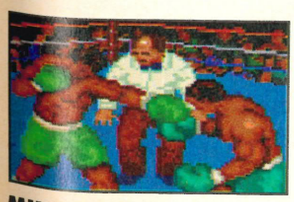
MORTAL KOMBAT

BY ACCLAIM
PRICE: £49.99
REVIEWED: MT21

Faithful conversion of the wildly popular coin-op. A typical one-on-one beat 'em up, but with digitised fighters and lots of corny gore. The soundtrack is excellent, the special moves are relatively easy to pull off and the game's highly enjoyable to play.

▲ Good conversion of the coin-op.
▼ Not as good as Streetfighter II.

MT RATING: 90%



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.

▲ Captures the atmosphere of boxing better than any other boxing game.
▼ Naff 3D intro sequence, but that's 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 punch-ups!.

▲ Superb, fast, end-to-end hockey action, with a wonderful two-player option.
▼ Pretty much the same as the first game.

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.
▼ It's a bit similar to its predecessor.

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 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.
▼ The combat by rounds system doesn't make it too attractive to RPG non-veterans.

MT RATING: 89%

POPULOUS II

BY VIRGIN
PRICE: £44.99
REVIEWED: MT21

Long-awaited follow-up to the original God sim, which offers no radically new features apart from a Customise option which allows you to create new lands and also allocate your god experience points. Apart from that, it's the same 'flatten the land and let your people go forth and multiply' action, although a larger range of disasters are at your disposal with which to wreak havoc on your enemies.

▲ Follow-up to the classic original god sim, with an added Customise feature and a wider range of more spectacular disasters on hand.
▼ Apart from that, it's the same old stuff - it's still fun, though.

MT RATING: 89%



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.

▲ Technically it's excellent and feels very simulationy.
▼ The serious approach makes it less fun than Mega-Lo-Mania. Very samey.

MT RATING: 81%

PUGGSY

BY PSYGNOSIS
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT21

Excellently designed and thought-out platform-based puzzle game with a difference. There is no set solution for each problem, and there are several solutions which will enable you to get off each level. The star of the game is Puggsy, and there are over 40 different objects he can use. The game features 'real physics', in that heavy objects weigh Puggsy down, rubber ducks help him to float in weater and balls bounce around realistically.

▲ Puzzles can be solved several different ways, giving good longevity.
▼ Control system takes some getting used to. Objects tend to bounce around when you try yo stack them up.

MT RATING: 90%

Q

QUACKSHOT

BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 1

Donald 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).

▲ Superb graphics, and a testing game.
▼ Infinite continues - doh!

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 scrolling zones, taking out a particular variety of target and anything else that fires back.

▲ Major league bosses and fancy graphics raise this above the rest.
▼ 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. There's also a Tetris-style puzzle bit where you are given blocks with which to repair your castle after the enemy has shot at its.

▲ Superb blend of different game styles.
▼ Nothing. It's lovely.

MT RATING: 90%

REVENGE OF SHINOBI

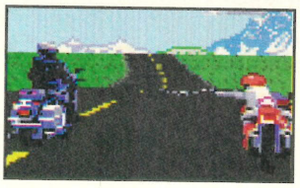
BY SEGA
PRICE: £19.99
REVIEWED: PRE-MEGATECH

Joe Musashi, top ninja, is out to rid the world of a band of gangsters. 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 with only (only?) the power of his fists, sword, shurikens and mystical ninja magic.

▲ Smart graphics, gameplay and sound.
▼ Downers? Nein danke!

MT RATING: 93%

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. Good fun.
▼ Two player mode doesn't add that much to the gameplay.

MT RATING: 89%

ROBOCOD

BY ELECTRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 1

Nasty Dr Maybe 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.

▲ Loads of levels and hidden bits.
▼ Not that much to the gameplay.

MT RATING: 85%

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.

▲ Smart graphics, excellent bosses, ingeniously-designed levels. Lots of fun.
▼ A bit easy.

MT RATING: 92%



WIN!
CD CASES



They're just the thing for the busy CD-owner on the move. Yes, despite that cliche, we've teamed up with Creative Products International to bring you the chance to win the latest in CD cases. Bound in sturdy plastic, these handy holders carry up to a dozen discs in separate compartments, and can withstand quite a bashing. We've got ten to give away, and here's the question:

Which of the following is not available for the Mega-CD:
A. Night Trap
B. Final Fight
C. Universal Soldier

Now send the answer into:

ON THE CASE COMP,
MEGATECH,
Priory Court,
30-32 Farringdon Lane,
London,
EC1R 3AU





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 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.
▲ The puzzle gameplay is simple but well thought out and enjoyable.
▼ Gets a bit samey.
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.
▼ Controls often a little 'sticky'.
MT RATING: 89%

S

SHINOBI III
BY SEGA
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT21
Ninja Joe Mushashi returns for his third visit to the Megadrive and the result is one of the best MD action titles around! Apart from the usual hack 'n' slash platform-based ninjascopics, there's a horseback section and even a level where Joe takes to a rocket-powered surfboard to take on his arch-enemies, the Zeed, in his attempt to prevnt them achieving their aim of total world domination. Great, fast-paced action, brilliant graphics and sound and a few new tricks up Mushashi's sleeve make this a must for action fans.
▲ Joe has more attacks and moves than before.
▼ Not as hard as Revenge of Shinobi.
MT RATING: 93%

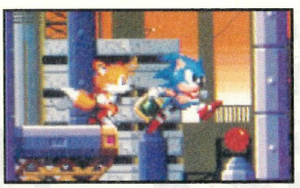


SIDE POCKET
BY SEGA
PRICE: £34.99
REVIEWED: MT 17
An American Pool simulation, this, in which you can play solo or two player games, 'pocket' games, nine ball games or mess around with a trick shot option. There's also a tournament mode in which you get to tour the bars of America looking for competition.
▲ Good ball movement and control.
▼ Still not as good as the real thing.
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.
▼Too short, and 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.
▼ Password system makes it a bit easy.
MT RATING: 86%

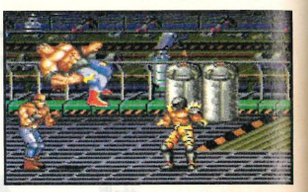
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
BY SEGA
PRICE: £34.99
REVIEWED: PRE-MEGATECH
Vile Dr Robotnik is capturing woodland creatures, turning them psychotic and putting them in heavily-armed robot suits. Sonic has to put a stop to this by jumping and dodging over colourful platform landscapes packed with hidden hedgehog 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%



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%

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.
▲ 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.
▲ Learning the tactics and using the wild weapons is great fun - best as two-player.
▼ Not quite as much fun on your own.
MT RATING: 90%



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, sound and raction.
▼ Sadly, rather easy.
MT RATING: 92%
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 ladie. There's also the thrill of a horseback bonus collection section.
▲ Excellent fun, especially in two player mode.
▼ Only four levels.
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.
▲ Kick Off's feel and playability is unrivalled by any other footy game - so far.
▼ £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 truck around bouncy courses in the pursuit of three computer opponents and prize money. The cash lets you upgrade your truck with new engine bits and so on.
▲ There are loads of different courses.
▼ It's quite easy to wipe the floor with the opposition during the first 20 or so races.

MT RATING: 83%
CURRENT HIGH SCORE
199,000 (no continues, 48 races won) by Mike Houghton, Stockport

T



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.
▼ Unbelievably easy.

MT RATING: 82%
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
Shredder is using his new-found Hyperstone to shrink New York, and only the Turtles can stop him. Much like the popular coin-op, this is a scrolling beat 'em with loads of recognisable characters to hit and kick.
▲ Tremendous graphics 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%



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%
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 with loads of extra weapons, massive boss monsters and weird scenery to keep the player occupied.
▲ A very addictive blast.
▼ Recently superseded by Thunderforce IV.

MT RATING: 89%
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.
▲ The gameplay is just ace.
▼ The basic gameplay is nothing original

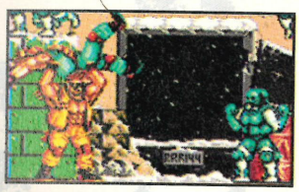
MT RATING: 94%
CURRENT HIGH SCORE
6,134,410 (Easy) by Daniel Gidman, Bristol
509,697 (Normal) by Lee Harrison, King's Lynn
5,280,880 (Hard) by Gay Fairholm, Dumfries

TINY TOON ADVENTURES: BUSTER'S HIDDEN TREASURE
BY KONAMI
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 17
Buster Bunny 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.
▼ Rather too easy 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 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.
▲ Great fun - pure and simple..
▼ Very basic gameplay.

MT RATING: 82%
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 to club the opposition into submission.
▲ Great graphics and great fun.
▼ Dead easy, though.

MT RATING: 84%

W

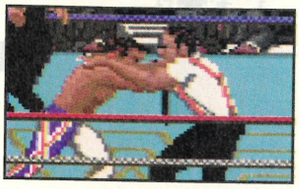
WARSONG
BY TRECO
PRICE: IMPORT
REVIEWED: MT 4
A fantasy strategy game in which you have to lead your army of wizards, warriors and assorted mythical beasts into battle in several scenarioes with the overall goal of regaining your throne.
▲ Simple controls and fun battle scenes.
▼ Graphics aren't super-duper.

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.

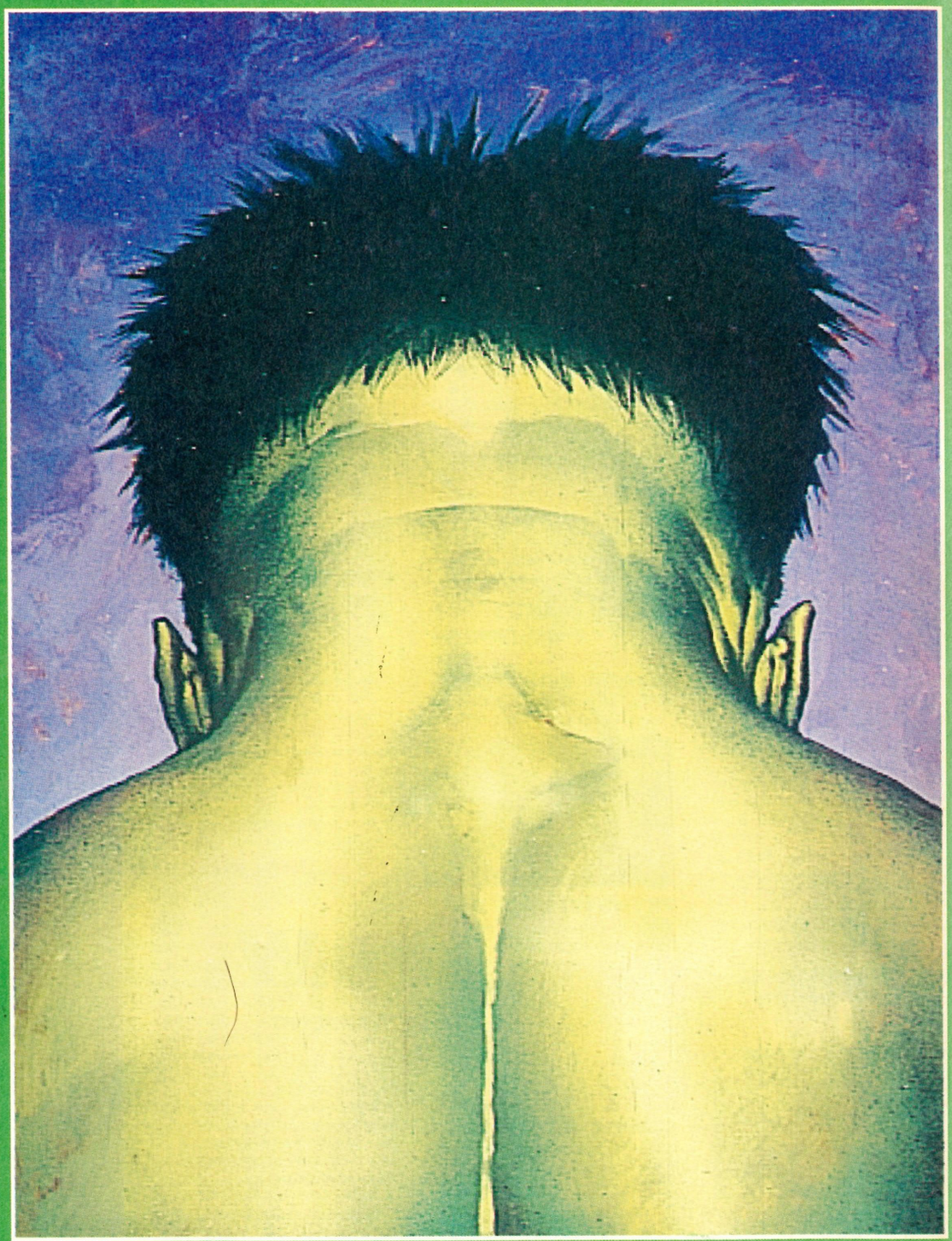
MT RATING: 82%
CURRENT HIGH SCORE
2,584,700 (Easy level) by Craig Wilkins, Delapre

ZOMBIES
BY KONAMI
PRICE: £39.99
REVIEWED: MT 22
Eek! Assorted B-Movie baddies have invaded a hick town and the surrounding towns and are set to eat the hapless inhabitants. As either a male or female hero, your task is to round up all the civilians before heading for the next stage. Numerous film tie-in ideas add to the fun, and there's dozens of power-ups and special weapons to collect as you go.
▲ Loads of variety and a feast of film favourites.
▼ Nope, you've got me there...

MT RATING: 90%

NEXT MONTH!

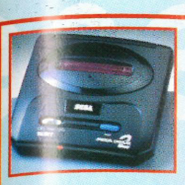
BACK AGAIN!



Yep, we'll be right back in a month's time, with a massive selection of news, previews, reviews and tips – in fact, everything that makes MegaTech so great. Us, basically. On the review front, we'll be taking a look at Toejam And Earl 2, Dragon's Revenge and Virgin's The Lost Vikings, and there's a few more surprises up our collective sleeves too. But if you want to know what they are, you'll have to wait until next month. It's called 'Playing Secrets' and it's great.

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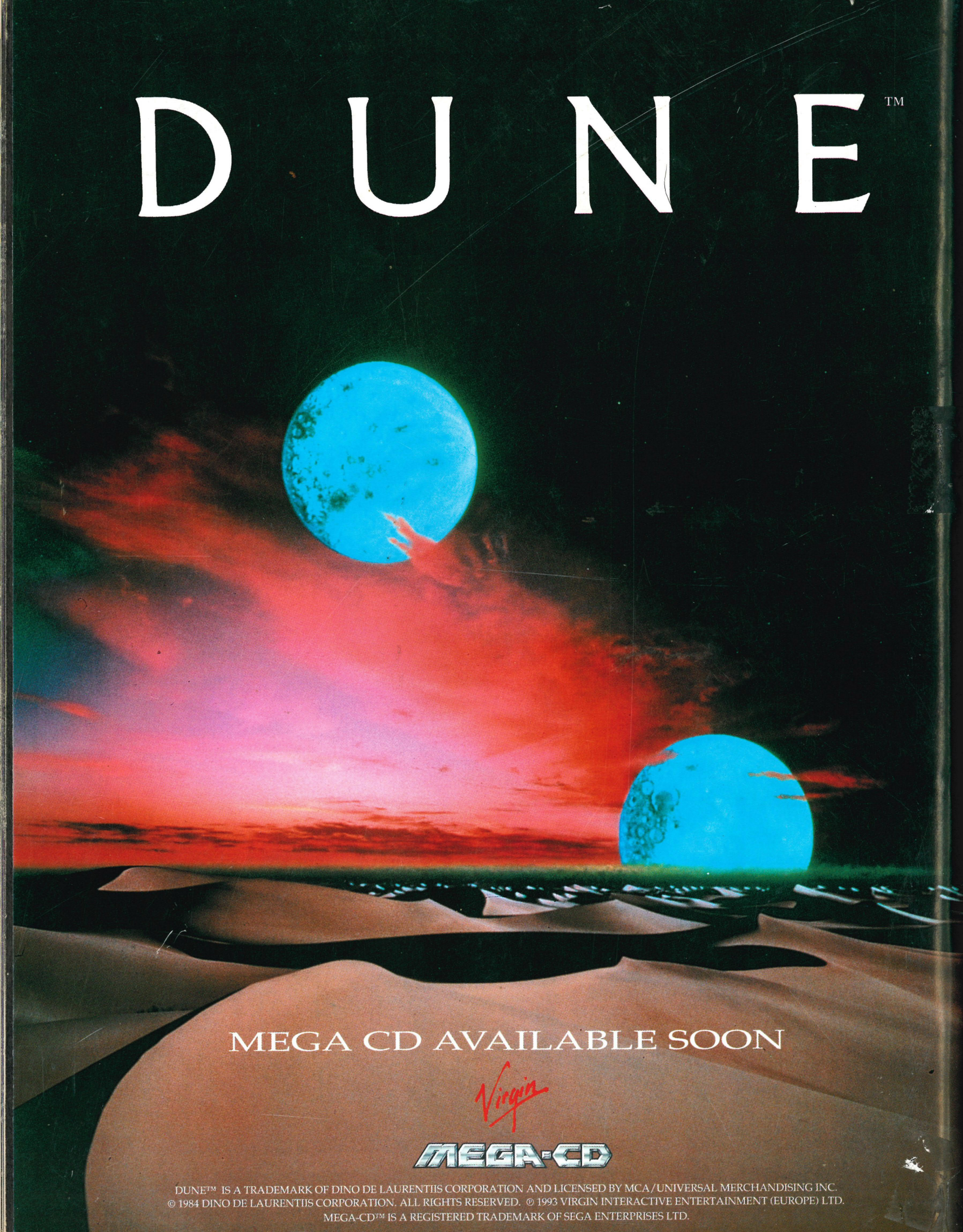
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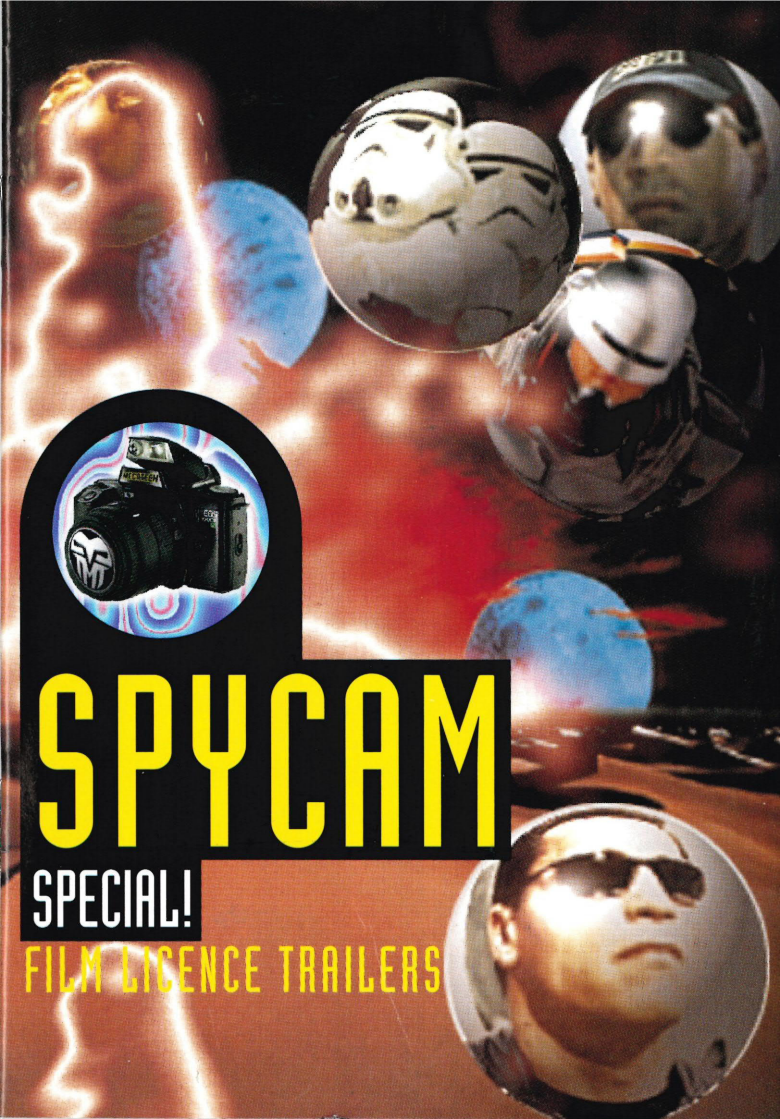


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FILM LICENCE TRAILERS

ROLL 'EM!

Film licences, eh? Let's face it, there have been some real turkeys in the past – Dracula, The Terminator and Home Alone – all rather smart movies which somehow never quite looked as good on the Megadrive. Yet still they keep coming. Granted, the odd surprise such as Alien 3 appears and restores our faith a little, but in the past it has seemed as if film licences are a bit of a no-no. Thankfully, though, things are starting to improve a little, and this year we've already been moderately surprised by Jurassic Park, Dune and Batman Returns. What's more, Sega and Virgin also teamed up to completely knock our socks off with the absolutely stunning Aladdin – perhaps things aren't so bad, after all.

Still, regardless of the quality of film-based games, people still buy them, so the assorted software houses keep releasing them. This Christmas alone, MegaTech will see more film tie-ins than ever before. Aladdin, Robocop 3, Cliffhanger, The Last Action Hero and Dragon – all the latest films, and set to be translated into Megadrive games. But it doesn't stop there. Older films are also being dragged out of retirement and given the Sega treatment. Last month we saw The Addams Family revived for the Megadrive market, and in the near future Acclaim are set to release another game based on T2, whilst Virgin go back even further with a CD version of the original Terminator film! And with Takara set to release The Blues Brothers some time next year, it makes you wonder how soon it is before Gone With The Wind or The 39 Steps is destined to be turned into a platform-laden blockbuster!











Listed in this booklet are all the best film licences set to hit your screens over Christmas or in 1994. Some are already available to buy, whilst the others have literally only just been announced. We hope you find it a useful reference guide which will help you pick your way through the minefield that is licensed games, and that it offers a few tasters of info on games currently under development. We haven't pulled any punches, and if something looks a little dodgy, then we've said so. Let's face it, no matter how big a fan you are of Sylvester Stallone or Arnold Schwarzenegger, you're still going to feel hacked off if you've forked out forty quid for something which bears no relation to his latest all-action epic whatsoever.

So, here it is: Spycam at it's very best. Forget the popcorn and extra-large Capri-Sun. This is the Megadrive equivalent to Barry Norman. Enjoy...



DEMOLITION MAN (1)

BY: VIRGIN | **£TBA**

Realising that his film career didn't lie in dismal comedies like 'Oscar' and 'Stop, Or My Mom Will Shoot', Sylvester Stallone is all set to enter the action arena again as he does battle with Wesley Snipes in Demolition Man. The film is currently number one in the US top ten, and is due to open in the UK towards the end of November. And, yep, those new would-be kings of the film licence, Virgin, have snapped it up for a Megadrive and Mega-CD game.

The film begins in Los Angeles in 1996. A dangerous psycho called Simon Phoenix (Snipes) is holding thirty people hostage within a heavily fortified building. The odd-looking Phoenix (complete with peroxide hair and green and blue eyes. Although it could be David Bowie, I suppose) is a real baddie of the old school, and hankers after power – as much as he can get. The hostage situation is the latest in a long line of crimes, and now the police have decided enough is enough and have despatched their key weapon in the fight against crime.

ENTER SPARTAN

Cue Sly Stallone as LAPD's very own John Spartan – the Demolition Man of the title – who earned his name because very little is left standing when he's finished pursuing his prey. Living up to his name, Spartan rips into the building in an attempt to get to Phoenix, but it all goes horribly wrong and the thirty civilians are toasted as the building is destroyed in the Demolition Man's wake. Furious at his behaviour, the authorities

DEMOLITION MAN (2)

BY: VIRGIN	£TBA

jail Spartan for involuntary manslaughter and he is sentenced to a cryogenic prison, where the inmates are frozen and kept out of the way until their penance has passed, and Phoenix is in the next cubicle!

WAKEY, WAKEY!

The next time we see Los Angeles is in 2032, and is it is a calmer place where crime has been virtually eradicated, as have all the fun aspects of life, with drinking, eating and virtually every enjoyable pastime banned by the government. Apparently, the film's producer, Joel Silver (the guy behind the Lethal Weapon films) wanted to take today's politcal correctness to its fullest extent, and, in doing so, he created a world where people don't eat meat, don't smoke, never swear, and where... er, making babies has been replaced by a more tidy method. The new Mayor, Raymond Cocteau (Nigel Hawthorne), has managed to establish a more genteel society and violent crime is now almost non-existant. However, during a routine parole hearing, Phoenix kills his guards and escapes into the futuristic city.

With the new bad boy in town, Cocteau's crime graphs start to escalate, and the unsuspecting police department have no idea how to stop him. Of course, one plucky cop puts two and two together and reasons that when dealing with a '90s criminal, only a '90s cop will do. So Spartan is thawed and let loose in the city to recapture Phoenix. As the film progresses,





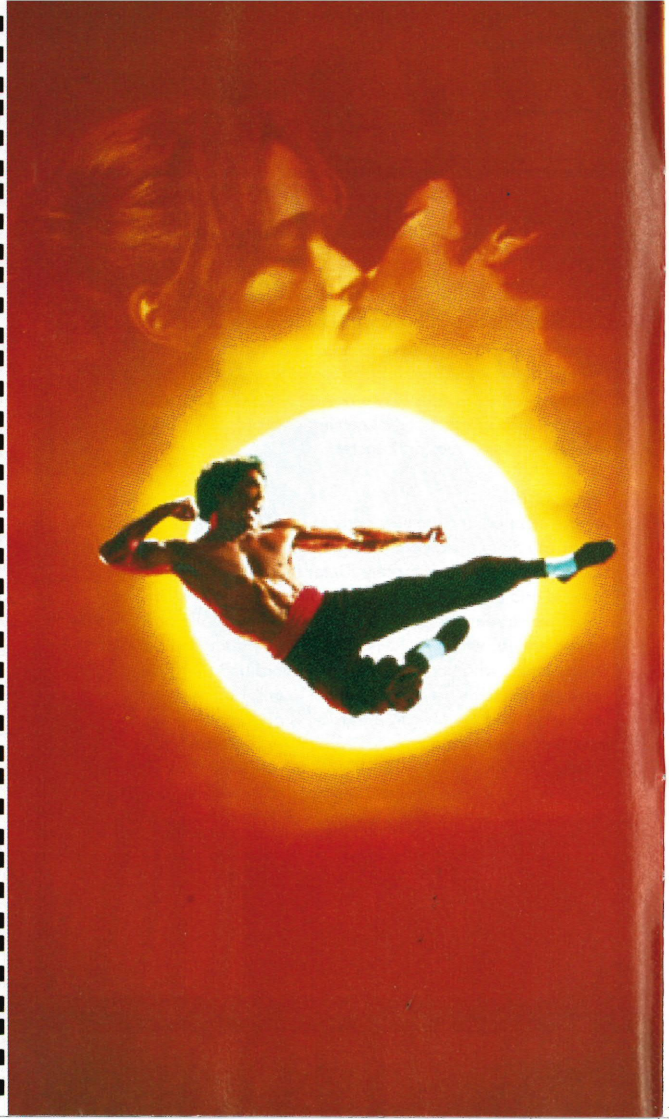
DEMOLITION MAN (3)

BY: VIRGIN	£TBA

Spartan not only has to get to grips with the strange new world he has found himself in, he also learns that the cryogenic process has made Phoenix even more powerful than before. What's more, it also seems that the seemingly innocent city of San Angeles hides a very dark secret...

THE GAME

Virgin stepped in extremely early to buy the rights for Demolition Man, the main advantage being that they were allowed to work closely with the film company. Details regarding the game's design and content are a little sketchy at the moment, but from what we've seen the game appears to be a Lethal Enforcers-style shoot 'em up, with the player controlling Spartan as he blasts the many felons who trundle onscreen. According to Virgin, real footage has been used from the film to ensure the animation is top-notch, and the Mega-CD version is apparently looking absolutely stunning with loads of massive digitised baddies rolling all over the place. Sadly, it's too early to show you anything definite yet, but rest assured we're working our little fingers off to bring you the first shots of this potentially-brilliant film licence.



DRAGON (1)

BY: VIRGIN | **£TBA**

With the film on release at a cinema near you as you read this, the Megadrive version of the Bruce Lee story is in the capable hands of Virgin's in-house development team and takes the form, logically enough, of a series of one-on-one or two-on-one bouts against key characters from the film.

The film charts the life of Lee (played by Jason Scott Lee – no relation) from his humble Hong Kong beginnings through to movie stardom. When we first meet Bruce, he's being packed off to America by his father who is worried about Bruce's involvement with local gangs. Starting work washing-up in a Chinese restaurant, he then leaves to go to university where he meets his future wife, Linda. Battling against racism from her parents and his fellow scholars, Bruce is forced to defend himself in a couple of scraps and eventually wins their respect, even to the point of several of his opponents asking him to teach them how to fight. He then invokes the wrath of the Chinese community as he starts to teach fighting skills to westerners, and is forced to fight China's champion martial artist and winds up with a broken back. Interspersed with all this action is a bit of lovey-dovey stuff, but this is just a filler for the fighting bits that we all want to see. Dragon features some of the best fight scenes witnessed since Lee's actual films – most notable of which is the restaurant scene – and Virgin have captured the 'chop-socky' nature of the film perfectly.

DRAGON (2)

BY: VIRGIN | **£TBA**

ENTER THE DRAGON

As with the film, the game opens with Bruce pitted against a rather burly sailor, before he then moves to the US where further fights await against cleaver-wielding cooks and the Chinese martial arts champ.The film charts Lee's progression from arrogant scrapper to expert tutor, and it also features a sub-theme where Bruce is haunted by a demon Samurai from his childhood who he must eventually defeat in combat if the Lee bloodline is to continue. Similarly, the binary Bruce encounters foes from his past and his movies, and Virgin have even gone to the trouble of recreating both the ice room scene from 'The Big Boss' and the mirrored room which was the scene of the final fight in 'Enter The Dragon.' The climax of the game is then the fight against the aforementioned Samurai, which takes place in a misty graveyard.



FISTS OF FURY

During the game's development, Virgin were given full access to the script and film stills, and a team of twenty are currently putting the finishing touches to the game. Each of the game's opponents is being pieced together by a separate graphic artist, and these feature in excess of ten indivual moves – for instance, the sailor Bruce fights in the first scene is a bit of a boxer, whilst

DRAGON (3)

BY: VIRGIN | **£TBA**



the chef prefers to sap our hero's strength with a meat cleaver as opposed to fists. Bruce himself starts with a limited number of fighting and defensive moves, but as he makes his way through life (and levels), more are gradually added to his repetoire as his experience grows. In addition, it is hoped that enough memory is left to allow the programmers to arm Lee with the pair of nunchucku he used in 'Enter The Dragon' (not that you'll see their use in either 'Enter' or 'Dragon' in the UK, as the censors cut them out!).

THE BIG BOSS

Obviously, Dragon's competition in the beat 'em up arena is fierce, but Virgin don't really see the game being compared to the likes of Mortal Kombat and Street Fighter II. A major plus in its favour is the size of the combatant sprites – they are massive, three-inch-high geezers which dominate the scrolling play areas. In addition, diehard Bruce Lee fans will be pleased to learn that Virgin are incorporating a few of his most famous moves into the game. From what we've seen of Virgin's game, Dragon certainly has potential. The two-player mode proves quite a laugh, and allows a second Bruce to join in against the current foe (it was originally going to be a sprite based on Lee's wife, Linda, but the film producers objected). We'll be reviewing it real soon, so keep an eye on MegaTech for further details.

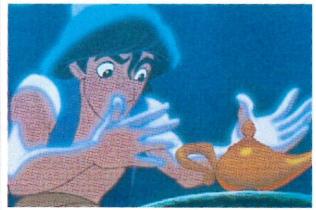


ALADDIN (1)

BY: SEGA | **£49.95/OUT NOW**

It's amazing, but even in today's world of action flicks, Disney still holds a certain magic. No matter whether you're young or old, the likes of Snow White and The Jungle Book still hold a certain magic. What's more, Disney show no sign of flagging either, as demonstrated by Beauty And The Beast and, more recently, Aladdin. There cannot be a person in the country who doesn't know the story of Aladdin and his magic lamp, and Disney's interpretation follows their classic route of adding cute characters and loads of songs to enhance the original story, and with the added twist of using Robin Williams to voice the genie of the lamp.

THE WONDERFUL WORLD...



Sega's 16-Meg platformer has been developed by Virgin, and again features the works of platform meister Dave perry. Adopting the baggy pantaloons of young Aladdin, the game mirrors the film as Aladdin goes in search of the mythical magic lamp under the supervision of the evil Jafar. As the archetypical bad-guy, Jafar is aiming to use the three wishes the lamp bestows upon the user to

ALADDIN (2)

BY: SEGA | **£49.95 OUT NOW**

become king, but his evil nature prevents him from entering the 'Cave of Wonders' where it is held, and only Aladdin has proved innocent enough to enter.

*Starting in the city of Agobah, the game charts Aladdin's progress past the Jafar's guards and henchmen until he makes his way into the cave itself. From here, he is just a magic carpet ride away from the lamp... but all is not what it seems. Of course, I'm preaching to the converted here. You know what Aladdin looks like, and by golly if it isn't the best-looking Megadrive game we've seen, we'll eat our MegaTech hats.

OOH, YOU'RE A LOVELY MOVER

The animation is second to none, with Disney's team of animators having a hand in getting the baggy-trousered hero running and climbing to ensure he moves with the utmost realism. Similarly, Aladdin's many foes are equally well done, with spitting camels, trouser japes ahoy, and a neat line in exploding skeletons. Basically, although the gameplay is familiar territory, it's Aladdin's presentation which raises it above the norm. Everything about the game is polished until it positively gleams, and I could bore you for hours about the stunning backdrops and neat little touches. Granted, this isn't really Spycam material, as it should be in the shops by now, but if any of you have somehow missed the Aladdin hype, we're here to rectify that.



LAWNMOWER MAN (1)

BY: STORM | **£TBA**

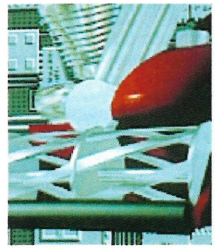


A bit of an odd one, this. About a year or so back, Storm announced they were producing a game based on the (then) forthcoming Virtual Reality film, The Lawnmower Man. However, in the funny world that is the entertainment software business, the game was delayed, the movie came and went without so much as a cheer, and is now available on sell-thru video. What's more, with the game still under development, Storm have since also secured the licence to the sequel to the film (provisionally-entitled Mindmeld) which is currently in production. Lo and behold! – Storm have since announced that the game will be based on both films!

For those of you who missed it (and it must have been quite a few, as it didn't exactly have ET worried in terms of box office sales), The Lawnmower Man expanded on an old Stephen King short story about a retarded gardener whose brain is augmented using computers. For the film's purposes, though, the computers were swapped for VR kit, allowing the producers to insert loads of dead clever animations into the plot.

LAWNMOWER MAN (2)

BY: STORM | **£TBA**



Jobe is the retarded gardener and titular Lawnmower Man, and guinea pig for VR specialist, Doctor Angelo's, VR experiments. Picked on by the small-minded locals, Jobe is all-too eager to improve himself and, as Angelo integrates his mind into the VR world with special drugs, his intelligence grows at a phenominal rate, until he eventually becomes cleverer than Angelo himself and starts to plot a plan for revenge against the cruel locals and, before long, he also hankers after world domination.

Storm are currently busy preparing two versions of the game: an 8-Meg cart and a greatly-enhanced CD version. In the cart game, the action is a mixture of Impossible Mission-style platform bits and some really clever VR-esque bits with the player trying to steer their way through a fast-moving 3D landscape. By far the most exciting part, though, is the climactic Tempest-style shoot 'em up section which has to feature one of the fastest pieces of screen update seen on the Megadrive. The CD-based game contains pretty much the same levels, but the 3D sections are going to be considerably more detailed and make full use of the unit's scaling capabilities. In addition, digitised scenes from the film have been taken and will explain the scenario as the player progresses.

Quite where the second film comes into play we don't know, but Storm have had a copy of the script for several months and are liasing with the production company for assorted ideas. The version of the game we saw followed the first film's plot extremely closely, and our guess is that the second film will only be included in token form. Still, time will tell, and Storm are currently without a Sega licence so, unless another third party licensee snaps it up, it'll be a while before we get to see the fruits of their labour anyway.

REBEL ASSAULT (1)

BY: JVC | **£TBA**



Quite easily the most influential sci-fi films of all time are George Lucas' Star Wars trilogy. A basic story of good versus evil, Star Wars, Empire Strikes Back and Return Of The Jedi introduced us to the plucky band of freedom fighters led by Princess Leia and the weirdest assortment of alien low-lifes and scum you're every likely to see in one film. Luke Skywalker, R2-D2, C3-P0, Han Solo, Chewbacca, Lando Calrissian, Bob Fett, Jabba The Hut – classic characters every one of 'em, and still as fresh today as they were in 1977. What's more, the Star Wars trilogy has provided plentiful inspiration for game designers every where, with three coin-ops from Atari, an X-Wing flight sim from US Gold for the PC, and spin-off derivatives for virtually every home format known to man.



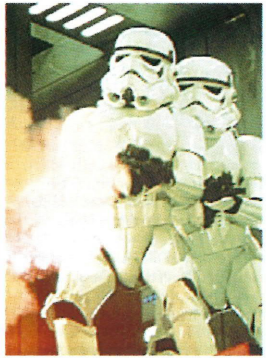
Now, however, JVC and Lucasarts have teamed together to work on what could possibly be the ultimate home Star Wars experience – Rebel Assault for the Mega-CD. Using footage taken from the first film, Rebel Assault is fast-paced shoot 'em up with the player assuming the role of

REBEL ASSAULT (2)

BY: JVC | **£TBA**

gappy-smiled hero, Luke Skywalker. Using elements from all three films, Luke's adventures take him to the ice world of Hoth, numerous shoot-outs with Stormtroopers and, eventually, into a head-on attack to destroy Lord Vader's super weapon – the seemingly impregnable Death Star.

Sadly, all we have seen of the game so far is a few snatched glimpses at the CES show last year, but that was enough to knock our socks off. The flying sequences feature absolutely stunning update as Luke whizzes across planet surfaces and into battle, although we're not sure just how playable it will be – anyone remember Sewer Shark? It's not all flying bits, though, and we've also seen the recently added Stormtrooper scenes, which see Luke pegging it through to the centre of the Death Star whilst taking out as many of Vader guards as possible. The footage fits in with the game extremely well but, again, only time will tell how it plays.



DELAYED RE-ENTRY?

The main problem regarding Rebel Assault, though, is just when exactly we'll get to see it. The UK division of JVC do not hold a Sega licence as of yet, and this means we could have a rather nasty wait on our hands. The game is set to be released in the US sometime in the next couple of months so, needless to say, we'll be reviewing the import version as soon as it is complete but we really hope JVC and Sega come to some sort of an arrangement soon. This could be the game your Mega-CD is crying out for,

CLIFFHANGER

BY: SONY | **£TBA/DEC. '93**



Alongside The Last Action Hero and Jurassic Park, Sly's return to form in Cliffhanger completed the trilogy of summer blockbusters, and Sony were there to pixellate Sly for the Megadrive. Stallone stars as Gabe Walker, a mountain rescue worker. Gabe and his party witness a plane crash into a nearby mountain and head off to search for survivors. However, it transpires the plane is under the control of a vicious bank robber called Qualen, and went down with three cases stacked full of loot in its hull - and he forces Gabe to retrieve the cash. Gabe decides to be a bit of a hero and pick of the bad guys one by one. But what of the game? Well, Sony have opted for the safe route and have turned Cliffhanger into a Final Fight-style beat 'em up. It's certainly a great deal better than the awful Last Action Hero, but it still lacks that certain 'something.' Sly is armed with his fists and feet as the bad guys come on screen in groups of two or three. In addition to the beat 'em up bits, Sony's programmers have also made the most of the mountainous backdrops, so not only is there the odd bit of rock climbing, but there's a rather neat avalanche scene, too.



In Cliffhanger's favour, it does attempt to stick to the film's plot. All the key action scnes have been recreated – including the leaping across chasms – and the game ends with a rather smart helicopter attack as Qualen tries to blend Gabe into the wall with some aerobatic flying. However, the beat 'em up bits which form the bulk of the game are a little clumsy and limited to control, and it proves rather too frustrating to concede a hit when you are desperately trying to wrestle with the controls. Our advice? Rent the film when it comes out on video instead.

JUNGLE BOOK

BY: VIRGIN | **£TBA/JAN. '94**



By the time you read this, Disney's The Jungle Book will have become the biggest-selling video of all time. With early orders shooting past the three million mark, it looks pretty unlikely that anything is going to knock Disney's version of the Kipling story from its top slot this side of Christmas.

Having been stolen from under his parents' noses by a pack of wolves, young Mowgli is left to make his own way through life . However, with this being a Disney tale, his quest for survival is made easier by a friendly bear called Baloo. Additionlly, The Jungle Book also features some of the most famous songs ever, including the classic Baloo anthem 'The Bear Necessities.'

Having wowed us with Aladdin, Virgin are again at the reins of the forthcoming Jungle Book tie-in. Spanning eleven stages, The Jungle Book gives the player full control over Mowgli as he leaps from tree to tree in the jungle. Starting within a dense forest, Mowgli's foes appear in the form of vicious monkeys, venomous snakes, and spiky plants – all of which sap our young hero's health on contact. Moving on from the forest, Mowgli then encounters more banana-lobbing primates as he scales the 'Great Tree', and this eventually leads into King Louie's crumbling palace.

We've seen a roughly 70% complete version of The Jungle Book and, whilst admittedly very similar to Cool Spot and Aladdin platformers, it still seems very playable.



Mowgli is currently undergoing a bit of tweaking in the animation department. Originally pencilled in for a November release, you can expect to hear the Megadrive speaker coping with 'The Bear Necessities' just in time for Christmas.

LAST ACTION HERO

BY: SONY | **£TBA/DEC. '93**



Arnie's latest big bang extravaganza didn't do quite as well as he had hoped, sparking premature concern regarding his popularity. Still, Sony obviously think he's still pretty bankable, and their Megadrive game based on Last Action Hero is set for release within the next few weeks. In the film, Arnie plays a Dirty Harry-style movie cop whose latest adventure, Jack Slater IV, is eagerly-awaited by his greatest fan, Danny. Keen to see his fave star first, Danny is over the moon when the cinema owner gives him a magical cinema ticket – magical because, during the film, Danny is actually sucked into the screen and becomes part of the action. Thus, teaming up with Slater, Danny joins the fight against Anthony Quinn, Charles Dance and their assorted baddy mates. During the course of the film, though, Dance gets hold of Danny's ticket and uses it to take him and his cronies into the 'real' world - a place where they stand more of a chance against Slater; because, in his movies, Jack is virtually indestructible (rather like Arnie)!

Sony's game is another addition to the scrolling beat 'em up pile, with the player guiding Arnie through wave after wave of weapon-waving thugs. However, those of you expecting a reasonable rival to Final Fight are going to be disappointed as The Last Action Hero is a lot more limited than that. The enemy appear on their own or in pairs, and each requires five hits or kicks from Jack's limited array of moves before they stay down. Hmmm. Not one of Sony's better releases, but at least we warned you.

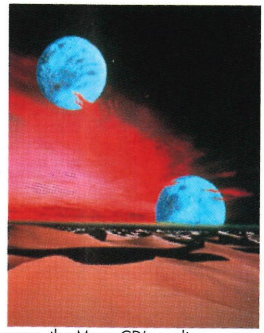


DUNE CD

BY: VIRGIN | **£TBA/DEC. '93**

David Lynch's film of the classic Frank Herbert book is appearing in two separate games, courtesy of Virgin. However, we are going to concentrate on the Mega-CD version as, quite simply, it is absolutely stunning and is the perfect game for a CD-based system. As can be expected, Dune CD revolves around the seedy and dangerous world of Spice mining. Spice is a rare substance which enables the user to travel through space without so much as moving. However, it can only be found on the planet Arrakis and, as you can guess, it is highly sought after by bands of miners.

The player's aim is to mine the planet for Spice, striking up deals with people you meet and conversing with others for hints and tips, using your scout craft for transport. Of course, with this being a CD game, when we say converse we mean it – the characters actually hold full conversations! In addition, when the player searches the planet surfaces for buildings and docking



areas, the Mega-CD's scaling system is used to update the screen in real-time! This looks absolutely stunning, and really does have to be seen to be believed.

Of course, there is a down side. Behind all the fancy presentation lurks a rather shallow game. An enjoyable one, yes - but still rather repetitive. Wandering from palace to palace can be terribly tedious, and the novelty of the planet update soon wears off. Still one of the best CD titles to date yet, though...

ROBOCOP 3

BY: ACCLAIM | **£TBA/DEC. '93**



The film has been in 'development hell' for as long as anyone can remember but, at long last, it seems that Orion's third part in the Robocop series should hit our screens this Chrimbo, with Acclaim's game appearing at roughly the same time. This time round, Robo is battling against corruption within OCP who, in the process of creating a New Detroit for all their rich residents, are using strong-arm tactics to clear out the poorer inhabitants. To hurry the eviction process up a little, specially-commissioned SWAT teams have been offing anyone who causes trouble and, despite conflicting with his directives, Robocop starts to unravel the dirty deals taking places at OCP and a Japanese company currently trying to buy them out.

Acclaim's game is a conversion of Ocean's ageing Super NES platformer, with Robo trudging across a series of eight-way-scrolling areas, avoiding angry residents and taking on any larger bosses in his way. In addition, one of the film's new ideas is to equip Robocop with a jetpack, and this has been incorporated into the game to create a vertically-scrolling shoot 'em up section. As with Acclaim's T2 licence, the original game was a bit of a flop and the Megadrive version of Robo 3 doesn't exactly fill us with excitement. As Queen once sang, "Another one bites the dust..."

HOOK

BY: SONY | **£TBA/DEC. '93**



Steven Spielberg's modern day interpretation of the classic JM Barrie story, Peter Pan, didn't exactly set the movie world alight, and the Mega-CD game came and went without so much as a murmur. Now, however, Sony are set to test the Hook waters again as they release a truncated cart-based version. As far as the gameplay goes, the Mega-CD's original blend of platform action and swordplay has been retained, and the only real casualty are the dull digitised scenes between stages.

The film showed Pan as a yuppie who had forgotten his past and had settled down with kids. However, whilst out at a charity ball, Hook has returned from his supposed watery grave and kidnap's Peter's kids in an attempt to force him out of 'retirement' and into a rematch. Stepping into the tights of Barrie's 'Boy Who Never Grew Up', the game leaves the player to explore Neverland in search of Hook's ship where his kids are being held.

It seems a bit odd that Sony are releasing Hook now, as the film is yesterday's news and the CD



version was hardly a classic. Still, the platform action does prove moderately playable and it features some very nice graphical touches lifted from the film – the fat rolling kid, for instance. Sadly, it seems that the cart-based version of Hook is destined for relative obscurity and, in these days of Jurassics and Aladdins, could be a bit of a 'yesterday's man.'

THE BLUES BROTHERS

BY: TAKARA | **£TBA**

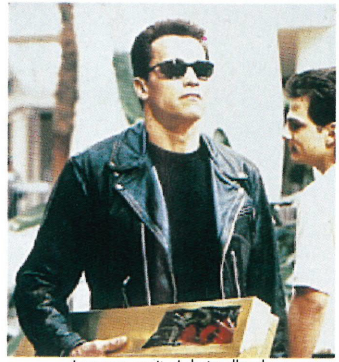


Having appeared on every conceivable computer and console available in the past few months, Takara are now set to bring The Blues Brothers to the Megadrive. However, if you're expecting a smash-bang car chase game as Jake and Elwood tear across America on their mission from Gof, think again. The Blues Brothers is a conversion of the Super NES game and takes the form of a platform game, with the player controlling either Jake or Elwood as they search for caches or records scattered across the scrolling play area whilst picking up anything that comes to hand to throw at the assorted baddies out to stop them. The player selects one of the brothers at the start of the game, with skinny Jake more adept at jumping than lardy Elwood, whilst the latter's bulk allows him to throw heavier objects at their foes. In all, there are five areas for the dynamic duo to explore, and these include shopping malls, factories and forests, all of which are inhabited by similarly-themed baddies (old ladies in the mall, for example).

In its Super NES form, The Blues Brothers was a bit of a flop. The action is a little stilted and uninspiring, and running backwards and forwards in search of something to throw at the next nasty soon gets annoying. Still, we are lead to belive that Takara are going to add a little something to the game, so it's only fair we reserve judgement until then. More news as we get it.

TERMINATOR 2

BY: ACCLAIM | **£TBA/DEC. '93**



Not to be confused with Acclaim's conversion of the coin-op, T2 takes the form of a horizontally-scrolling combination of the arcade/adventure and fighting genres. Cast as Arnie, the player is initially unarmed and left to find suitable weaponry and the like from the nearby bar. In terms of plot, T2 follows the film quite closely and, having found a rather handy shotgun, next up is a driving sequence where young John Connor has to be rescued from the T1000 and his big truck. This combination of exploration and driving then continues as the game recreates the chase through the hospital in search of Sarah Connor, thehelicopter chase, the destruction of the Cyberdyne building, and the pursuit into the steel mill which plays host to the climatic end battle.

Sadly, it has to be said that T2 is looking a little ropey at best. The Super NES game it has been converted from was far from a classic, and this is basically an identical version and isn't likely to improve on it. Admittedly, the game follows the film very closely and Acclaim have recreated all the best action bits, but the game is slow to play and often hard to control. It's also rather repetitive, and the search for Sarah just seems to go on for ages with no real sense of menace from the T1000. Similarly, the graphics aren't all they could be and the Arnie sprite looks more like a leather-clad John Inman (shudder) than the muscular killing machine in the film. Not one of Acclaim's best if you ask us...

MEGADRIVE-IN MOVIES

So, just how many film tie-ins have there been for the Megadrive? Oooooh, loads. And here they are, listed for your delectation. Aren't we just so good to you...

OUT NOW

ADDAMS FAMILY
ALADDIN
ALIEN 3
BACK TO THE FUTURE 3
BATMAN
BATMAN RETURNS
DICK TRACY
DRACULA
DUNE CD
DUNE 2
FANTASIA
GHOSTBUSTERS
HOME ALONE
HOOK CD
INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE
JAMES BOND
JURASSIC PARK
LITTLE MERMAID
MOONWALKER
PREDATOR 2
RAMBO 3
ROBOCOP VS TERMINATOR
SUPERMAN
TERMINATOR
TERMINATOR 2: THE ARCADE GAME
TOYS
UNIVERSAL SOLDIER

COMING SOON

And what else is on the horizon? We got Mystic Meg (well, Steve) to look in her crystal ball, and here's what is on the horizon...

AKIRA
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
BLUES BROTHERS
CLIFFHANGER
DEMOLITION MAN
DRAGON
HOME ALONE 2
HOOK JUNGLE BOOK
JURASSIC PARK CD
LAST ACTION HERO
REBEL ASSAULT CD
ROBOCOP 3
STEVEN SEAGAL
TERMINATOR CD
TERMINATOR 2
ULTRAMAN
WAYNE'S WORLD





EMAP IMAGES PRESENTS...
A MERRETT/ZIE PRODUCTION
SCREENPLAY BY: STEVE MERRETT
PRODUCER: JEFF ZIE
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER: MARK HOLMES
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: DAVID KELLY

THANKS TO: WARNER BROS, SARAH EWING, GARY HARROD AND HANNAH AT EMPIRE MAGAZINE

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