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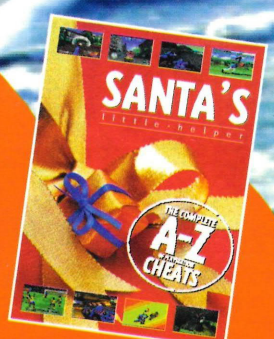
DESCENT II

Exclusive first look – has it improved?

FIFA '97

FREE CHEATS BOOK!

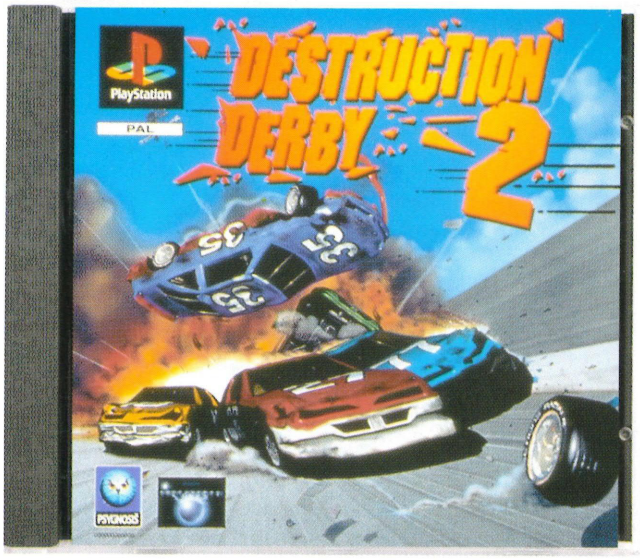
WITH THIS ISSUE



PANDEMONIUM

Is *Crash Bandicoot* history already?

The latest PlayStation titles are in Woolworths. (Ready, steady, obliterate.)



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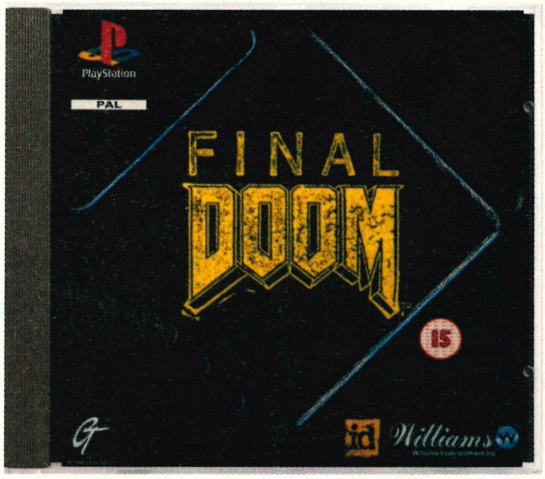

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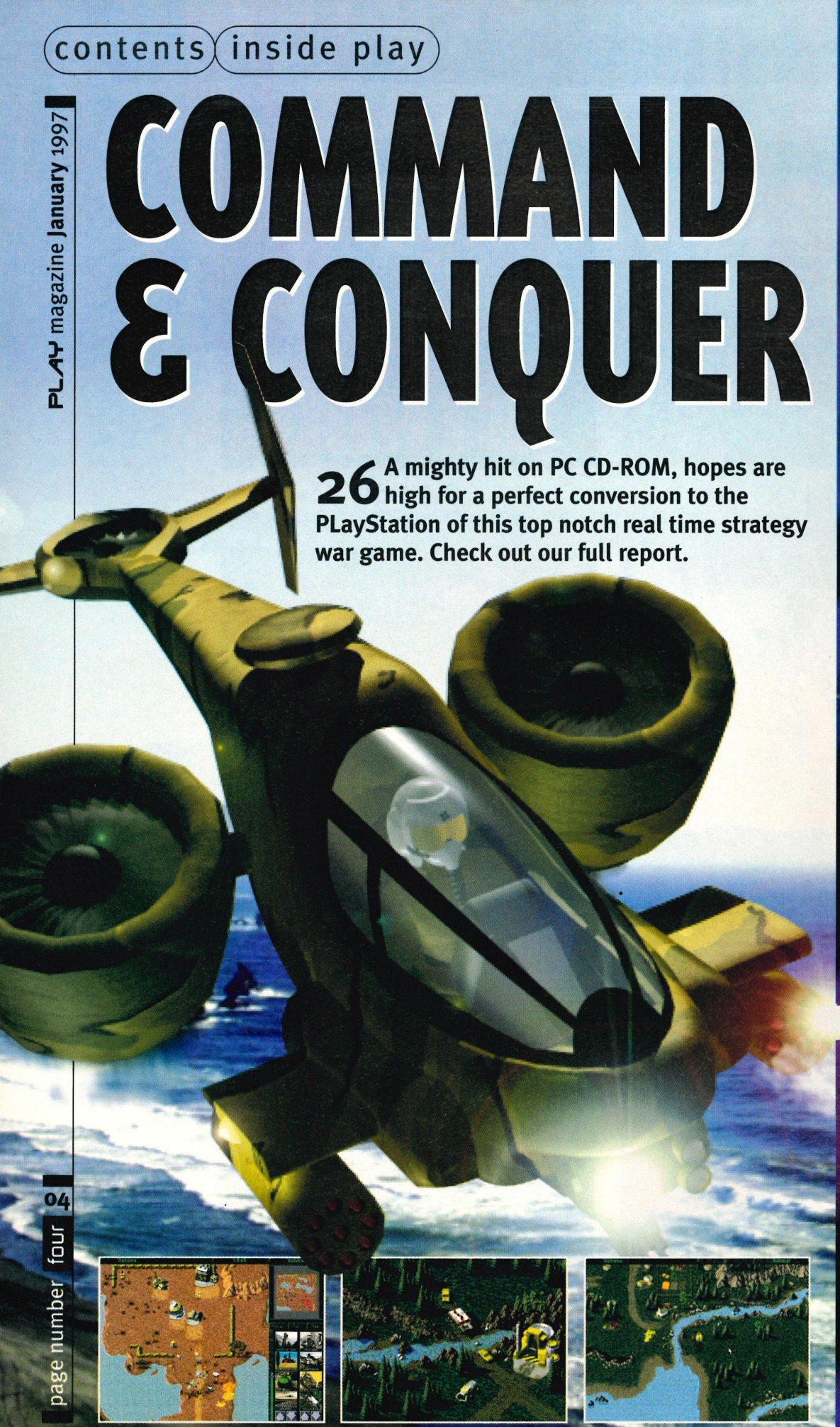
All items subject to availability

COMMAND & CONQUER

26 A mighty hit on PC CD-ROM, hopes are high for a perfect conversion to the PlayStation of this top notch real time strategy war game. Check out our full report.



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Tel: (01202)200228
(5-6pm weekdays only!)

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49 A selection of ultra-useful cheats and tactics for you to pull out of the mag and stick on the wall until wretched. This month the first part of an epic *Mortal Kombat Trilogy* guide!

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76 The very best solutions every month. Maps, cheats, tips and your gaming queries answered.

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52 Join the UK's best selling unofficial PlayStation magazine team and receive Play every month.

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92 Oi, PLAY – sort it ahhhht! Yep this is the letters section, where you [illegible] the chance to voice your opinions on the [illegible]agazine, the Sony PlayStation – in fact anyt[illegible] you want really.

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94 Want to know the games that Play really rates? Then you'd better turn to Playback, where we've rated the ten best games in each genre. Sports, shoot-'em-ups, racing games – they're all there in this handy buyers' guide.

[Interview with...]

96 We speak to Toby Gard, the man behind the 94% rated game *Tomb Raider* in the palatial surroundings of Lara Croft's ancestral home. Just what makes him tick, and more importantly, what does he think of Derby?

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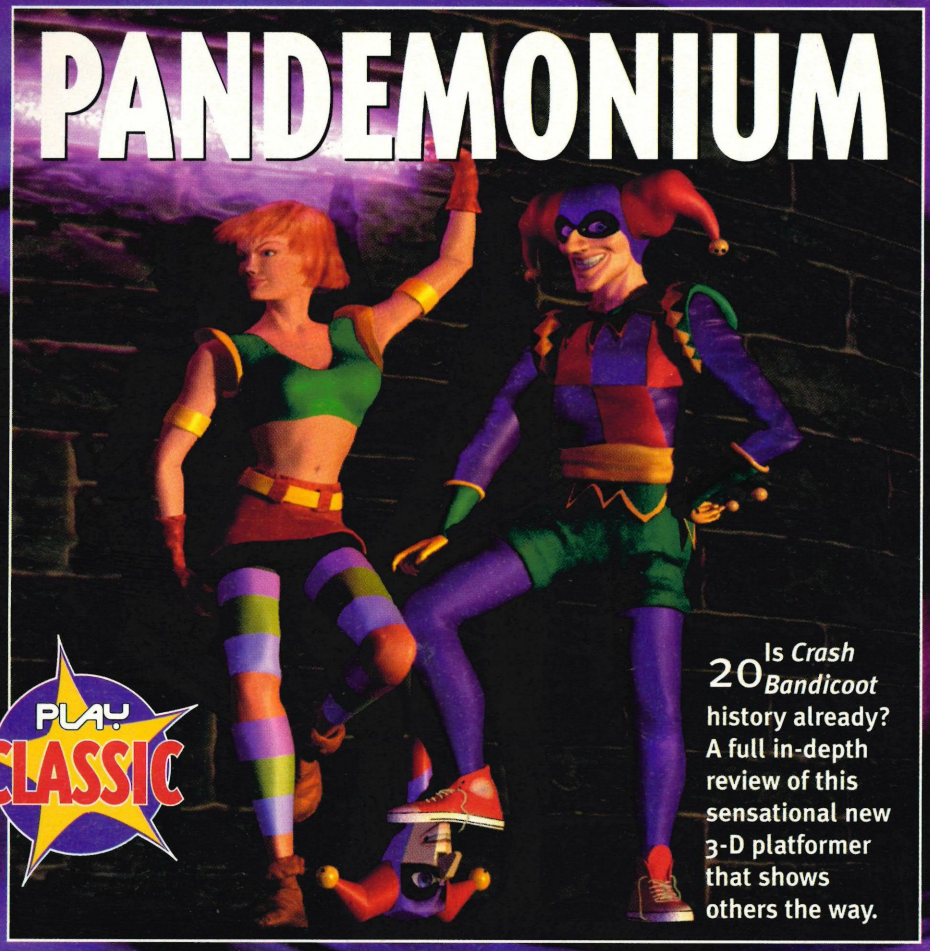
issue fifteen

UK's Fastest Growing PLAYSTATION Magazine!

PANDEMONIUM



PLAY CLASSIC

20 Is *Crash Bandicoot* history already? A full in-depth review of this sensational new 3-D platformer that shows others the way.

DESCENT II

30 World first look at Interplay's hot sequel! Is it a significant improvement?

FIFA '97

34 The full review at last! But do we raise the world cup or walk dejectedly to the changing rooms?

WORKSTATIONS

Your first look at the latest games still in development. If it's behind closed doors, we're the ones with the battering ram!

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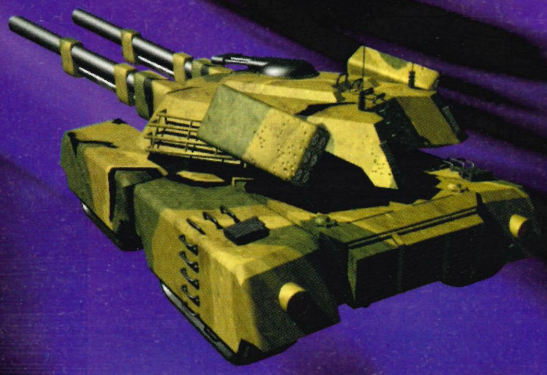

WIRED UP

A short preview look at the hottest games before the full review next issue. Space is tight, so only the most exciting prevail.

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The very latest official and import games are reviewed here by the experts – no other magazine gives you so many reviews per issue.

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PLAYSTATION wire

news • snippets • rumours • h

WHAT'S IN STORE FOR THE PLAYSTATION

CHRISTMAS approaches like a huge white snowy thing and once again PLAY magazine groans under the weight of all those last minute game reviews. We've 15 of the buggers this month, and because we like to also give you a huge news section and features on the latest games in development, we still didn't have enough room to fit them all in. Next month you will no doubt see the rest of the rushed Christmas releases seeping into the magazine even though some will already be on the shelves.

This issue we saw *Command & Conquer* for the first time on PlayStation, and whereas the presentation and basic game structure remained intact from the PC version, the graphics were largely unchanged too, which was a shock because we had expected it to be in the PlayStation's high resolution mode and in far more detail. I should point out that the graphics in the feature on page 26 are different from those in the playable version we received as this issue was going to press, and although the features and comments in the article are entirely valid, you should hold back from buying the game until you read our full review next issue. Only then will you be sure of what you're getting.

Finally, a big thank you to all PLAY readers for buying the magazine and constantly sending us your comments and advice. Without you, the magazine would not exist and now there are more of you than ever before. Hope you enjoy this issue and I'll see you in the new year. Merry Xmas from the PLAY team!

Damian Butt
Managing editor

IF YOU'RE reading this then the chances are it's very close to Christmas or the new year and already your thoughts are turning to what 1997 will bring for the PlayStation. As this year is winding down for PLAY too, and because nothing really controversial happens in the season of goodwill, our lead story this month is devoted to looking into our crystal ball and predicting what will happen next year.

The PlayStation will of course sell like hot cakes this Christmas and not just among the affluent twenty-somethings who first took to the machine. With a lower price point and a plethora of bundles (*Tekken 2*, *Rayman* among others), a new generation of younger PlayStation owners will find the 32-bit console at the foot of their family Christmas tree this year. It's already happening, with younger PLAY readers sending in letters and calling our hotline all the time. Sony predicts that by March, there will be over 750,000 PlayStations sold in the UK alone and many of the new owners in 1997 will be aged 16 or under.

This will have important ramifications on the software being produced, with more younger-orientated games being developed, and the likes of *Resident Evil* 2 being frowned upon by parents. Perhaps even censorship will begin to rear its ugly head as more and more impressionable young gamesplayers adopt the machine. We at PLAY hope this does not happen because the PlayStation has always been about giving the childish 16-bit games of old a kick up the backside and bringing them up-to-date.

1997 will also be a year for some of the most hyped games ever to finally appear in the UK. *Tobal No.1*, the splendid polygon beat-'em-up from SquareSoft will be released officially (although whether it will come with a free demo disk is still unknown), and both *Soul Edge* and *Time Crisis* from Namco will make their impressive entrances to worldwide acclaim. The latter is reported to be an amazing arcade conversion, and it should come packaged with the ultra-cool Namco Guncon. And then there's *Tekken 3*...

Resident Evil 2 is also scheduled for a mid-year release and from the screenshots we've all seen, it looks likely to be far better than the original. *Porsche Challenge* and *Rapid Racer* from SCEE also promise to be great games from the official side, and let's not forget that Psygnosis, the PlayStation's numero uno PSX developer, has yet to announce its full 1997 schedule – expect something that will blow your minds.

What else can we expect from 1997?

[ABOVE] ***Porsche Challenge*** **from Sony will be one of next year's biggest games.**

INTERNATIONAL PLAY BOYS

WHO TO CONTACT AT PLAY MAGAZINE...

DAMIAN BUTT
This month our leader actually dared to take a holiday – right on deadline – right when everyone else had left the building. Never again. E-mail play@paragon.co.uk.

ASAM AHMAD
This is Asam's final issue of Play as the caveman disappears to the big smoke to live the life of a God. We wish him well, but now there's no-one who can fix the office TV. Damn!

THE MASKED REVIEWER
The identity of the masked reviewer is a dark secret. All we know is that we send him games to a postbox in Whitechapel, and a couple of days later, a review appears. Do not ask questions, just believe in The Masked Reviewer!

FOR N'97?

Well a new Sony analogue control pad for starters, and maybe even a further price drop as reports indicate that the new low-spec PlayStation may come to Europe late in the year. We still have no news of a budget range of software, but surely something must be done next year to combat the renewed interest in the Nintendo 64.

Yep, it's all going to plan, and next year will be the best yet for PlayStation owners. See you then.

[ABOVE] **Sony' Yaroze scheme will start next year in Universities – see page 15 for details.**

PLAYSTATION – THE FACTS

YEAR TWO for the mighty PlayStation then and with over 150 games and 400,000 sales in the UK we at PLAY thought it was time to put it all into perspective. Here are some little known facts about Sony's 32-bit console.

• The total number of PlayStations shipped up until December 1996 is nine million: 4 million in Japan, 2.8 million in America and 2.2 million in Europe.

• By the end of the year, over 400 games will be available for the PSX in Japan.

• For the months of November and December, Sony aims to produce over two million PlayStations to cope with demand.

• Sony predicts that over 750,000 PlayStations will have found new homes in the UK by March of next year.

According to Chart Track, who provides PLAY with our monthly sales charts, in the month of October when the PlayStation had the top two slots of the CD-ROM chart with *Tekken 2* and *Formula 1*, these two titles sold more than the rest of the top 20 put together and the market share for the PlayStation rose to an all-time high of 31.3%.

• A new version of the PlayStation has just been launched in Japan which features a simplified internal design and merges the video output terminals into one AC multi output jack. There are rumours that this new model loses the serial link capability, but at the time of going to press that is all they are. The price therefore of the basic PSX has dropped in Japan and the same is expected to happen worldwide.

NOZIN' AROUND

NOZIN' AROUND

RUMOURS WE can't substantiate, whispers of secret projects, general snooping, that's what this regular column is all about – we'll do our utmost to find out all the juicy titbits that the Sony PlayStation has to offer.

We've heard this month that EA will be publishing Delphine Software's latest game, *Moto Racer* in March of the new year. So far we have very few details.

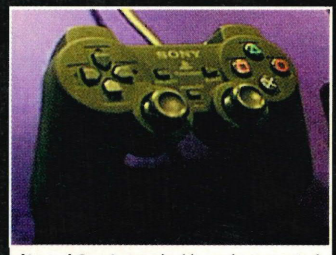
A juicy rumour this month comes from the murky underside of the Internet. Apparently the next generation of the PlayStation, the so-called PlayStation 2, has already been shown to major software developers, some of whom have development kits for the new machine already. PlayStation 2 is code-named Project Highlander and we've heard that prototypes are already being circulated in America.

The whisper from Europress Software is that they WILL be converting their excellent PC game, *RAC Rally Championship* to the PlayStation for Autumn next year. The game faithfully re-creates every mile of the rally held all over the UK and gives you the chance to ride in a Skoda, Suberu, Escort Cossie, Renault Megane, Golf GTI and Proton. The heads of Europress only came to the decision to convert RAC Rally as this issue of PLAY was going to press, and it's certainly good news because it's one type of racing game that the PLayStation sorely lacks. The Sega Saturn has *Sega Rally*, the PC has *Screamer 2* and *RAC*, and now the PlayStation can at last boast an authentic rally game. Hooray!

And finally this month we have news that the version of *Command & Conquer* featured on page 26 is in fact not the one that will appear on PLayStation, so check out the full review next issue for more details.

SONY'S DOUBLE ANALOGUE PAD!

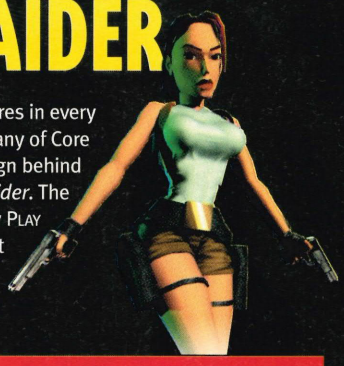
A BRAND NEW official Sony controller was unveiled recently at the PlayStation Expo in Japan and looks to be taking on the innovative Nintendo 64 pad head-on. The new pad features all the standard buttons and D-pad, but two analogue mini-joysticks have been added to the lower portion. It is thought that these new methods of control will more suited to the next generation of Sony software including *Tekken 3* and *Rapid Racer*. It also makes games like *Robotron X*, where two controllers are the proper way to play the game, more accessible. The new pad is likely to hit these shores within the first three months of next year.



[ABOVE] **Sony's new double analogue control pad was unveiled in Japan recently. Cor.**

£500,000 CAMPAIGN FOR TOMB RAIDER

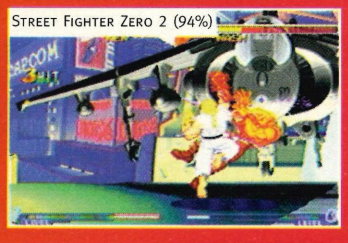
BOLSTERED by fanatical review scores in every PlayStation magazine, Eidos, the parent company of Core Design, has put a £500,000 marketing campaign behind their flagship product this Christmas, *Tomb Raider*. The game, which was first revealed to the public by PLAY and received 94% last issue, is without a doubt the best game on PlayStation. Sadly, despite capacious wallets, Eidos has yet to pledge its support for this magazine.

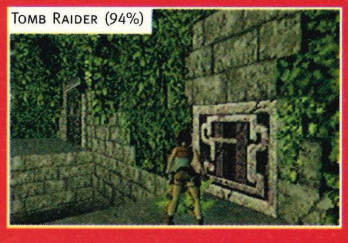


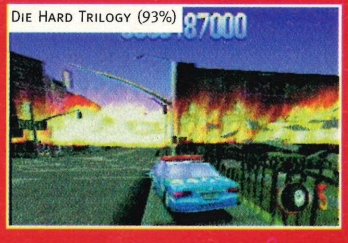
DD 2 DELAYED!

DUE TO hit the shelves in November, it now looks likely that *Destruction Derby 2* by Psygnosis will slip into the new year. This is despite the fact that the American version of the game is already out, even though *DD2* was developed in the UK. *DD2* looks to be the victim of the Christmas rush to get games out, although Psygnosis say it was planned.

PLAY RECOMMENDS...







AIR COMBAT 2 LIFTS OFF IN '97

AFTERBURNER has a lot to answer for because it spawed a whole generation of jet combat games, many of which were poor. *Ace Combat* arrived on PlayStation just after the console was released in the UK and scored a respectable 79% in PLAY. Now the sequel is just being finished in Japan and it looks set to blow the genre apart. Boasting far better next generation graphics (check out that stratofortress below), over 30 missions (twice as many as in the original) and 16 different planes to control, *Air Combat 2* is one to look out for in the Spring of '97.

[ABOVE] ***Air Combat 2*** **looks very similar to the original, but the graphics have been improved.**

[ABOVE] **And for the full *Afterburner* effect, here's the exterior chase view.**

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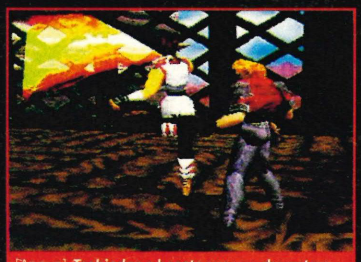
TOSHINDEN 3

WHILST *Toshiden* was an incredible looking game and one of the first 'ground-breakers' on the PlayStation, its sequel, the cleverly named *Toshinden 2* was a complete dog. The graphics had suddenly become much worse, and it wasn't as fun to play. Not surprisingly, people stayed away in their droves. Why then should you be expected to get excited about the third in the series, *Toshinden 3*? Well for a start it's likely to have 30+ characters (even the mighty *Tekken 2* only had 25!), including a Japanese detective called Iwashiro Nagisa who has a pistol and a nightstick as weapons, David, who carries a chainsaw, and Bai Fo, who's an ape. *Toshinden 3* desperately wants to be just like its cooler, more facile half-cousin, *Soul Edge*, and the stage is all set for a monumental showdown in January. *Soul Edge* is still set for a December release in Japan.



[ABOVE] ***Toshinden 3*** **boasts over 30 characters, some of which are based on the old ones.**

[ABOVE] **The main difference between *Toshinden* and *Tekken* is the prolific use of weapons.**

[ABOVE] ***Toshinden 3*** **includes such weapons as swords, axes, guns and even a chainsaw!**

PENNY RACERS GETS UK RELEASE

FINALLY an official release for the import game *ChoroQ* which was reviewed in PLAY issue 11 and scored a better than average score of 70%. In the UK the game is called *Penny Racers* and it is a cartoony racing game featuring miniaturised *Micro Machines*-style vehicles based on real cars. On offer are a Lamborghini Diablo, many different Japanese cars, and even a mini cooper. It's great fun, but our main criticisms of the game were that it lacks a two player mode and isn't that challenging. It should be out now.

[ABOVE] ***Penny Racers*** **is great fun and good to look at, but ultimately lacks challenge.**

US TOBAL GETS FREE FFVII DEMO!

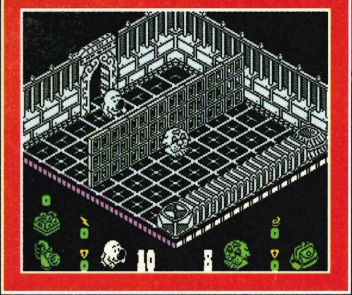
WILL SONY UK FOLLOW SUIT IN JANUARY?

SONY US has packaged a playable demo of *Final Fantasy VII* with the official copy of *Tobal No.1* on its release in America last month. The superb 3-D fighting game from top Japanese developer, SquareSoft, was reviewed in issue 12 of PLAY and scored a respectable 94%. So far *Tobal No.1* has sold over 700,000 units in Japan alone and hopes are high for success on a *Tekken 2* scale. Certainly the game has netted Square enough money to mobalise the rest of its PlayStation titles, namely *Final Fantasy Tactics* and *Bushido Blade* for worldwide release, and they have also just announced a range of sports titles (see our Japanese column for more information). Sony UK has a release date of 10 January for *Tobal*, although there is no confirmation of the *FFVII* demo.

[ABOVE] ***Tobal No.1*** **will arrive at the start of 1997, but will there be a playable demo with it?**

MOST WANTED

An all-time classic game that could be converted to PlayStation is *Head Over Heels*, written by Jon Ritman with graphics by Bernie Drummond. You guided two independently controlled characters with varying abilities, and who could eventually team up and become one being. Isometric and full of puzzles, it was ace.



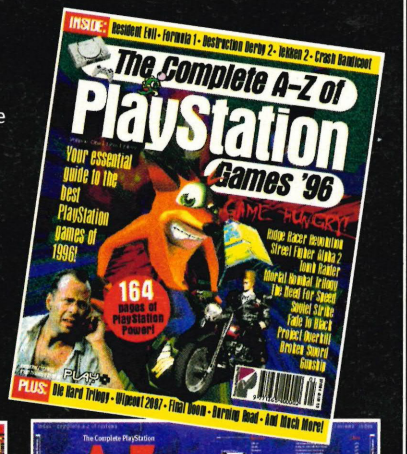
$200 MILLION LOSS FOR ACCLAIM

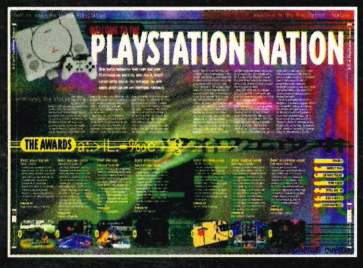
GAMES GIANT Acclaim has reported that its full year losses for 1996 could top $200 million. The troubled publisher has been quiet since the mighty *Alien Trilogy* (PLAY review: 91%) on PlayStation, with only the addictive and underrated *Bust-A-Move 2* and the awful *Revolution X* punctuating the release schedules in 1996. *Bubble Bobble* has not turned up yet despite being slated to arrive in October. According to sources inside Acclaim, over 100 staff members have been laid off in the last couple of months including the president, Rob Holmes. The firm blames 16-bit cartridge over-stocks and over-lengthy development times for its losses. A sad day for the once mighty marketing driven software publisher. *Batman Forever* (reviewed on page 54) is unlikely to cause a u-turn in their fortunes in our opinion.

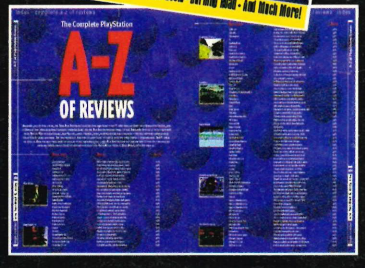
[ABOVE] ***Batman Forever*** **is the latest game to come from the licence giants, Acclaim, now facing financial trouble.**

EVERY PLAYSTATION GAME REVIEWED!

OUT NOW is a huge 164-page special PlayStation magazine which comprehensively reviews every single PlayStation game released since its launch in 1995. THE COMPLETE A-Z OF PLAYSTATION GAMES '96 (priced £4.99) features loads of in-depth reviews, a look at the console's dominance, and some reviews of the many peripherals on offer. It's the perfect Christmas present for a PlayStation obsessive and offers invaluable buying advice if you're looking to blow some cash on something PlayStation related.

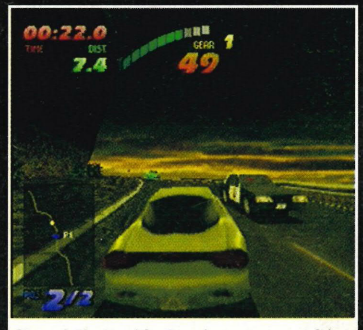




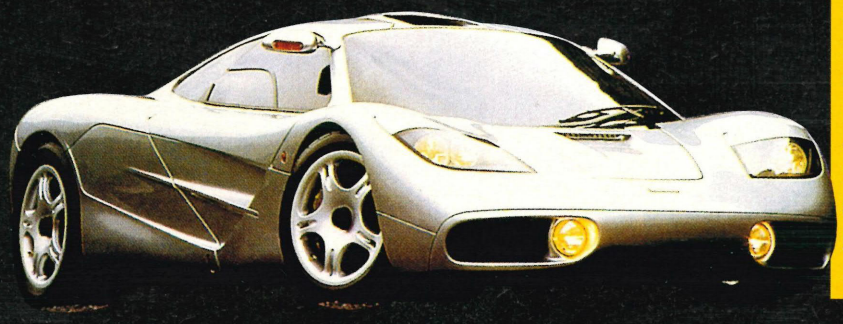


NEED FOR SPEED 2 BY AUTUMN SAYS EA

WHISPERED last issue was news that EA is currently developing *The Need for Speed 2* in America and the game will arrive in Autumn 1997. We have no news on the exact details of the game (even booze won't shift those tight lips!), but we reckon a big presence for Ferrari, Lamborghini, Lotus and possibly even Maclaren. Our wish list would be: Ferrari F50/355 Spider, Lamborghini Muira, Maclaren F1, Lotus Esprit V8, Shelby Cobra, Aston Martin DB7, Porsche 959/Boxster. Dear Santa...



[ABOVE] ***The Need for Speed*** **was so successful on PSX, they're doing another one. Yes!**



THOSE RELEASE DATES IN FULL

Well over 100 games were released in 1996 for the PlayStation, and 1997 is set to be even more active. But first, what's coming out in December and has anything slipped through to the new year?

DECEMBER

Aryton Senna's Kart Duel (Sunsoft)
Batman Forever (Acclaim)
Breakpoint Tennis (Ocean)
Cheesy (Ocean)
Chronicles of the Sword (Psygnosis)
Command & Conquer (VIE)
Crusader: No Remorse (EA)
Die Hard Trilogy (EA/Fox)
Discworld 2 (Psygnosis)
Earthworm Jim 2 (VIE)
FIFA '97 (EA)
Firo & Klawd (BMGie)
Floating Runner (THQ)
Hardcore 4x4 (Gremlin)
Hyper Match Tour Tennis (VIE)
Iron & Blood (Acclaim)
Konami Open Golf (Konami)
Lomax (Psygnosis)
Mortal Kombat Trilogy (Acclaim)
NASCAR Racing '96 (Sierra)
NBA Jam Extreme (Acclaim)
NHL '97 (EA)
On-Side Soccer (Telstar)
Pandemonium (BMGie)
PO'ed (Warner)
Powerplay Hockey '96 (VIE)
Project Overkill (Konami)
ReLoaded (Gremlin)
Robotron X (GT)
Sim City 2000 (Maxis)
StarFighter 3000 (Telstar)
Star Gladiator (VIE)
Street Fighter Alpha 2 (VIE)
Street Racer (UBI Soft)
Tempest X (Interplay)
Tilt (VIE)
Tomb Raider (Eidos)
Tunnel B1 (Ocean)
Victory Boxing (JVC)
WW In your House (Acclaim)
X-Com:Terror from the Deep (MicroProse)
X2 (Team 17/Ocean)

AND THE SLIPPERS...

GAME (PUBLISHER)	WAS	NOW
Destruction Derby 2 (Psygnosis)	December	January
Micro Machines (Codemasters)	November	February
Smash Court Tennis (Sony)	December	January
Prime Goal (Sony)	December	January
Firo & Klawd (BMGie)	October	December

CHARTS

In association with ChartTrack

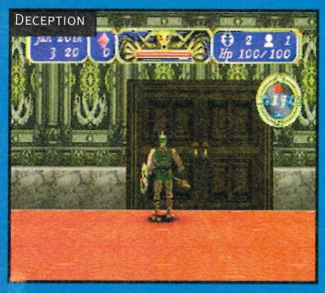
POS	GAME	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	PLAY SCORE
1.	SOVIET STRIKE	EA	EA	83%
2.	CRASH BANDICOOT	NAUGHTY DOG	SONY	84%
3.	FORMULA 1	PSYGNOSIS	PSYGNOSIS	92%
4.	WIPEOUT 2097	PSYGNOSIS	PSYGNOSIS	93%
5.	TEKKEN 2	NAMCO	SONY	95%
6.	RESIDENT EVIL	CAPCOM	VIE	95%
7.	FINAL DOOM	WILLIAMS	GT INTERACTIVE	82%
8.	ACTUA SOCCER	GREMLIN	GREMLIN	94%
9.	TUNNEL B1	NEON	OCEAN	87%
10.	ACTUA GOLF	GREMLIN	GREMLIN	88%

USA ENTERTAINMENT

ENTERTAINMENT USA

CAT BUCANNON brings you all the news on what's hot in the land of Bill Clinton and endless cable TV channels.

If you remember, a few issues ago I mentioned a new game called *Deception* – a first person perspective 3-D adventure which placed you in the shoes of the bad guy. Well now this game has just come out over here and it's getting widespread acclaim because of its originality. You are the keeper of a fully texture mapped castle and the idea is to lure unsuspecting adventurers into your many traps. From what I can tell it's a similar concept to UK developer Bullfrog's game, *Dungeon Keeper*. The only problem so far encountered with *Deception* is that you will need to persevere to get the most out of it because it is very slow going. Still, why not check it out at your local import store.



Just out in the USA is Capcom's first 3-D beat-'em-up, Star Gladiator and the press over here are going mad for it. The game features nine selectable characters and three secret ones (compared to *Tekken 2's* 25!) and they are a mixture of aliens and robots from every corner of the galaxy. Each character has their own unique weapon which can be used in conjunction with their impressive array of special moves. Saturn, for example, has a plasma yo-yo which he uses to hack away at his opponents. Also, in the great Capcom tradition, Star Gladiator features a host of combos, power moves and elaborate special effects to dazzle the gamesplayer. The animation is top notch, as you would expect from the makers of *Street Fighter Zero 2* (Alpha in the UK – Ed), and Star Gladiator is aiming to go head-to-head with Squaresoft's recently released beat-'em-up, *Tobal No.1*.

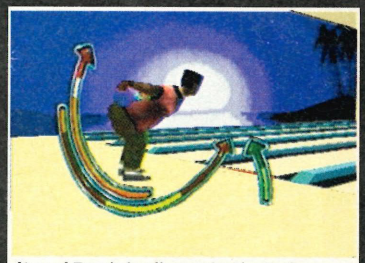
Although Star Gladiator doesn't look as impressive as *Tekken 2*, it does at least give Capcom the chance to perfect the 3-D techniques that will be used in *Street Fighter Ex* due out in the USA for the Easter holidays. Breath is duly bated.

[ABOVE] Cat Bucannon – likes games and banana yogurt...

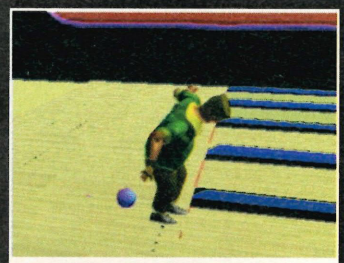
STOP

EA IS BOWLED OVER (GROAN)

JUST IN from EA Sports this month is *Ten Pin Alley*, the PLayStation's first bowling simulator. The game allows you to take control of various rendered charcters individually or in teams and try to get the highest score. not that much is known about the game as we literally received it as the magazine was going to press, but we'll have a full review next issue. *Ten Pin Alley* will be released early next year.



[ABOVE] **Ten pin bowling on the PlayStation – you heard it here first folks.**



[ABOVE] **To jazz up the otherwise predictable gameplay, EA has included humerous cut scenes.**

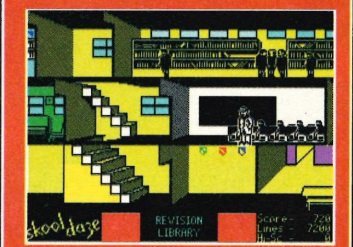
ALLIED GENERAL

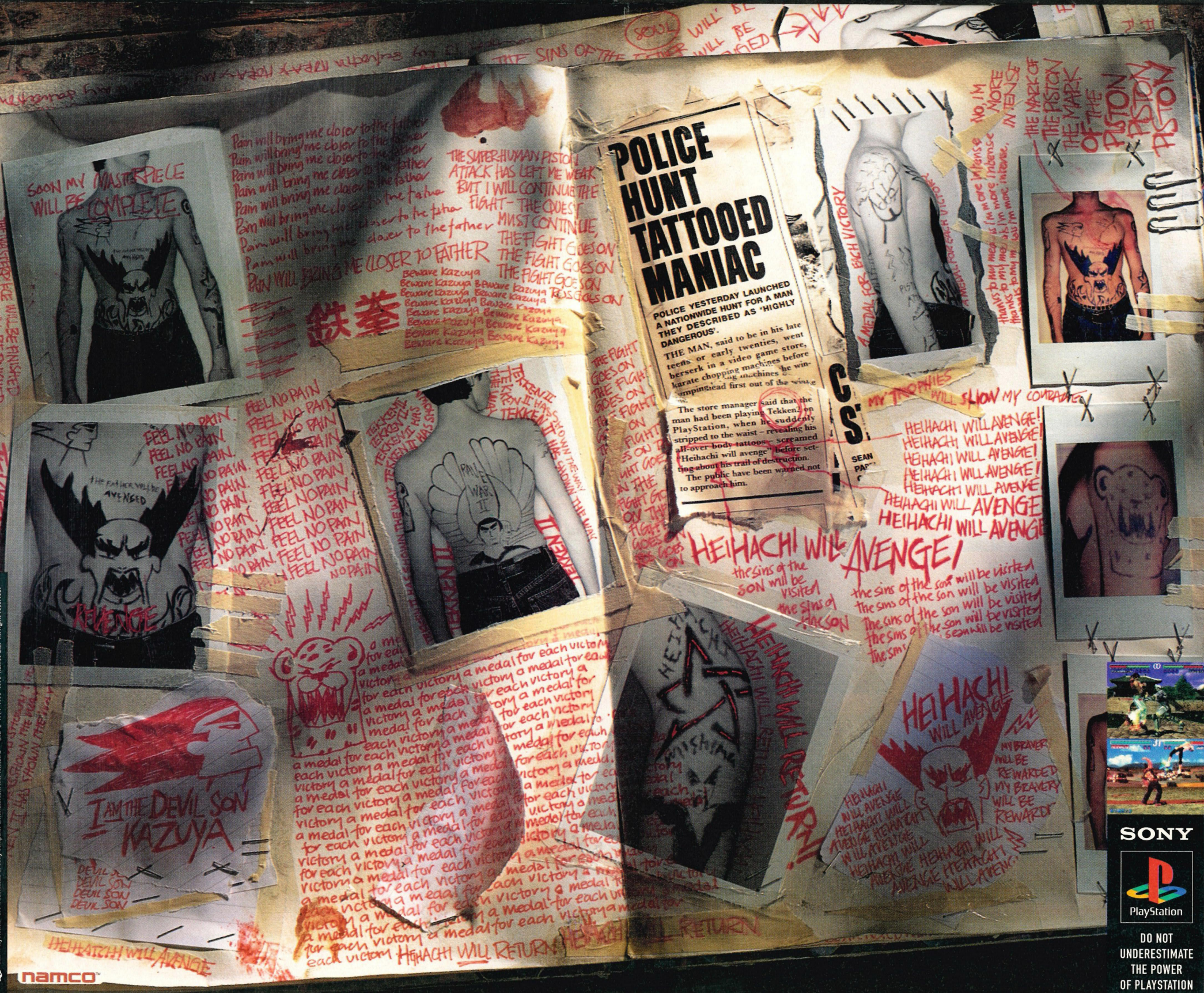
CHURCHILL tastic news from Mindscape is that *Allied General*, the latest in the 'General' series (which includes *Pacific, Fantasy, Star* and *Panzer* on PC) is to be converted to the PlayStation and released in May '97. PSX owners should already be familiar with *Panzer General*, which was released earlier this year, but the new game takes you into central Europe for the battle against the Axis powers headed by Adolf Hitler. In fact you can play as the Allies or Axis powers in the game, and there are 35 different scenarios ranging from the standard battles, to fantasy ones like Churchill's never realised Operation Jupiter. Strategy fans – save those pennies!

[ABOVE] ***Allied General*** **– get to stomp through France and shoot Germans. All the fun of WW2!**

MOST WANTED

One of the all-time classic games from the computer boom in the mid Eighties was MicroSphere's *Skool Daze*, later followed by the sequel, *Bak 2 Skool*. The game was a side-scrolling affair, with you playing Eric, a new pupil at the school from hell. The aim was to get hold of the answers to the exam papers before the exam day, but violation of the school's rigid rules meant being penalised with lines. 10,000 of them and you were instantly expelled, so the real trick was to sneak around the school during lessons and solve the puzzles whilst avoiding the beady gaze of the agile teachers. A classic game, surely someone could convert it?




POLICE HUNT TATTOOED MANIAC
POLICE YESTERDAY LAUNCHED A NATIONWIDE HUNT FOR A MAN THEY DESCRIBED AS 'HIGHLY DANGEROUS'.
THE MAN, said to be in his late teens or early twenties, went berserk in a video game store, karate chopping machines before
The store manager said that the man had been playing Tekken2 on PlayStation, when he suddenly stripped to the waist – revealing his all-over body tattoos – screamed "Heihachi will avenge" before setting about his trail of destruction.
The public have been warned not to approach him.
SOON MY MASTERPIECE WILL BE COMPLETE
THE SUPER-HUMAN PISTON ATTACK HAS LEFT ME WEAK BUT I WILL CONTINUE THE FIGHT – THE QUEST MUST CONTINUE, THE FIGHT GOES ON THE FIGHT GOES ON THE FIGHT GOES ON
PAIN WILL BRING ME CLOSER TO FATHER
Beware Kazuya
鉄拳
A MEDAL FOR EACH VICTORY
NO, I'M MORE INTENSE
THE MARK OF THE PISTON
MY TROPHIES WILL SHOW MY COURAGE
HEIHACHI WILL AVENGE!
the sins of the son will be visited
FEEL NO PAIN
REVENGE
I AM THE DEVIL SON KAZUYA
HEIHACHI WILL RETURN!
HEIHACHI WILL AVENGE
MY BRAVERY WILL BE REWARDED
namco
SONY
PlayStation
DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION

JAPS EYE

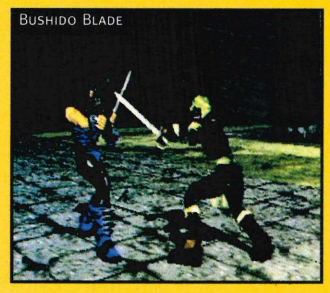
SquareSoft in Japan announced this month that it is creating a new label called Aques, an abbreviation of the company's aim: Advanced QUality Entertainment and Sports. The first titles to emerge will be Super Live Stadium (baseball), Grand Champion Rally, and a mahjong game. All three games are expected to be released at the start of 1997 and will be coming to an import shop near you.

Bushido Blade, thought to be SquareSoft's next release (after *Final Fantasy VII*) has been delayed from 20 December to 14 March. Development complexities have been blamed.

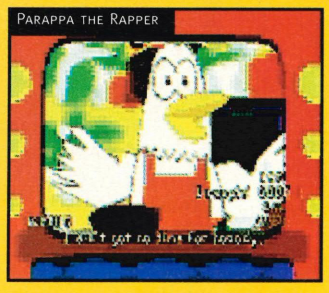
The latest Japanese sensation hitting Japan at the moment is Parappa the Rapper, a totally bizarre gaming experience best described as a the videogame equivalent of MC Hammer! Debuted at the PlayStation Expo last month, Parappa the Rapper is a cartoon style game which features many different animated musical rappers and the idea is to keep in time with each of their raps by tapping the buttons on the joypad in the right sequence. The game takes place in many different locations and with loads of quirky rappers testing your powers of memory and timing. Parappa the Rapper is scheduled to arrive over here by Christmas, but at the moment there are no plans to release the game in Europe or America. Apparently the Japanese are unsure as to how you guys will cope with the concept. Japanese kids though have all lost their minds over the game.

And finally a reminder that the epic weapons fighting game, Soul Edge, is confirmed as being released at the end of December in Japan and so far there are no delays. Soul Edge is expected to be just as popular, if not more so, than Namco's other beat-'em-up, *Tekken 2*, and Soul Edge (which is called *Soul Blade* in the US – no news on the UK version) is more of the same, but with weapons. Can't wait!

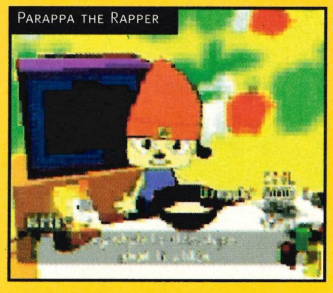
Bushido Blade



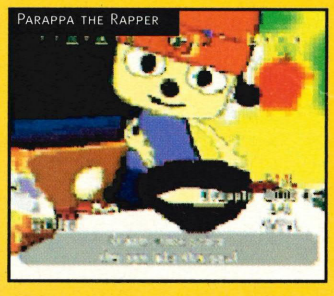
Parappa the Rapper



Parappa the Rapper



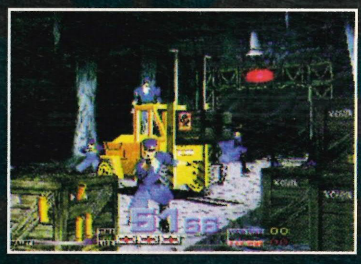
Parappa the Rapper



Soul Edge

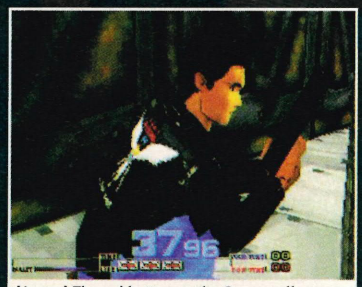
TIME CRISIS FIRST SHOTS

As Play was just going to press we received first news and shots of the PlayStation version of *Time Crisis* from Namco. Due out in March or April of next year *Time Crisis* is widely tipped to be as popular as *Tekken 2* and the PSX version is now confirmed as having the story mode of the arcade machine, a time attack mode, and a plethora of never-before-seen special stages. Packed with the game is Namco's Guncon, a black light gun with a red button on the side which is used to duck/hide and is a substitute for the pedal in the arcades. The Guncon does NOT have a recoil facility as was first thought, but it is amazingly accurate, and Namco claims it is up to ten times more precise than Konami's gun. We will have a full report on this game in the new year.



[Above] **Namco's Guncon will not be black when it comes over here, for obvious reasons.**

[Above] ***Time Crisis*** **looks to be one of the hottest new games for '97.**

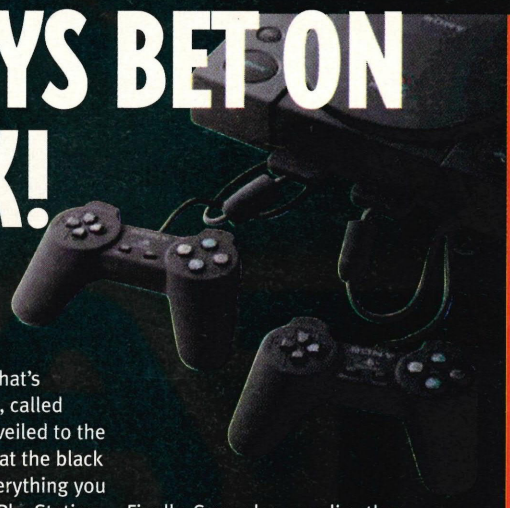


[Above] **The red button on the Guncon allows you to duck and hide behind objects.**

PSYGNOSIS & SONY TOGETHER AGAIN!

All bets are off! Sony is no longer planning to sell off Psygnosis after over six months of the hugely successful software developer being 'on the market.' With the unprecidented sales of both *Formula 1* and *Wipeout 2097*, to say nothing of the back catalogue including *Destruction Derby* and the original *Wipeout*, Sony has decided to keep the Liverpool based firm, albeit with a new structure. Psygnosis has reportedly been given more freedom to manage its own affairs with very little interferance from Sony's Japanese headquarters. Sony, according to insiders, realised the true value of Psygnosis' tremendous games know-how and saw that in the long run they would lose out. Psygnosis is the most successful PlayStation games developer, with *Formula 1* already selling over 600,000 copies in Europe, and at least the same projected for Japan.

ALWAYS BET ON BLACK!



PLAYSTATIONS now come in three colours – grey (standard), blue (development), and Black (home programming). Yes that's right, the Black PlayStation, called Yaroze, has at last been unveiled to the UK press, and Sony says that the black machine which includes everything you need to program your own PlayStation games will become available to members of the Yaroze scheme in February 1997 for just £599! The UK is the first territory outside of Japan to have Yaroze because Sony recognise the popularity of demos and the wealth of potential programming talent. Yaroze will be initially aimed at universities, but it is open to anyone who can afford the system and has the desire to learn the process.

The Yaroze kit allows you to write programs using a PC and then download to a PlayStation. You will need a PC minimum spec of a 486DX2-66MHz with one or more serial ports, a 28.8 modem (ideally), CD-ROM drive, mouse, 10Mb of free hard disk space, a SVGA monitor and at least 4Mb of RAM. Yaroze will work with DOS version 5 or later and Windows 3.1 or 95.

For your six hundred smackers you will get the following: A black Yaroze PlayStation, two controllers, one access card, memory card, serial cable and an AV lead. Plus the actual development kit stored on two CDs consists of: standard C programming libraries, maths, high level 3-D rendering, controller interface and sound libraries, graphical file utilities and 3-D object creation/conversion utils. Also, you get an R3000 C compiler, a linker and a debugger.

Finally, Sony also supplies three manuals with a start-up guide, user guide and a reference library.

On-line support comes from Sony's own member's web site (hence the need for a modem) and you can also download new bits of software on demand. If you are interested in joining the Yaroze scheme then send your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address (if you have one) to the following address: *Yaroze application, Sony Computer Entertainment Europe, Waverley House, 7-12 Noel Street, London W1 4HH*. You will then be sent an application form next year and if interested, send the completed form back with your payment.

We at PLAY applaud the Yaroze idea as it paves the way for the re-emergence of the 'bedroom programmer' and a host of original and personal games which aren't motivated by making a fast buck or riding on the back of a hit movie. Hopefully as more and more people adopt Yaroze, Sony will be inundated with a fresh injection of game writing talent. Now all we need is for Yaroze members to realise that all the best games were made on the Spectrum and Commodore 64 between 1983 and 1988 and we'll all live in a perfect world. Please remember to check out PLAY's regular 'Most Wanted' sections for game ideas.

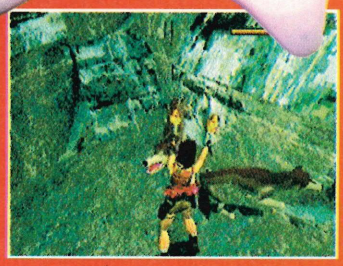
STOCKING FILLERS

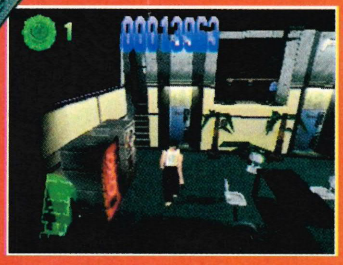
WHAT TO GET THE PLAYSTATION OBSESSIVE THIS XMAS

SANTA'S on his way, you can almost hear his sleigh bells jingling. Inevitably you'll get the same old socks, aftershave and Paddington Bear sweater as last year... unless. Yes, why not check out the PLAY stocking filler guide and ask for something you really want, preferably PlayStation related.

First up, games. If you haven't already, make sure you get a copy of the following: *Tomb Raider, Formula 1, Wipeout 2097, Tekken 2, Bust-A-Move 2* and *Die Hard Trilogy*. You might also consider: *Soviet Strike, Street Fighter Alpha 2, Fade to Black* and *Destruction Derby 2*. For the strategists though, it's got to be *Warhammer* or *Command & Conquer*.

On the hardware front, well have you considered Logic 3's splendid Predator light gun (£29.99), a multi-tap (£19.99) a link-up cable (anywhere from £10-25), or perhaps a superb NeGcon racing joypad (£39.99). Or if you have relatives with the initials HRH or you live in Brunei, why not ask for a 33" Toshiba TV!





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BETTER THAN ONE

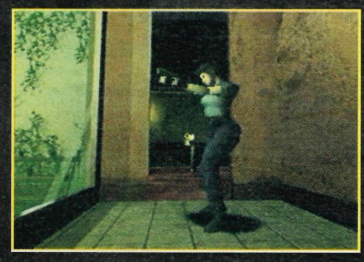
NEW from Technoplus is a quirky controller which should be perfect for games such as *Robotron X* and, er, well that's it at the moment. The Freedom Pro is a two handed gamepad which splits the standard PlayStation pad and its functions in half and allows you to perform two things at once, theoretically. The Freedom Pro is certainly a wacky idea and we'll have a full report on it next issue. If you want to take the plunge and get one now though, it retails for £19.99.

SEQUEL CITY

GAMES WE FEEL DESERVE A FOLLOW UP IN 1997

IT'S INEVITABLE that when a game is successful there will be a sequel, and perhaps even another and another. Only the most hardy bloodlines survive though, with perhaps only the Mario and Megaman series proving that you can improve on perfection. What next for the current crop of ultra-cool PlayStation games then? *Resident Evil 2* you should already know about because PLAY printed the first screenshots of the game in issue 12, along with an exhaustive plot summary and list of features. Mark our words, this game is going top be a monster, and with the original selling over a million copies worldwide, only a fool would bet against *RE2* shifting at least twice as many. It's money for old rope. The real trick of course is coming up with a game that deserves a sequel. *Crash Bandicoot* will inevitably return. Despite a general loathing for the shiny happy marsupial by more hardended gamers, a marketing budget that could fund a third world country will ensure that Crash is grinning inanely in the majority of PlayStation owning homes this Christmas. A sequel is on the cards and Naughty Dog are already working on ideas. So what else? Well *Tomb Raider* is an odds on favourite and regular readers will already know that the sequel to *Soviet strike* will be *Asia Strike*. Also on the cards are *X-Com 3: Apocalypse, The Need for Speed 2, Namco Museum Volume 4 & 5, Fade to Black 2, Wing Commander IV, Discworld 2, Tekken 3* and *Street Fighter Alpha 3*.

[ABOVE] ***Formula 1*** **has sold over 600,000 copies already – a follow-up must be on the cards.**



[ABOVE] ***Street Fighter Alpha 2*** **will be a success this Xmas and there is already a sequel planned.**

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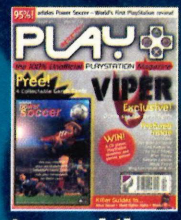
ISSUE [5]
Tekken 2 issue! World first look and massive feature.



ISSUE [6]
Viper and *Tunnel B1* exposed, *addidas Soccer* FREE postcards.

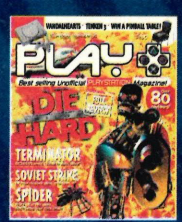
ISSUE [7]
Dark bloody *Forces* exclusive news, *Mayhem*, weird Jap games.

ISSUE [8]
Resident Evil issue. Huge review + *Duke Nukem 3D* news!

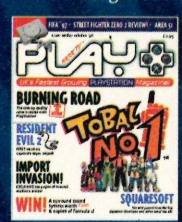
ISSUE [9]
Massive *Soul Edge* feature, *Wipeout 2*, *DD2*, *Project Overkill*.

Back ISSUES

ISSUE [10]
Tomb Raider exclusive look, *Crash Bandicoot* FREE sweet!

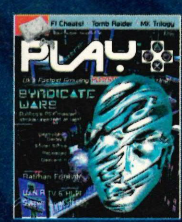


ISSUE [11]
Die Hard, Terminator, Formula 1, Soviet Strike – fantastic!



ISSUE [12]
Exclusive review of *SFZ2*, huge Jap feature, plus *Burning Road*!

ISSUE [13]
Massive review of *Project Overkill*, first look at *Nightmare Creatures!*



ISSUE [14]
Superb *Syndicate Wars* exposé and a huge review of *Tomb Raider* and *DD2*!

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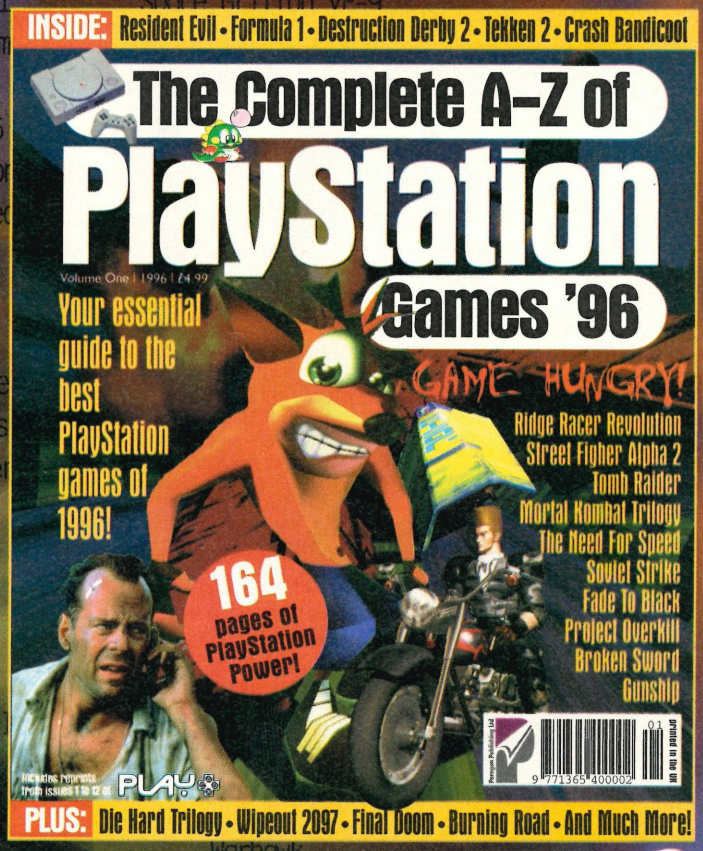

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THE GAM

AT THE END OF THE DAY WE ALL WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE LATEST PLAYSTATION SOFTWARE, AND THERE'S NO BETTER PLACE THAN RIGHT HERE IN PLAY!

THE BIG GAME

20 We've been waiting absolutely ages for a decent game from Crystal Dynamics on PlayStation and at last, this month, we get our wish. *Pandemonium* is a terrific 3-D platform game which in our opinion blows Sony's *Crash Bandicoot* out of the water! There are loads of levels, each crammed with innovative ideas and stunning rendered creatures. First time you play it, you will be amazed... Check it out now.

GUIDE TO THE GRADES

We scrutinise all the games thoroughly, playing each for hours, even days, on end. Then we all get together to discuss the review scores to make sure we get it right. The individual reviewer also nominates their own personal category for each game. Game elements are scored out of ten, and the game is given an overall rating out of 100%. Here's how the scores break down...

PLAY CLASSIC

90-100 If a game scores this highly it's an essential purchase and receives the PLAY Classic logo as a stamp of approval.

85-89 We recommend these games as they are fun, lasting and value for money.

75-84 A decent, solid and dependable game which offers good value for money and won't disappoint fans of the genre. There are some gameplay flaws, but nothing serious.

50-75 These are average games that may be entertaining but are fundamentally flawed or don't have any lasting appeal.

30-50 Games that should be avoided by everyone except die-hard fans of the genre and masochists.

0-30 Complete tripe. Avoid at all costs!

PLAY ICONS

These symbols are designed to give you vital information about the maximum number of players and whether or not you can use a specific device with the game. PSX steering wheel or the Negcon joypad come under steering/analogue.

One player
eg Project Overkill

Multiple Players
eg Tekken 2

Steering/Analogue
eg Negcon

Multi-Tap compatible

Mouse compatible
eg Sim City 2000

Uses a Memory Card
(for save games)

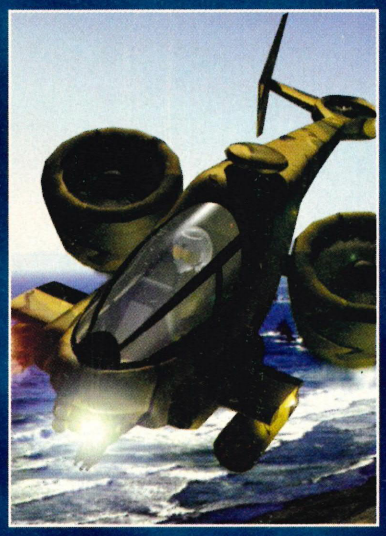
Split Screen
eg Bust-A-Move 2

Link Cable compatible
eg Formula 1

Light gun compatible
eg Die Hard Trilogy

ES

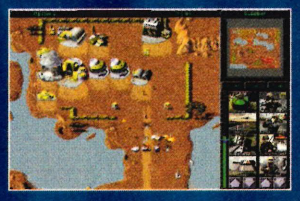
REVIEWS ▸ WORKSTATIONS ▸ WIRED UPS



WORKSTATIONS

You want in-depth features on the latest software? You got it!

COMMAND & CONQUER 26
DESCENT II 30



CHALLENGE BOX

This clever little box is designed to show you instantly how long a game will last (in our opinion) based on the review. The one player game (in red) will more often than not be lower than multiple players because it's more fun playing a friend than the computer. Although it is entirely subjective, we hope it gives you a rough guide to a game's lifespan.

PLAY REVIEWS

Nobody does it better. PLAY reviews are the only place you should turn if you want authoritive advice. Never buy a PlayStation game without seeing what we gave it first.

PANDEMONIUM (PLAY CLASSIC) 20
FIFA '97 34
TERROR FROM THE DEEP 38
HARDCORE 4X4 40
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PITBALL 70
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WIRED UP

A short look at a game which is either too big to be ignored, or a final assessment before it's reviewed.

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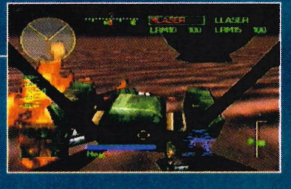
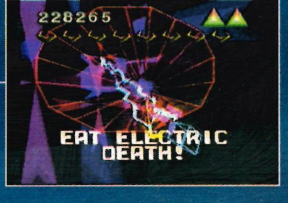




THE BIG GAME

PLAY CLASSIC

PANDEMO

IN THE BATTLE OF THE 3-D PLATFORM GAMES, DO WE AT LAST HAVE A CLEAR WINNER?

Written By Asam Ahmad

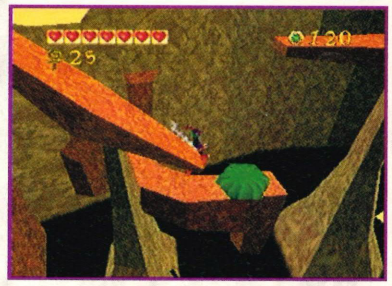
Platformers

on the PlayStation to date haven't been anything special. So far developers have tried various twists to the genre and although they've managed to produce decently playable efforts, they haven't been outstanding. Sony's *Crash Bandicoot*, although technically brilliant, lost marks for being a little too frustrating (especially saving your progress), a bit too linear, and frankly, not that good. The *Jumping Flash* series took classic platform elements and transformed them into a true first-person 3-D perspective with plenty of freedom, but didn't quite make classic status for its lack of variety in gameplay. Now there's a new player vying for that elusive position atop the platform podium, and by all accounts, it looks like it's gonna just pip the opposition to the post this Xmas.

Pandemonium has been developed by Crystal Dynamics. One of the foremost developers on the 3DO system, Crystal Dynamics hasn't really made an impression on the PlayStation as yet, with previous mediocre efforts such as *Gex* and *Total Eclipse*, both published by BMGie. The wind is changing, and the tide is turning.

A BIT O' RUMPUS

Pandemonium is perhaps one of the most unassuming 3-D platformers available for the PlayStation. I don't mean unassuming as in "boring," but sedate as in "not-trying-too-hard-to-be-different." The gameplay is strictly classic 2-D, but presented in a 3-D world. This means that the control of your character is limited to left and right movements, along with the obligatory jump and fire, but the action is translated effectively into a swirling, rotating, twisting 3-D landscape. Rather than being restrictive though, this lack of control is actually curiously emancipating in that through the ease of the control system you can get into the game so easily, and all that remains as a challenge is the game itself – something other games of this ilk haven't quite



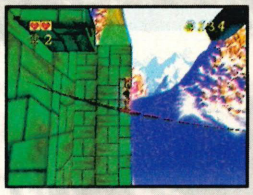
PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: BMGie
Customer support: 0171 973 0011
Price: £44.99
Release date: December '96

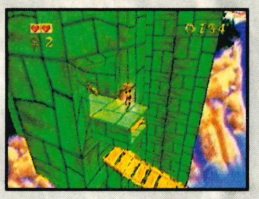
ONE PLAYER

PLATFORM PERILS

This is one of the simpler puzzles in the game, but despite being easy to activate, it still requires deft character control to ensure you make it across the huge gap by jumping on the birds to the bonus crystal store ahead.



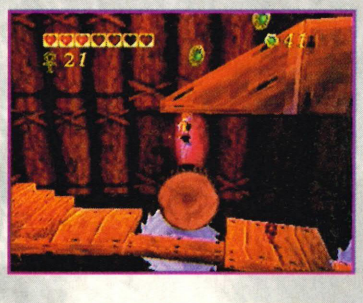
1: Now, how do I get up to that platform on the right? Hmmm. I'll try jumping up to the left...



2: Ten attempts later and I'm up. I couldn't have done it with Fargus – he can't jump high enough. A-ha! A key. This'll surely help me across.

3: Now what?! The bridge only goes so far... That bird across the way is just the first of a succession of 'live-platforms' to jump across.

[Above] The way the game rotates the 3-D world around you is absolutely superb. Here you can see a long way into the distance, and to what's ahead.



NIUM

successfully managed to achieve. This no-nonsense approach makes *Pandemonium* easy to pick and wonderful to play.

The story of the game revolves around a couple of crazy kids who have gone just a little too far playing with magic. Featuring a jester, Fargus, and his wooden stick-puppet, Sid, they're naughty and always getting into mischief. This time they've encouraged Nikki, a wizard protégé, to conjure up some magic spells but things have gone a little wrong and a huge village-eating monster has been unleashed. Of course in order to reverse the spell, the duo (and the puppet) are going to have to find a few items to help them send the monster packing.

It ain't bedlam

Playing *Pandemonium* is a dream. You enter the game as either Fargus or Nikki, with each having slightly different abilities. Nikki can run faster and jump higher, but Fargus has a special cartwheel-like spinning trick up his sleeve. Both can collect weapons, ranging from a standard blaster, to a miniaturiser that'll shrink your enemies, and even a freezing weapon to give them the cold smoulder. But there's more. As you progress through the game, some of the levels become literally impossible to navigate. Fear not, as magic is to the rescue! Yup, as you get further and further and require different abilities, when you pass certain checkpoints your character transmutates into another creature such as a turtle, a rhino, or even a frog, each with its own unique abilities necessary for that particular section. Ribbit. This is neat, as it breaks up the

"*Pandemonium* is easy to pick up and wonderful to play..."

WHO AM I?

There are two main characters to choose from, Fargus and Nikki. As you progress through the game, at certain points you character changes form into a rhino, a frog or a turtle.

[Fargus]

Fargus can jump and run, as well as fire weapons when collected. He also has a cartwheel-like spin attack to dispose of enemies, which is very handy for when you don't have a weapon.

[Nikki]

Nikki can run slightly faster than Fargus and can jump a lot higher, with a special double-jump. Unfortunately she doesn't have a spin attack, but this is made up for by her superior agility.

[Rhino]

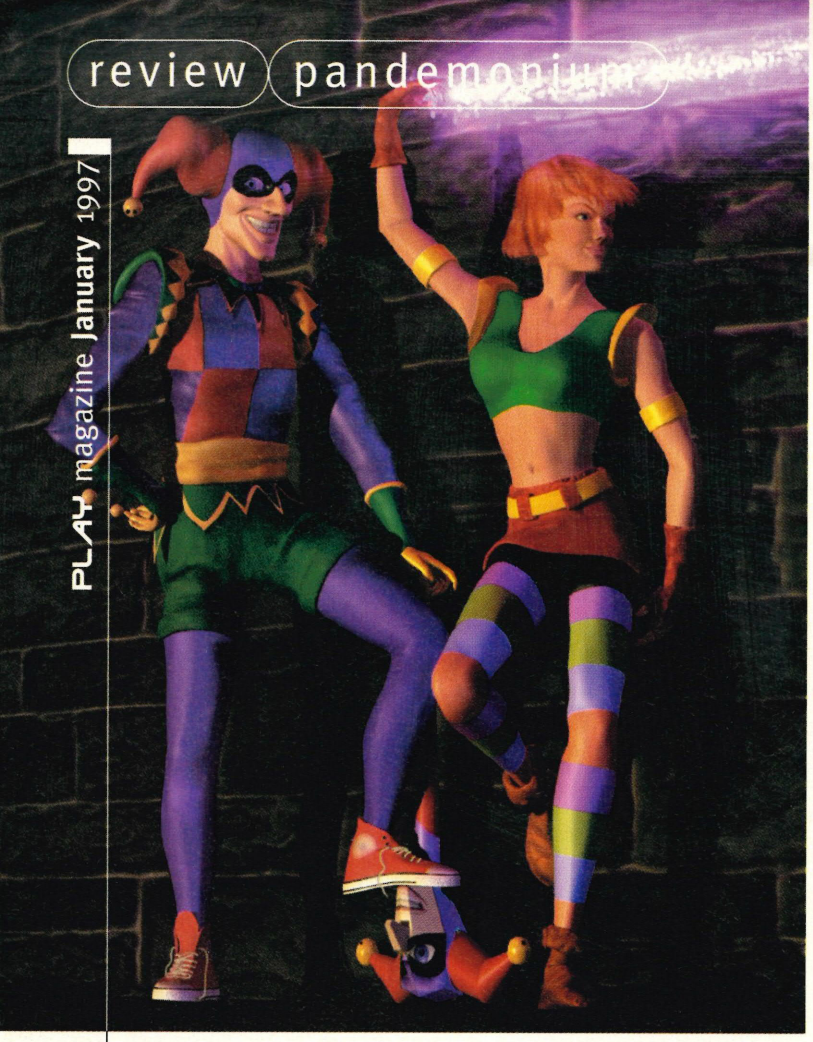
The rhino has a high inertia value meaning he starts slow, but can get up to a decent speed. To kill enemies, you can jump on 'em as with Fargus and Nikki, or, if you're going fast enough, prod them with your horn.

[Frog]

Froggy is very handy for incredibly high jumping power, but can only attack enemies in this manner. Unfortunately, like all the animal characters, you can't use any of the weapons when in this mode.

[Turtle]

The turtle is slow and can't even jump very high, but is protected from above through his shell. Luckily you only use him later on in the game, but his lack of agility proves quite a challenge.



standard platform gameplay and ensures the game doesn't get too monotonous.

Given that *Pandemonium* is played strictly in a 2-D manner, you could be forgiven for thinking that it is going to be linear. It isn't. As you progress through the 3-D worlds, you can see the level ahead through the clever automatic camera positioning. Of course the most obvious route is always shown directly in front of you, and, as your character stays predominantly in the centre of the screen, there is scope to look around. Often at the extremities of the screen, you'll notice crystals that are just beyond your reach. They must be collected somehow, and after a little trial and error, you'll find out how.

[Above] That crystal below is a little invitation to investigate further. It turns out to be a route to a small bonus area.

The mechanics of this work very well. If you see an area of the level you can't seem to get to at first, often you'll be able to find a way without taxing the old grey matter too much. It might need a key to collect, or to stand in a certain position, or kill an enemy. But this doesn't mean that it's easy to access all the secret areas, it just means that the secret areas are findable, but you've still got to try and get to 'em... This clever construction ensures that through the 19 levels you'll be able to complete the game with a bit of work, but at least you won't find yourself dumbfounded at what to do next.

"Certainly much more enjoyable to play than *Crash Bandicoot*..."

Sounds, pretty, good

Technically, *Pandemonium* has been very well produced. Okay, so it doesn't allow you total freedom of movement, but for a game like this it's probably a good thing – it's a classic 2-D platformer in a 3-D world, nothing else. Importantly, you can't fall off sideways like in *Crash*. The graphics are sumptuous, the camera positioning is very clever, and the variety from level to level is extremely vivid, breath-taking even. Within a level, colour palettes and graphic styles change as you progress, particularly when you pass the

[Above] Spider ain't gonna catch me in this web now that I've frozen him. Time to smash the annoying arachnid.

TIME FOR BRUCEY

Depending on how well you do after each level, you are awarded a bonus level. We've found two different bonus levels in the game, both seemingly based around a curious pinball table. Of course there are plenty of bonus areas within each level too, some always accessible if you can find 'em, and some only accessible once the relevant key has been found.

[Inter-level Bonus]

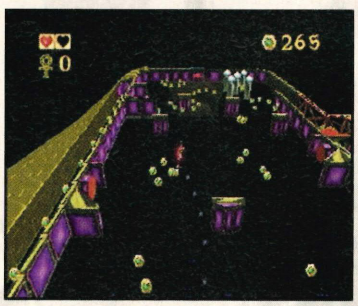
This bonus stage is found hidden in level three. You automatically get awarded a standard blaster when you enter the room, and have to aim at the target to release awards from the spout above. They come out at different speeds on different projections so it's actually quite tricky to amass too much. Collect as many as you can before the store runs out.

[Bonus 1]

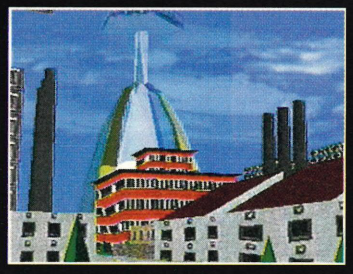
If you get 90% or more of the crystals in a level, you're transported to this bonus section. You're on a track (suspended in space?), with a huge swirling mass chasing you. As you progress through on the track, spinning wheels propel you rapidly forward. The tricky bit is avoiding all the obstacles in the way, for if you should stop and the swirling mass catch you... well it's curtains and no more bonus level. You do get three lives though...

[Bonus 2]

If you obtain 95% or more, you get this gurt great vertical pinball table to get smashed around on. This bonus level is actually easier to amass a high bonus score, but is obviously harder to get to. There are plenty of springloaded platforms to throw you around the place, an two huge flippers at the bottom to shoot you skyward. Again, you get three lives to get as much as you can.



"PlayStation?"



Play god.

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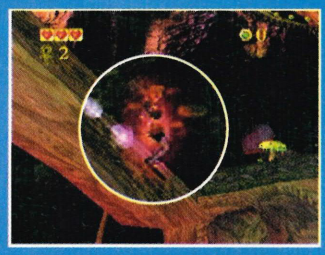
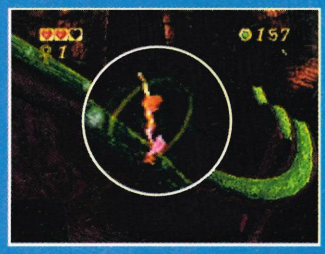
DIE, WILL YOU!

There are three different types of weapon you can collect to help you along the way. Of course you can always jump on an enemy to kill 'em, but these weapons come in very, very handy. However, the first hit from an enemy, projectile or trap and you lose it. Bummer!

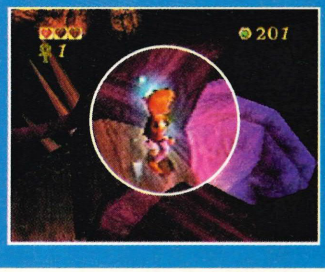
[Blaster]
The standard blaster, indicated by a red glow around your character is handy to dispose of enemies from a distance. They take as many shots to kill them as it would jumps.

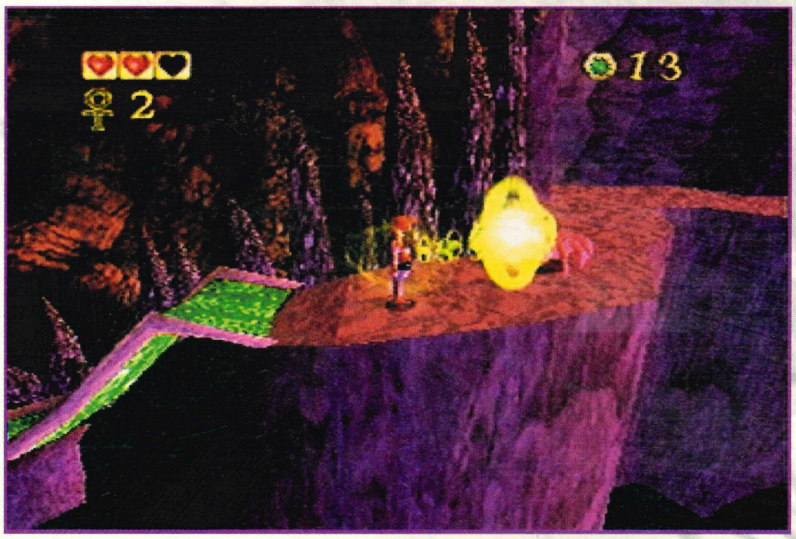


[Shrinker]
The shrinking weapon is very handy. One blast and it miniaturises your enemies making them small enough to tread on. This weapon is especially handy when surrounded.



[Freezer]
The freezing weapon er, freezes your enemies for a short time, rendering them pretty defenceless and useless. Simply jumping on them will smash their frozen asses to smithereens.





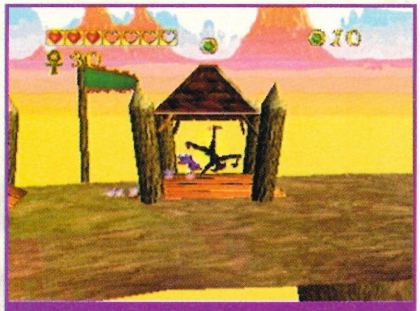
"The variety from level to level is extremely vivid, breath-taking even..."

[Above] There are plenty of tunnels, slides and ramps to travel along, and the graphics flow tremendously fast at all times.

mid-level points and end up in new sections. And as the levels change, so do the enemies, of which there are a wide variety.

Sonically, the game isn't outstanding, but the sound effects are amusingly comical and suffice. The tunes that play in the background are typically 'twangy,' with lots of harpsicord going on, and they are suitably atmospheric, but again, nothing special. It would have been nice to get the sound produced in Dolby Surround, as most key titles seem to be these days, but hey, it's not a big point. Something else to note though is that there is no memory card support – it uses eight-letter passwords. This isn't a problem, but it can get tedious having to write them down all the time.

Overall though, there isn't any one thing that sets this game apart from the opposition, except for the fact that it has very few failings, unlike its contemporaries which have niggly faults in various departments. The level construction is very good, with a gentle learning curve, and *Pandemonium* is immensely playable as result. Perhaps my only criticism in this respect would be that the game does feel a little short, especially for the more adept player. With only 19 levels and only three (albeit very impressive) bosses, with the first six or so being relatively straightforward, it does feel as if it could have done with a bit more. Saying that, the levels do get a lot longer as you progress through the game, but if you don't get 100% on them and just take the straight route, you'll miss out on quite a bit of the game. In this case it's wise to go back to some of the levels to look for what you missed the first time around. Otherwise, a top-notch effort, and certainly much more enjoyable to play than *Crash Bandicoot*. *Pandemonium* is a beautiful platform romp through a wonderful fairytale land. Well done Crystal Dynamics and BMGie.



[Above] Fargus isn't particularly fast or agile, but makes up for this by having a permanent cartwheel spin attack to get rid of enemies.

PLAY

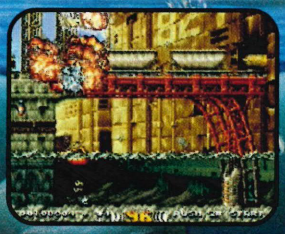
Looks	9
Sounds	8
Gameplay	9
Value	9
Accesibility	9

PLAYED 90%

It'll be Pandemonium this Xmas

Alternatively:
Crash Bandicoot (84%)
Jumping Flash 2 (87%)

BLOW 'EM TO SQUID SPIT



"The only way to describe In the Hunt is to combine all the best shooters you have ever played in one game." EGM - February 96

IN THE HUNT™

PlayStation

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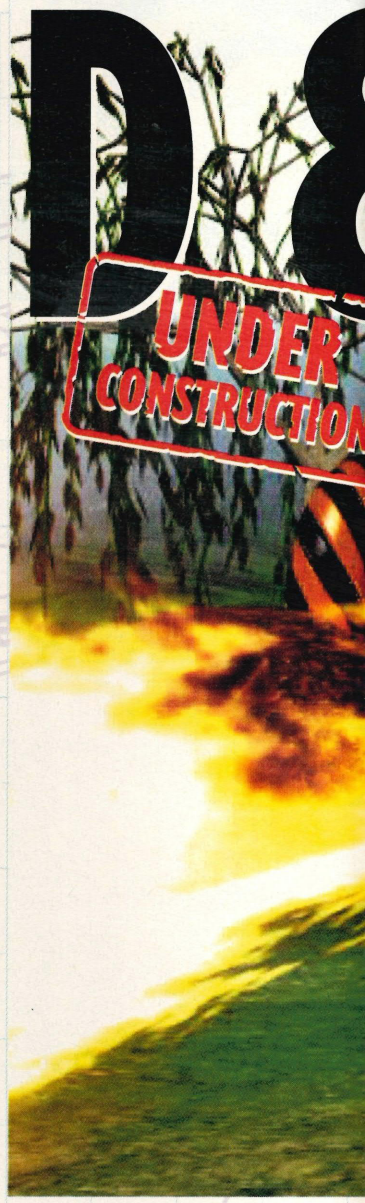
COMMAND&



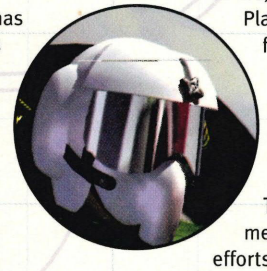
IT'S WAR! WESTWOOD STUDIOS AND VIRGIN INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT HAVE AT LAST CONVERTED *COMMAND & CONQUER*, ONE OF THE BEST SELLING GAMES OF ALL TIME, TO THE PLAYSTATION. SHOULD YOU BE EXCITED? TOO BLOODY RIGHT!

Written By Damian Butt

Alert! Alert!

"Your base is under attack." So says the laconic woman in mission control as hundreds of NOD infantry units blow a hole in your perimeter fence and pour into your undefended base while your main invasion force is two miles away and out of radio contact. Engineers capture your vital installations, SAM missile launchers bombard your gun turrets and barracks, and just to add insult to injury, five Apache gunship helicopters suddenly appear in support and cut off your escape route. "Battle control terminated." Damn!

It's two in the morning and NOD has won again. But wait a minute what's this? There are three cups of cold coffee by the PlayStation, your dinner's in the dog, and Sellotaped to the lid of your console is a letter in female handwriting which simply says "Lock the door on your way out." *Command & Conquer* has claimed another victim.



No change there then because since its launch on PC in 1995, Westwood Studios' epic tour de force must have been responsible for more relationship break-ups than Princess Di! Such is the addictive nature of this superb war/strategy game that once you've loaded it up, you cannot stop playing until your plucky little guys have won the day, and even then you're still hooked by that "just one more go" factor. What's all this leading up to? Well, the bad news, at least for partners of PlayStation owners across the globe, is that *Command & Conquer* is coming to the PlayStation... soon. In fact before Christmas says publisher Virgin. Looks like the divorce statistics are going up again!

Westwood STUDIOS

Blueprint

Publisher: Virgin Interactive Entertainment
Developer: Westwood Studios
% Complete: 90%
Expected Release Date: Dec '96
Origin: USA
No of Players: 1-2

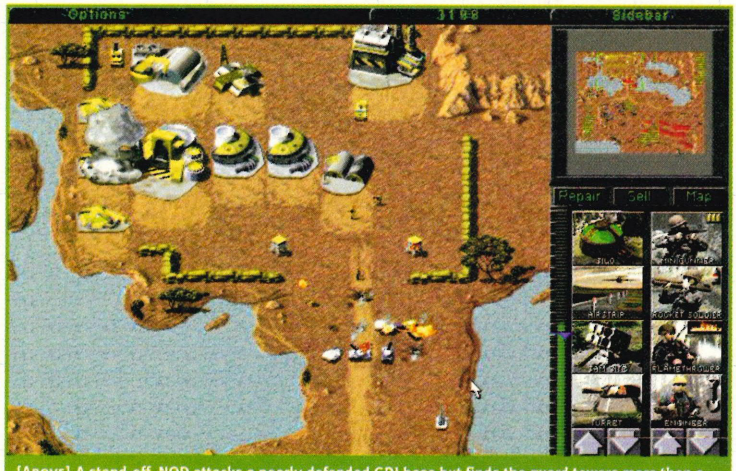
NEVER...

Command & Conquer was developed by US coder, Westwood Studios, the visionaries behind such PC and console classics as *Dune II*, the *Kyrandia* series, *Lands of Lore* (also coming to the PlayStation) and of course who could forget, *Monopoly*. Essentially *C&C* is an overhead strategy/war game where you take control of vast numbers of forces and must command them in the heat of battle.

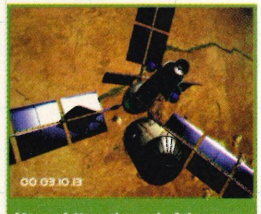
The biggest shock is the control method. Despite Westwood's best efforts, *C&C* on PlayStation will NOT be compatible with the PSX Mouse – a fact that defies belief given the game's PC origins. Apparently this is because the interface between the console and the mouse cannot handle quick movements during on-screen action, a problem highlighted by Sony's very own *Broken Sword*. Luckily though, the game is just as easy to control using the standard joypad because you can assign the buttons to various commands and the scroll rate is high. You make your army units active by either clicking on them individually or dragging the cursor over an area; highlighting everything in its path; men and vehicles alike. This is important because whereas stealth missions may require a small squad or single scout vehicle to investigate, if you're being attacked, you want to get as many of your forces to defend as quickly as possible.

...IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN COMBAT...

C&C on PlayStation, as has been reported in PLAY before, is displayed in the console's high resolution mode and this means that you can fit as much if not more on the screen than the PC version. The sidebar which includes all your available units, energy level and tactical map has also reputedly been spruced up (the version we had didn't have any changes), with enhanced graphics for each icon. The bottom line is that on



[ABOVE] A stand-off. NOD attacks a poorly defended GDI base but finds the guard towers more than a match. Note the silo going up in a mushroom cloud to the left. That's a nuclear warhead for you.



[ABOVE] Near the end of the game the GDI forces develop an orbital ion cannon which can be used to take out NOD bases from space. It takes a while to charge though.

CONQUER

1997

MINERAL WAR

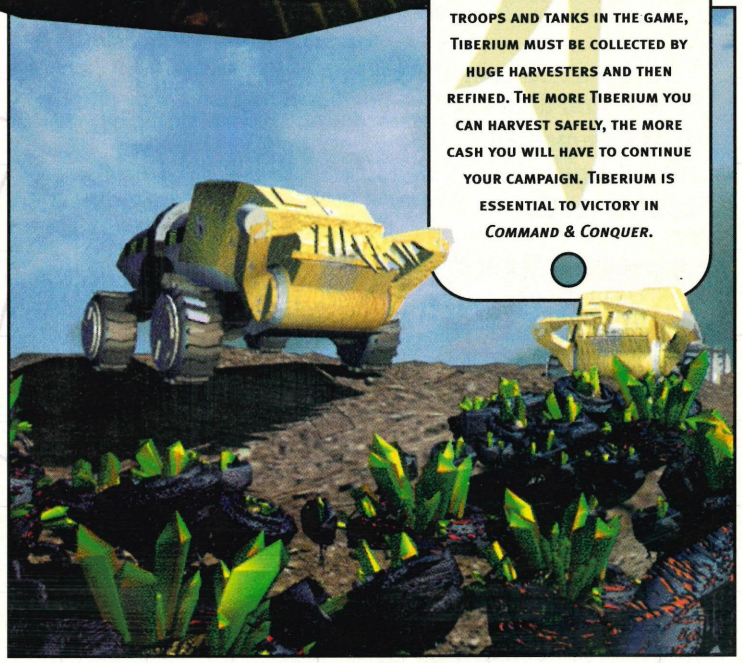
Command & Conquer is driven by an extraterrestrial mineral called Tiberium which first fell from space next to the Tiber river in Germany, hence the name. Tiberium feeds off the Earth's natural resources; pumping spores into the air and infecting all nearby land. Tiberium is toxic to humans and so you must always guide your troops around infested areas. In order to build bases and have enough cash to generate troops and tanks in the game, Tiberium must be collected by huge harvesters and then refined. The more Tiberium you can harvest safely, the more cash you will have to continue your campaign. Tiberium is essential to victory in *Command & Conquer*.

"[C&C] must have been responsible for more relationship break-ups than Princess Di!"

PlayStation, you are likely to see even more of the battleground and therefore have a lot more work to do.

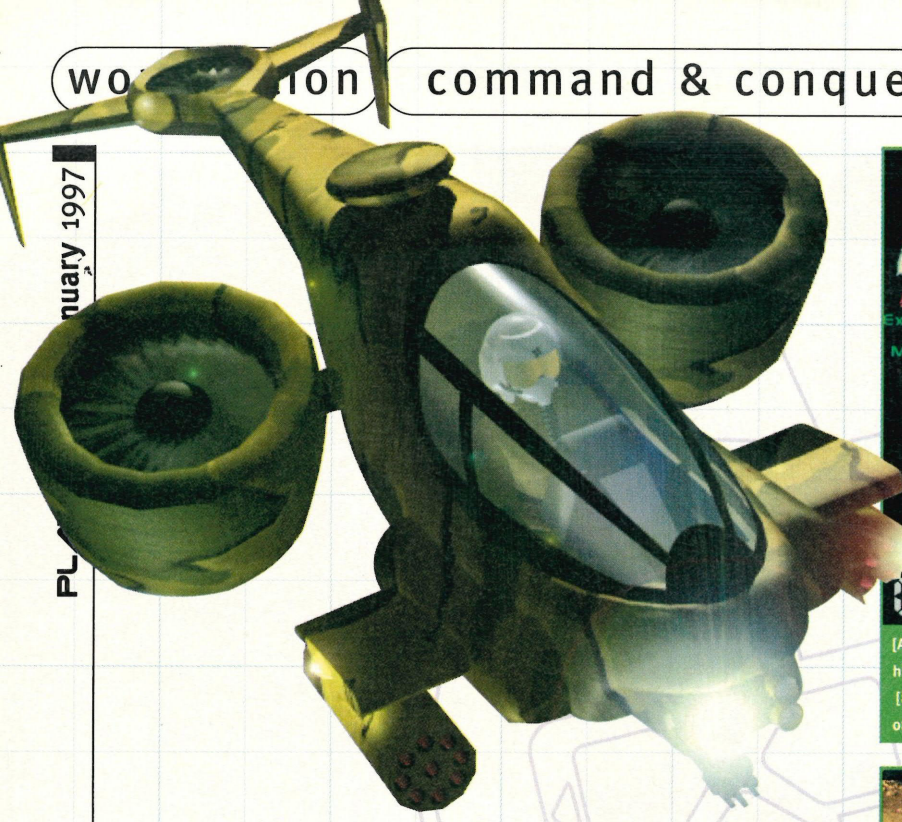
To heighten the tension and test your abilities as a commander further, *C&C* is played in real time as opposed to the turn based antics of games like *Warhammer:SOTHR*, and so you have very little time to react if surprised. This works both ways of course, meaning you need to master the art of ordering men around quickly in order to maximise the impact of an attack. If you forget a squad during an attack, the chances are they will be wiped out off-screen (to the accompaniment of screams and the omnipresent announcer saying "Unit lost.") without your help.

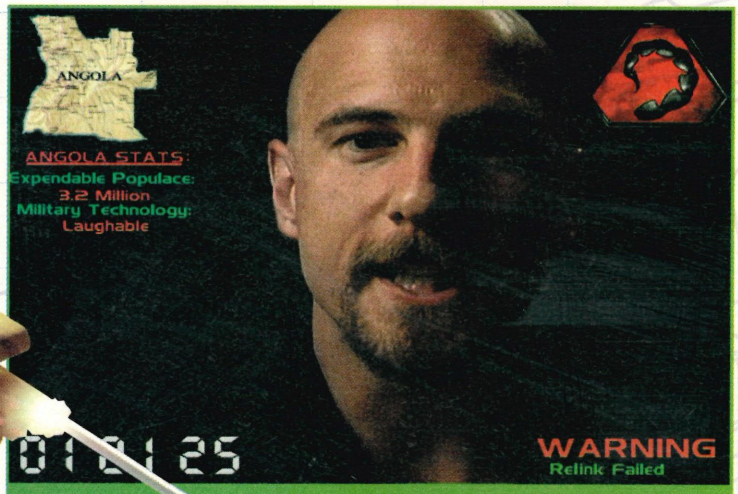
At the start of the game you decide which side to fight on. The Brotherhood of NOD are the bad guys (but you get to do lots of lootin' and shootin'), and the Global Defence Initiative is Earth's clean cut marines sent to stop NOD by the United Nations. Playing against NOD is the most difficult of the two sides because 'the dark side' has almost unlimited resources and better weapons, and because the GDI is backed by government, funds do



SOFTOGRAPHY

Virgin Interactive:
Lands of Lore (PC)
Monopoly (PC)
Dune II (PC, Mega Drive)





[Above] This is Kane, t[illegible]eader of the Brotherhood of NOD. When fighting on their side, he, or one of his generals will instruct you on mission objectives. Here, we discuss the invasion of Angola.
[Below] The PlayStation's high resolution mode makes the game graphics seem even smaller than on PC, but you can also see more of the game map.

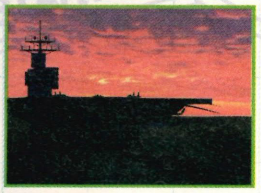
occasionally run dry if you become unpopular. To cope with all the game data, the missions, 60 minutes of FMV and 25 original musical scores, *C&C* comes on two CDs, one for each side. It will still retail for £50 though. Hooray!

...Has so much been owed by...

PlayStation Rommels get not only the original's 30 missions (15 for each side), but also the mission disk *Covert Operations* (a plotless series of ultra-tough combat zones – not as good as the original) and over ten completely new never-before-seen missions created specifically for the PlayStation – over 50 in all! By my reckoning that's well over a hundred hours of warfare.

Each new level signals a gorgeous piece of streamed FMV which shows how the war is going and more often than not, a huge explosion and lots of dead bodies flying about the place. *Command & Conquer* makes use of these cut scenes like no other game, and they manage to take your mind off the tiny graphics of the main battle screen.

Where *C&C* really scores is in the execution and how it plays. If you're not occupying an existing base, each mission begins with a massive armoured Mobile Construction Vehicle (MCV) which transforms before your very eyes into a construction yard. You have a certain amount of Tiberium (money, effectively) allocated which is used to build first, a power plant to support your fledgling base, then barracks, a weapons factory, and most importantly, a refinery which then farms Tiberium (see panel on mining this mineral elsewhere in this feature) and turns it into more cash to further the war effort. Without Tiberium you will not be able to expand your base or build vehicles, so protection of the harvester and refinery is paramount.



"There's no doubt that *Command & Conquer* is a landmark title..."

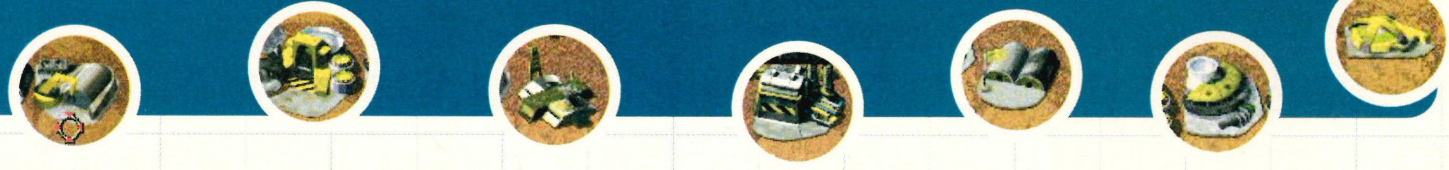
...So many to so few...

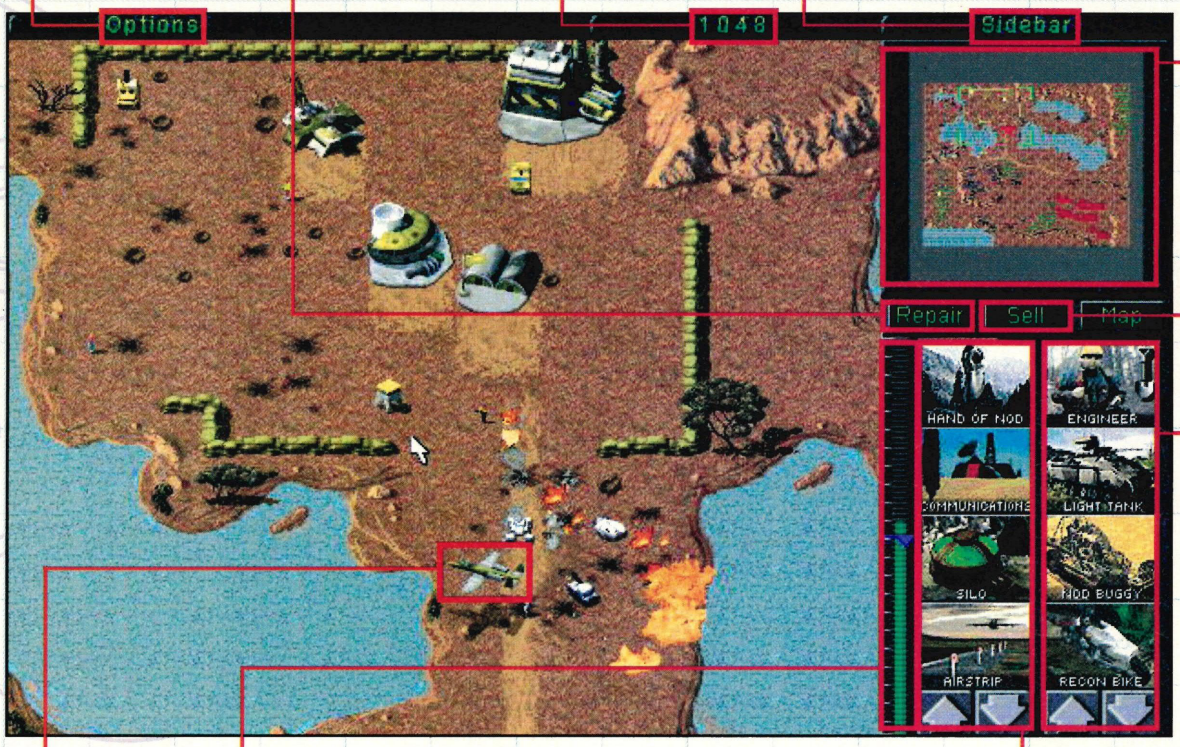
With cash flowing like wine you can enforce your base further with a comprehensive list of buildings and assault vehicles. Gun turrets will automatically see off marauders if your attention is diverted elsewhere, and you can also construct a communications centre which gives you a radar display of the whole game map and shows enemy

EMPIRE BUILDING

You're dropped deep behind NOD lines with nothing but a handful of men and a Mobile Construction Vehicle – how do you go about building the perfect base? Here's your five point plan.

1. Deploy the MCV and immediately construct a power plant, a Tiberium refinery (comes with a free harvester) and a barracks. Begin building sandbags around the perimeter.
2. Encircle a largish area of land with sandbags and then leave one opening, preferably facing the largest concentration of Tiberium. Build a couple of guard towers or gun emplacements at the entrance to protect it.
3. Start churning out troops (rocket launchers are good for firing over sandbags) to protect the base from all angles. As the Tiberium starts flooding in, either buy another harvester to increase output, or invest in a weapons factory to add much-needed tanks.
4. The enemy is bound to start bombarding you from the air, so get some SAM missile launchers in there to protect major installations. And while you're at it, build more silos to cope with all that Tiberium and a communication centre to keep on eye on the enemy.
5. Finally, start patrols around the area to illuminate black spots and build a repair centre to heal wounded vehicles when the real fight begins. You will always need power, so make sure it is topped up. Finally, get some helicopters or Orca attack craft in there and start long range bombing. You are now ready to attack.





Presents you with plenty of in-game choices and you can restart missions at any time.

Buildings which have been attacked by the enemy can be repaired using this icon. Vehicles need a special base to do this.

The amount of Tiberium you have collected and can be used as cash.

At any time you can get rid of the sidebar and leave more of the screen devoted to the battle.

This is the tactical map and it only comes into play when you've built a communications centre and you have surplus power to run it. It shows where yours and the enemy's forces are located but it cannot penetrate the darkness of uncharted areas. You have to do that yourself.

At any time you can instantly sell your buildings and get half the price for them. Handy if you need instant cash.

This is the men and vehicles menu and it shows what you can buy or manufacture. You must have a weapons factory to make tanks and bikes, and a barracks for troops. Once one is in production, you cannot access the others.

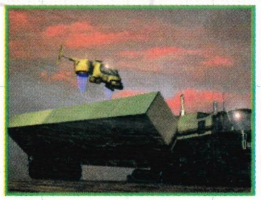
When all NOD SAM sites are wiped out (and you're playing as GDI) you can invoke an airstrike using A-10s.

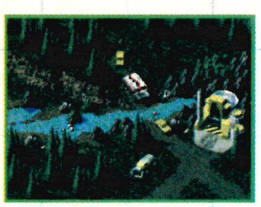
This is your power level. The green indicates your power output and the arrow shows the rate of consumption.

The structures menu appears when you deploy your Mobile Construction Vehicle and it becomes a fully functional yard. Choices include an airstrip (if you're NOD), communications centre, barracks, weapons factory, gun turrets and the all-important sandbags and concrete walls.

movements. Later in the game orbital ion cannons, Orca attack craft, helicopters and even a nuclear missile become available so that you can launch strikes on your enemy from the comfort of your own base. After all, why send a hundred men to do the job of one ten mega-ton device? The wealth of options in *Command & Conquer* means you'll be playing it for months and many different strategies can be tried and tested.

Troops are vital to your plans of lebensraum and they come in many flavours, such as the basic grunt (minigunner), grenade infantry, rocket launchers, flame-throwers, commandos, and the very sneaky engineers, who can be used to take over enemy buildings sometimes without them even knowing. A cunning tactic for example would be to fill an APC with engineers, blow a hole in the back of the enemy's base and then take over key installations before launching a frontal attack. All of a sudden your opponent will find he hasn't got any power, troop-making facilities, and his refinery is silently filling your coffers instead of his. Victory is thus assured.





Winston Churchill

There's no doubt that *Command & Conquer* is a landmark title on PlayStation as it was on PC. The control system has been tweaked to give maximum performance from the joypad, and the graphics have been considerably enhanced. It all goes to make one hell of a package that no PlayStation owner should be without. And the gameplay? Well you'll have to wait for our review next issue.

A NOD'S AS GOOD AS A WINK...

The two warring factions you can control in *Command & Conquer* are explained below. Each comes on its own CD. There are roughly 25 missions for both sides.

[The Brotherhood of Nod]

Founded: Date unknown. Could be as early as 1,800BC.
Ideology: Ultimate control of the world's resources.
Leader: Kane, also known as Caine, Jacob and Al-Quayym.
Base: At Kuantan, Malasia. Al-khali, Saudi Arabia. Tokyo. Caen, France.
Military strength: Previously believed to be only a small terrorist organisation. A UN scandal revealed that NOD are well equipped by the military sworn to defeat them.
Economic strength: Assets believed to be in excess of $255.2 billion.
Political strength: Sole backers of the Allah party in Jordan (52%), United We Stand America party in the USA (12%), Albion First! party in the UK (25%+) and many other unconfirmed parties.
Affiliations: Irish Republican party, Islamic Jihad, Khmer Rouge.

[Global Defence Initiative]

Founded: 12 October 1995 (in accordance with United Nations Global Defence Act (UNGDA). Previously known as Special Operations Group Echo and Black Ops 9.
Ideology: Enforce UNGDA and uphold ideals as outlined in the UN charter.
Leader: Brigadier General Abra Shepherd, chief of staff of UN military Command.
Base: United Nations Military Command Centre, location classified.
Military strength: Within parameters of UNGDA, Article V, section 3a, paragraph 12.
Economic strength: Funded by United Nations and various governments, public organisations and private enterprise.
Political strength: Not applicable. No political influence.
Affiliations: United Nations.

EXCLUSIVE!

DESCENT

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

ANOTHER GAME THAT'LL NO-DOUBT SPAWN AN 'INTERESTING' MARKETING CAMPAIGN IS HERE. THE SEQUEL TO *DESCENT* IS LOOMING, AND AFTER THE MIXED RECEPTION OF THE FIRST, HOW WILL THIS FARE?

Written By Asam Ahmad

Goin' down can be a hell of a lorra fun y'know, 'specially in the dark. Oooh matron!? No, not in that sense you depraved rascals (but that's pretty cool too!), down as in below, into, under. Just imagine – you can hardly see, your goal is buried deep down past many winding, weaving shafts. Crevices entrap. Chastising guardians attempt to impede your progress at every turn. It's gotta be *Descent* hasn't it. Yup, as revealed exclusively last month in PLAY, the sequel to Interplay's 3-D mining mission is almost ready, and after the rather substandard letterboxed effort that was the original *Descent* on the PlayStation, Interplay seems to be quietly confident that this sequel is gonna be the lordy nad-of-dog. Hmmmm...

For anyone who may not be familiar with the plot of the original, in *Descent* you were contracted as a mercenary by the PTMC corporation to cleanse their mining operations in the Sol system. Nope, it ain't as a chimney sweep, but more to do with destroying the corporation's mining robots which have gone berserk due to being infected by a specialised computer virus of alien origin. Upon completing the mission, you flew back to a rendezvous point at the edge of the solar system to collect your fee, and a well-earned vacation.

This is where *Descent II* picks up. Upon arrival at your recreation point, you, the pilot, discover that you've been cheated out of this immediate rest and payment and contractually coerced into flying another, low-risk, 'reconnaissance' mission. Seeing no available option but to comply, you're dropped at the first waypoint on the outskirts of Terran space. Once there, you discover that this new mission is anything but low-risk...

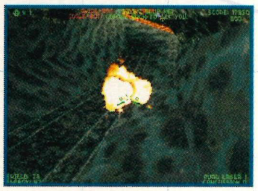
[ABOVE] Dynamic light-sourcing ensures that you really 'feel' hits when you get targeted by enemy fire. [INSET] BANG!

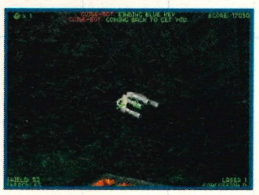
Blueprint

Publisher: Interplay
Developer: Parallax Software
% Complete: 80%
Expected Release Date: Feb '97
Origin: US
No of Players: 1–2

3–DESCENT TOO

"Descent II is a first person action game where the player's goal is to stay alive through 30 levels of dark, sub-terranean tunnels, and devious, robotic furies. The skills the player learns initially in the game are those that he will rely on throughout; namely, the ability to manoeuvre and blast enemies in a weightless, 3-D environment with six

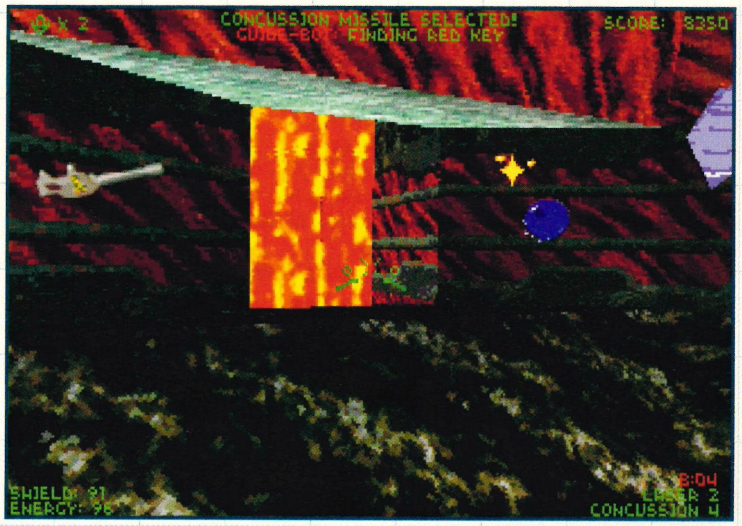




LADS GOING DOWN...

THE DEVELOPMENT TEAM BEHIND *DESCENT II*:
PROGRAMMER ▸ CHRIS PFEIFER
LINE PRODUCER ▸ KIHAN PAK
PRODUCER ▸ RAPHAEL HERNANDEZ
LEVEL DESIGNERS ▸ DOUG BROOKS AND DAN WENTZ
LEAD TESTER ▸ DEREK BULLARD.

[ABOVE] This is a Preliminary Integration Groundbot. More of a drone than a formidable enemy, but nevertheless is annoying.



[BELOW] Often, the locations of some of the goodies wll entice you into ambushes. Who knows what lies beyond...

GO AHEAD, SHOOT ME

EVERYBODY LOVES WEAPONS, AND *DESCENT II* CERTAINLY ISN'T SHORT OF THEM. HERE'S A BRIEF RUN THROUGH OF SOME OF THE BALLISTICS YOU MIGHT HAPPEN TO PICK UP.

[PRIMARY WEAPONS]

SUPERLASERS (THE ULTIMATE IN LASER CANNONS)
GAUSS CANNONS (A PARTICLE-ACCELERATOR CANNON OFFERING TREMENDOUS POWER)
HELIX CANNONS (AN UPGRADED VERSION OF THE ORIGINAL SPREADFIRE CANNON)
PHOENIX CANNONS (LIKE *DESCENT'S* PLASMA CANNON, BUT SHOTS CAN 'BOUNCE' OFF WALLS)
OMEGA CANNON (THE ULTIMATE IN SHORT-TO-MEDIUM RANGE PEACE-KEEPING)

[SECONDARY WEAPONS]

FLASH MISSILES (USED TO TEMPORARILY 'BLIND' AN OPPONENT)
MERCURY MISSILES (ULTRA-FAST MISSILES THAT IMPACT ALMOST INSTANTLY)
GUIDED MISSILES (MISSILES THAT THE PLAYER CAN GUIDE HOME TO ITS TARGET)
SMART MINES (MINES THAT RELEASE GUIDED BOMBLETS THAT HOME IN ON TARGETS)
EARTH-SHAKER MISSILE (THE ULTIMATE RESPONSE TO ANY THREAT...).

"*Descent II* guarantees faster, deadlier, and more intense gameplay than the original..."
Raphael Hernandez

degrees of freedom," explains Raphael Hernandez, *DII's* producer. So, not much change there then.

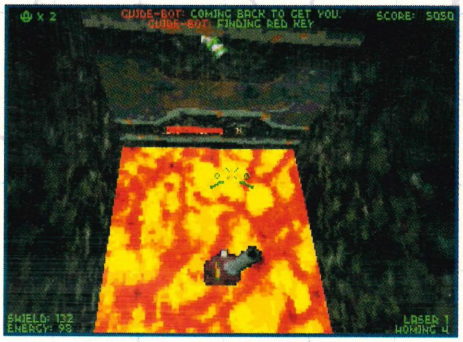
"Within each level, the goals are clear: destroy the mine's reactor and escape before everything within the mine is vaporised. How the player actually has to do this is always different, depending on what level he is facing. Early levels are fairly easy and straight-forward, with the opposition being challenging without posing an overwhelming threat. Later levels, however, require far greater skills at surviving encounters with deadlier robotic opponents, a greater propensity for exploring ever-darker more complex mining centres, and the ingenuity to both avoid traps and solve puzzles necessary for progression. Near the end, the player is not only fiendishly fighting for his very survival, but also having to contend with the full complexity of the mines' geometry and puzzles."

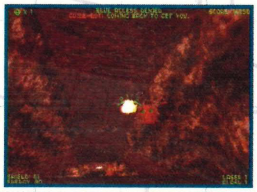
ONE WAY IN

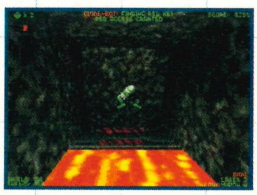
"Throughout the course of the entire game there is no one set method of achieving the player's immediate and long-term goals. Though each mine's geometry does not change, there are usually multiple pathways for reaching the same areas. The AI governing the robots' actions is one point of exceptional note – the robots in *Descent II* will cleverly use their 3-D environment to their fullest advantage: robots will take shots at you from behind, then quickly duck behind corners and openings before you realise they were there at all. Some robots will attempt to lure you into following them to a large ambush awaiting you; still others will silently drop down on you from the darkness to rip your ship apart," explains Hernandez.

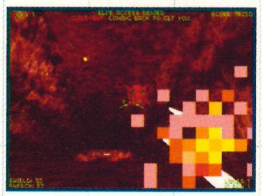
"The physics model within the game

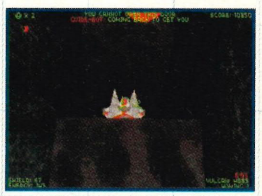
[ABOVE] Thankfully, with the aid of the GuideBot, you can find your way around to the various sections you need to go to. You can issue commands to it, and if you get lost, it'll come back to get you. Good stuff.

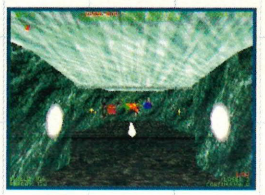












YOU ARE NOT ALONE...

Within the depths of the mines, there'll be many different craft to encounter. Some will actually be helpful, but most will be infected and as a result rather mean and nasty towards you. Here are just a few...

One [GuideBot]

The GuideBot is your ally. Originally designed as a tour guide, GuideBot comes in handy to help you navigate around the twisty turny mineshafts. You can control it to a degree, issuing commands, and it'll help you find keys and exits. Superb.

Two [Bandit]

The Bandit is a cheeky little rascal. Originally a trash collector, the virus has managed to change its programming into that of an opportunistic thief. If it ever comes in contact with you it'll steal one of your weapons, which can be extremely annoying, especially in battle.

Three [PIG]

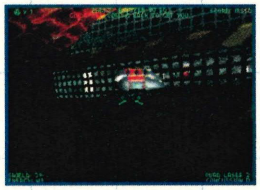
The PIG is a Preliminary Intergration Groundbot. An intersection guard, it lingers around protecting section splits. It's pretty slow and only has weak weapons but can nevertheless prove deadly when your shields are low, or when they are attacking in numbers.

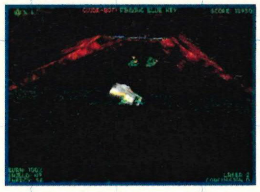
Four [ITD]

The ITD (Internal Tactical Droid) is actually a devious little bugger. If it sees you, it'll no-doubt engage in fire, but is prone to running away to alert bigger, more powerful bots to the disturbance. It's best to destroy these as fast as you can or reinforcements will destroy you.

Five [Smelter... and the rest]

There are several other bots in *Descent II*, and they're all gonna make your life hell, like this Smelter. What this one does isn't quite known yet, but it's certainly a formidable opponent. Destroy it on sight, if you can...





is also of considerable note: Robots all have mass and are knocked around when struck by heavy weaponry; all explosions will damage both robots and players within their vicinity; active force fields will cause energy weapons to ricochet in random directions," he adds. This realism indeed sounds impressive, but it's all down to implementation.

Play me...

Of course it's a one player game, but with a link cable, two players will be able to play at once either in Anarchy, CoOp, or RoboAnarchy modes of play. Anarchy is simply an arena style of play where each player is out to destroy the other player as many times as possible. CoOp is, as its name suggests, a co-operative mode of play where two players attempt to complete the game by pooling their efforts together. RoboAnarchy is an all-out fight against the other player and a host of robotic enemies. Also, to make the game easier to play, PlayStation owners who've bought the analog flightstick will be able to use it for advanced craft control.

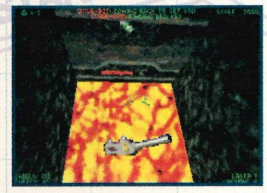
One of the main criticisms of the original was the extreme screen letterboxing. Although the preview PAL version we've seen is indeed very-much letterboxed, when asked about this Hernandez explained.

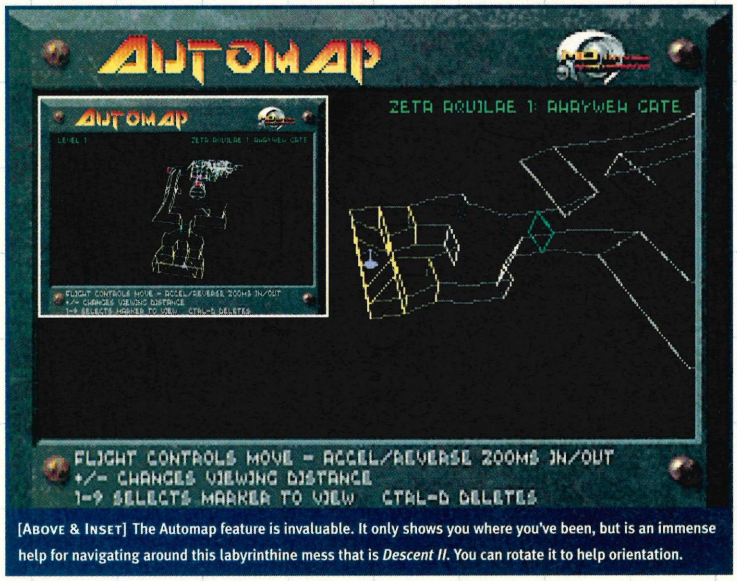
"Having learned certain lessons from the first *Descent* game, we've been able to optimise portions of the game's engine, making it faster while increasing the sophistication of the game's AI. With the addition of the game's new weapons, robots, and environmental effects, *Descent II* guarantees faster, deadlier, and more intense gameplay than the original *Descent.*" Still, this doesn't mean it'll be full-screen and after the cold reception of the original, let's hope they at least optimise the game to *some* degree. We'll await the finished version before final judgment.

Parallax Software is already doing preliminary work on *Descent III*.

"This game will continue both the previous game's storyline and push the technology out beyond current limits. We will be creating a brand-new engine and will take advantage of all of the possibilities this opens up. Right now, this is what's exciting us most about the future," enthuses Hernandez. All very well, but unless Parallax ensures *Descent II* is as playable as possible (meaning that it's fast enough and you're not enclosed by a tiny screen) there may be no point...

[Above] The blue globe is a shield power-up, dropped by another vessel on destruction. You can 'use' power from other ships this way.





[Above & Inset] The Automap feature is invaluable. It only shows you where you've been, but is an immense help for navigating around this labyrinthine mess that is *Descent II*. You can rotate it to help orientation.

SOFTOGRAPHY

Interplay so far on the PlayStaiton...
Cyberia
Descent
Casper
Disruptor
coming soon...
Lost Vikings II
Tempest X
Rock 'n' Roll Racing II
Star Trek: Star Fleet Academy
Wild 9s

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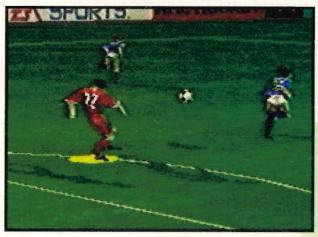
ON THE BALL

There are many skills and tricks to master, including flattening opposing players!

[Pass]
The accuracy needed to pass to teammates depends on the skill level.

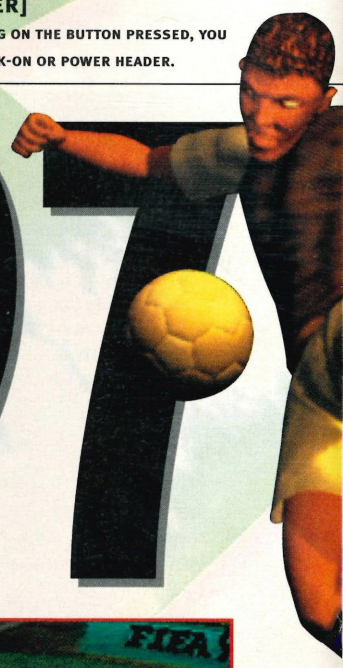
[Shot]
You can serve shots with aftertouch and volley crosses for spectacular goals.



[Chip]
This is used for crossing balls into the box, and for beating Peter Schmeichel.

[Header]
Depending on the button pressed, you get a flick-on or power header.

FIFA '97



INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, MOTTY'S BACK BEHIND THE MIKE FOR EA'S LATEST SHOT AT THE PLAYSTATION PREMIER LEAGUE.

Written By Phil King

Whatever will EA do come Christmas 1999? I mean, will they be releasing *FIFA '00*? Hmm, that's probably what they should have named this latest instalment in EA's long-running soccer series. It's a real 'nil–nil on a rainy night' sort of game. The fans must be wondering when, or if, the good times are ever going to return to the EA Virtual Stadium. After the series' glorious heyday on the old 16-bit consoles, the disappointing PlayStation *FIFA '96* saw a downturn in form akin to Blackburn Rovers. Fuzzy players, slow-motion gameplay and a general lack of skill started the slide. And while some of these problems have been addressed in the latest version, *'97* is still likely to see a crisis of Manchester City proportions. I already have visions of angry fans picketing EA's offices with placards demanding a new chairman.

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Customer support: (01753) 549442
Price: £44.99
Release date: Out now!

One Player | Mutiple Players | Memory Card | Multi-Tap

Sterling Effort

It would be a tad unfair, though, as it's not as if EA hasn't made a real effort to improve matters. Not only is John Motson back, but joining him in the commentary box are Des Lynam and Andy Gray – be grateful for small mercies, it could have been Trevor Brooking! As usual, Motty's insights into the game are fairly intelligent and relevant to the on-field action, not to mention amusing as he yells "Oooohh!" and "What the heck?..."

[Above] Southgate hits the net for England at last. See what I mean about duff goalies?

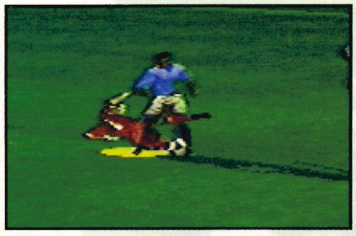
Graphically it all looks good too. The texture-mapped players are a huge improvement on their predecessors (even if some look like they're related to Peter Beardsley), featuring great detail to admire at close range. Obviously, the close-up camera angles aren't very practical during normal play (you can't see where the hell you're running), but great for replays, and the choice of eight perspectives certainly can't be faulted.

Free Transfer

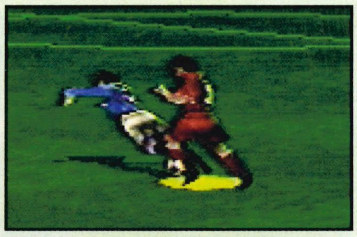
Take a peek at the long list of game options (which we've come to expect from EA) and there's nothing lacking in this department either, apart from maybe a chance to select different pitches or weather conditions. However, a quick look at the team line-ups reveals that (as with the previous game) they're taken from last season! Shearer still at Blackburn, Bruce at Manchester United... and this is meant to be the up-to-date '97 version? Hmm, at least you can now 'transfer' players between teams to amend the inaccuracies

[Flick]
Completely bamboozle defenders by deftly flicking the ball over your head.

[Block Tackle]
The standard tackle puts your foot in to claim the ball easier than a slide.



[Slide Tackle]
Get stuck in, but don't go in from behind or you're likely to be booked.

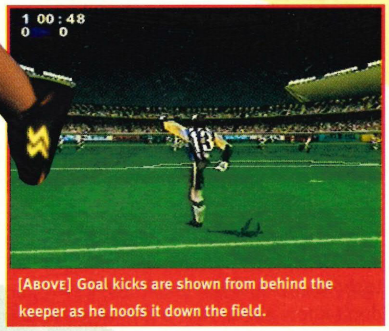


[Push]
If all else fails, push the attacker to the ground. But expect an early bath.

[Above] The team runs out onto the pitch to be greeted by the roar of the crowd and Des Lynam's comments.

[Above] A six-a-side indoor game is incorporated. Get ready to bounce those shots off the walls.

"Be grateful, it could have been Trevor Brooking!"



[Above] Goal kicks are shown from behind the keeper as he hoofs it down the field.

IN THE DUGOUT

In addition to playing on the pitch, you need to make managerial decisions about substitutions, formations, and tactics.

[Transfers]

Although the team line-ups are taken from the '95–'96 season, you can 'transfer' players from one side to another. So off Alan Shearer goes to Newcastle without even paying one penny of the £15 million.

[Substitutions]

You're allowed the standard three substitutions per game to replace injured or tired players.

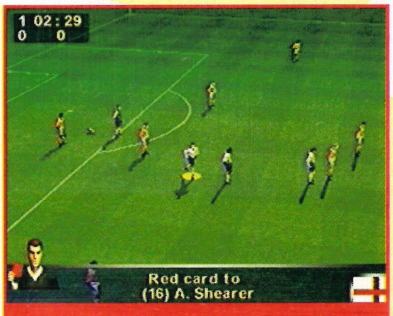
[Tactics]

As well as selecting from several formations and strategies, you can adjust the positions of individual players on the pitch.

(although why EA couldn't have got it right in the first place is a mystery). Even the English teams are from last year's Premier League, so fans of Leicester (including yours truly!), Sunderland, and Derby will be sick as a parrot.

One of the game's better points is in the 'team management' area where, in addition to selecting a formation, you can customise it by adjusting the positions of individual players to plan your perfect tactics – a nice touch. Another is the way you can select from three 'skill levels' which vary the amount of

[Above] There are several EA Custom sides to fiddle with to create your very own dream team.



[Above] It's a great laugh hacking down the keeper, but expect to receive your marching orders.

[Above] As seen in close-up instant replay, the Rangers forward holds off the challenge of two Celtic defenders.

[Above] Tournament options include a league, Euro '96-style competition, and this eight-team knockout.

[Above] Arsenal take on Juventus, but the similar kits make it tricky to pick out your team-mates.

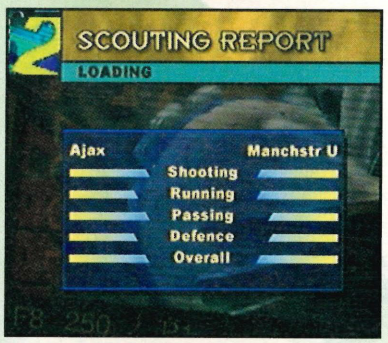
computer assistance given for passing and shooting etc, enabling experts to play fairly against beginners.

Donkey Derby

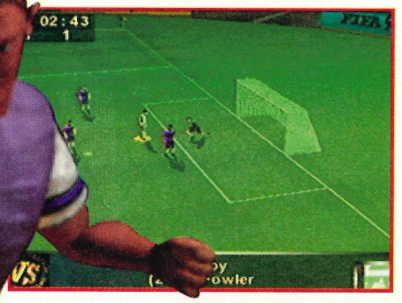
All very well so far, but the whole thing starts to fall apart as soon as you run out onto the pitch. Housewives' favourite Des may be anticipating "a thrilling match no-one wants to miss" in his link from the studio, but he's not going to get it. Instead he may be left wondering "how do they do that?": mess up the most vital aspect, ie the gameplay.

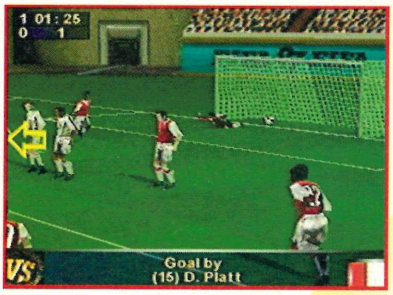
You know there's something wrong when Tony Adams sprints right up the pitch to bang in a goal. This is due to some dubious CPU player intelligence. For a start, there's that golden own-goal for a football game: crap keepers. I don't know who's been bunging these guys brown envelopes, but they manage to miss virtually every ball in the area, often running miles out to try and catch crosses and leaving a wide-open goal.

The defenders aren't much better, backing off far too much – they must think a tackle is something you fish with. This makes it dead easy to just sprint ahead, making this by far the easiest route to goal. Hence there's little call for intricate passing or accurate through-balls – just dribble all the way. Although there's more of a defensive challenge against a human opponent, the dribbling technique is still the most effective. I don't know about you, but endlessly hammering the sprint button isn't my idea of a good game of football.



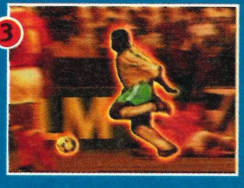
[Above] The Ajax players are jubilant after opening the scoring. There are several different celebrations.

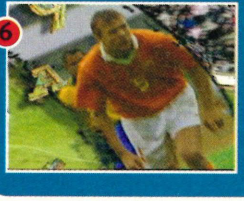


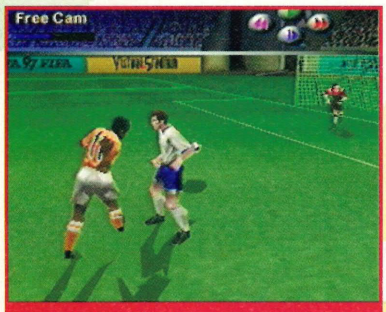


KICK-OFF

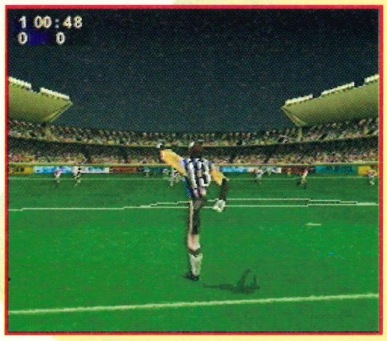
The standard glitzy intro sequence shows real players in action. Do those glowing geezers play for Sellafield United?







[Above] Replayed from the adjustable Free-Cam, the Dutch striker fires in a superb shot.

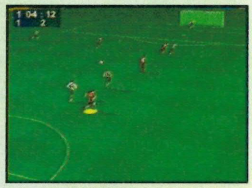


[Tele]
Your standard television camera tracks the action from the grandstand.

[Sideline]
Gives a lower view than the Tele camera, as if watching from the sideline.

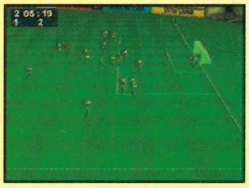
[Cable]
This high camera slides and rotates to track the action from end to end.

[Stadium]
As viewed from the corner of the stadium, this offers a diagonal view.



[Goal]
A Striker-style up-pitch perspective, but tricky if you're playing downwards.

[Tower]
My God, those players look like ants from up here. Even Gazza seems petite.

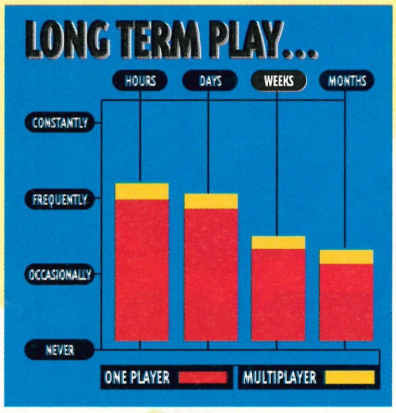


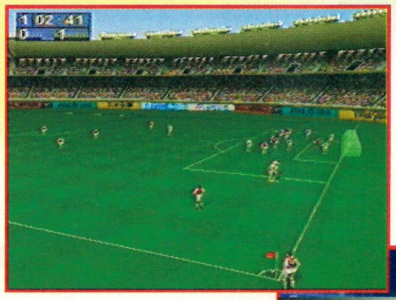
[Shoulder]
The ref has a mini-camera on his shoulder for an exciting close-up view.

[Ball]
Extreme close-up. Not actually in the ball... well, not the one they're playing with!

GRANDSTAND VIEWS

There are no less than eight cameras to choose from, including the amazing ball-cam – eat your heart out Sky Sports!



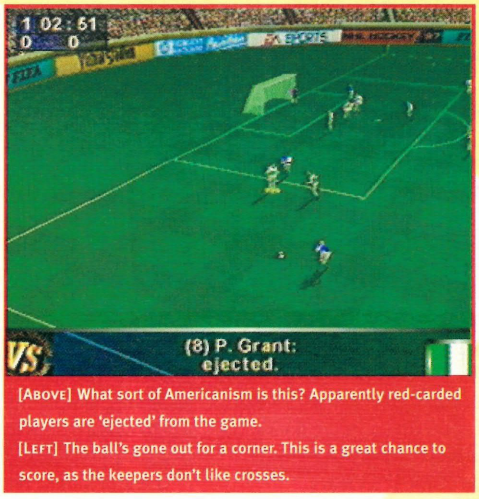


"There's little call for intricate passing..."

Heads Down

There are other ball skills to master, but they don't prove that effective. Heading is a particular weak point as it's difficult to get your position and timing exactly right, and then you can't really direct the header. Occasionally you'll be able to hit a super-powerful volley or a well-judged banana shot, but it's hardly necessary to score. With no need to learn and master new techniques and tactics, the gameplay never emulates the realistic skilfulness of *Olympic Soccer*. There's also some nasty graphical slowdown at times and, on the expansive pitch, the pace never rises above jogging, so there's not even the high-speed arcade excitement of a *Striker '96*.

Following such promising presentation, and the FIFA series' illustrious history, it's a disappointing performance. A lack of instinctive playability and emphasis on skill quickly sinks the game into footballing mediocrity. And, sadly for EA, they can't even use the old 'grey kit' excuse.



[Above] What sort of Americanism is this? Apparently red-carded players are 'ejected' from the game.
[Left] The ball's gone out for a corner. This is a great chance to score, as the keepers don't like crosses.

PLAY

Looks	8
Sounds	9
Gameplay	6
Value	6
Donkeys:	10

PLAYED 70%

How could they miss from there?

Alternatively:
Olympic Soccer (84%)
Striker '96

SCENE SETTING

IT'S THE YEAR 2039, 30 YEARS AFTER X-COM DEFEATED AN ALIEN INVASION FORCE WHICH, IN ITS DEATH THROES, SENT OUT A POWERFUL TACHYON BEAM. THIS WAS PICKED UP BY INTERSTELLAR COLONISATION STARSHIP WHICH CRASHED TO EARTH 65 MILLION YEARS AGO. THIS SHIP HAS NOW RE-ACTIVATED AND IS TERRORISING HUMANITY. AN OCEAN LINER WAS THE FIRST VICTIM, BUT NOW ALIEN FLYING SUBS HAVE BEGUN ATTACKING PORTS AND SHOOTING DOWN AIRLINERS. A NEW WAR HAS BEGUN...

X-COM: TERROR FROM THE DEEP

THE MOST ADDICTIVE GAME OF XMAS '95 IS BACK IN TIME FOR XMAS '96, BUT IS IT STILL LORD OF ALL IT SURVEYS?

WRITTEN BY STEWART WYNNE

The full title of this came is really *X-Com: Terror From The Deep: A Strategy Game Unlike Any Other*. The latter, tired cliché has been appended to every Julian Gollop game since *Rebelstar Raiders* blew apart the preconceptions of arcade fiends with its brilliantly tight, compulsive game engine. *X-Com* was not only the nth refinement of Gollop's inspired combat system, but a repositioning of it alongside a more conventional, but equally compulsive resource management sim and an inspired narrative.

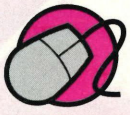
It was the latter which really put in the hook – as compelling as six-inches of steel curved into a marlin's throat. The more you played, the more the story twisted, revealing more and more about the aliens, and the weapons your scientists would slowly duplicate. With most games, the more you play the more repetitive a game becomes. With *X-Com*, the more you played the more weapon-toys you got and, as a consequence, the more elaborate your tactics became. What's more, it even delivered on a spectacular finale taking your team off-planet to test their mettle against an alien outpost on Mars.

PLAY INFORMATION

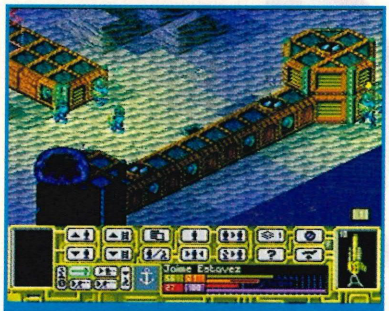
Publisher: MicroProse
Customer support: 01454 893893
Price: £44.99
Release date: Imminent

ONE PLAYER

MEMORY CARD


MOUSE

[ABOVE] Are the Faeroe Islands really this tropical? Note multi-level 3-D battlezone with alien below.



[ABOVE] Approaching an alien base. Have they noticed the huge alien jellyfish (bottom left).

How the hell do you follow that? An intergalactic voyage to the alien home planet? A new invasion producing an even dizzier spiral of military technology?

AQUATIC ACCOUNTANTS

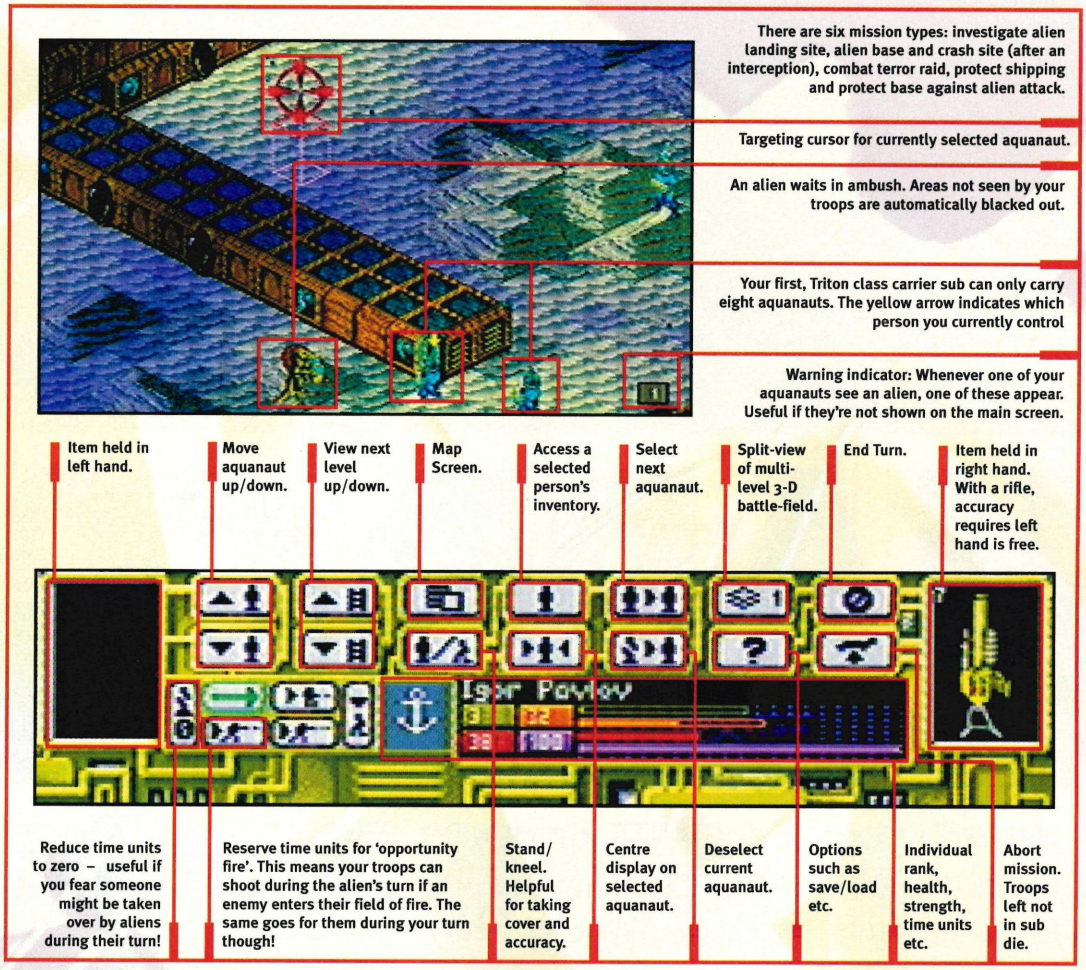
Sadly, to keep the accountants happy, Gollop's Mythos Games embarked on merely redressing the old game in aquatic garb. The new, sea-based enemy require a whole new set of firepower, so once again X-Com must play catch-up, beginning with primitive hardware and developing new weaponry which, strangely turns out to be a very close match to the non-aquatic weapons previously encountered.

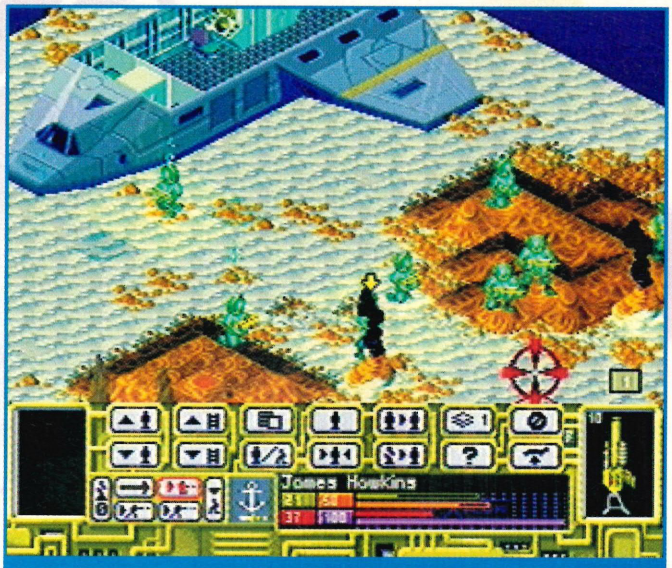
Unsurprisingly, MicroProse's ad campaign focuses on new FMV (ten times as much as before) and new 'improved' graphics. The former certainly delivers, ditching the cartoon look of the original in favour of artily executed CGI. Sadly, this only underlines the paucity of other artwork which, if anything, is worse than the original. The equipment screens, where you outfit your squad, reveal a frankly disturbing collection of genetic freaks. In-game backgrounds are more detailed than before, but the Jules Verne suits are ugly, the aliens comical and the Victorian-styled alien subs simply bizarre. The bubble-contrails left by projectile weapons are a nice touch, but the unsettling conjunctions of aliens lurking in

[Above] Seeping smoke and rivers of lava add detail and animation to battlezones.

cornfields at backward farm communities are lost.

For fans of the original, MicroProse promises a tougher challenge with improved alien AI and, well, all those things which made the original so great. Newcomers should probably start here, although the cost-conscious won't lose much going for the original game. For veterans, the decision is harder. Anyone with the time to play through the original on various skill settings will probably love this. For myself, I'm more reluctant, this being ultimately *X-Com: Terror From The Deep: A Strategy Game Unlike Any Other... Except X-Com: Enemy Unknown.*





[Above] Saving a game during a battle requires a whopping ten memory blocks to record all the variables. Alternatively, if you save at other times much less memory is needed.

"Backgrounds are more detailed than before, but the Jules Verne suits are ugly..."

PLAY

Looks	●●●●●●○○○○
Sounds	●●●●●○○○○○
Gameplay	●●●●●●●●●○
Value	●●●●●●●●●○
Depth	●●●●●●●●●●

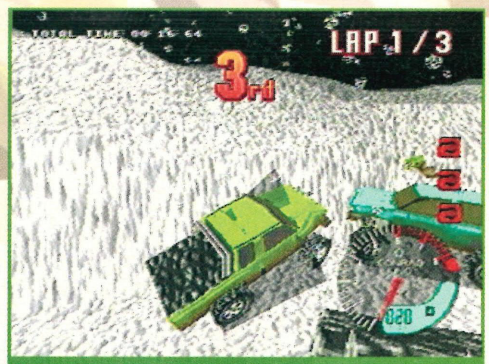
PLAYED 88%

Brilliant, but over-familiar

Alternatively:

X-Com: Enemy Unknown (80%)
Command & Conquer (out Dec)

[Above] Oh dear, did Gremlin lift that dashboard from some Amiga game? No matter, few people will be able to stick this perspective without suffering stomach-heaving motion sickness!



[Above] Crunching collisions with competitor trucks is good, violent fun but can seriously degrade your truck's performance – particularly if you roll your monster machine.

[Above] The truck mechanics and suspension are accurate re-created and this means you often bounce all over the place in search of the right way around the course.

HARDCORE 4X4

A MIDGET IN A WORLD OF GIANTS, GREMLIN HAS SURVIVED AND PROSPERED BY BEING QUICK AND CLEVER. *HARDCORE 4X4* IS YET ANOTHER PIONEERING EFFORT.

Written By Stewart Wynne

A year after we raved over 3-D cars whizzing about 3-D but largely flat courses, the zeitgeist is for a far more demanding experience. Dynamic, exceptionally varied landscapes is today's fashion, exemplified by the imminent mob of jetski games. *Hardcore* is desperately scooting ahead of that crowd, and most particularly Psygnosis's imminent *Monster Trucks*.

The first thing to say about *Hardcore* is that Gremlin's programmers have, once again, done them proud. The six, progressively more complex and difficult tracks are not only impressively hilly, but remarkably cohesive with minimal texture distortion and polygon tearing. Add in six huge trucks bouncing about at a fair old speed and you can't help but admire their determination.

[Above] Arcade aspirations are evident in turbo mode, double-tap the accelerator to activate one of three turbos per race.

Daihatsu Fourtrack

Dropped on top of this programming wizardry is a relatively conventional game structure: you can whiz about the tracks in a one-off single race, a time trial or take them all in championship mode. In the latter, you compete against five CPU controlled trucks, drawn from a selection of six trucks offering varying trade-offs between speed and grip. Come first in championship mode and you progress from Novice to Pro, with 25% more horsepower and four laps rather than three. Extreme Mode ups the laps to five and adds another 25% horsepower. A wild card factor is the weather, while selectable in other modes, for the championship it's totally random, cycling through Good, Overcast and Severe in permutation with Day or Night-time conditions. The differences have real impact, reducing visibility and traction.

The speed of the graphics engine makes *Hardcore* instantly appealing, bumping over such challenging terrain in a huge 4x4 is good fun. However the more you play, the more you want from the game. It is, for example, a neat idea how the route isn't clearly signposted lending an air of adventure, especially on the first lap. But after that first, relatively brief lap it all settles down into a familiar groove. Bigger tracks, perhaps with varying routes to require off-road map-reading, would be as welcome as a few more tracks – particularly bonus ones. The ability to save after every race is welcome, but lessens challenge. Anyone can fluke one excellent race result, making success often a matter of persistence and luck rather than skill.

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Gremlin
Customer support: 0114 2753423
Price: £44.95
Release date: December '96

One Player

Mutiple Players

Steering/Analogue

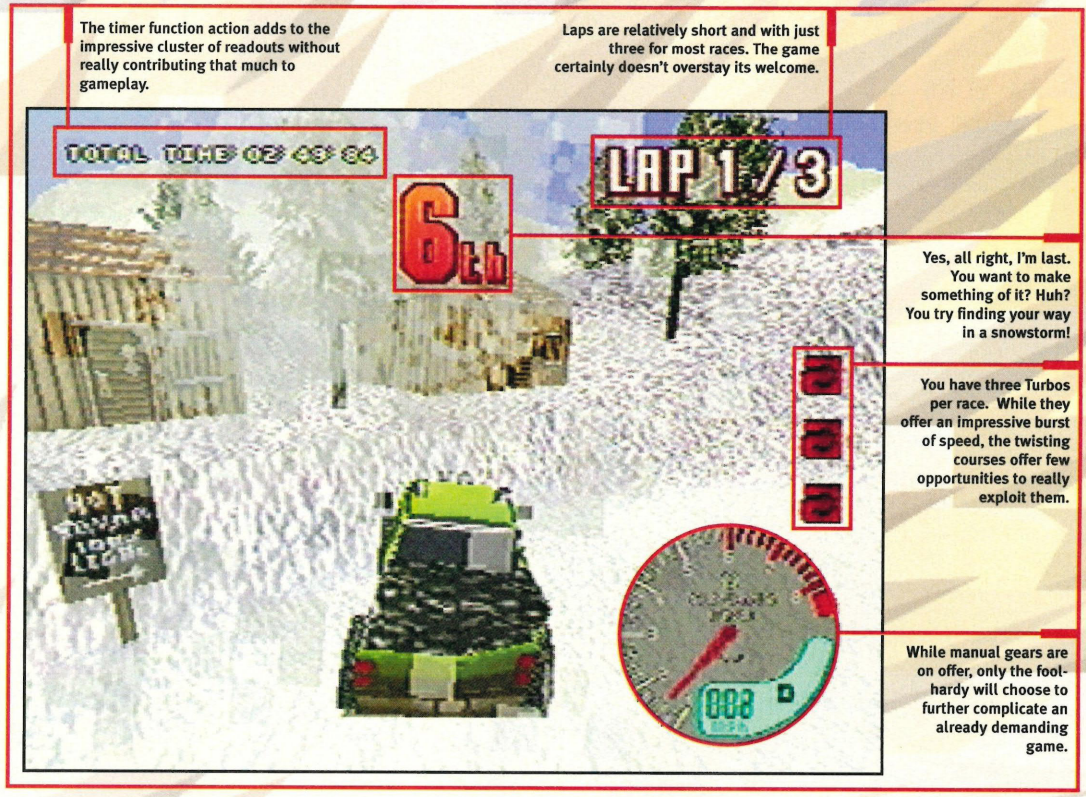
Memory Card

Link Cable

TWO PLAYER BOX

Hardcore 4x4 features a link-up two player mode if you have two PlayStations and a link cable. Unfortunately, two copies of this game were unavailable at the time of review and so at best we can only speculate about how well it plays. From the one player mode you can instantly come to the conclusion that the two player is more fun, and because the trucks can get damaged, you will more often than not end up just trying to ram each other to destruction rather than racing. A full report in news soon.

4X4



The timer function action adds to the impressive cluster of readouts without really contributing that much to gameplay.

Laps are relatively short and with just three for most races. The game certainly doesn't overstay its welcome.

Yes, all right, I'm last. You want to make something of it? Huh? You try finding your way in a snowstorm!

You have three Turbos per race. While they offer an impressive burst of speed, the twisting courses offer few opportunities to really exploit them.

While manual gears are on offer, only the foot-hardy will choose to further complicate an already demanding game.

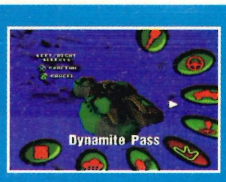
[Above] And they're off! On early levels, a skilful driver should be able to barge to the front of the pack right away... it's holding the lead which is tough.

"Bumping over challenging terrain in a huge 4x4 is good fun..."

[Above] Nope, it's not a fellow competitor iced up and frozen into an Artic sarcophagus, this blue truck is merely part of the lush scenery.

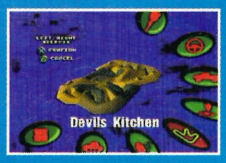
4x4x6

There are six courses in *Hardcore 4x4*.



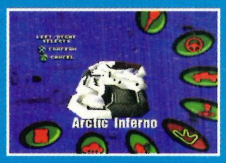
[Dynamite Pass]

Relatively straightforward, but watch out for those narrow bridges when amongst the pack!



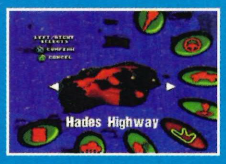
[Devil's Kitchen]

Some nutters set up on race on the site of the Gulf War. Watch out for knocked-out T72 tanks!



[Arctic Inferno]

When hell freezes over it'll be like this. Although snow isn't as slippy as you'd expect, if it's actually snowing during the race then traction is lousy, and visibility drops right down to a few metres ahead.

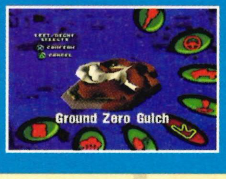


[Hades Highway]

Some tight turns, but it looks nastier than it plays.

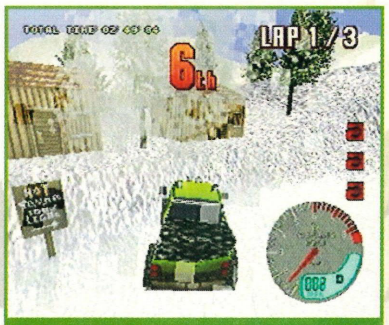
[Mercurial Forest]

One of the most graphically impressive tracks with a nice stretch of motorway for some rare high-speed overtaking manoeuvres.



[Ground Zero Gulch]

A tunnel makes for some crunching collisions, but otherwise pretty simple



[Above] And yes, the boy Wynne rams into the wall again. Well that's what happens when you don't have a car yourself isn't it?

[Above] Skilful drivers will learn how to execute hand-brake turns... Novices will get used to the reverse gear!

Land Rover

Shortcuts could be made more of as well. Certainly the racing isn't as satisfying as it could be, 4x4s are obviously not the most nimble of vehicles. Overtaking on a straight, with all the trucks bunched together, is something of a lottery, entertaining but less than precise. The main overtaking manoeuvre is cutting corners, judging just how early to take an inclined turn is entertaining but ultimately a little repetitive.

Another neat idea is mud being churned up by the truck ahead, obscuring your vision with huge clumps whirling across the screen. Pity they're so crude and blocky. Fog bound tracks lessen visibility further, heightening the rough and ready feel which is the game's principal strength. Night-time tracks have a similar appeal, but again you wish the programmer had been given more time: while the scenery is cloaked in darkness, the trucks are lit for daytime conditions. Given the PlayStation's excellent lighting effects, and the programmers' skill, it's a considerable shame there wasn't time to execute this properly. Imagine slippin'-slidin' through a night track with your headlights filtering through a thick veil of snow...

Overall, *Hardcore* is another perfectly fine Gremlin game, clearly designed to exploit the PlayStation's chipset to maximum effect. If a little less speed might've made for a classier product, at least what's here is playable enough. The gravel-crunching approach of *Monster Trucks* is daunting, but its ambition by no means ensures it will be better.

PLAY

Looks	●●●●●●●○○○
Sounds	●●●●●●○○○○
Gameplay	●●●●●●●○○○
Value	●●●●●●●●○○
Sickbag realism	●●●●●●●●●○

PLAYED 81%

Solid as a Mack truck

Alternatively:

Monster Trucks (out Jan '97)
WaveRace 64 (or PSX equivelant)

"Shhh! He really thinks he's playing tennis...

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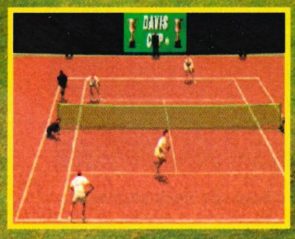
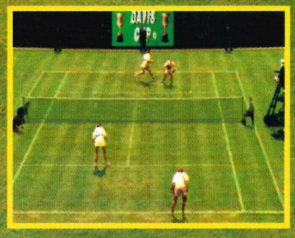
...perhaps he is!"

- Amazing 'Roto-morphing™' technology allows for television quality graphics
- Full speech and sound effects for total realism
- 48 individual characters
- Grass, Clay, Tarmac & Indoor Courts
- 1 to 4 Players





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TELSTA

GRID RUN

SUCKED INTO A WORLD OF COMPLEX MAZES AND PATROLLING MONSTERS, YOUR ONLY HOPE OF ESCAPE IS TO COLLECT FLAGS... WHAT?!

Written By Ryan Butt

Now don't get me wrong getting paid to play and evaluate games is like a Godsend for a lower class slacker like me, but if I was a member of the general public that was shopping around to shed their wallet of 50 nicker in the cause of a decent software purchase, then *Grid Run* isn't something I would opt for, unless drugged considerably and with a gun pointing at my head!

What I would want is a game that showcases what the grey plastic box is worth... something like *WipEout 2097* for class, or *Resident Evil* for laffs, not this – a game which when all said and done is nothing more than a glamorised version of Kiss Chase!

[Above] Victory! Your haste in collecting the flags leads you to a magnificent triumph over the understandably gutted crab-man – who didn't actually manage to collect any.

ON A ROAD TO NOWHERE

Yep *Grid Run* is a game of tag whereby you dash around maze-like complexes collecting flags pursued by marauding, drooling, snarling 10ft demonic monsters. If the said monster catches you, you automatically become 'It' and are unable to collect any more flags before hunting down the demon and tagging it. Naturally there's a little bit more to it than just that though. You come equipped with a weapon to slow down the pursuing beast, plus a wealth of magic which will temporarily stop them in their tracks. Also, if you collect the time bonuses, these comprise a time limit for you to run riot in the bonus levels after three conventional mazes have been completed – that's it basically. New features come into play on later levels such as teleporters, jump pads, and speed boosts, also the terrain's alter to hinder your performance. There is a pounding sense of urgency about each maze, once your opponent has been tagged, the race is on to collect as many flags as possible before they hunt you down because it doesn't take very long for them to catch up and tag you back. As well as your guns and magic (all of which can be upgraded with certain power-ups), you can also lay special temporary platforms to bridge voids and get to unobtainable areas, but these don't last long and your opponent can also use the ones you lay. That's really all the strategy there is, the rest is mindless running around trying to reach your quota of flags. The bonus levels are a worthy inclusion though, as they give you the opportunity to boost-up your speed, magic and agility should you collect enough coloured blobs in the allocated time.

There are three levels in each world, and

PLAY INFORMATION

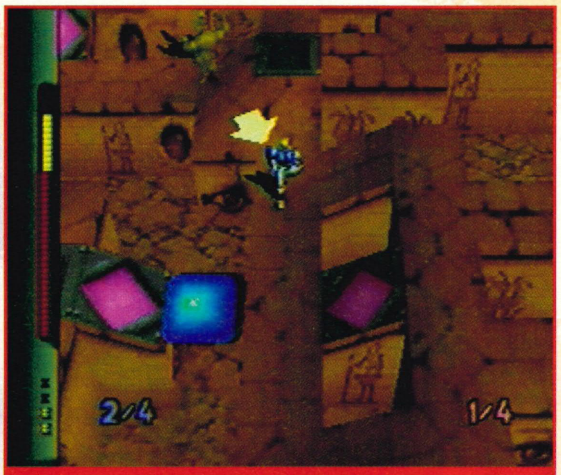
Publisher: VIE
Customer support: 0171 368 2255
Price: £44.99
Release date: Out Now

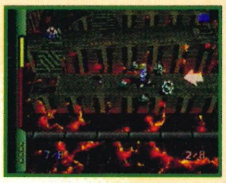
ONE PLAYER | MUTIPLE PLAYERS | MEMORY CARD | MULTI-TAP

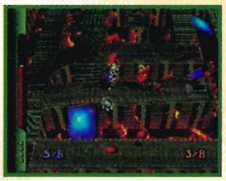
[Above] Slippery stuff! It is often extremely hard to hit a moving target whilst sliding arse-over-tit!

[Above] On some stages you must lay a bridge of squares to access hard to reach areas.

[Above] More bonus fun as you dart around the extra stage assisted by speed arrows.

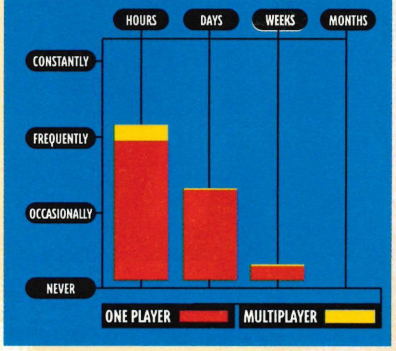






[Above] Once you're 'it', the arrow will assist you in finding any flags that need collecting. If you're tagged though it will point you in the direction of the particular mutant you are trying to chase.

LONG TERM PLAY...



[Above] You've got some catching up to do as the mutant ant sours into the lead.

BEASTIE BOYS

Let us take this opportunity to introduce you to some of your vicious opponents for tonight's match-up:

Minox – A bulky Minotaur who goes at it like a bull in a china shop.

Lethotep – A pacey alligator who'll snap your chops given half the chance.

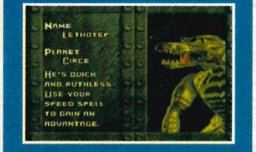
Kravken – A crabby geezer who repels bullets.

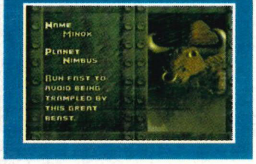
Kolo – A mammoth thing who's cool, like the mint with the hole.

Belok – Satan himself dwells in the fiery stage of Ash.

Mantos – An egg-laying ant whose offspring present a problem.

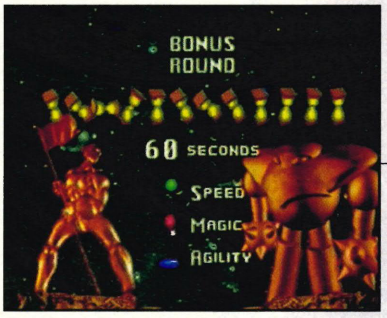
Bog – A stinky frog-man with fishy breath, say no more.

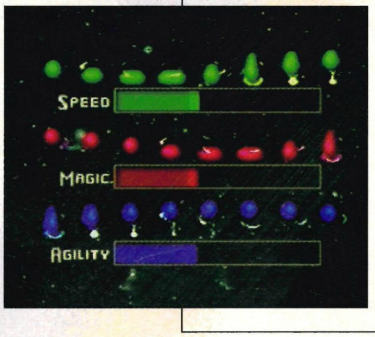




BRUCEY BONUSES

1. By collecting the special hour-glasses on each maze, you'll accumulate vital seconds to take into the Bonus Round (five seconds for each glass).
2. Use this time to dash around like mad collecting the various power-ups. The Bonus Round will end when you either collect all of the power-ups or run out of time.
3. A chart will then display how well you did.





once these have been beaten, the boss of that world (your opponent) is left truly gutted in the wake of your destruction. A new world yields a new boss and what a twisted bunch of saps these are. Ranging from Satan to Minotaurs. These are a laughable bunch of rendered twerps that wouldn't look out of place in the Banana Splits, or worse... The Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers!

Fool's Gold

Grid Run is good fun to start with as you traipse through the levels kicking monster butt, but after a while it starts to get very, very boring, and the tone isn't lifted much by a mundane soundtrack that not even Dale Winton would shake his oversized M&S pants to!

So who would buy something like this? Fools? Masochists? Or simply some lost soul in search of a decent multi-player game? *Grid Run* does indeed boast multiplayer capabilities if you link two PlayStations up with two people playing on each. But not even that can disguise the fact that this game is, when all else is said and done, poop.

[Above] To get to this flag you must build a bridge over from the green squares. Tricky.

"A mundane soundtrack that not even Dale Winton would swing his M&S pants to..."

PLAY

Looks	7
Sounds	5
Gameplay	5
Value	5
Unplayability	9

PLAYED 53%

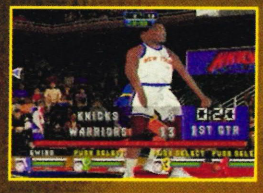
Running on empty, pal!

Alternatively:
Robotron X (85%)
Pitball (66%)

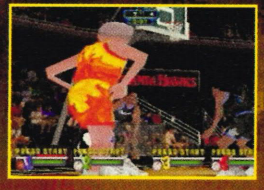
NBA JAM EXTREME

WOW! THE JAM HAS GOT FRUITIER THAN EVER WITH EVEN MORE CHUNKY BITS TO SAVOUR THAN EVER BEFORE... SO WHY IS IT SO HARD TO SWALLOW?

WRITTEN BY RYAN BUTT



"A lot more in-yer-face!"



Kerchang!

NBA Jam is becoming somewhat of a vast, booming money-spinning dynasty. Let's be honest – it's a license to print money. So fair-play to Acclaim for belting out another sure-fire cash injection this Yuletide.

In the early days though, who would have believed that it would span this far? What started off as a hugely addictive coin-op translated splendidly onto the thriving 16-bit consoles, in fact overnight it seemed that the whole planet had gone alley-oop for a bit of rim-rockin' action. Then came the inevitable sequel, *Tournament Edition*, which, in this reviewer's eyes', detracted from the original game's stark grit and bone simplicity and featured niggly 'new' quirks such as Hot Spots and suchlike (sorry they weren't memorable enough for me to remember the full list). Suddenly what started out as a one-off masterpiece degenerated into another *FIFA*, or *NHL* franchise – but even if you didn't think that after *Tournament Edition*, you will after *Extreme* does the rounds.

Become God

It would appear that my initial scepticism was a tad premature though because *Extreme* has at least got 'Next Gen' branded all over it. Yeah the same old jazz is here – unfeasible dunks, fiery hot streaks and sadistic fouls, but the perspective has been altered for a more eye-pleasing approach and the actual players themselves are awesome! You can select from a more varied tally of team-mates to jam with, and there is even a brand new 'Extreme' button that provides your player with God-like qualities for a limited time.

[Above] Smokin'! Three consecutive baskets will send your player on a hot-streak that is hard to douse.

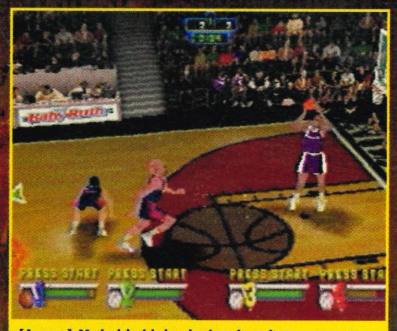
Polygon Pelvis

In fact the whole thing is a lot more in-yer-face and over-the-top than ever – although if I see that Ewing geezer gyrate his fat, polygon pelvis again after scoring, I fear I may projectile vomit into my PlayStation!

The game possesses the same pick-up and play appeal that it had before due to the sheer simplicity of the controls – when starting out all you need is the turbo and dunk controls sussed and you'll be ramming in triple-somersault backflips and scorching three-pointers before you even realise it's the demo you're watching!

The more complicated skills follow suit shortly afterwards, although I say complicated with a pinch of salt when really all this consists of is maybe laying-off certain plays to your partner or twatting your arch rivals into the crowd before nicking the ball and shattering their back board.

The whole game is pretty basic stuff, but at the end of the day it's just the ticket for four mates to get together and party on a court surrounded by arm-waving imbeciles all gagging for a bit of entertainment. And *NBA Jam Extreme is* entertaining. The only real downers are that there's a certain 'been there, done that' aura about the whole proceedings, and of course the niggly deep-down knowledge that there'll almost certainly be another sequel next year that promises to be better in some way than this. But sod it, this is fun and certainly one of the most enjoyable four player games on the market.



[Above] Mr baldy bloke dashes in vain to prevent the inevitable slam. Eat my fire slap-head!

[Above] A string of defensive errors will cause an eruption of dissatisfaction from the jeering crowd, as well as this fancy light show to rub it in.

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Acclaim
Customer support: 0171 344 5000
Price: £44.99
Release date: January '97

PLAY

LOOKS	9
SOUNDS	9
GAMEPLAY	10
VALUE	9
JAMINESS	10

PLAYED 79%

Acclaim do make exceedingly good jams!

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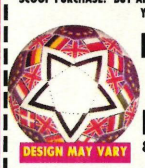

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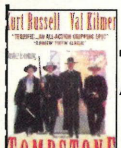

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WALL OF GAME

MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY

Mortal Kombat Trilogy features an incredible 37 characters with more combos and secret moves than any other fighting game. Naturally it was our first choice for the Wall of Game this month and we present not the standard moves, which you should all know anyway, but the fatalities, morphs and cheats – the real meat of the game. If you want a completely unexpigated version of this solution, check out *PowerStation* magazine issue 5, on sale 12 December.

CHEATS

[ACCESS THE ? SCREEN]

Go to the options screen and highlight any of the four boxes. Hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 and then hold Up. If you've done it correctly you will here a 'boom'. You can now access the '?' in the options screen. Here are your selections:

One Button Fatalities ON/OFF (See right for details)
Instant Aggressor ON/OFF
Normal Boss Damage ON/OFF
Health Recovery ON/OFF
Low Damage

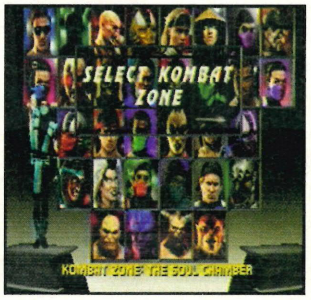
[ONE BUTTON FATALITIES]

To execute these, stand right next to your opponent and press any of the following buttons for the desired effect.

HP: Brutality
HK: Fatality 1
LK: Fatality 2
R2: Animality
R1: Friendship
LP: Stage Fatality
L2: Babality

[CHOOSE YOUR BACKGROUND]

In the character select screen, highlight Sonya and hold the Start button, then press Up on the control pad. If done right, you'll hear a low exploding sound. After you choose your character, you'll also get to choose your background. If two players happen to be playing, whoever enters the code is the one who gets to choose the background.



PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: GT Interactive
Customer Support: (0171) 258 3791
Price: £44.99
Release date: Out now

[QUICK EXIT]

You can exit a game in the middle of any match by pressing the Start button and then Select. You'll then be asked if you want to continue with the fight or quit. You probably know this already, but you can be guaranteed that at least one person hasn't figured it out yet!

[PLAY AS CHAMELEON]

To reveal the hidden character Chameleon, pick either Human Smoke, Ermac, Classic Sub-Zero, Scorpion, Noob Saibot, Rain, or Reptile. Before the round starts, hold ⇦ + HP + HK + RU + BL. Chameleon now has the abilities of the same colour ninja that he morphs into.

[CLASSIC CHARACTERS]

There are two MK1 and MK2 characters to find. To reveal all four of them, simply press Select on the appropriate character to reveal their previous incarnation. The characters in question are: MK1 Kano, MK1 Rayden, MK2 Kung Lao and MK2 Jax.

[RANDOM SELECT]

For this to work, press Up + Start at the select screen whilst the default players are highlighted.

[CRISPY!!!]

If you hold both run buttons after you do the stage fatality on Scorpion's Lair, you can hear Shao Kahn say "Crispy." If you hold both punch buttons, Dan Forden will pop out and say "Crispy." You can hold both run buttons and both punch buttons to hear both Shao Kahn and Dan Forden say "Crispy."

[FROSTY!!!]

Sometimes Dan Forden doesn't say "Toasty," he says "Frosty." To do this, freeze your opponent while he/she is in danger.

[PIT FATALITIES]

Here is a list of pits and what to do for those spectacular fatalities.

Pit 1: Uppercut
Pit 2: Perform the Stage Fatality
Pit 3: Perform the Stage Fatality
Dead Pool: Hold LK + LP + ⇩ then tap HP
Kombat Tomb: Perform the Stage Fatality
Shao Kahn Tower: Perform the Stage Fatality
Subway: Perform the Stage Fatality

WALL OF GAME NUMBER 15

MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY

BARAKA

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1, Decap: (Sweep range) ⇦⇦⇦ + HP

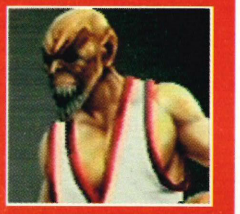
Fatality 2, Blade Lift (Sweep range) ⇦⇨ ⇩ ⇨ + LP

Stage: LK, RU, RU, RU

Friendship: ⇩ ⇨ ⇨ + HK

Babality: ⇨⇨⇨ + HK

Brutality: HP, HP, HP, LP, LP, BL, HK, HK, LK, LK, BL



JADE

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1, Shake & Vac: RU, RU, RU, BL, RU.

Fatality 2, Opponent On A Stick: ⇧ ⇧ ⇩ ⇨ + HP

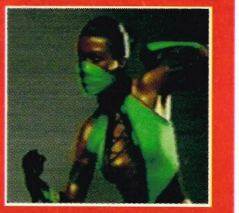
Animality: (Close) ⇨ ⇩ ⇨ ⇨ + LK

Stage: ⇦⇨ ⇩ + RU

Friendship: ⇦ ⇩ ⇦⇦ + HK

Babality: ⇩ ⇩ ⇨ ⇩ + HK

Brutality: HP, LK, HP, LP, HK, HK, LK, BL, BL, HP, HK



KANO

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1, Superman Beam: (Sweep range) LP, BL, BL, HK

Fatality 2, Skeleton Yank: LP*, ⇨ ⇩ ⇩ ⇨

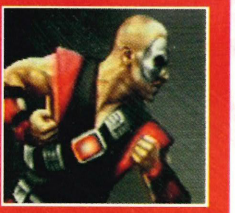
Animality: HP*, BL, BL, BL

Friendship: LK, RU, RU, HK

Babality: ⇨⇨ ⇩ ⇩ + LK

Stage: ⇧ ⇧ ⇦, LK

Brutality: HP, LP, BL, HP, BL, HK, LK, BL, HK, LK



NIGHTWOLF

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1, Lightning Axe: (Far) ⇦⇦ ⇩ + HP (Or [HP] ⇦⇦ ⇩ *)

Fatality 2, Alien Abduction: (Close) ⇧ ⇧ ⇦⇨ + BL

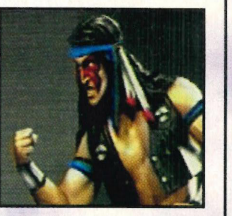
Animality: (Close) ⇨⇨ ⇩ ⇩

Friendship: (Far) RU, RU, ⇩ + RU

Babality: ⇨ ⇦⇨ ⇦ + LP

Stage: RU, RU, BL

Brutality: HP, HP, HK, LK, LK, BL, BL, LP, LP, HP, HK



CLASSIC SUB-ZERO

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1, Ice Spike: ⇩ ⇨⇨⇨ + HP

Fatality 2, Face Jab Animation: ⇩ ⇩ ⇩ ⇨ + HP

Stage: ⇨ ⇩ ⇨⇨ + HP

Brutality: HP, LK, HK, LP, HP, HK, HK, HP, HP, LP

JAX

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1, Terminator Series 2000: BL*, ⇧ ⇩ ⇨ ⇧

Fatality 2, Stomp: RU, BL, RU, RU + LK

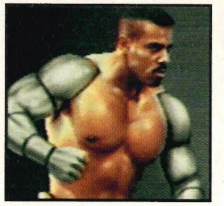
Animality: (Close) LP*, ⇨⇨ ⇩ ⇨

Friendship: LK, RU, RU, LK

Babality: ⇩ ⇩ ⇩ + LK

Stage: ⇩ ⇨ ⇩ + LP

Brutality: HP, HP, HP, BL, LP, HP, HP, HP, BL, LP, HP.



KITANA

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1, Decap Attack: (Close) gecc + HK

Fatality 2, Weezer: (Close) RU, RU, BL, BL, LK

Animality: (Between close and sweep range) eeee, RU

Friendship: ⇩ ⇦⇨⇨ + LP

Babality: ⇨⇨ ⇩ ⇨ + HK

Stage: ⇨ ⇩ ⇩ + LK

Brutality: HP, HP, BL, HK, BL, LK, BL, LP, BL, HP, BL

RAIN

Finishing Moves

Fatality 1, Lightning Storm: ⇩ ⇩ ⇦⇨ + HK

Fatality 2, Slicing Uppercut: ⇨⇨ ⇩ + HP

Friendship: ⇨⇨⇨ + LP

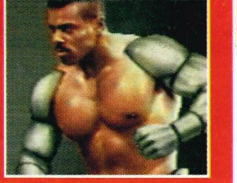
Babality: ⇨ ⇦⇦ + HP

Brutality: HP, HP, BL, LK, HK, BL, LK, HK, BL, HP, LP

Cyrax

Finishing Moves
Fatality 1, Predator Self-Destruct: eeca + RU
Fatality 2, Chopper: ⇩ ⇩ ⇧ ⇩ + HP
Animality: (Close) ⇧ ⇧ ⇩ ⇩
Friendship: RU, RU, RU + ⇧
Babality: ⇨ ⇨ ⇦ + HP
Stage: RU, ⇦, RU
Brutality: HP, HK, HP, HK, HK, HP, HK, HP, HK, LK, LP

Jax (MK2)



Finishing Moves
Fatality 1, Arm Rip: (Sweep range) BL, BL, BL, BL, LP
Fatality 2, Head Clap: (LP) ⇨ ⇨ ⇨*
Friendship: ⇩ ⇩ ⇧ ⇧ + LK
Babality: ⇩ ⇧ ⇩ ⇧ + LK
Stage: ⇧ ⇧ ⇩ + LK
Brutality: HP, HP, HP, BL, LP, HP, HP, HP, BL, LP, HP

Kung Lao

Finishing Moves
Fatality 1, Burial: ⇨ ⇨ ⇦ ⇩ + HP
Fatality 2, Spin: RU, BL, RU, ⇩ + BL
Animality: RU, RU, RU, RU, BL
Friendship: (Outside sweep range) RU, LP, RU, LK
Babality: ⇩ ⇨ ⇨ + HP
Stage: ⇩ ⇩ ⇨ ⇨ + LK
Brutality: HP, LP, LK, HK, BL, HP, LP, LK, HK, BL, HP

Rayden

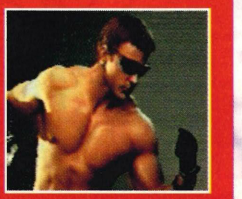
Finishing Moves
Fatality 1, Electrocution: LK* (hold 3 seconds). Tap BL + LK rapidly for explosion
Fatality 2, Exploding Uppercut: HP* (hold 8 seconds)
Friendship: ⇩ ⇦ ⇨ + HK
Babality: ⇩ ⇩ ⇧ + HK
Stage: ⇩ ⇩ ⇩ + HP
Brutality: HP, HP, LK, LK, LK, HK, LP, LP, LP, BL, BL

Ermac

Finishing Moves
Fatality 1, Telekinetic Explosion: (1/3 screen away) ⇩ ⇧ ⇩ ⇩ + BL
Fatality 2, Decap Attack: RU, BL, RU, RU + HK
Animality: ⇨ ⇩ ⇨ ⇨ + LK
Stage: RU, RU, RU, LK
Brutality: HP, HP, LP, BL, HK, LK, BL, HP, LP, LK, HK

Johnny Cage

Finishing Moves
Fatality 1, Backbreaker From Hell: ⇩ ⇩ ⇨ ⇨ + LK
Fatality 2, Decap Attack: ⇩ ⇩ ⇨ ⇨ + LP
Friendship: ⇩ ⇩ ⇩ + LK
Babality: ⇨ ⇦ ⇦ + HP
Stage: ⇩ ⇦ ⇨ ⇨ + BL
Brutality: HP, LK, HK, LP, HP, HK, HK, HP, HP, LP, HP



Kung Lao (MK2)

Fatalities
Fatality 1, Hat Trick: (Full screen) [LP] ⇦ ⇨* (aim with controls)
Friendship: ⇦ ⇦ ⇦ ⇩ + HK
Stage: ⇨ ⇨ ⇨ + HP
Brutality: HP, LP, HK, HK, LP, LP, LP, LK, LK, BL, HP

Reptile

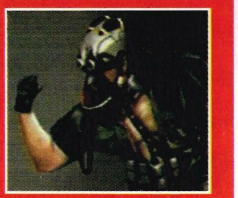
Finishing Moves
Fatality 1, Hungry: ⇦ ⇨ ⇩ + BL
Fatality 2, Really Upset Stomach: ⇨ ⇨ ⇧ ⇧ + HK
Animality: (Close) ⇩ ⇩ ⇩ ⇧ + HK
Friendship: (Close) ⇩ ⇨ ⇨ ⇦ + HK
Babality: ⇨ ⇨ ⇦ ⇩ + LK
Stage: BL, RU, BL, BL
Brutality: HP, BL, HK, HK, BL, HP, LP, LK, LK, BL, LP, HP

Human Smoke

Finishing Moves
Fatality 1, Inflate!: (Outside sweep range) ⇨ ⇨ ⇦ + RU
Fatality 2, Teleport: (1/2 screen away) RU, BL, RU, RU, HK
Friendship: ⇩ ⇨ ⇨ ⇨ + RU
Babality: ⇩ ⇦ ⇦ ⇨ + HP
Stage: caa + LP
Brutality: HP, LK, LK, HK, BL, BL, LP, LP, HP, HP, BL

Kabal

Finishing Moves
Fatality 1, Pump Up The Volume!: (Jumping) ⇩ ⇩ ⇦ ⇨ + BL
Fatality 2, Scream: RU, BL, BL, BL, HK
Animality: HP*, ⇨ ⇨ ⇩ ⇨
Friendship: (Far away) RU, LK, RU, RU + ⇧
Babality: RU, RU, LK
Stage: BL, BL, HK
Brutality: HP, BL, LK, LK, LK, HK, LP, LP, LP, HP, LP



Liu Kang

Finishing Moves
Fatality 1, Arcade Machine Morph: ⇧ ⇩ ⇧ ⇧ + BL + RU
Fatality 2, Teleporting Flame: ⇨ ⇨ ⇩ ⇩ + LK
Animality: (Sweep) ⇩ ⇩ ⇧
Friendship: RU, RU, RU, ⇩ + RU
Babality: ⇩ ⇩ ⇩ + HK
Stage: RU, BL, BL, LK
Brutality: HP, LP, HP, BL, LK, HK, HK, LK, HK, LP, HP

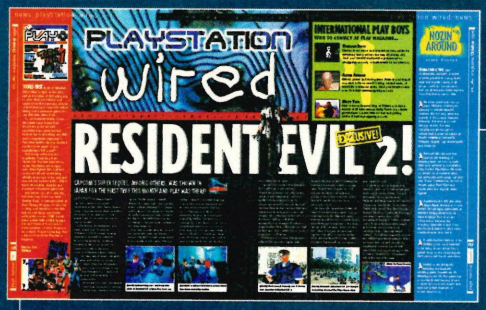
Scorpion

Finishing Moves
Fatality 1, Hand From Hell: ⇨ ⇨ ⇨ ⇦ + LP
Fatality 2, Old Flame: ⇩ ⇩ ⇧ + HK
Animality: (Close) ⇨ ⇧ ⇧ + HK.
Friendship: (Close) ⇦ ⇨ ⇨ ⇦ + LK
Babality: ⇩ ⇦ ⇦ ⇨ + HP
Stage: ⇨ ⇧ ⇧, LP
Brutality: HP, HP, BL, HK, HK, LK, HK, HP, HP, LP, HP

PLAY

KEY

HP = Tap high punch button.
LP = Tap low punch.
BL = Tap block.
HK = Tap high kick.
LK = Tap low kick.
RU = Tap the run button.
⇧ ⇩ ⇦ ⇨ ⇗ ⇗ ⇖ ⇘ = Tap direction on D-pad.
+ = Press buttons on both sides of '+' simultaneously.
[ ] = Press and hold buttons indicated in square brackets.
* = Release any or all pressed buttons.
, = Press in sequence, not simultaneously.
JP = Punch at ANY point during ANY direction jump.
JK = Jump forward (or backward) with kick during jump's descent.
HopK = Tap any kick button while starting to press ⇗.
HopP = Tap any punch button while starting to press ⇗.
run = Press and hold run to get close to opponent then release.
Sweep = Press ⇦ + LK.
Throw = Press LP when close to opponent.
Roundhouse Kick = Press ⇦ + HK.



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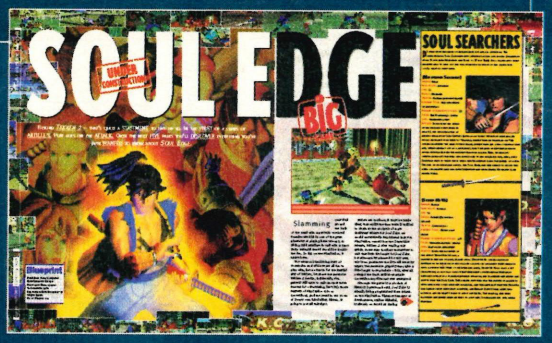
The Big Game busts open the game of the moment and devotes up to ten pages of shameless coverage to something we think you should be excited about.



PLAY reviews are the best in the world. Every aspect of the game is laid bare and we try to give you the most honest opinion. Long term challenge, value for money – all things to consider when you whop out yer wonga. We also review more games per month than anyone else. Fact!

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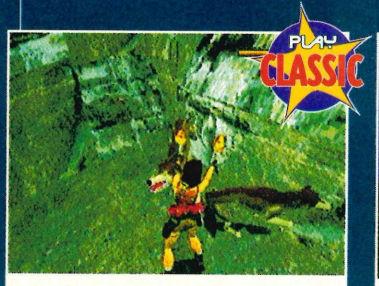
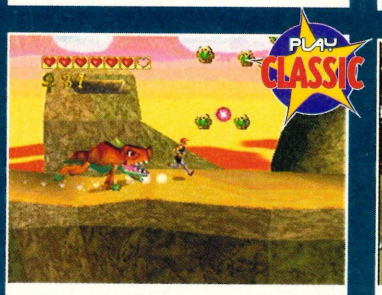
AND CHOOSE FROM ONE OF THESE GAMES!

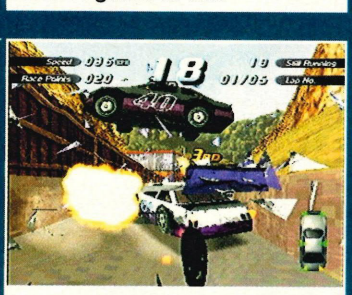


[ABOVE] *Tomb Raider* was rated 94% in issue 14 and we reckon it's the best PSX game ever!

[ABOVE] They don't come much better than *Die Hard Trilogy* – three fantastic games in one!

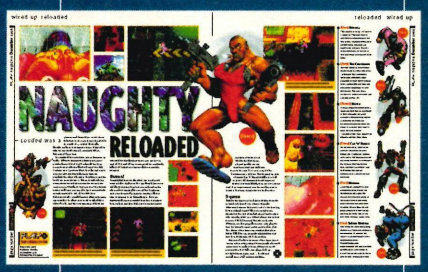


[ABOVE] Better than Sony's puny *Crash Bandicoot*, now you can own BMG's awesome *Pandemonium!*



[ABOVE] *Destruction Derby 2* is the most destructive force on PSX and far better than the original.

In-depth Workstations reveal behind-the-scenes information and pictures on the games *you* want to know about.



PLAY previews are packed with all the information you need to assess a game before the review. Detailed captions explain every facet of gameplay as this is our last chance to comment on the game before it is submitted to Sony.

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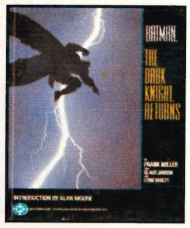
YOU EVER DANCE WITH THE DEVIL...?

The Caped Crusader first appeared over 50 years ago in Detective Comics 27, created by Bob Kane as a superhero without superpowers. Batman comics have been in continuous production ever since. Batman's critical renaissance began with Frank Miller's hugely influential *Dark Knight* series, currently available as *The Dark Knight Returns* graphic novel. This smart, media-hip and endlessly cynical story inspired numerous clones, as well as the script for *RoboCop* (for which Miller would write two sequels). Although originally quite distinct from the main story-lines, its huge success led DC to reinterpret the whole series in its mould beginning with *Batman: Year One*. Tim Burton's 1989 *Batman* movie owed much in style and structure to *Dark Knight*, while its plot drew inspiration from Alan Moore's excellent *The Killing Joke*. Currently there are some five monthly Batman comics, plus three supporting titles: *Robin*, *Catwoman* and *Azrael*. A new movie – *Batman and Robin* – is currently in production starring George Clooney, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Alicia Silverstone.



BATMAN FO

Batman Forever? Promise or threat? We find out...

Written By Stewart Wynne

There have been few acts of cinematic vandalism quite as crass as Joel Schumacher's *Batman Forever*, transforming a once quirky, original series into a garish MTV mess. Yet however bad it was, it was never quite so bad as this game which is, sadly, complete tripe!

Disillusionment begins swiftly with a drab intro sequence. Given the CGI spectacular which graces the PlayStation version of *Tekken 2*, it's ironic that a multi-million dollar movie conversion can't stretch to a few film clips. Scrolling pans over the newfangled Batmobile and Batman logo are reminiscent of old Super NES games, right down to the limited colour palette.

Bruce Wayne

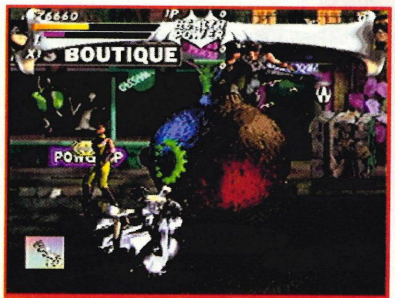
At the time of the movie's release, much was made of Acclaim providing a motion-captured CGI Batman for composing within dangerous action sequences, but they have junked all that graphical splendour for the PlayStation version and replaced it with quite the worst character sprites since THQ's *Home Alone!* There is simply no excuse for the shambolic collection of 'wouldn't look out of place on a ZX-81' characters and backgrounds. Seen from a distance, *Batman Forever* seems spectacular, with masses of on-screen action, but this illusion is shattered when you view it up-close. Hordes of enemies attack simultaneously, power-ups are constantly flashing, the screen is forever blanking under the effect of this or that stun bomb. Unfortunately, for the player gameplay is itself a little like taking a stun grenade in the face. Action is generally fast, almost too fast as you struggle to land a punch – even an NTSC machine suffers immense patches of slowdown which has your reactions constantly flipping between too slow/too fast.

This problem is emphasised because of the confusing nature of combat: a plethora of power-ups makes your character more unpredictable than the enemies. Particularly annoying is a screen-blanking fireball power-up which has your character rising into the sky, flames glowing and lightning cracking all around. It looks great the first few times, but thereafter becomes a tedious interruption to the action, particularly in two player mode. Taken all together,

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Acclaim
Customer Support: 0171 3445000
Price: £44.95
Release Date: December '96

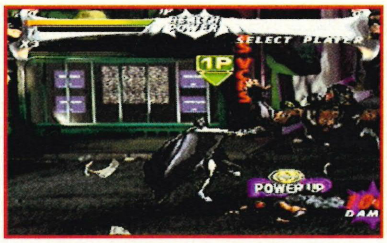
One Player | Mutiple Players | Memory Card



[Above] Huge background objects such as this wrecking ball periodically lurch into action, sneakily using slowdown to aid their surprise attacks.

[Above] There's a huge gunship copter in the background, honest.

[Above] Subtle colour changes allow for two Robins or two Batmans to be onscreen simultaneously, here taking on an android end-level boss.



OREVER:

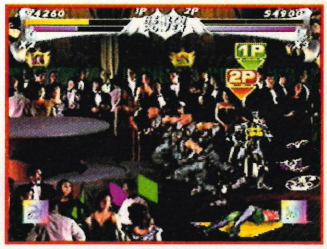
THE ARCADE GAME

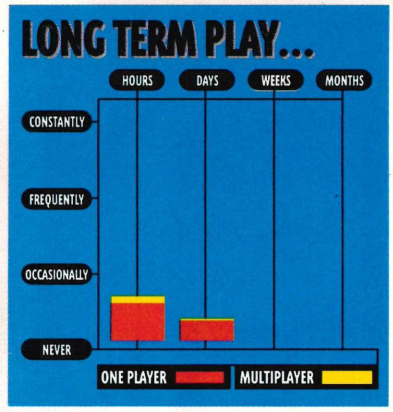
these factors drastically reduce interaction.

As the game's playability wanes, the ugliness of the graphics becomes ever more apparent. The main characters are poorly animated, the scaling is rough and during a dramatic swinging-out-of-the-screen attack they bitmap appallingly. Depth of colour is sadly limited, painfully muting the garish design which was the movie's principal characteristic. When a Sikorsky gunship copter attacks it appears the graphic artist had barely two colours available. Other end-level bosses also appear somewhat unfinished. Compared to Konami's gorgeous *Batman Returns* on Super NES, Acclaim's effort seems primitive and crass. Even the sound samples are tacky and distorted.

Dinner, dinner

Given the total lack of competition, *Batman Forever* only had to turn up in reasonable shape to earn itself comfortable sales and reviews. In the event, over-ambitious programming has delivered a self-inflicted knock-out blow. File this under 'Closet, Skeletons in the' and wonder once more about that cryptic phrase: 'Sony Quality Control.'





"It looks great the first few times, but thereafter becomes tedious..."

PLAY

Looks	●●●●○○○○○○
Sounds	●●●○○○○○○○
Gameplay	●●●●○○○○○○
Value	●●●●○○○○○○
Robin	●●○○○○○○○○

PLAYED 41%

Batsignal Konami Fast!

Alternatively:
No competition whatsoever

WELL IT'S ABOUT TIME WE HAD ONE ISN'T IT? FOUR PLAYER HEAD-TO-HEAD CARNAGE OF THE BLASTING VARIETY. TIME FOR THE PLAY-TEST.

BLAST CHA

WRITTEN BY ASAM AHMAD

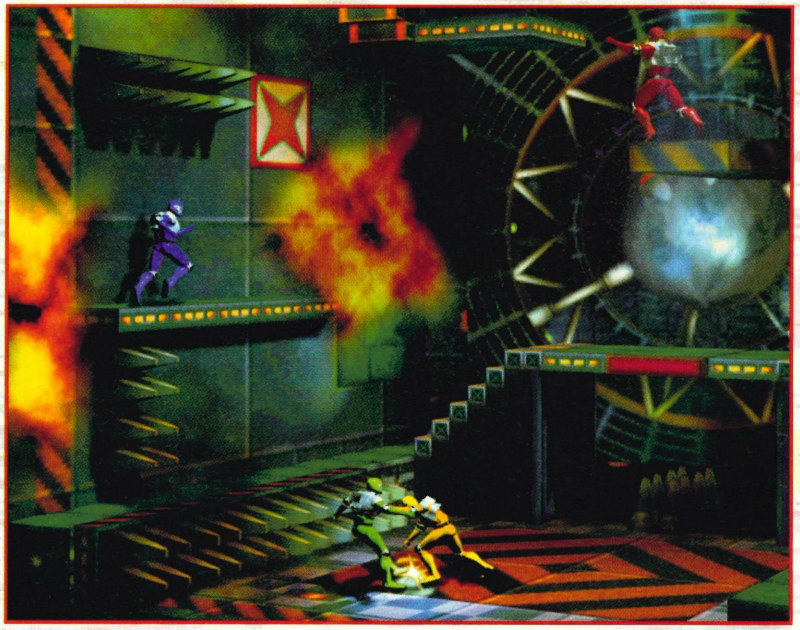
Blast Chamber is a traditional head-to-head multiplayer game translated into a new environment. Given that head-to-head multi-player games are undoubtedly the most engrossing of game genres, the cards are set for a promising blast-fest with all the evil vengeful glory that makes games of this ilk so moreish. However, it's all down to the implementation...

BOMBS, MAN!

Like most of the classic multi-player games such as the *Bomberman* series, *Blast Chamber* is set in a single room where you can see all the action at all times. The basic aim of the game is to survive, predominantly by ensuring your opponents don't. The mechanics of the game are derived from what could be described as a futuristic gameshow. Strapped onto your back is an explosive device with a counter continually ebbing away. Your task in each level is to collect a power crystal and deposit it in a coloured-coded receptacle to earn precious seconds, giving you more time before the inevitable blast. Of course, if you can't make it to your own receptacle, there's always an opponent's one to drop it into, taking away seconds from their fuse times.

Okay, so the object is pretty simple, and so it should be. Where the variety comes in is in the chambers themselves. The rooms are 3-D affairs, where you can roam just about anywhere within the confines of the walls. There are obstacles to jump over, pits to avoid and plenty of power-ups to alter the course of the gameplay. Interestingly, in the multi-player modes, as the rooms are symmetrical, in order to get to your receptacle you'll need to rotate the room. This is done by stepping on arrow pads situated in the corners. The gameplay element really starts to develop here...

In order to get the crystal, you can shove your opponent to the ground and

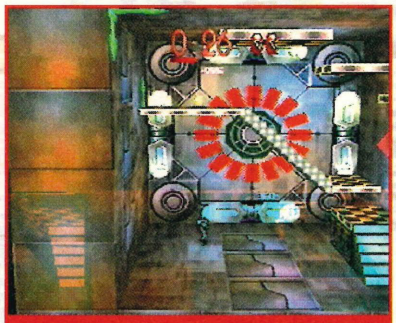


PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Activision
Customer support: 0181 742 9400
Price: £44.99
Release date: December '96

POWERUPS

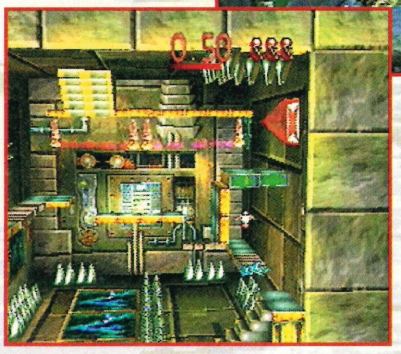
1. **MAG BOOTS** — ALLOWS YOU TO RUN ON THE WALLS AND ON THE CEILING
2. **GRAVITY BOMB** — REVERSES OPPONENTS' GRAVITY, FORCING THEM TO RUN ON THE CEILING
3. **PARALYSER** — FREEZES ALL OPPONENTS FOR A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME
4. **PSY-BOMB** — REVERSES YOUR OPPONENTS' CONTROLS FOR A SHORT TIME
5. **HI JUMPS** — ALLOWS YOU TO JUMP HIGHER THAN NORMAL FOR A PERIOD OF TIME
6. **MERCURIES** — ALLOWS YOU TO RUN INCREDIBLY FAST FOR A TIME
7. **TIME BOMB** — SUBTRACTS TIME FROM YOUR OPPONENTS' FUSE TIMES
8. **CRYSTAL DISRUPTOR** — MAKES THE CRYSTAL WARP TO ANOTHER LOCATION, EVEN WHEN IN POSSESSION
9. **VISEGRIP** — ALLOWS YOU TO HOLD ON TO THE CRYSTAL DURING ROTATION OR WHEN PUSHED
10. **CRYSTAL MAGNET** — DRAWS THE CRYSTAL TOWARDS YOU
11. **REACTOR SWAP** — MAKES THE REACTORS (CRYSTAL RECEPTACLES) CHANGE COLOUR
12. **EXTRA TIME** — GIVES YOUR KILL-CLOCK MORE TIME
13. **CRYSTAL BOMB** — MAKES THE CRYSTAL EXPLODE WITH DEADLY FORCE



[ABOVE] One of the 40 single player arenas. Navigating your way towards the crystal is often easier than it looks.

[ABOVE] The difficulty level of the single player arenas rises progressively, requring a little strategy to complete them within the alloted time.

MBER



[ABOVE] All the multi-player arenas are symmetrical, allowing equal opportunities for all contenders. Notice the abundance of spikes.
[LEFT] After stepping on the platform on the right, the pathway disappears. It's one way only in this game!

"A manic multiplayer jaunt with plenty of 'tit-for-tat' warfare!"

pick up the power pellet that has been dropped. Of course if one of your opponents is just about to score, you can try to rotate the room; forcing him to fall as the room spins, and steal the crystal that way. It all adds up to a manic multi-player jaunt with plenty of 'tit-for-tat' warfare!

SPIN ON THIS

But it's not all dandy. I've focussed mainly on the multi-player aspects of the game, as in single player the game does lack substance. All you have to do is to try and get the crystal past all the obstacles to the receptacle before the time runs out. There is a sense of urgency with the imposed time limit, and some of the rooms do require a certain amount of strategy, but the shallowness of playing *Blast Chamber* on your own tends to leave you quite bored after a while.

So, back to multi-player, and things are looking rosy. Except... well despite the fairly well presented graphics, it can be difficult to see your exact position in the 3-D cube. This aspect can be annoying at times when you're aiming for precise positioning but can't quite get it because the graphics don't have the detail to illustrate your position well enough. There is a camera control function which helps to alleviate this, but it isn't very easy to use in the throws of a feverish tournament.

Otherwise, *Blast Chamber* is an enjoyable affair, and a true next-generation original, but nothing overly special. More could have been made of the hardware to make the contact between players and the ball more tangible.

PLAY

LOOKS	●●●●●●●●○○
SOUNDS	●●●●●●●○○○
GAMEPLAY	●●●●●●●●●○
VALUE	●●●●●●●○○○
BOOM!	●●●●●●●●○○

PLAYED 82%

Blasting good fun.

ALTERNATIVELY:
BUST-A-MOVE II (88%)
SUPERSONIC RACERS (91%)

BLACK DA

MASSIVE EXPLOSIONS, JUNGLES VAPORISED, SPECTACULAR BATTLES... BUT THAT'S ENOUGH ABOUT *APOCALYPSE NOW*. LET'S TALK ABOUT *BLACK DAWN* INSTEAD.

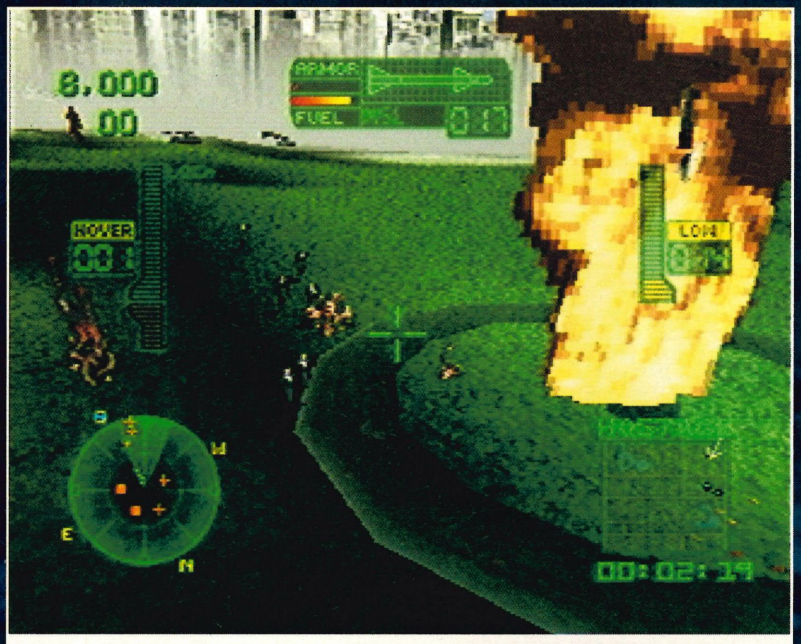
Written By Andy McDermott

One of the more petty perks of reviewing a game when it's sent to you without any packaging is that you get to make up your own scenarios. Such is the case with *Black Dawn*, a helicopter gunship game which sees you blasting seven shades of shit out of the sadistic forces of the bloke from the Daz Doorstep Challenge, who has his mind set on world domination and will not rest until his smirking mug is plastered over every TV screen, poster, wall and pillowcase across the globe. Or something along those lines. Look, the bottom line is that you've got this super-duper helicopter and you blow stuff up with it, okay?

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Virgin
Tel: (0171) 368 2255
Price: £44.99
Release date: January '97

ONE PLAYER | MEMORY CARD



[ABOVE] As an enemy vehicle explodes, the hurtling pink mass on the left is all that remains of a hostage who got caught in the blast.

BIG CHOPPER

With battles taking place over several different terrains, such as deserts, arctic wastelands and forests, you guide your throbbing chopper from point to point on an undulating map, at each stage completing an objective which usually involves riddling the Dazster's minions with red-hot metal fragments or picking up your own stranded soldiers before their cammo fatigues become whiter than white. If this sounds eerily familiar, then you've quite probably already bought *Soviet Strike*, and will thus have not even the slightest interest in *Black Dawn* unless repetitive 'whup-whup-whup' noises get you frothing.

The two games, it has to be noted, play in a fairly similar way, the main differences being in viewpoint – EA's game looks down on the action from an isometric perspective, whereas *Black Dawn*, although possessing a not very helpful 'wing view' which makes it practically impossible to see what you're shooting at, is meant to be played from a first-person perspective looking out through the cockpit window. Although this makes flying a rather more visceral experience than in *Soviet Strike*, the landscape swaying beneath you like a trip home from the pub, it does mean that there's a lot of clipping on hills which even the now-common trick of making the playfield look like it's enveloped in a pea-souper fog doesn't entirely disguise.

CHOPPER HARRIS

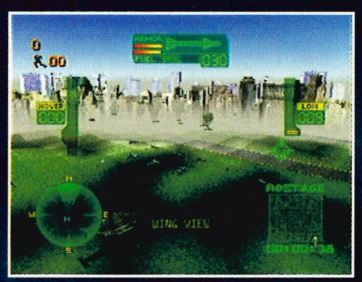
Having never flown a real helicopter (apart from that one time over 'Nam) I

POINTS OF VIEW

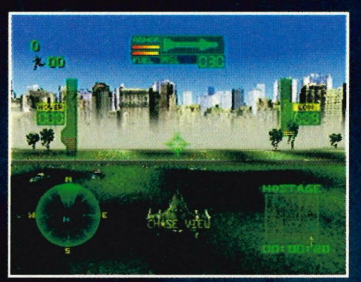
[COCKPIT VIEW]
A PILOT'S-EYE VIEW, WITH WINDOW FRAMES AND THINGS TO GET IN THE WAY.

[HUD VIEW]
THE BEST WAY TO PLAY, GIVING YOU A FULL FIELD OF VISION.

[WING VIEW]
RATHER UNHELPFUL ISOMETRIC VIEWPOINT, WHICH MAKES IT HARD TO AIM.



[CHASE VIEW]
VERY HOLLYWOOD, BUT NOT VERY PRACTICAL.



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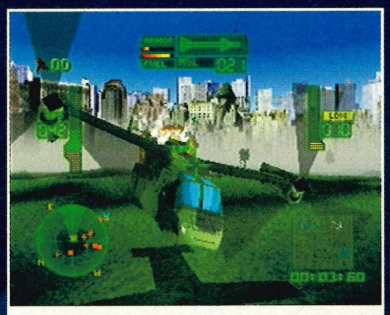


[Above] The terrorists have access to all the US military's latest gear, such as this Osprey tilt-rotor.

don't know how realistic the controls are, but your aircraft does have a convincing sense of inertia. The multiple functions for each button on the pad are at first confusing, but after a short while they become second nature, and it's quickly possible to spin around targets in mid-air; strafing them like something from *Airwolf*, though hopefully without spilling your booze and drugs. Weapons can be upgraded by shooting Doorstep Boy's troops and collecting power-ups from the blazing hulks, the ultimate toy being a tactical nuclear weapon with which to sear the very flesh from the bones of the bad guys. Huzzah!

The main problem with *Black Dawn* is that EA got there first, and it has to be said that *Soviet Strike* is the better of the two games – it's simply more enjoyable to play, and there's not really much else that matters. *Black Dawn* lacks any real adrenaline-pumping moments, which are what videogames should be all about. The Daz bloke can relax – everyone's going to be gunning for those nasty ol' commies instead.

THOSE MAGNIFICENT MEN IN THEIR FLYING MACHINES

Helicopters. Where would we be without 'em, eh? If it wasn't for the likes of Igor Sikorsky we would never have had films and shows like these... wait a minute. Sikorsky! You b*stard!

[Whirlybirds]

Kiddie-oriented 'copter-related action for the long of tooth. A pair of clean cut American heroes (read: annoying smug gits) fly around in a helicopter righting wrongs. The Baywatch of its day (not).

[Blue Thunder]

The film at least had had Roy Scheider and Malcolm McDowall. The TV show had, erm, nobody you've ever heard of again. Clean cut American hero, geeky sidekick, fat bloke in a van and token black guy with a moustache. Rubbish.

[Airwolf]

Rip-off of *Blue Thunder* that somehow managed to be more successful than the original, a bit like *The Munsters* versus *The Addams Family*. Betty Ford Clinic candidate Jan-Michael Vincent ponced about with a big fiddle, Ernest Borgnine annoyed everyone and the Man From Del Monte lost an eye and took over the CIA. From the man who brought you *Quantum Leap*, amazingly.

[Wings Of The Apache]

Stupid title, as helicopters in fact don't have wings. Nicholas Cage slums it, Tommy Lee Jones overacts as usual and Sean Young wears one of those curve-enhancing flight suits you only get in Hollywood. Some balls about drug smugglers ruins a perfectly inane *Top Gun* rip-off plot.

[Any Modern Action Thriller]

What self-respecting beefcake vehicle would be complete without an exploding helicopter? *Broken Arrow* leads with three, but anything featuring Steven 'Blimp Arse' Seagal or Jean-Claude Van Damme can't be far behind.

[Above] "And the Flying Eye this morning reports heavy drug smuggling traffic... just remember to keep out of the crossfire."

PLAY

Looks	●●●●●●●●○○
Sounds	●●●●●●●○○○
Gameplay	●●●●●●●○○○
Value	●●●●●●●○○○
Chopper jokes	●●●●●●●○○○

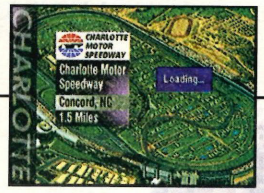
PLAYED 76%

Don't keep your rotor running

ALTERNATIVELY:
Soviet Strike (83%)
Krazy Ivan (90%)

TRACK & FIELD

FOR YOUR £45 YOU GET 16 OFFICIAL COURSE, PLUS MADE UP ONES AND NIGHT VERSION. IN ALL, OVER 20 ARE AVAILABLE WHICH IS MORE THAN ANY OTHER RACING GAME ON THE PLAYSTATION.



NASCAR RA

FORMULA 1 LACKED OPTIONS. DESTRUCTION DERBY 2 WAS SHALLOW. BUT THIS RUBBER-BURNING MONSTER FROM THE GOOD OL' US OF A MIGHT JUST SNATCH THE TITLE...

Written By Damian Butt

The closest most of us have ever got to the American NASCAR motorsport, is watching Tom Cruise ponce about in overalls during the film, *Days of Thunder*. In Europe we've got Formula 1, touring car and GT championships, all of which more than satisfy our lust for mechanical things crashing into fleshy bodies, and so NASCAR has never taken off. This and the fact that it largely takes place on huge concrete ovals, and is therefore about as interesting as watching paint dry. The cars may be able to muster over 700bhp and make a noise not unlike a 747 with a stubbed toe, but unless there are chicanes and the possibility of a messy death at every turn, we're not interested.

NASCAR Racing from developers Papyrus is an accurate simulation of the sport, converted from their popular PC CD-ROM game. Whereas *Destruction Derby 2* offers mindless maiming aplenty, *NASCAR* gives the chance to do all that and adjust spoilers, set weight distribution, regulate the gear spacing, set tyre pressures to aid steering – the whole nine yards.

[ABOVE] Coming off of the flat pit entrance you flip the back end out and crash into car 71. Unfortunately, the impact is so great, your engine falls out.

OH, OH, SHOW ME HEAVEN...

From the vast range of options covering car set-ups, realism, viewing opponent's cars and save facilities, you then launch into either an arcade or simulation race (the latter giving you pit radios and a full garage during warm-ups) on one of the 20 tracks, 16 of which are officially endorsed.

Firmly harnessed in the sweltering, claustrophobic cabin the first thing you notice is that there are a heck of a lot of dials. Pressing the top shoulder buttons on the pad brings up eight menus showing data such as fuel/lap ratios, race positions, tyre wear and temperature, and general race information. These can be accessed at any time and are vital for pit-stop strategy and monitoring your car's stamina. In the simulation mode you can also call up the pit radio and plan changes well in advance; something which was badly missing from *Formula 1*.

Blipping the throttle produces a meaty roar from the mighty engine, which is good because that's all you're going to hear on the move. You would be well advised at this point to turn off the in-game music as Papyrus,

[ABOVE] The game features an easy replay mode which lets you see incidents from eight different views.

[ABOVE] *NASCAR*'s comprehensive set of options is impressive, if a little daunting for beginners.

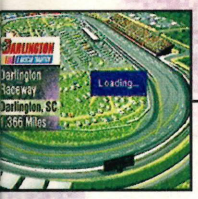
PLAY INFORMATION

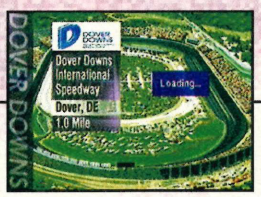
Publisher: Sierra
Customer support: (01734) 303322
Price: £44.99
Release date: December

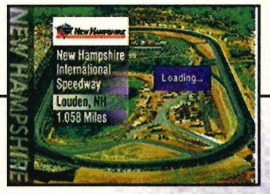
ONE PLAYER

MEMORY CARD

STEERING/ANALOGUE





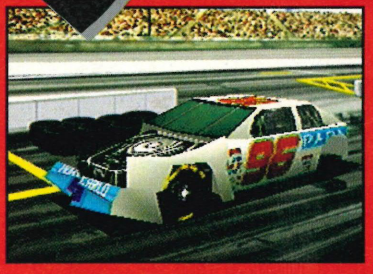


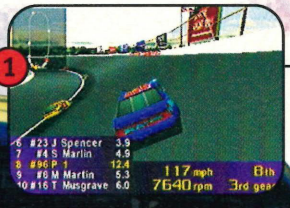
ACING '96

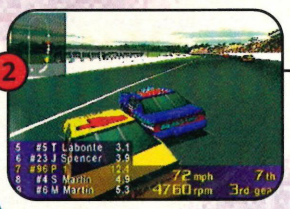
[Above] Boof! Late breaking always has an element of risk. Crushed bodywork is one of *NASCAR*'s best features.

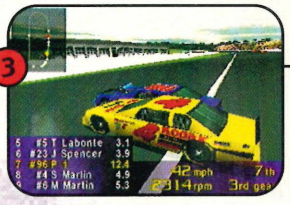
THE CARS

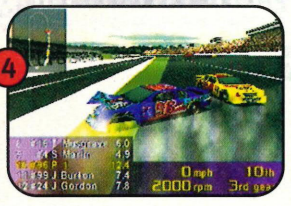
NASCAR gives you the option of driving in one of three cars, each with subtle handling differences. The Novice is fairly neutral, but the Expert model is all speed and no finesse. The game features no way to customise them as in the PC version. This is a shame.



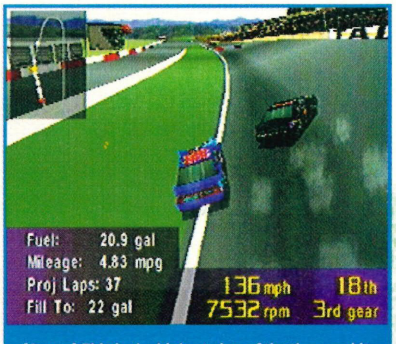




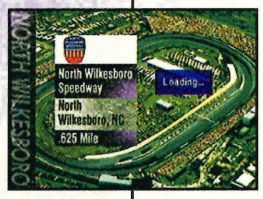


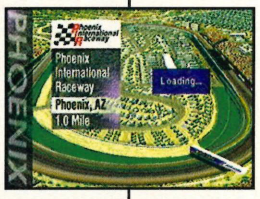


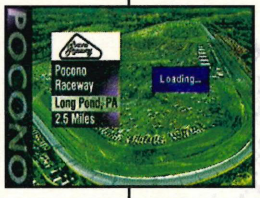
[Above] Most of the circuits are simple ovals where the only danger is slamming into the wall. Collisions like this damage the wheels and suspension.

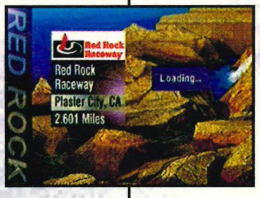


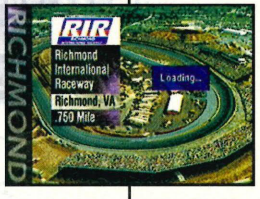
[Above] This is the highest view of the three and it allows you to see more of the track ahead as well as behind. As you can see you can call up the race menus at any time.

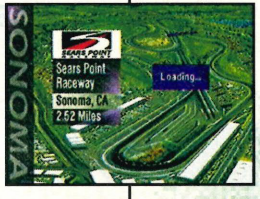


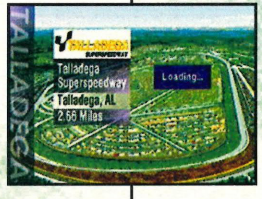


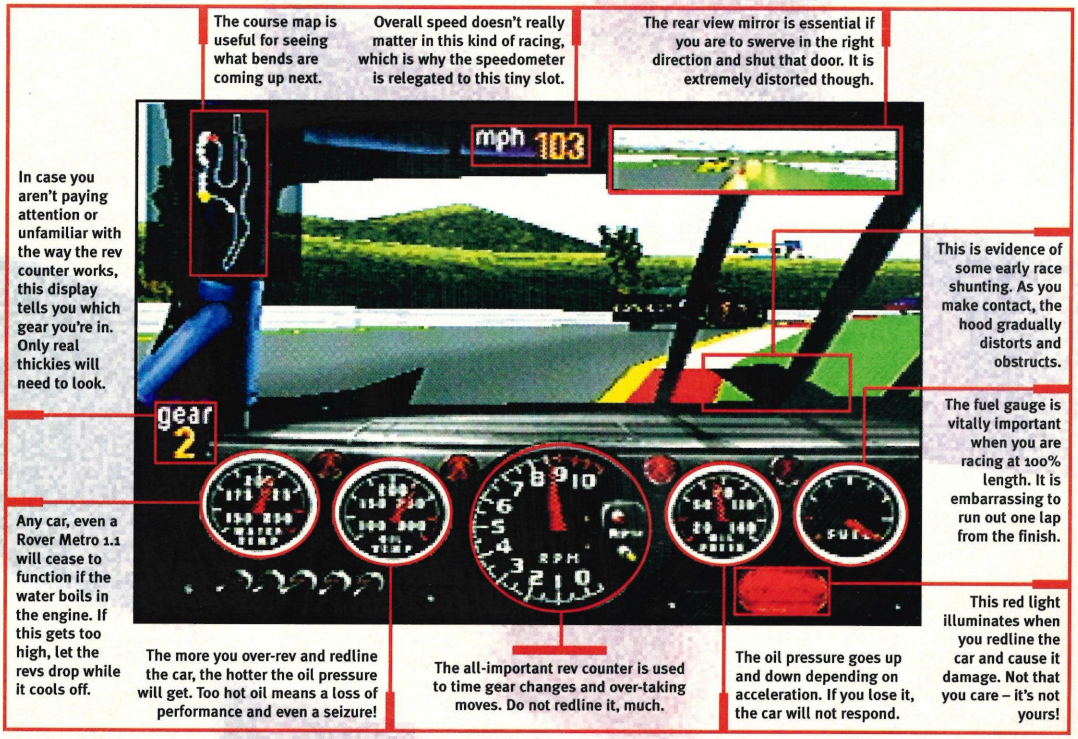












in keeping with all other racing games, has included a whining medley of tedious cock rock. When will people realise that you want to hear the engine during in a racing game – you don't see Damon Hill slapping on a bit of Thin Lizzy as he exits the pits do you?

Out on the blacktop and initially all looks good. The graphics are bright and colourful and move at a fair old pace. Of the three views, the in-car is the best because you get a great idea of how the car is performing and when it is being over-stressed. There are some clever touches, like when you shunt another car, the hood (it is American after all) bends up to obscure your view and make the racing even more difficult. I particularly like the way body panels fly all over the place and tyres can be ripped off. On a 78 lap race, you've got to be very careful to survive to the end – not easy when everyone else on the track wants you dead.

Cruiser

Of course all that car dynamism and wreckage means major slowdown when you go sideways into the middle of a pack of cars, and this is *NASCAR Racing's* only real fault. Get more than four guys in front of you and your smooth progress is suddenly interrupted by Jerry the Jerk from Jerkytown. Also, lest you forget, because the majority of the tracks are simple ovals, a championship season of 20 races can be an incredibly boring series of long left turns.

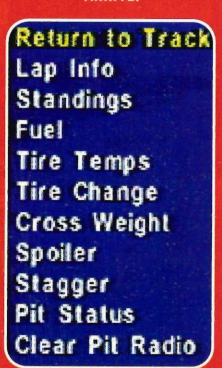
"The cars muster over 700bhp and make a noise not unlike a 747 with a stubbed toe!"

NASCAR Racing is a game for racing purists. Casual players will find the options and over-sensitive control method off-putting. This is *no Ridge Racer Revolution*, nor does it have the immediate appeal of *DD2*, and I am surprised that Papyrus didn't include the 'paint your own car' option from the PC. Surely that could have been saved to the memory card?

If you're looking for a racing game with more meat on its bones, then *NASCAR* is definitely worth a spin but, like the sport, it is an acquired taste.

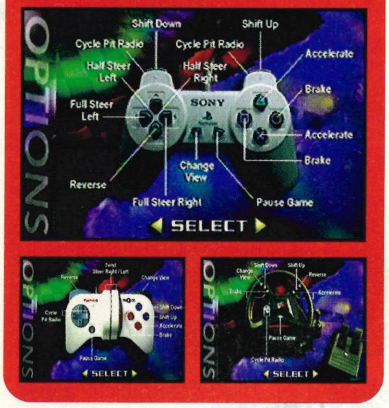
PIT RADIO

A CLEVER TOUCH IS THE PIT RADIO, WHICH CAN BE USED TO PLAN PIT-STOPS IN ADVANCE OR ORDER TYRE CHANGES WELL BEFORE YOU ARRIVE.



CONTROLS

AS MENTIONED IN OUR EXCLUSIVE NEWS STORY WAY BACK IN ISSUE 12, *NASCAR RACING* ALLOWS YOU TO PLAY WITH JOYPAD, NEGCON AND PSX STEERING WHEEL. BOTH ANALOGUE CONTROLLERS ENHANCE THE PLAYABILITY OF THE GAME BECAUSE YOU DON'T HAVE TO KEEP ADJUSTING YOUR COURSE WITH THE D-PAD. STEERING WHEEL IS BEST BECAUSE YOU GET PEDALS AS WELL, AND THERE'S NOTHING LIKE STOMPING ON THE GAS AND HEARING THOSE TYRES SQUEAL!



PLAY

LOOKS	8
SOUNDS	4
GAMEPLAY	8
VALUE	7
BHP	8

PLAYED **80%**

Pedal to the drawing board

ALTERNATIVELY:
DESTRUCTION DERBY 2 (82%)
ANDRETTI RACING '97 (74%)

"Bloody marvellous!..."

"...playability that sucks you in like a French kiss!..."

PlayStation Magazine STARPLAYER

PLAY CLASSIC

"...it's so refreshing to finally see games on the PlayStation that have lasting playability..."

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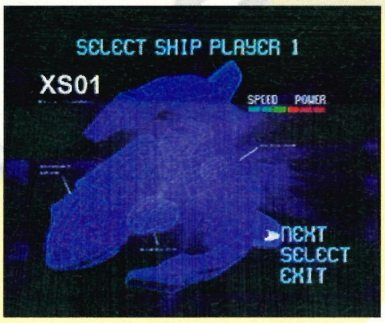
SPOT THE DIFFERENCE!

There are three ships to control in *X2*, each boasting slightly (and I mean slightly) different speed and strength ratings. The designs are not radically different and you could be forgiven for not even finding the other two.



X2

HERE IT IS, THE PLAYSTATION'S VERY FIRST *R-TYPE* CLONE. IT'S ABOUT GOD-DAMNED TIME...

WRITTEN BY DAMIAN BUTT

Sweat is pouring from my hands, the joypad is awash with persperation making it as slippery as an eel. On-screen is Team 17's *X2* (formerly *Project X2*), a good old fashioned 2-D shoot-'em-up which rips off just about every other game of this genre and then piles on even more insanity. This surely must be the ultimate shoot-'em-up, if only for the fact that you couldn't possibly cram anything more onto the screen.

Lavishly presented with a techno soundtrack, futuristic menus and a catchy logo, the gameplay of *X2* is simple to grasp and difficult to leave. You control one of three nimble ships throughout ten horizontal and vertical scrolling levels, each packed to the rafters with squadron upon squardon of funky looking alien ships. Limb-seperating death comes from all angles, with missile launchers popping up from the sands, ships spiralling in from every conceivable angle, and natural obstacles such as rock formations proving to be a constant niggle.

"Everything including the kitchen sink, shelf units and matching panelled doors is thrown at you!"

NO, NO, NO, NO...

To survive, you must keep your thumb firmly pressed on the fire button, and when something really monstrous appears, like a mid-level boss, or a mighty alloy leviathon, let loose with one of your smart bombs. Vape an entire run of similar looking aliens and a power-up is left behind (usually right in the middle of something deadly) and once collected it adds to your arsenal or speeds you up. From the standard laser you can bolt on a ripple laser, flame-thrower, multiple missile pods, echo guns and the impressive looking lightning ray, which sends out a constant stream of electricity; striking those closest in range. You couldn't ask for a better looking shoot-'em-up than *X2*, and at times the mass of high speed objects and swirls of colour look more like a Jean Michel Jarre concert than a game!

You've got to hand it to those Team 17 boys, they know how to make a playable game and have done so since the early Amiga days, but only now has the PlayStation's great scope for visual effects meant that their wacky ideas can become a reality. Aside from the breath-taking weaponry, the backgrounds are quite superb, particularly the first level city, complete with blitz-like searchlights, and everything from the smallest enemy fighter to the gargantuan end-of-level guardians wouldn't look out of place in one of the new *Star Wars* movies. But of course there is a catch...

...THERE'S NO LIMIT!

Unfortunately, unless you like staring at computer art, you are going to want to play *X2*, and it is five seconds into level one that its only acheiles heel rears its head. To put it simply, everything including the kitchen sink, shelf units and matching panelled doors is thrown at you; making it

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Team 17
Customer support: (01924) 267776
Price: £39.99
Release date: December '96

ONE PLAYER MUTIPLE PLAYERS

The first end-of-level boss is this huge base ship which fires missiles and front lasers at you. All's well until...

It opens like a seed pod and suddenly spews laser death from every orifice! Aim for the middle section to defeat it.

[Above] The boss for the ice level is this huge mini-gun-toting robot. There's no set strategy, just shoot the crap out of it and avoid its twin guns. In this shot we see a super bomb being let off.

impossible to survive parts of the level. The only way to progress in this game is to keep ploughing through, not really avoiding anything (because you can't see what to avoid) until you reach the end. The password system means that once a level is completed, you never need to see it again, and the levels are relatively short. After a few goes you realise that being clever or agile is pointless, and you regard losing a life as inevitable, rather than a mistake on your part.

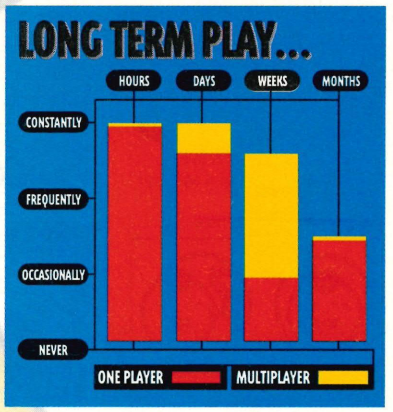
The problem escalates with the simultaneous two player mode (stolen from the Mega Drive game *Bio Ship Paladin*), which doubles the number of weapon discharges and eliminates both players' chance of ever avoiding anything. It also gets very annoying when tooled up to the nines with every gun the games has to offer, they still don't kill even the lowliest of minions.

X2 pulls rabbit after rabbit out of the hat of PlayStation tricks, and although it is very well done, and a definite boon for the console, it can be unfairly difficult to all but the most skilled of players (or those on hard drugs). This is the ultimate blaster, but some tweaks definitely need to be made for us mere mortals.

[Above] Remember these tentacles from the game *Salamander*? You must of course stay at the top of the screen, and that's just where the enemy wants you.

LOOKS FAMILIAR?

If you can't beat them, join them goes the saying, but Team 17 has taken this idea one step further. If you can't beat them, fuse them together. X2's varied horizontal and sideways scrolling levels pillage many ideas from classic shoot-'em-ups of old. The beefy power-ups and guardians from *R-Type*, tentacles and interactive backgrounds from *Salamander* and *Armalyte*, the realistic military angle from *UN Squadron*, and finally the power-ups which get change the longer you leave them in the open air from *Znaps*. But this is no bad thing. It does beg the question though, are there any new ideas left?



PLAY

Looks	●●●●●●●●●●
Sounds	●●●●●●●●○○
Gameplay	●●●●●●●●○○
Value	●●●●●○○○○○
Panic	●●●●●●●●○○

PLAYED 77%

Guy Fowkes night times a million!

ALTERNATIVELY:
Starfighter 3000 (85%)
Tunnel B1 (87%)

ROBOTR

ARCADE GAMEPLAY FROM THE EIGHTIES? LESS STRATEGY THAN WAKING UP IN THE MORNING? SURELY NOT! IT CAN'T BE! IT IS. ROBOTRON X IN ALL ITS 32-BIT GLORY.

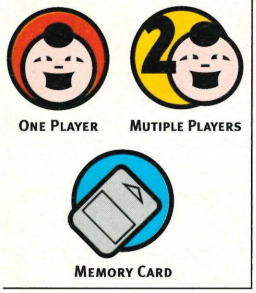
Written By Asam Ahmad

Eat lead blood-sucking robotrons! Yup, it's arcade gameplay old-skool style. With one of the highest body-counts per second of any videogame ever created, how can *Robotron X* lose?! A brand new postmodern 3-D interpretation of Eugene Jarvis' 1982 classic, *Robotron X* takes a proud place on the podium as one of the most frenetic shoot-'em-ups available for the PlayStation. It's 2084. The robotrons are here. Let's kick butt!

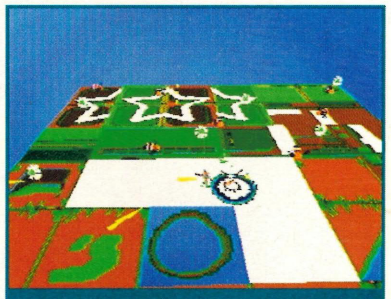
Robotron X is perhaps one of the simplest shoot-'em-ups you could ever conceive of. Your job is simple – to save the human race from the ever-encroaching robot forces. The action takes place in an almost endless number (200 actually) of single room arenas, with no place to escape to. You're stuck, but then so are your fellow humans. All you have is your trusty raygun and all you can do is shoot. Sounds bleak, doesn't it? What it is in fact, is fantastic.

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: GT Interactive
Customer support: 0171 258 3791
Price: £44.99
Release date: Out now



[ABOVE] The three-way fire upgrade only lasts a short time, but its effects are something to behold .



[ABOVE] A bonus level. Fast, buzzing bees fly around you. Shoot 'em before you get the sharp end of their poisoned points.

AIM, FIRE, REPEAT!

Robotron X is a level based romp where all you have to do is shoot, shoot, shoot. Along the way, you might want to save a few foolish humans that happen to be wandering around, and perhaps boost your presence with few short-lived but valuable weapon power-ups, but in essence this game is all about destroying as many human-killing robots as you can, as fast as you can, before they get you. Nope, there ain't much in the way of strategy. Nope, your mission doesn't change from one level to another. And no, the humans never learn!

The beauty of *Robotron 2084*, and this Nineties reincarnation, is the simplicity of the whole affair. With so little to master, it is purely about lightning fast reactions and a nervously-charged trigger finger. Your only aim is to last as long as you can! As you progress through each level, you'll encounter more and more outlandish robots, plus many new ones all with different abilities. Some will home in on your position, some will capture humans and turn them against you, hell some will fire homing missiles at you, leaving a few mines around ready to blow you up at your first faltering step. It's all quite mad and the pressure builds constantly, but what makes this game so addictive is the pure adrenalin rush it forces upon you.

ELECTRICALLY CHARGED

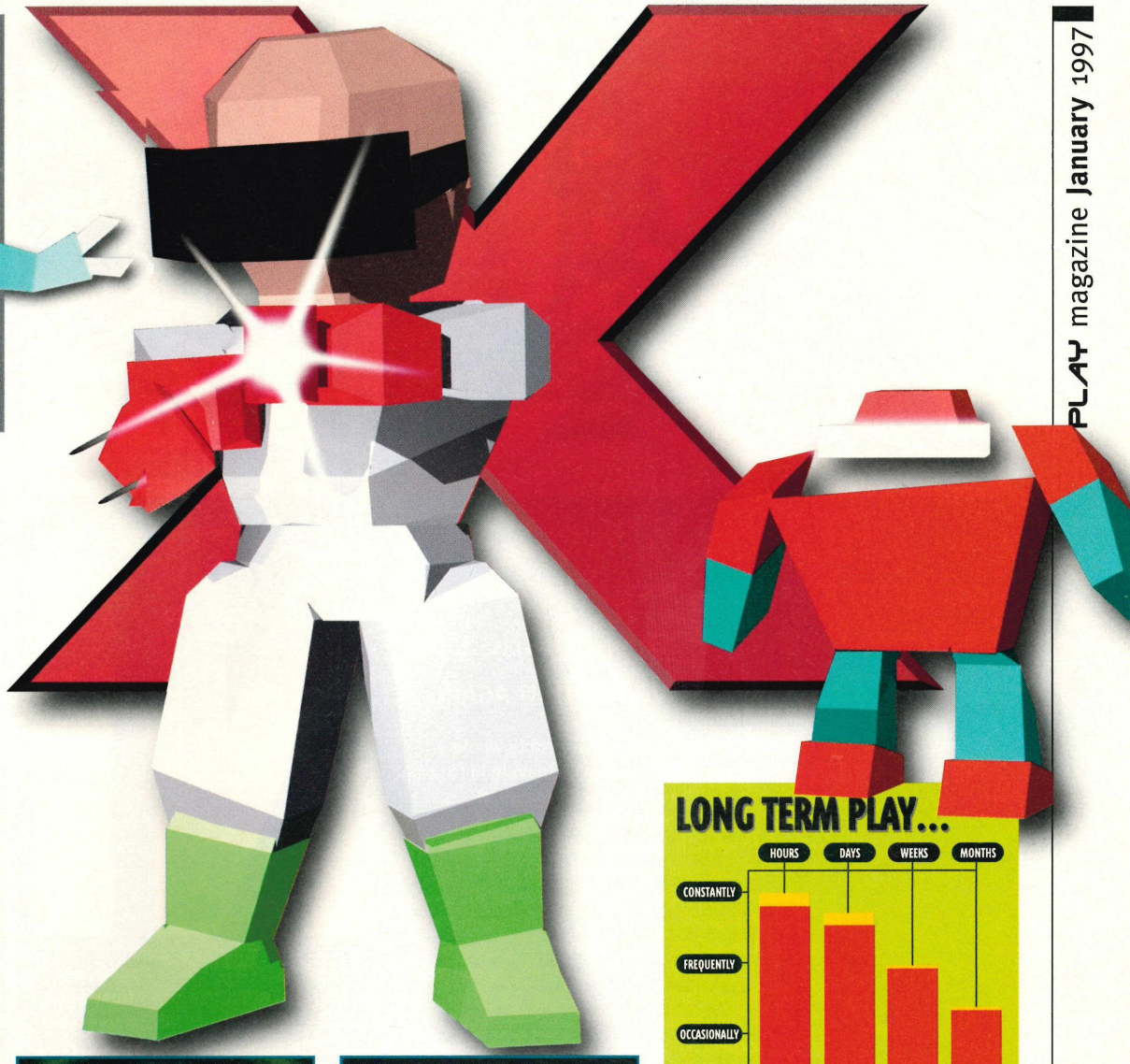
All this arcade action is further reinforced by a pumping techno soundtrack. If there was ever a game for which this kind of music was perfectly suited, *Robotron X* is it. As you're wandering around urgently looking for a power-up, herding the increasing numbers of homing aliens around your position as you constantly strafe and turn in concentric circles, techno just seems to heighten the whole electric atmosphere of the game.

And as if the hypnotic beats weren't enough to send you into an elevated mental utopia, behind the simple geometric play areas, tunnel-like visuals entrance the mind with subtle hypnotic graphics designed to draw you further and further into the game as you play. The functional line-based nature of the screen displays pay homage to the early arcade

WHEN *ROBOTRON 2084* WAS FIRST RELEASED BACK IN THE EARLY EIGHTIES, THE ARCADE MACHINE BOASTED TWO JOYSTICKS – ONE FOR THE CONTROL OF YOUR MAN AND ONE TO CONTROL THE DIRECTION OF FIRE. THE PLAYSTATION INCARNATION USES THE STANDARD JOYPAD THE BEST IT CAN, WITH YOUR MAN'S CONTROLS USING THE STANDARD D-PAD, AND THE FIRING CONTROLS ARRANGED ON THE RIGHT-HAND SIDE BUTTONS PROVIDING, IN COMBINATION, THE SAME EIGHT-WAY FIRING AS THE ARCADE.

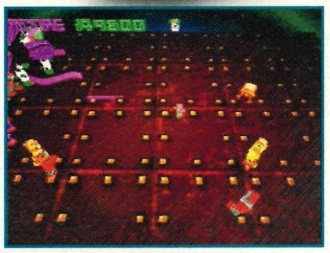
THIS WORKS WELL, EXCEPT FOR THE RSI-LIKE THUMB-ACHE THAT DEVELOPS AFTER A SHORT WHILE. IN ORDER TO COMPENSATE FOR THIS SOMEWHAT, ANOTHER OPTION IS ALSO INCLUDED TO ALLOW YOU TO USE TWO JOYPADS IF YOU DESIRE, WITH THE FIRST'S D-PAD TO CONTROL YOUR MAN AND THE SECOND PAD'S D-PAD TO CONTROL FIRE. ALTHOUGH THIS ISN'T THAT MUCH BETTER THAN USING ONE PAD, IT DOES MEAN THAT IF YOU HAVE TWO JOYSTICK-STYLE CONTROLS, YOU CAN HOOK THEM UP TO PLAY ROBOTRON X THE WAY IT WAS MEANT TO BE PLAYED. HOORAH!

ON



"Lightning fast reactions and a nervously-charged trigger finger!"

[Above] A-ha! I'm protected by a shield. Try me now you blood-sucking robotrons!!!



heritage of the game. Although the graphics are relatively plain and simple, as you get further on in the game the line-based approach grows into something more substantial with texture-mapped floors. However, given the simplicity of the on-screen action, the game still shamefully exhibits signs of slow-down when the number of characters on-screen rises. This is the main criticism I have for an otherwise superbly interpreted rendition of the archetype *Robotron 2084*. It won't appeal to everyone – many might find it too simple, perhaps banal. That's probably true – it is very basic. However, it is a whole lot of fun.

PLAY

Looks	●●●●●●●○○○
Sounds	●●●●●●●●○○
Gameplay	●●●●●●●●●○
Value	●●●●●●●●○○
Thumb-ache	●●●●●●●●●●

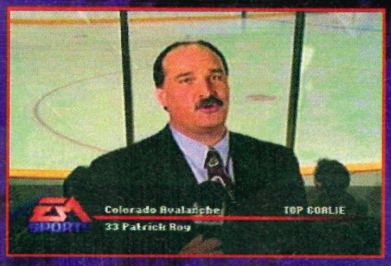
PLAYED **85%**

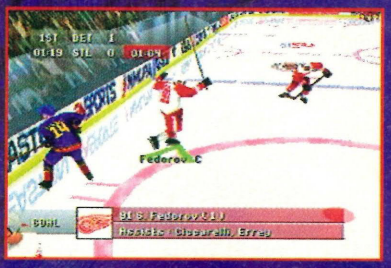
Manic massacre madness!

Alternatively:
Williams Arcades' Greatest Hits (84%)
X2 (81%)

Written By Asam Ahmad

[Above] Puck-off dude, I'm gonna win this face-off matey! The graphics are well-detailed and fairly fluid to boot.





We've had FIFA, PGA, NFL, NBA and more. Attack of the mutant killer acronyms? Nope, just EA in boring game name saga. Ooops, they've done it again.

NHL

Puckering up

is what most people would associate with moving in to snog a chick in a nightclub. Not so with the Canadians. Nope, since 1850, they've been pucking-off in teams of six, against six other similarly surly, skate-wearing sportsmen brandishing sticks, for fun. It's ice hockey of course, and after the delays that prevented the '96 version appearing, EA has finally managed to get it together for *NHL '97*. And it's good.

The game is pretty much what you'd expect from the licence masters at EA Sports. With the NHL licence, all the teams from the various divisions in the National Hockey League are included, as well as all the players with varying attributes in several key departments. You can also customise or add new players which is a nice touch, but only hardcore fans will probably want to develop this option. With several play modes and all the extraneous options you'd expect taken for granted, let's get on with the game.

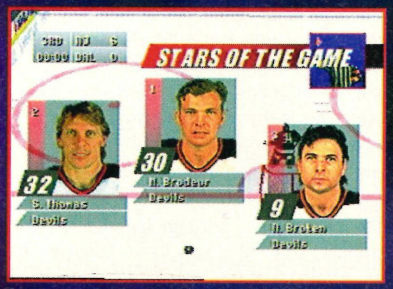
Ice, ice, baby

The way it plays is the most critical part of a game, and thankfully *NHL '97* is indeed very fluid. Of course the obligatory thumb-ache manifests itself after a while, but it's nothing you wouldn't expect from a game like this. The inertia of the players has been well calculated and above all, the AI of the other players in the team is high enough to ensure you have logical passing/shooting options most of the time. Most importantly of all though, EA has wisely decided to make sure the most realistic aspect of the game has been included – fighting! Yup, get a little irate on skates and you can engage in a scrappy punch-up with the full complement of comedy sounds for authenticity. This aspect is a most welcome addition, especially to relieve the stresses of losing. It's not *Tekken 2*, but it is fun!

Perhaps a little less well developed is the in-game sound. Limited to crowd noises, the odd 'schliding' and 'schlapping' sounds and the occasional (redundant) piece of commentary, it isn't particularly inspiring. It would have been better to be able to perhaps add some more useful commentary or to have some background music playing other than the obligatory organ. Saying that though, in between each period you do get a rather rotund moustachioed bloke spouting some commentary-cum-advice, but these FMV bits do get very repetitive. Thankfully you can turn him off.

Holiday on ice?

Graphically, *NHL '97* is fine,and everything moves at a cracking pace. The polygon players have been motion captured to create a decent illusion of real hockey motion. The detail level is high, especially with each and every player having their own numbers and names texture-mapped



PLAY Information

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Customer support: 01753 549442
Price: £44.99
Release date: Out now

One Player | Mutiple Players | Memory Card | Multi-Tap

97

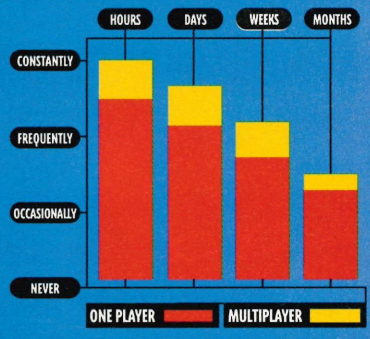
"The most realistic aspect of the game has been included – fighting!"

on to their backs, however, unfortunately, they all seem to have developed from the same zygote – their hair colour and faces are identical!

The presentation of the rest of the game is just what you'd expect from Electronic Arts. The intro sequences are amongst some of the smoothest FMV bits you'll ever see, the menu interface system is fancy but functional, and the whole package just oozes television-like quality. With very few bad points apart from the minor niggles noted above, *NHL '97* is yet another quality title from the EA Sports stable. If you're into hockey, this is certainly your best PlayStation option, and even if you're not, but like the idea of a fast, frantic sports simulation for up to eight players, *NHL '97* will still provide much enjoyment.

[Above] Ice hockey is a very fast moving game, so the replay function can come in useful to relive glory moments, and to watch tactics.

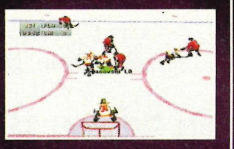
LONG TERM PLAY...



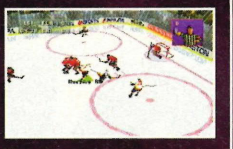
[Left] As you can see from this helmet view, all the players seem to have the same faces. It would have been nice to see some variety.

VIEW TO A SPILL

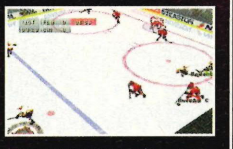
We're all used to multiple-camera modes in PlayStation games, mainly due to the freedom that 3-D generated polygon worlds allow. So it comes as no surprise then that *NHL '97* does indeed have its fair share of 'em to suit different tastes. Here's a little run-through.



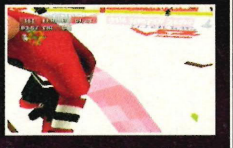
The classic view comes in three flavours of elevation, if you're used to playing up and down the screen, this view is the one for you.



The horizontal sideline camera also comes in three sizes, again changing the camera height for each one.



For those that don't like to show their orientation preferences, a clever 'sitting on the fence' isometric mode could be the answer.



This is the most interesting. A first-person perspective mode, with the camera lodged firmly inside the helmet of the player you're controlling. Yup, it plays as bizarrely as it sounds, but at least the feature is there. Okay, so you can't turn quickly enough, it's confusing when you switch from one player to another, you can't work out where you are on the rink, you can't actually see the puck when it's in your possession, and as such, it probably has no practical use at all. But I like it.

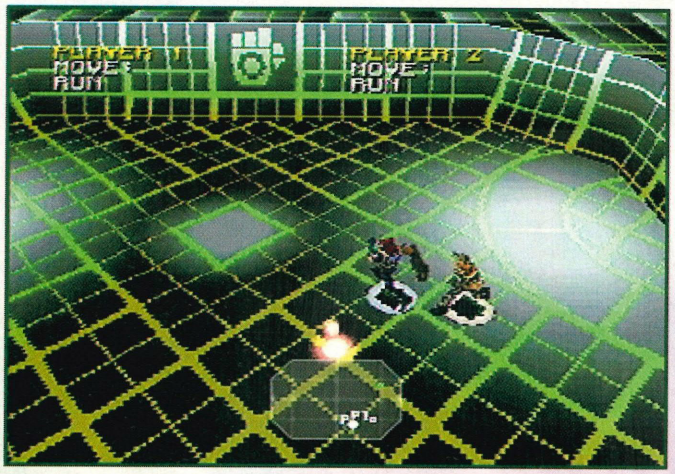
PLAY

Looks	●●●●●●●●●○
Sounds	●●●●●●●○○○
Gameplay	●●●●●●●●●○
Value	●●●●●●●●○○
Fights	●●●●●●●●○○

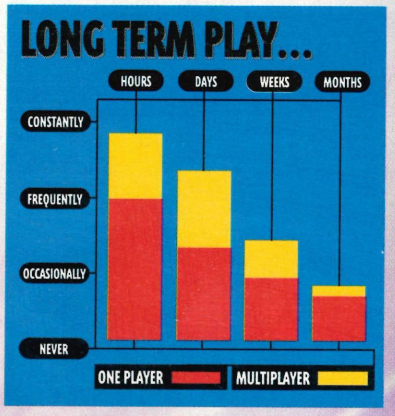
PLAYED **86%**

Fighting fit, puck slappin' shenanigans

ALTERNATIVELY:
NHL Face Off (78%)
NHL Powerplay Hockey '97 (82%)



[Above] Goooooaaaaall!! Player one has just scored a long-distance goal, indicated by the red glow surrounding the globe on the left.



[Below] Several different power-ups can be bought pre-match, as well collected throughout the game.

Will the real Bitmap Brothers please raise their hands and come frontstage. There are a few too many imposters in the building...

PITBALL

"*Pitball* is dry, lacks substance and longevity..."

Written By Asam Ahmad

Nobody's ever happy, are they? If they're not complaining about fluctuations in beer prices around the country, they'll probably be complaining about the sheer complexity of today's games. Okey dokey, let's get back to basics. Remember *Speedball*? Yup? Then you'll be interested to hear that the PlayStation now has its own version. Sort of.

The basics of *Pitball* are simple. It's a futuristic two-on-two basketball-style game set, quite literally in a pit, on various planets around the galaxy. It's a full contact sport, so not for the faint-hearted, and progressing through the tournament will involve plenty of foul play. Attacks and special moves need to be mastered, and are indeed encouraged, with a handy training mode to help you build up your skills. Apart from your standard abilities, you can pick-up equipment such as jet boots and special fighting gloves to power-up with.

Pitball Terrier?

Now for the crunch. Despite the simplicity of the concept, *Pitball* doesn't play as smoothly as it could. Fluidity is lost somewhat by the torpid movement of your players around the ambitiously large 3-D arena. For the number of players the arena is far too big, but worse is the fact that your guys move so unresponsively despite any pick-ups, it's like they're wearing concrete boots!

The fact that the game is inherently multi-player means that it does have an extended lifespan. On its own *Pitball* is dry, lacks substance and longevity, but get a few mates round and up to four players can battle it out for a bit of head-to-head mayhem. In this mode the game can be fun, but still the action-based nature is hampered by the floaty sluggishness of the players' motion and as a result can get tedious.

Pitball's a good attempt at emulating an old classic, but the 3-D translation has taken its toll on the playability. A game like this needs speed, and *Pitball* could well do with powdering its nose.

PLAY Information

Publisher: Warner Interactive
Customer support: 0171 391 4300
Price: £44.99
Release date: Out now

PLAY

Looks	7
Sounds	7
Gameplay	7
Value	6
Tedium	8

PLAYED 66%

More like Pitball Poodle

Alternatively:
Blast Chamber 82%)
Riot (Jan/Feb '97)

BUBSY 3D

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Telstar Electronic Studios
Customer support: (01932) 222232
Price: £44.99
Release date: December

One Player | Two Players

WARNING! THIS GAME IS NOT FOR ADULTS, IT IS STRICTLY FOR THE YOUNGER END OF THE PLAYSTATION SPECTRUM AND HAS BEEN REVIEWED AS SUCH. THINK OF BUBSY 3D AS A 'MY FIRST SONY GAME' AND YOU CAN'T GO WRONG.

Written By Kane out of Kung Fu

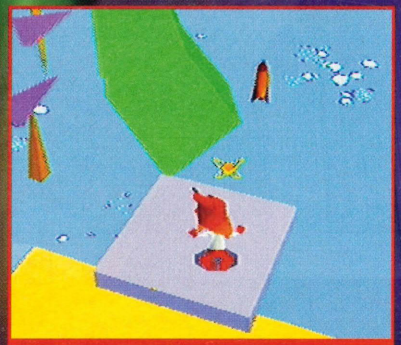
Do the words "platform game" mean anything to you? Of course they do because since the early Eighties every home computer and console that has ever seen the light of day has been force-fed a diet of these types of games. Things have moved on ever so slightly since then (although the dreaded "please wait, game is loading" screen seems to have made somewhat of a resurgence), we now get fancy FMV intros, pseudo 3-D in-game graphics and 32-bit speed and fluidity. Oh yeah, and we also get *Bubsy 3D*.

Bobcat or Topcat

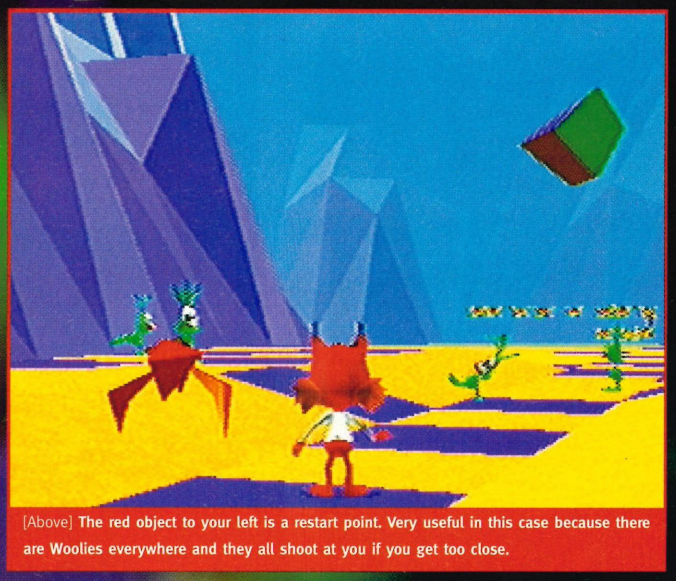
Due to the fact that there is no other game out on the PlayStation that can claim to be a truly inter-dimensional affair (yeah yeah, I can hear the shouts of Sir *Crash of Bandicoot*, but isn't that really only a tarted up 2-D engine hiding behind a 3-D premise?) *Bubsy 3D* nips in and steals the 3-D crown. What *Bubsy* does is place the player in 16 levels of total 3-D environment that can be panned around the full 360° limits of the playing area. Basically, this means that you get full freedom of movement and a strange uneasy feeling of vertigo. Let *Crash* have a go at emulating that.

Lager, Lager, Lager

The game is played out over a modeled polygonal landscape that not only features mountain ranges and plateaus, but also platforms in the sky. Look up into the lunar firmament and you'll see a multitude of intricately designed walkways that are all geared towards taking you to new heights. Switches, enemies, secret levels and a whole host of other platform staples are all there but, when combined with the super-slick 3-D engine, it somehow seems a lot more, er, real. You've still got to jump onto the enemy beings' heads but there is also more of a puzzle element to this game that most of its contemporaries. Oh yes, and did I mention that there is a two player mode? Get a mate around and one of you can have a go at controlling the bobcat while the other takes potshots at him and tries to snuff out some of his nine lives. It takes a little getting used to, but once you've sussed it it's great fun. *Bubsy 3D* may not be everyone's cup of tea, but younger players will be enthralled by its bright colours and simple gameplay, even if adults reach straight for the sick bucket.



[Above] Yes, we know it looks like the illegitimate son of a ZX-81 and a Simon Says machine, but *Bubsy 3D* be extremely playable, if you're a very young PlayStation owner.



[Above] The red object to your left is a restart point. Very useful in this case because there are Woolies everywhere and they all shoot at you if you get too close.

"Have a go at controlling the bobcat while the other takes potshots at him!"

PLAY

Looks	●●●●●●●●●●
Sounds	●●●●●●●●●●
Gameplay	●●●●●●●●●●
Value	●●●●●●●●●●
Whiskers	●●●●●●●●●●

PLAYED 82%

3-D's comin' home!!

ALTERNATIVELY:
CRASH BANDICOOT (84%)
JUMPING FLASH 2 (86%)

PlayStation
空山基

[size] is everything

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STATIONMASTER, PLAY MAGAZINE, PARAGON HOUSE, ST PETER'S ROAD, BOURNEMOUTH, DORSET BH1 2JS.

STAR GLADIATOR

Invisible Walls

If you beat the game on any skill level, go to the options screen and a new option will have appeared that allows you to turn the invisible walls on or off. This basically means that there'll be no more Ring Outs.

Fighting In The Dark

Select your character as per normal and then press Down + L2 + R2 and hold them until the fight starts. You'll now notice a distinct lack of light as you commence the fight.

Fight As Bilstein

This cheat can only be accessed in one player mode, but once it has worked you'll be able to access the character in two player mode. On the character select screen, go to Hayato and press and hold Select. Now move to Gore and press ×, ●, ×, ●, ■, ■, ■, ▲, ▲, ▲, × + ●. Bilstein will now appear to the right of Gore.

Fight As Kappah

Once again this cheat can only be accessed in one player mode, but once the cheat has worked, you'll be able to access the character in two player mode. You must perform the Bilstein cheat before you can get this to work. On the character select screen, go to Bilstein and press and hold Select. Now move to Hayato and press ●, ■, ▲, ■, ×, ■, ▲, ■, ●, ■, × + ▲. Kappah will now appear to the left of Hayato.

GUNSHIP

Invulnerable Mode

At the Loading Screen after you get you mission orders, press and hold L1+L2+R1+R2 for the entire load time. When the Mission Screen appears you'll see the word "Cheat" in the upper/left corner.

IMPACT RACING

Invincibility

Go into the password section and put in the words I.AM.IMORTAL and you will become invincible.

DIE HARD TRILOGY

DH1 – Bazooka

In the first level, shoot the blue car to get a bazooka.

Cheats

DH1

Silly mode

Pause the game and hold the R2 button. Then press Down, ●, ●, Down, ▲, Down.

Flat shade mode

Pause the game and hold the R2 button. Then press Down, Up, Left, Left, Down, Up, Left, Left, Down, Up, Left, Left.

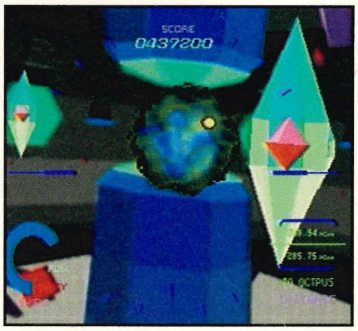
FERGUS!

Pause the game and hold the R2 button. Then press ●, Down, Down, ▲, ×, ■.

STARBLADE ALPHA

Rapid Fire Laser

At the Main Title Screen enter Up, Up, Down, Down, O, Triangle, Square while the letters are moving together. You'll hear a "Boom." While playing the game press X to access the laser



TEKKEN 2

Mini-cheat

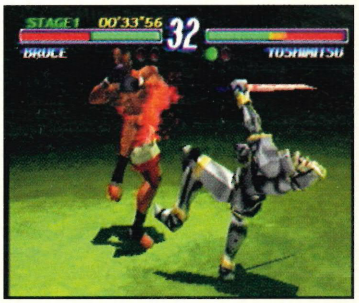
Just a small little cheat for Tekken 2:

If, having obtained all of the secret characters, you press Up + Select when choosing a character – lo and behold you will enable SKY MODE!

You must hold down this button combination until the fight actually starts, at which point you will hear a 'punch' sample to confirm that the cheat has been activated...

Basically it allows you to fight in a Mortal Kombat style, with certain uppercut-type moves resulting in your opponent flying high up into the sky. For some strange reason it seems to work with sweeps as well...

Here's an easier way to get Roger/Alex. First get all the players selectable. That is including Kazuya and Devil/Angel. Now all you have to do is go to practice mode and do one 10 hit combo with any caracter. Make sure that you turn the tool bar at the bottom of the screen where you can see the buttons to press. The code will not work if that is not turned on. You should hear the word "great."



SIM CITY 2000

One Million Bucks

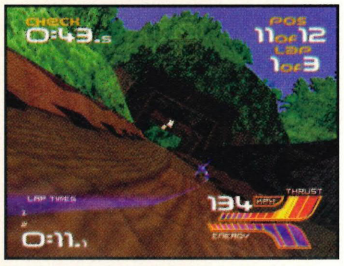
1. Load or Start a city
2. Once you're in the game, access City Info / Budget
3. At the Budget Screen, press & hold R1
4. While holding R1, press X, ●, ▲, ■
5. Release R1
6. Hold down L1
7. Press X, ●, ▲, ■.
8. Release L1
9. Hold down R2
10. Press X, ●, ▲, ■
11. Release R2
12. Hold down L2
13. Press X, ■, ▲, ●
14. Release L2
15. You should hear a cheer, and your cash will increase to a million bucks! Get building that city!

WIPEOUT 2097

Passwords

Challenge I: ■●■▲●▲▲●■■■▲×■

Challenge II: ■●■▲●▲×■×▲▲×●●



SOVIET STRIKE

Passwords

Level 2: GRAND THEFT

Level 4: CHERNOBYL

Level 5: CIVIL WAR

TOBAL NO.1

Kill HOM

To make HOM shut himself down, press Down+R1+L1 during a fight

TUNNEL B1

Cheat

Pressing L1+R1+L2+R2+■+●+X+▲ at the same times gives all weapons. This may only work on the US version.

VICTORY BOXING

Secret Characters

Jack-In-The-Box & Snake – Fight your way up to the Champ in Open style to obtain Jack as a secret character in Exhibition mode. Then defend your title five times to obtain Snake.

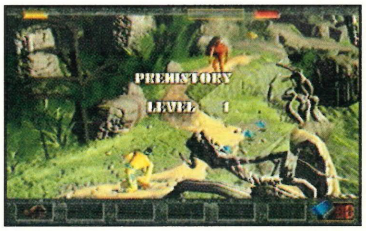
Kiki & Mimi & Edward King – Fight your way up to the Champ in Peek-A-Boo style to access Kiki & Mimi as a secret character in Exhibition mode. Then defend your title five times to obtain your very own promoter, Edward King as a secret boxer.

Roboxer Betal & Carrie the Bunny – Fight your way up to the Champ in the Detroit style to access a demented robot called Roboxer as a secret character in Exhibition mode. Then defend your title five times to access the lovely Carrie as a secret boxer.

TIME COMMANDO

Secret Level

Type this at the password screen: COMMANDO



Q&A

A FEW MORE READERS, DESPERATE FOR HELP AND ADVICE GET THE Q&A TREATMENT THIS MONTH. IF YOU'VE ANY PROBLEMS RELATING TO THE WORLD OF THE PLAYSTATION, GAMES, PERIPHERALS OR OTHER PRODUCTS, THEN WRITE IN AT THE ADDRESS BELOW. AND PLEASE, NO MORE L

Dear Play,

Do you have any cheats for Shockwave Assault by Electronic Arts?

N Mirza, London

Indeed there is Mr Mirza. Pause the game and enter a password, then quit out (Select button) and you should be able to access the following codes.

Code activation: ●, ■, X

Special laser: ●, ●, X ●, ▲, ■

Refuels you once: ●, X, ■

Invincibility: ■, X, ▲

Dear Play,

I have just bought *Final Doom* and am stuck on level six, could you possibly furnish me with some passwords for this perhaps even the later levels (creep, creep).

P Booty, Bristol

Try these for size Mr Booty.

Level 6: O4MSK2X921

Level 7: YTTLCXXLXV

Level 8: O9SMBYO4YW

Level 9: 7KKBLDV53

Dear Play,

I'm completely stuck on level one of *Soviet Strike* which I bought recently. I keep running out of lives and there doesn't seem to be any way of getting more. Can you help as I am going out of my mind – how can the game be this tough?

D Murphy, Dublin

Christmas has come early because if you go to the bottom right corner of the map you'll see Santa on his merry sleigh with his pack of reindeer, patiently waiting for landing clearance. If you shoot Santa's sleigh without killing him or his beasts you will get an extra life for your trouble. Also, once you've rescued your co-pilot from the prison camp, an outside toilet will appear near your base. Land on the pad near the bog, let your man do his business and when he emerges, blow it up to receive a box of sidewinders.

PART TWO

DIE HARD Trilogy

THE SECOND INSTALMENT OF OUR *DIE HARD TRILOGY* GUIDE TAKES MCCLANE SAFELY THROUGH THE TERRORIST-INFESTED DULLES AIRPORT.

SOLVED

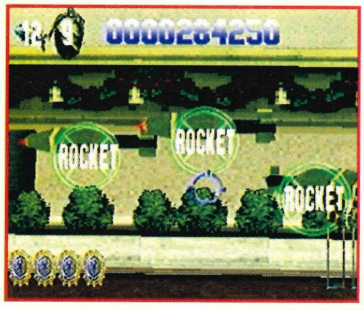
DIE HARDER

Level Guide

Level 1 – Terminal

1. Don't shoot a cab or cop car at the very start or you'll get a 'Major Disaster' message and the cops will start targeting you!

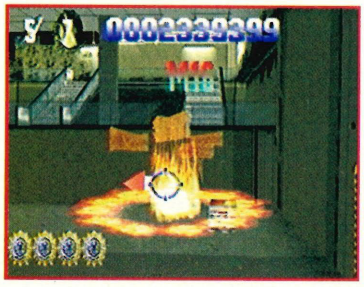
2. Shoot the helicopter at the beginning to get a second Beretta. Dual Berettas do awesome damage.
3. When the game starts if you avoid shooting any good guys, once you kill the bloke at the entrance booth with the girl hostage, you're taken back out into the car park area for some extras.
4. Kill the baddies hiding in the kiosk without getting hit and you'll get a Merry Christmas bonus and extra power-ups.
5. If you do well in the section where the taxis come crashing into the terminal, it scrolls to the right and you get a bunch of rockets.



6. When the Head Honcho turns up with his cronies, let loose with your rockets and grenades.

Level 2 – New Wing

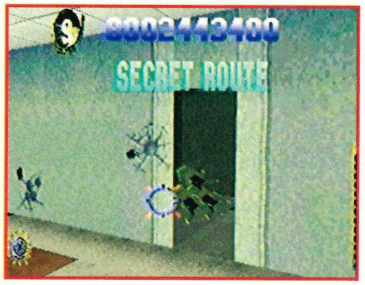
1. Shoot the wooden box on the shelves at the start for an M16.
2. Barrels can be shot to blow up nearby terrorists, but take care that no hostages are in range.
3. Do well on the catwalk section after going up the escalators and you're rewarded with three grenades and a medikit on the left – otherwise you get a load of baddies there.
4. A Gratuitous Violence bonus can be earned where you shoot at villains on the distant escalators and below. Shoot them all and you're rewarded with an M16 and some 'sitting duck' baddies to shoot with it.



5. Do well on the section where the baddies come up the escalators and you get a Secret Route bonus with tons of power-ups to shoot through the two doors opposite.
6. Once the Head Honcho is dispatched with rockets etc, you have to shoot some distant baddies to complete the level.

Level 3 – Tunnel

1. Watch out when shooting at the villains behind this cop, otherwise a salvo of rockets will come your way.
2. That bloke in the window is very tricky to shoot – better use a grenade.
3. Do well in the last section and you get a Gratuitous Violence bonus.
4. The Head Honcho appears just after the baddies pop up behind the close metal boxes.
5. Make sure you shoot the crates which fall from the ceiling: they contain medikits. A few more dead baddies and the level is over.



Level 4 – Runway

1. Shoot the chopper at the start for a Secret Route. This takes you to a tower with several power-up crates to shoot.
2. After scrambling over the plane, you come to this hangar where the Head Honcho pops up. Once he's dead, you get his AK47.

3. Do well in the hangar section and you're taken round the side and back for crateloads of extras!
4. Use rockets and grenades on the jeeps which race around.

5. The level ends with a helicopter firing missiles at you. Shoot the missiles while using rockets to knock the chopper out of the sky.

Level 5 – Plane Interior

1. After the first two baddies, four more come out of the woodwork, along with two hostages. The latter run towards you on the right, so you can use rockets or grenades on the left two villains.

2. Collect the shield from the baddies in the doorway and you can then afford to wait until this girl hostage is safely out of the way before picking off the gunman. behind her.
3. Shoot the brown crate on top of the darker one to receive a medikit. Down below it is a crate of explosive ammo.
4. You have to shoot the cabin crew: the game won't proceed until you do.

5. Once you've shot all the baddies teeming through the cabin doorway, you'll get a Major Disaster. Don't worry, McClane will find an ejector seat!

Level 6 – Church

1. Shoot the rightmost guy at the start for an MP5. Kill the bloke semi-hidden in the trees for a Merry Christmas bonus.
2. Beware this red-shirted 'hostage' by the snowmobile. He's actually a villain who pulls out a gun and rolls left.
3. Shoot the chopper hovering over the church, using rockets to help down it.
4. Avoid killing any hostages at the front of the church and your Good Cop Bonus takes you round the back for extra power-ups.

5. You get to revisit the rear of the church for more crates later in the level. Make the most of them.
6. The Head Honcho is inside the church. Use any rockets or grenades you have left.

Level 7 – Snowmobile Chase

1. You seemingly can't blow up that van on the bridge, so just shoot the villains on it.

2. If you down the chopper (best use rockets) over the bridge, you're rewarded with a powerful Steyr gun.
3. When chasing the enemy snowmobile, don't miss the two crates containing a shield and medikit.

4. Shoot all the snowmobiles for a Good Cop Bonus, rewarding you with several crates.
5. It gets tricky with half a dozen guys perched on the hilltops and bridge. Throw everything you've got at them.

6. The level ends amidst some grounded choppers. You can't destroy them, so concentrate on the baddies which pop up.

Level 8 – Plane Intercept

1. Make sure you grab the shield in the yellow crate that drops at the start.

2. Shoot at the targets on the choppers, using well-aimed rockets to speed things up.
3. It's pure Hollywood as the terrorists stand on the wings of a moving jumbo jet! Use rockets and grenades and grab any power-ups.
4. Avoid shooting the civilian parachutists and you get a Good Cop Bonus.

5. More choppers appear, so get the explosive ammo to shoot them down more easily.
6. In the grand finale, many targets appear all over the plane. Shoot the four engines to turn it into a fireball and complete the game.

Level Codes

Level 2 – New Wing
14_JJ2JB144JL [_ = space]
289144JB__F1_ [two spaces between B and F]
4JLKT3GS9_L38
F144JL289144J

Level 3 – Tunnel
SS_XHKG5SW3DF
KQ6SW3F!QQ1SM
3DDQRNCCVDFJQ
2SW3DFKQ6SW3_

Level 4 – Runway
F416QVMBF5NQL
VC9F5NNSLCHF9
NQM1W6TDP6LWC
FF5NQLVC9F5NJ

Level 5 – Plane Interior
N__V38Y3N2JB1 [two spaces between N and V]
85_N2J955Y1NL
JB_1L4Q7TV195
4N2JB185_N2J_

Level 6 – Church
8N_N8KL68P2NB
KB58P2RQ!L581
2NB698681NBJB
18P2NBKB58P2J

Level 7 – Snowmobile Chase
8D142J2_8F1N6
JV38F1JJ3B_8P
1N7BGCBSV46KV
78F1N6JV38F1J

Level 8 – Plane Intercept
N_1B58Y3N2JB1
85_N2JHHXP2NZ
JB_76LXXNV195
4N2JB185_N2J_

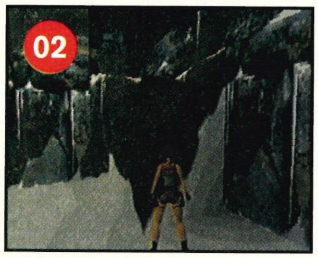
TOMB RAID

SOLVED

THIS IS ONLY A TASTER OF A HUGE SOLUTION TO BE FOUND CURRENTLY IN POWERSTATION MAGAZINE AND WE WILL CONTINUE IN MORE DEPTH NEXT ISSUE.

Just after the start, watch out for the darts coming from either side of the corridor.

In the cavern to the right, you can find a secret area (containing a small medikit) by jumping from the sloping block and grabbing hold of the ledge.
Backtrack and climb up the rocks to the right to enter another corridor. Get ready to the shoot the bats which attack. Go down this corridor and round to the left. Drop down into the cavern and down the stairs leading under the floor. Hit the switch to open the door. Watch out for more bats as you enter the room with the bars.



Climb up through the hatch in the northeast corner of the ceiling. Follow the corridor round and you come to a large cavern with two bridges across it. Shoot the two wolves down below before venturing further. Follow the ledge round to the right and jump from the end of the one bridge to the other. Go through the doorway and you'll find a room divided by a chasm – a bear pit. Jump across to the save crystal. Look down and shoot the bear before dropping down and going through the doorway to find another secret area.

Grab the small medikit and stand on the floor switch to open a door back to the large cavern with the bridges. Climb up the bridge and go back to the room with the pit.
Jump across again and grab the small medikit before going down the stairs. As soon as you pass through the doorway, two wolves will attack. Jump back while shooting them. Go through and down some more stairs.

Climb up the blocks in the southwest corner and jump across to the ivy-covered ledge to find another secret area containing a large medikit.

Now run onto the two crumbling tiles in the middle and fall through. Go north and jump between the ledges above the bars. Round the corner, shoot the wolf and go through the south door to find a switch. Hit it and quickly go back round and jump down between the beams into the main hall. Go through the doors before they close.

Back in the main room, climb up and hit the switch in the northwest corner. Quickly jump over to the doors and go through before they close again. Avoid the darts on the second set of stairs and be ready to the shoot the wolf in the next room.

...ER

KEY:

- **Large Medikit** — Restores a huge chunk of health
- **Small Medikit** — Replenishes about half health
- **Darts** — Blown from sides of corridors
- **Crumbling Tile** — Quickly crumble, making you fall
- **Floor Switch** — Step on them to open some doors
- **Switch/Lever** — These open doors and hatches
- **Save Crystal** — Use it to save your position
- **Bats** — Fly towards you but are easily shot
- **Bears** — Maul you and take some killing
- **Wolves** — They usually hunt in packs

Level 1 Caves

Secret area

Two darts either side

01

START

Fall through

Opens final doors

Switch opens door

Two darts either side

END

02

03

Two wolves on ground

For a full solution see issue 5 of Powerstation

Opens doors to left for a short time

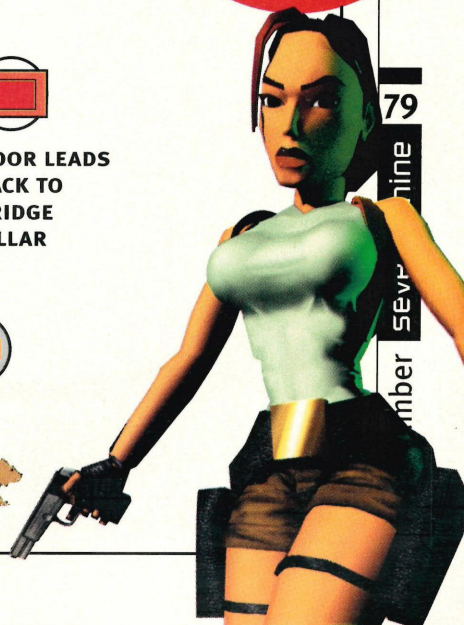
05

04

Door leads back to bridge pillar

Under staircase

Shoot from upper level



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Battle Arena Toshinden 2
Beyond the Beyond
Bogey Dead 6
Braindead 13
Bust-a-Move 2
Bubble Bobble
College Slam
Crash Bandicoot
Crime Crackers
Criticom
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Firestorm
Gex
Goal Storm
Gunners Heaven
Hermie Hopperhead
Hi-Octane
Hyper Formation Soccer
Impact Racing
In the Hunt
International Track & Field
J-League Winning Eleven
Johnny Bazookatone
Jumping Flash
Jumping Flash 2
Kileak the Blood
Krazy Ivan
Loaded
Lone Soldier
Madden '97
Magic Carpet
Mobile Suit Gundam
Mortal Kombat III
Motor June GP
Motor Tune GP2
Namco Musem 1
NBA Jam: TE
NBA Shoot Out
Need For Speed
New Japan Pro Wrestling
NFL Gameday
NHL Faceoff
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Project Overkill
Puzzle Bobble 2
Raiden Project
Rayman
Resident Evil
Return Fire
Ridge Racer
Ridge Racer Revolution
Rise 2: Resurrection
Road Rash
Shanghai Triple Threat
Shellshock
Shockwave Assault
Sidewinder
Space Griffon VF-9
Space Hulk
Street Fighter Alpha
Street Fighter Alpha 2
Street Fighter: The Movie
Striker '96
Syndicate Wars
Tekken
Tekken 2
Theme Park
Time Commando
Tobal No 1
Tokimeki Memorial
Total Eclipse
Total NBA '96
Triple Play '97
Twisted Metal
V-Tennis
Viewpoint
Warhawk
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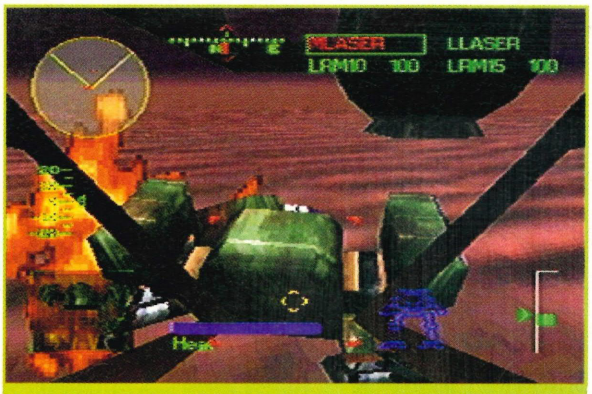


[Above] The mechs in the game are extremely detailed. Some are huge and very impressive with high polygon counts.

[Above] Explosions are suitably satisfying. There are also plenty of different weapons (indicated top right).

BOTTY

MECHWARRIOR 2

The robots

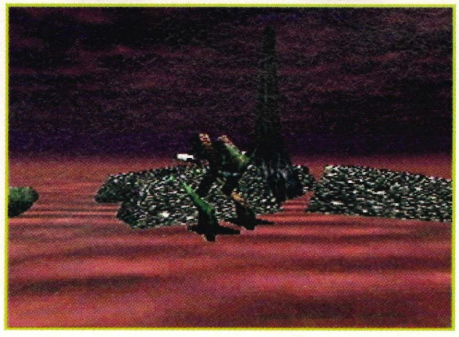
are coming! *MechWarrior 2* is progressing steadily and strongly, and has come on quite a way since we covered the game exclusively way back in PLAY 11. Your task in the game is to pilot one of 12 powerful BattleMechs which can be customised with over 20 lethal armaments, including missiles, lasers and guns. Sounds fairly simple doesn't it? But it's not all fun, you've a job to do.

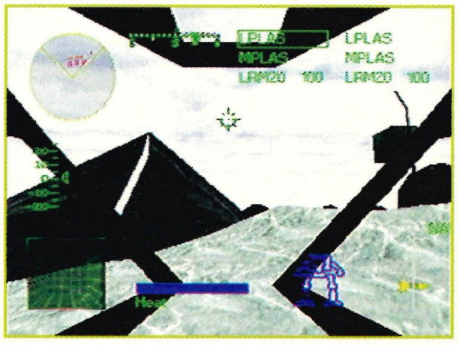
There'll be two main ways to play: Instant Action – an arcadey shoot-'em-up against a plethora of other mechanoid monstrosities, or the mission career mode which sees you progress from a lowly rookie 'Mech to the leader of your Clan by means of accomplishing many tactically charged excursions. Hey – there's plenty of depth in this one.

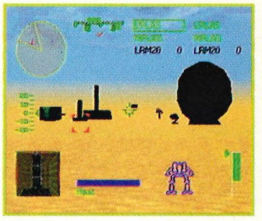
'MECH, SCHMECH!

You might be mistaken for thinking that MW2 isn't going to be much cop – the previous console effort on the Super NES was slow and devoid of lasting appeal, but from what we've seen, the PlayStation version is shaping up to be a smart blaster. It's got the arcadey appeal of games such as *Krazy Ivan*, but has much more involved long-term gameplay. Of course the emphasis of the PlayStation translation has had some of the deeply strategical elements cut down from the PC version, but this is a good thing as it focuses more on the action whilst still keeping the most important aspects of war strategy.

Graphically, the game is looking very promising, with plenty of polygons flying around, with fully texture-mapped buildings and land constructions, and above all, the frame rate is admirably high – something that was another problem for the Super NES. One to look forward to over the next month or so.







PLAY INFORMATION

Name: MechWarrior 2
Publisher: Activision
% Complete: 75%
Release Date: February '97

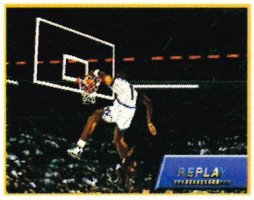
SQUEAKY

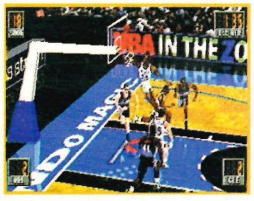
NBA IN THE ZONE 2

"Oh no, not another basketball game on the PlayStation," I hear you cry, but yes it is and the sequel to the hugely successful *NBA In the Zone* by Konami. We've had *Total NBA*, *NBA Jam* and *NBA Live '96*, so you might think there are no new surprises in the PlayStation basketball camp – but you'd be wrong. *Zone 2* for example has taken every single player from every one of the 29 teams in the American NBA and not only included all their stats and records, but also made them look like their real life counterparts, included their trademark dunks, and even texture mapped their faces onto their polygon bodies. You can take realism too far, can't you?

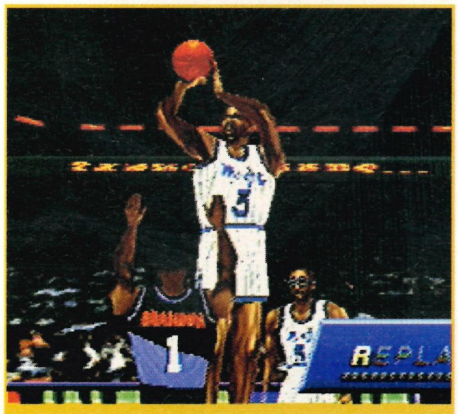
PLAY INFORMATION

Name: NBA In the Zone 2
Publisher: Konami
% Complete: 90%
Release Date: January





Zone 2 is a five on five challenge game which builds on the frame of the original game and adds many new features including more advanced types of foul, substitutions, stamina which affects player performance, and even the chance to play God and create a player or even an entire team from scratch. As you can see the graphics in-game are extremely detailed and despite texture mapping all over the place, it never slows down or exhibits any screen jerking. There is also the now standard 'squeaking' of the players' trainers as they leg it around the court, and player reflections have also been added. It all goes to make *Zone 2* the most realistic looking basketball game yet. How can *Total NBA '97* top this?



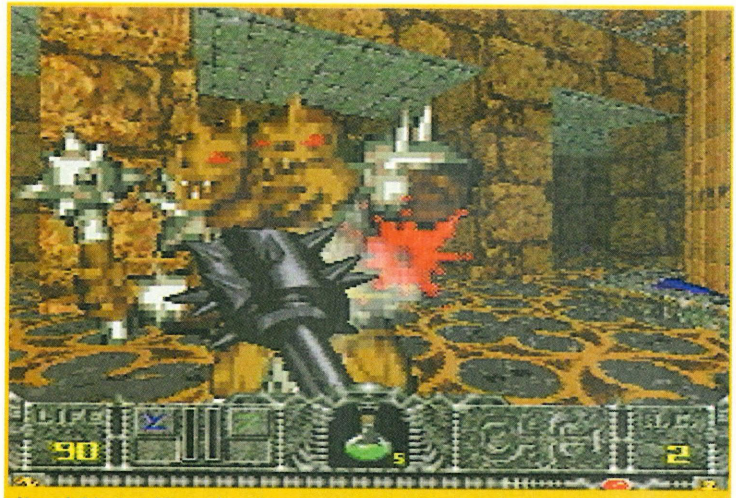
[Above] Check out that level of detail. Even the faces have been slapped onto the polygon frames for the ultimate realistic touch.

[Above] *NBA In The Zone 2* now features enhanced graphics, reflections in the shiny court's surface, and every player is individually texture mapped.

The new stamina feature is paramount because it can affect the whole swing of play. Imagine your top player suddenly getting a bit tired and slowing down drastically. Or your defensive line-up losing concentration and letting in your opponent's top scorer. The idea is to watch how your players are doing and if they get low on stamina, substitute them for some fresh legs or decide to stick it out until the end of the period. This adds a much needed strategy element that many other basketball sims lack.

NBA In the Zone 2 will be released in January and looks far better than any other sports game on PlayStation. You even get a rendered woman singing the *Star Spangled Banner* at the start of each match. Full review next issue where we will be wearing our biggest pair of pneumatic trainers.

[Above] *NBA In the Zone 2* even allows you to create a player from scratch. Here's a tip, make him seven foot tall with great big flapping hands.



[Above] Take that with my pointy stick you overgrown two-headed squirrel! Unfortunately close-combat is a big part of the game and the enemies bitmap badly, but that's true of all the *Doom* games.

[Above] Most weapons, apart from the one you start with, require mana (magic) as power to make them work. Live long and prosper, dude.

MAELSTROM HEXEN

The demons

are back and their appetite for blood is as voracious as ever. Yup we're back to the id dimension courtesy of GT interactive, and a first person adventure with magic, mystery and, er, more monsters than you can shake a pointy stick at.

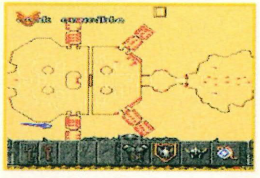
Hexen is the latest *Doom*-style game to emerge from the GTi stables, and is being developed by id in conjunction with Probe Entertainment, developers of the well-received *Alien Trilogy* and *Die Hard Trilogy*, amongst others. The game engine is based around the tried-and-tested formula that made *Doom* such a hit in the first place, but *Hexen* takes its predecessors' gameplay, adds a little hocus-pocus into the mix, and comes up with a worthy successor packed with similarly devilish demons and wondrous weapons.

Hexen features three main characters to choose from, each with differing magical and warrior abilities. This RPG-style extends far into the gameplay, with plenty of magic to collect and utilise, as well as the obligatory weapons to pick-up along the way.

The main differences *Hexen* sports over *Doom* however are based in the control department. As well as all the usual movements, *Hexen* allows the character to jump as well as looking up and down. These extra degrees of freedom open up the gameplay somewhat, making the whole experience more rewarding, and as a result should go down well with players longing for something trickier and a little more cerebral than the norm.

All in all *Hexen* is shaping up to be as dastardly and demonic as you might expect, but a little work still remains on getting the frame-rate up to speed. We're hoping to have a review next issue.

[Above] Oh shit.



[Above] Key-finding is going to be an integral part of getting anywhere in this game.

[Above] A hidden passage lies behind a stained-glass window. There'll be much in the way of puzzles in *Hexen*.

PLAY INFORMATION

Name: Hexen
Publisher: GT Interactive
% Complete: 75%
Release Date: February '97

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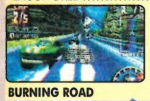
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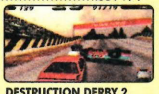
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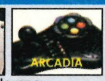

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COSMIC! TEMPEST X

"Grandad, tell me about *Tempest*."

"Well, *Tempest* was an arcade game from the early Eighties."

"Wow! Before I was even born!"

"Erm, yes. Anyway, it was one of those simple but highly addictive games that was regarded as a classic."

"Did it have FMV?"

"No, but-"

"How about bosses?"

"Nnnno...."

"Power-ups? It must have had power-ups."

"Look, will you shut up for a minute? *Tempest* didn't have power-ups, bosses or any stupid FMV. Nor did any other games back then."

"Cheh! I can't believe anyone ever played them."

"They didn't need them! Games back then were designed to be played entirely by instinct. You couldn't plan ahead or memorise patterns – you just had to react to events on screen."

"You – you couldn't – no patterns to memorise? How did you ever complete them if you couldn't learn each level by route?"

"You couldn't complete them. They just went on forever until you lost."

"What's the point of that?"

SMACK!

"Ouch!"

"Anyway, as I was saying, in *Tempest* you controlled this little claw thingy that moved around the top of a series of geometric webs. Things tried to climb up the webs, and you had to shoot them before they got there."

"That's it?"

"That's it."

"Doesn't sound like a classic to me."

SMACK!

"Ow! Ooh! Grandad, that hurt!"

"Yyyeeessss. Anyway, after its lifespan in the arcades came to an end, *Tempest* was largely forgotten until 1994, when Jeff Minter wrote *Tempest 2000* for the Atari Jaguar."

"The what?"

"Exactly. Anyway, *Tempest 2000*, an updated, psychedelically charged version of the original, was too good to waste on the Jaguar, so in 1996 Interplay brought *Tempest X* – a rewrite of *Tempest 2000* – out on the PlayStation. The gameplay was as exciting as ever, but it now had raved-up music and even more levels and power-ups, though fortunately it still didn't need bosses and FMV to make it a great game."

"Hmmm."

"With retro gaming the in thing at the time, *Tempest X* became another avatar of pure gameplay, rather like *Robotron*."

"*Robo*-what?"

"I see I'm going to have to teach you a lesson you won't forget..."

SMACK! SMACK! SMACK!

PLAY INFORMATION

Name: Tempest X
Publisher: Interplay
% complete: 100%
Release date: December '96

[Above] The superzapper in action, frying the bad guys in a dazzling cascade of multispectral polygons. Not bad, eh?

[Above] Psychedilic explosions burst from the screen as yet more stylised aliens bite the dust. Who needs acid when you can just stare at this for a while?

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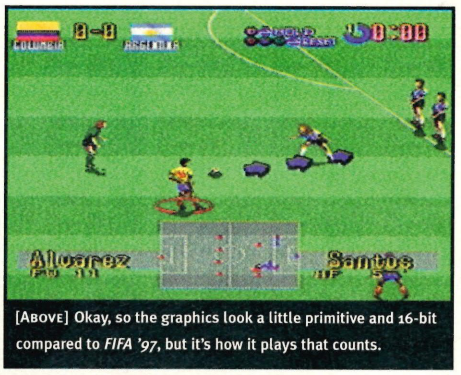
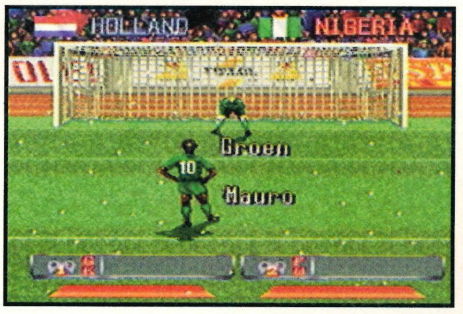
Cripes alive!

As if there weren't enough PlayStation football games to contend with already, Konami has slyly nipped in with another. No it isn't one of those Winning Eleven games with the block-headed players and vastly oversized goals, in fact if you cast your mind back to the Super NES heyday then the answer is staring you right in the face – because everyone who's anyone knows that there was only ONE football game doing the rounds at the time that was worthy of the recognition, *International Superstar Soccer Deluxe!*



[Above] Okay, so the graphics look a little primitive and 16-bit compared to *FIFA '97*, but it's how it plays that counts.



Football's Coming Home

It's all coming back to you, right? The gameplay smoother than a freshly-whipped tub of angel delight, the fantastic attention to detail, and of course the players themselves, who bared an uncanny resemblance to their real life counterparts. *ISS Deluxe* had it all, and now PlayStation owners who are eager to experience what a real football game plays like can await the release of this game with the kind of anticipation one would expect for the end of the world, because all going well, this game could BLOW the competition sky-high!

HOOF!

ISS DELUXE

Some of the aspects that made the original so great were things such as the scenario – whereby you were transported into the dying minutes of a tense grudge match between two pre-picked teams, and then in the short time allocated, you had to work miracles to turn the game around and win it for your country. Or perhaps the intricate detail tickled your fancy – the ability to hoof the ball at snapping paparazzi, argue your point with the ref and ultimately throw a tantrum, and the vast wealth of neat little tricks you could perform to gain an edge.

The game is basically a straight port over from the 16-bit console, with all of the characteristics and gameplay of the original remaining intact. Obviously though there's bound to be a few new quirks as well as the abundance of commentary that is already flowing nicely at this stage of development. *ISS Deluxe* is loaded with options to tweak the gameplay, tournaments and suchlike, plus plenty of on-field trickery to have you literally running rings around your opponents. And more good news is that even the fantastic doggy cheat has made the conversion, but more about that at a later date. Woof!

[Above] Every International team in *ISS Deluxe* features players who look exactly like the real thing. The only problem being that many of them have now moved from where they were two years ago.

PLAY INFORMATION

Name: Int Superstar Soccer Deluxe
Publisher: Konami
% Complete: 85%
Release Date: January '97

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VIEWS · QUESTIONS · CRITICISMS · IDEAS

THIS MONTH, ARENA HAS BEEN TAKEN OVER BY THE GHOST OF *FORMULA 1* AND WE'VE PRINTED AS MANY IRATE READER'S LETTERS AS POSSIBLE. WE HAVE GIVEN BOTH PSYGNOSIS AND SONY A CHANCE TO DEFEND THEMSELVES, BUT AT THE TIME OF GOING TO PRINT WE HAVE HEARD NOTHING. DUE TO THE SHEER VOLUME OF CORRESPONDENCE, WE HAVE EXTENDED THE LETTERS SECTION THIS MONTH. HOPEFULLY THIS CAN END THE *F1* CONTROVERSY. LETTERS ON A DIFFERENT SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS: *ARENA, PLAY MAGAZINE, PARAGON HOUSE, ST PETER'S ROAD, BOURNEMOUTH BH1 2JS*. OR E-MAIL US AT PLAY@PARAGON.CO.UK. NOW THAT WE'RE INTO PLAYSTATION YEAR TWO, HOW ABOUT YOUR THOUGHTS ON HOW IT'S GONE SO FAR AND WHAT YOU HOPE TO SEE IN THE FUTURE.

DEAR PLAY,

Having bought *Formula 1* and practiced like crazy in order to be competitive against a friend with his PlayStation linked to mine, I have to confess at being very disappointed. We only played the game (or attempted to) for about three hours. During this time we discovered most of the bugs mentioned in your news articles and also that when playing against each other with no computer cars, as soon as one player pits the race ends. All of the reviews I read raved about the link-up mode but as well as the bugs which make it unplayable, the slow down when playing a full grid is appalling!!! I could not believe that the replay feature didn't work with the NeGcon and even rang Psygnosis about this, of which they were well aware of the problem. Its pretty obvious that Psygnosis didn't even bother to test the finished product knowing that I found so much wrong with It in such a short amount of time. Either that or they just couldn't give a toss. Well that's another 50 quid gone. The game is now gathering dust as I have not played it since.

Marcus Woods, e-mail

I think you're being a bit unfair on the link-up option, Marcus. For the review I linked it up with a friend and apart from the fact that he had to play on a smaller TV than my 30" monster, the game was incredibly playable. Yes there was some slow down, but mainly when there were loads of cars, or we did plenty of skidding and had smoke all over the place. I wouldn't say it was appalling. I also did not encounter the pit problem you mention, except on the last lap, where the person behind cannot go into the pits without being placed last automatically. The link-up mode is the best bit of the game in my opinion.

DEAR PLAY,

In response to the *Formula 1* complaints made last issue, I too noticed that having all made one pit-stop, half the cars would continue to do so on each subsequent lap – very annoying! This can be overcome by going to the car set-up menu and turning the fuel off. But we shouldn't have to should we? When I rang Psygnosis about this problem they acknowledged it but then denied that the game was bugged. Surely they are talking out of their brown stars aren't they? Can you shed any light on it? Yours disappointingly.

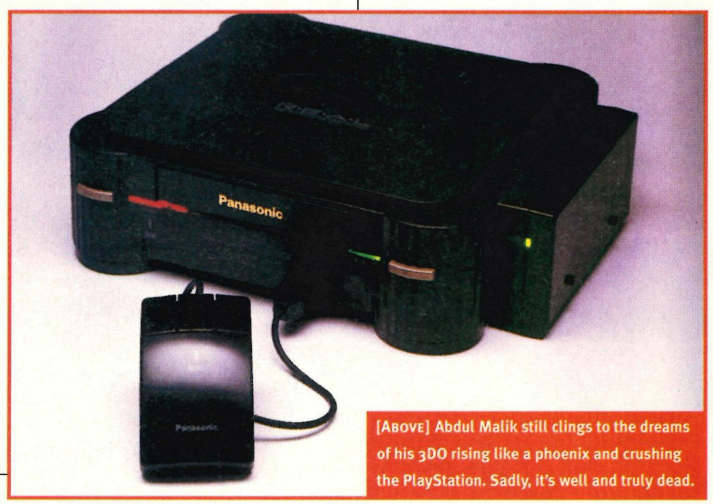
S Hayhoe, Norwich.

Thanks for the tip, but no official statement from Psygnosis yet, though.

DEAR PLAY,

On your comments on the 3DO ashtray, I would not like you to forget that the 3DO mag probably outsells PLAY and makes your bosses a disgusting amount of money. Where does a lot of your decent games come from? *Space Hulk, Po' ed, The Need for Speed, Shockwave, Alone in the Dark, Primal Rage, Return Fire, Cannon Fodder, Wing III, Road Rash, Starblade, Total Eclipse* – do you want more? And don't forget the long awaited M2. If you want to make space for your PlayStation I suggest a large tub of Vaseline and a smile. I also own a PlayStation and it is a good machine, just don't knock the 3DO.

Abdul Malik, Sutton.



[ABOVE] Abdul Malik still clings to the dreams of his 3DO rising like a phoenix and crushing the PlayStation. Sadly, it's well and truly dead.

3DO magazine no longer exists and you know why, because no-one bought the machine. The 3DO, whilst technically brilliant, was a slow, ill-supported dinosaur which has now been put out of its misery. Live in the now. I can criticise it because like you I once thought it was going to be the 'next big thing', but sadly it's rubbish. Support your local Spectrum instead. Your just bitter 'cos you spent £400 on one.

Dear Damian,

As an avid F1 fan I couldn't wait for *Formula 1* to be released. It was with disappointment that I read your small article about the bugs that seem to litter the game. I personally do not own a PSX steering wheel or a NeGcon, so I can't comment on the replay mode, but I have noticed that sometimes if you watch your car during the replay it will crash into the barrier and just spin constantly. The problem that Mr Kitson rang in to say about the pit problem also works on the medium difficulty level. Has anybody noticed the intro sequence not always coming on?

Unfortunately, I missed your review in issue 11 and so didn't see the points you made. I must admit to thoroughly enjoying the game at first, but knowing all of these faults, I do feel let down somewhat. Perhaps Psygnosis could offer a discount on their next game on proof of purchase of *Formula 1*.

S Witchard, Rangeworthy.

We all feel let down, Mr Witchard, but it is important to remember that the game works fine with a standard joypad and it is really only the Formula 1 enthusiasts who have discovered these bugs. More casual players, myself included, can enjoy the game as it stands. It's just unfortunate that *Formula 1* was billed from the start as the most realistic racing game ever. It didn't turn out that way. The discount idea is a good one, but Psygnosis is unlikely to adopt it as there is no way to prove that claimants were genuinely dissatisfied or just wanted to swap the game having completed it. It is one of the points I have put in my letter to Psygnosis asking for some answers.

Dear Play,

In the November issue of your magazine you asked anyone who had problems with *Formula 1* to get in touch, well I have had a few and being the Yorkshire lad that I am I say what I like and I like what I f*cking well say, ie I'm a bit on the blunt side. After buying *Formula 1* it all went wrong...

1. Steering wheel doesn't work with replay.
2. The analogue brakes are absolute sh*te. I know F1 brakes are a bit on the keen side, but you must be able to slow down gradually.
3. I've met taxi drivers with more intelligence – very rarely do the back markers actually pull off the racing line to let you through and if they do I can guarantee they will pull straight back into the back of you causing you to grind to a halt.
4. Fuel & tyres. Both seem to have no effect on the way the car handles.
5. Loss of wings – yet again, absolutely no effect on the handling.
6. This is the worst one. Halfway through the race you've got the pit all the time syndrome, more commonly known as "b*llocks to the bugs, they're all too thick to notice and we've got a deadline to meet." Don't patronise me Mr Programmer. Can you imagine what real F1 would be like if halfway through the race the drivers started pitting every lap then disappearing. Imagine the press conference. So Damon you seemed to be struggling to keep up with the pace in the first half of the race, then suddenly found yourself in the lead, how did you manage it?

"Well, I have to hand this victory to lady luck I'm afraid. I was lying in forth position when the three guys in front decided to pull out of the race. I believe Jean Alesi had a dentist appointment. Mika Hakkinen was on a promise with some bird he met in the pit lane. And Johnny Herbert had to take his mum shopping!" Now after all that slagging off I do actually like the game, but sadly find it far too easy, even on the hard level.

Jason Simpson, Yorkshire

The loss of wings definitely do affect the handling drastically, Jason – it's one of the only things that *does* work.

Dear Play,

With regard to your article concerning *Formula 1*. I bought the game on the day of release and immediately experienced some problems. For starters the intro screen wouldn't always come up, and Murray Walker's commentary stops briefly as it is loaded from the CD. I contacted my local independent games shop and he told me without hesitation that it was my machine at fault and not the game. Feeling pissed off, I then telephoned the Sony helpline who were very helpful and explained that if all of my other games played okay, it was the game at fault. My PlayStation is only three month's old, do you have any idea what is going on?

Richard Brant, fax

[Above] Many people are still annoyed with Psygnosis for the bugged *Formula 1*. So much so in fact that we've had to extend the letters section just to fit them in.

It's the game and you are not alone. Try to get a refund from the shop if you still have the receipt, or perhaps swap it for another, *Tomb Raider* or *Die Hard Trilogy* for example.

Dear Play,

After reading in the recent issue of Play about the many faults with *Formula 1* I feel I must write to complain. I have also encountered similar problems with the game in grand prix mode where the drivers all go into the pits. This makes it totally unplayable. Without the grand prix mode with pit stops, tyres, fuel, damage, repairs and racing around a course for over 70 laps, it is just *Ridge Racer* with a few extra tracks. I have contacted Psygnosis who are aware of this major gameplay bug but do not intend to do anything about it. Surely magazines like Play should not just be here to report faults found in a game, neither just to inform the buying public of new releases, review games or publish a few hints and tips, but also to stand up for PlayStation owners and use your influence to stop the large games publishers ripping people off. At least get them to admit their faults. You should be encouraging people to write in with their complaints and print petitions for people to sign. This would show those at the top that the people who pay their wages are not happy and are no longer willing to cough up hard earned cash for unplayable games.

The price reduction of £100 for the PlayStation was an example of every magazine praising Sony, but nobody gave a toss about the 100,000 or more owners, based on Sony's own figures, who were ripped off and paid the full price. I would urge Play readers to phone Psygnosis (Tel 0151 282 3000) or write to them at: *Napier Court, Stephenson Way, Wavertree Technology Park, Liverpool L13 1HD* with your complaints.

Paul Morris, Skelmersdale.

We are encouraging people to write in and complain Paul, and it's good to see the other PlayStation mags following suit. Always remember that we were the first to print news of *Formula 1's* bugs and therefore open the floodgates. Doubtless everyone else was too afraid of what Psygnosis would do to them to do anything constructive. That has now changed. *Formula 1* is still a good game despite the bugs though, not like *Frontier: First Encounters* on the PC, which had a catalogue of errors so fundamental, you could not even play it. The really funny thing about all this is that the suits at Psygnosis have chastised the UK press for "destructive journalism" – bollocks! We report the facts and we comment on things that we discover or the public makes us aware of. What's more destructive, the truth, or trying to hide it from us all?

[Above] Does giving *Lone Soldier* 90% mean Play is corrupt? See letter by Mr S Williams.

Dear Play,

You asked for comments regarding *Resident Evil, F1, Tekken 2* and demo disks so here goes. Firstly I was extremely pleased with *Formula 1*. Since the launch of the PSX I have been hoping that someone would have the common sense to update Geoff Crammond's *Grand Prix* which I owned for my ST. Although not the same game, Psygnosis' version was more than adequate. Secondly I found *Resident Evil* immense fun. The game captivated me from beginning to end. One of the finest moments has to be filling the stranded sharks full of lead! However after a week I had finished the game and having seen everything I found there was little to go back for. *Tekken 2* was probably the biggest disappointment of the three. While it is an excellent game I was dismayed by the sloppy PAL conversion. Compared to the American version this is s-l-o-w. Finally having been an official PSX member for well over a year I have received two demo disks as well as various special offers from Sony. The most recent CD had playable demos of *Crash Bandicoot* and *Die Hard Trilogy* to name but two. While two CDs in the space of a year might not seem a great deal I never expected to receive anything. Good work Sony and keep up the good work Play.

James Holden , Newcastle Upon Tyne.

Thank you for your comments James, good to hear something wide ranging for a change. On the subject of *Tekken 2*, I find the game perfectly acceptable having avoided the NTSC version of the game until the PAL arrived. Yes there are tiny boarders and perhaps it runs slightly slower, but not enough to spoil the game. *Tekken 2* is incredible fun (especially at parties where the team battle comes into its own) and I would still recommend it to anyone. NTSC versus PAL is like getting into a sports car after your family hatch, and then suddenly feeling that your car is underpowered. It's an illusion. Play PAL *Tekken 2* for a while and soon don't even notice the difference.

Dear Play,

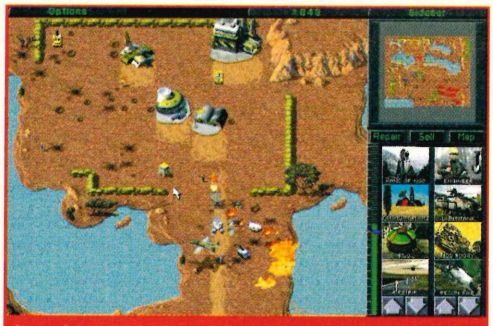
As a poor whinging student may I first congratulate you on a well printed and good value magazine. My only gripe is that you review games that are on imminent release and then Sony push back the release date due to their quality control and bug-testing, so that it is sometimes months before games appear. I waited from April for *Return Fire* to appear, which it did in the middle of October at my local GAME (Arndale Manchester). Now a few questions:

1. With not having any money ever I was wondering if Sony or any third party producers were planning on a budget re-releasing of older games, especially those that have been on release for over a year or so? I think it is appalling that shops are still charging full price for games like *Loaded* and *Wipeout !!*
2. I buy most of my games second hand for about £25 and also hire them from my local video store (Hooray for Blockbuster) especially for newer games such as *Tekken 2, Resident Evil* and *Formula 1*. Unfortunately some of these CDs are dirty and or scratched – could you tell me how to clean them as I do not want to scratch my CDs. Somebody at a local game store also recommended cleaning CDs with brasso to remove scratches which sounds totally daft-heard of that one?
3. When does *Command and Conquer* come out? Will it come packaged together with a mouse for a couple of quid more (I saw a Saturn game packaged with a Joypad for about a tenner more than a normal game). Will it feature a link-up option as this is ace on the PC.
4. On the subject of *Spy Hunter* How about Konami putting it on one of their games as a sub-game to pass the time during tedious loading ? The game must only take up 48K 'cos I had it on my speccy.
5. Which of the forthcoming lightguns looks the most promising? Which games will be compatible?
6. Will Sony produce Data disks for games' upgrades such as *C&C:Red Alert* and *Worms Reinforcements?* If so how much would they retail at?

Thanks for your time

Simon Baxter, Manchester

1. A budget range has been launched in Japan, but according to Sony UK, there are no plans for a similar scheme in the UK. Sad but true, we are simply not a big enough world market to justify the extra cost. Expect to see it in the US soon.
2. Use a non-static cloth and wipe the CD from the inside out across the tracks. Do not wipe left/right.
3. Virgin claims it should be out before Christmas (which means while you're reading this most probably), but we can't see it happening. We have a version which does not feature a link-up option, nor one for a mouse. These are both huge mistakes in my opinion.
4. A great idea, unfortunately it was by Elite.
5. The Logic 3 Predator is the best so far and it looks the coolest.
6. The idea is certainly possible and Sony announced a few months back that it would actively encourage developers to develop data disks for their games. *Command & Conquer* is a prime example and so is *Worms*.



[Above] *Command & Conquer* does not support a mouse and has no link-up option. This will disappoint Simon Baxter.

Dear Play,

Congratulations on producing such a high quality magazine, but could you please answer my question. Do you admit to giving good reviews for average games if publishers pamper you with expensive lunches or other similarly persuasive measures? Otherwise, how can you explain giving terrible games such as *Lone Soldier, Rise 2* and *Adidas Power Soccer* high ratings? *Adidas* especially, as it no longer figures in your top ten sports sims even though it received an enormous 95% at the time!

Mr S Williams, Harrow.

Just send me a cheque for £50 made payable to CASH and I'll answer you. Seriously though bribery does go on I'm sure but not on this magazine (was that convincing enough?). Sure, games publishers take us out to lunch and slip portable compact disk players in our pockets when we're not looking ("how did that get in there?!"), but it never gets in the way of a review. The games you mention were covered well before my time, Mr Williams, and I too am perplexed at their high scores. *Lone Solider* in particular, while looking impressive, has quite the worst control method I've ever experienced. The reason *Adidas* does not feature in our top ten is that I compile it and I don't rate it. *Olympic* is much better. The Play team has changed quite a bit since the first issue and whereas some were enamoured by the early games because they represented such a huge graphical jump, us cynical 'veterans' now see games in a completely different light. We have much higher standards because machines like the N64 are forever pushing forward the boundaries.

We reserve the right to edit your letters and regret we cannot reply personally. If you want us to print your e-mail address for further electronic discussion, please give specific permission at the end of your letter.

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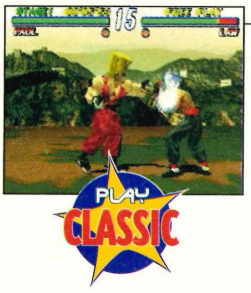
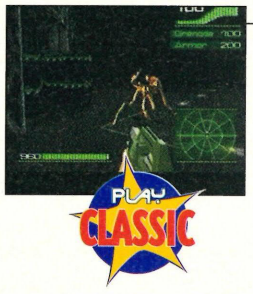


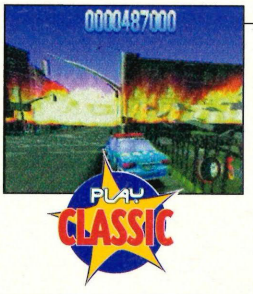
GAME	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	REVIEW DATE	REVIEW SCORE
1. Tekken 2	Namco	Sony	May '96	95%
2. Street Fighter Zero 2 (import)	Capcom	Capcom	Oct '96	94%
3. Tobal No.1 (import)	SquareSoft	Sony	Oct '96	94%
4. Mortal Kombat Trilogy	Williams	GT Interactive	Dec '96	92%
5. Street Fighter Alpha	Capcom	Capcom/VIE	May '96	93%
6. Tekken	Namco	Sony	Nov '95	95%
7. Darkstalkers	Capcom (Japan)	Capcom/VIE	Aug '96	88%
8. MK3	Williams	Sony	Nov '95	93%
9. Rise Of The Robots 2	Mirage	Mirage	Mar '96	88%
10. Criticom	Vic Tokai	VIE	Feb '96	87%

FIRST PERSON PERSPECTIVE SHOOT-'EM-UPS



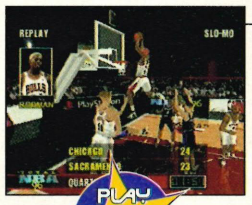
1. Alien Trilogy	Probe	Acclaim	Easter '96	91%
2. Doom	id Softwave	GT Interactive	Jan '96	93%
3. Magic Carpet	Krisalis/Bullfrog	Bullfrog/EA	Apr '96	90%
4. Tunnel B1	Neon	Ocean	Aug '96	87%
5. Descent	Interplay	Interplay	Apr '96	85%
6. PO'ed	Studio3Do	Warner Interactive	May '96	87%
7. Shellshock	Core Design	Core Design	Apr '96	85%
8. Krazy Ivan	Psygnosis	Psygnosis	Feb '96	90%
9. Assault Rigs	Wheelhaus	Psygnosis	Jan '96	81%
10. Lone Soldier	Tempest	Telstar	Dec '95	92%

ARCADE SHOOT-'EM-UPS



1. Die Hard Trilogy	Probe	Fox Interactive	Aug '96	93%
2. Soviet Strike	EA	EA	Dec '96	83%
3. X2	Team 17	Team 17	Jan '97	77%
4. Project Overkill	KCEC	Konami	Nov '96	89%
5. Gunship	MicroProse	MicroProse	Jun '96	90%
6. Loaded	Gremlin Interactive	Gremlin Interactive	Nov '95	85%
7. Starfighter 3000	Krisalis	Telstar	Jun '96	85%
8. Return Fire	Silent Software	Warner Interactive	May '96	84%
9. Thunderhawk 2: Firestorm	Core Design	Core Design	Jan '96	85%
10. Williams Arcade Greatest Hits	Williams	GT Interactive	Jun '96	84%

Sports Sims



Game	Developer	Publisher	Review Date	Review Score
1. Total NBA '96	**Sony**	**Sony**	**Mar '96**	**94%**
2. Olympic Soccer	Silicon Dreams	US Gold	Jul '96	84%
3. Actua Golf	Gremlin Interactive	Gremlin Interactive	Aug '96	88%
4. Int Track & Field	Konami Japan	Konami	Jul '96	85%
5. Victory Boxing	JVC	JVC	Nov '96	90%
6. Actua Soccer	Gremlin Interactive	Gremlin Interactive	Feb '96	94%
7. Olympic Games	Silicon Dreams	US Gold	Jul '96	89%
8. Sampras Extreme	Codemasters	Codemasters	Jul '96	90%
9. Striker '96	Rage Software	Warner Interactive	Nov '95	89%
10. Big Hurt Baseball	Iguana Ent	Acclaim	Jul '96	81%

Strategy/Adventure Games

1. Resident Evil	**Capcom**	**VIE**	**Jun '96**	**95%**
2. Tomb Raider	Core Design	Eidos Interactive	Dec '96	94%
3. Fade to Black	Delphine	EA	Jul '96	90%
4. X-Com: Terror from the Deep	MicroProse	MicroProse	Jan '97	88%
5. Space Hulk	Key Games	EA	Aug '96	84%
6. X:Com: Enemy Unknown	MicroProse	MicroProse	Apr '96	82%
7. Theme Park	Krisalis/Bullfrog	Bullfrog/EA	Nov '95	86%
8. Wing Commander III	Origin	EA	Apr '96	82%
9. Alone In The Dark	Infogrames	Infogrames	Feb '96	77%
10. Discworld	Perfect 10	Psygnosis	Nov '95	74%

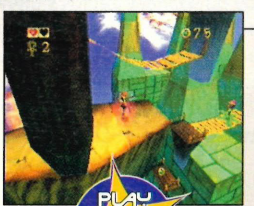
Puzzle/Party Games

1. Bust-A-Move 2	**Taito**	**Acclaim**	**Jun '96**	**88%**
2. Bubble Bobble	Probe	Acclaim	Sep '96	85%
3. Pro Pinball	Empire	Empire	Aug '96	90%
4. Worms	Team 17/Ocean	Team 17/Ocean	Nov '95	92%
5. Namco Museum Vol 3	Namco	Sony	Nov '96	73%
6. Hebereke's Popitto	Sunsoft	Marubeni	Dec '95	43%

Racing Games

1. Wipeout 2097	**Psygnosis**	**Psygnosis**	**Nov '96**	**93%**
2. Formula 1	Psygnosis	Psygnosis	Sep '96	94%
3. The Need for Speed	EA	EA	Apr '96	94%
4. Ridge Racer Revolution	Namco	Sony	May '96	90%
5. Destruction Derby 2	Psygnosis	Psygnosis	Dec '96	82%
6. Supersonic Racers	Supersonic Software	Mindscape	Sep '96	91%
7. NASCAR Racing	Papyrus	Sierra	Jan '97	80%
8. Street Racer	UbiSoft	UbiSoft	Dec '96	84%
9. Burning Road	Toka	Funsoft	Oct '96	90%
10. Hardcore 4x4	Gremlin	Gremlin	Jan '97	81%

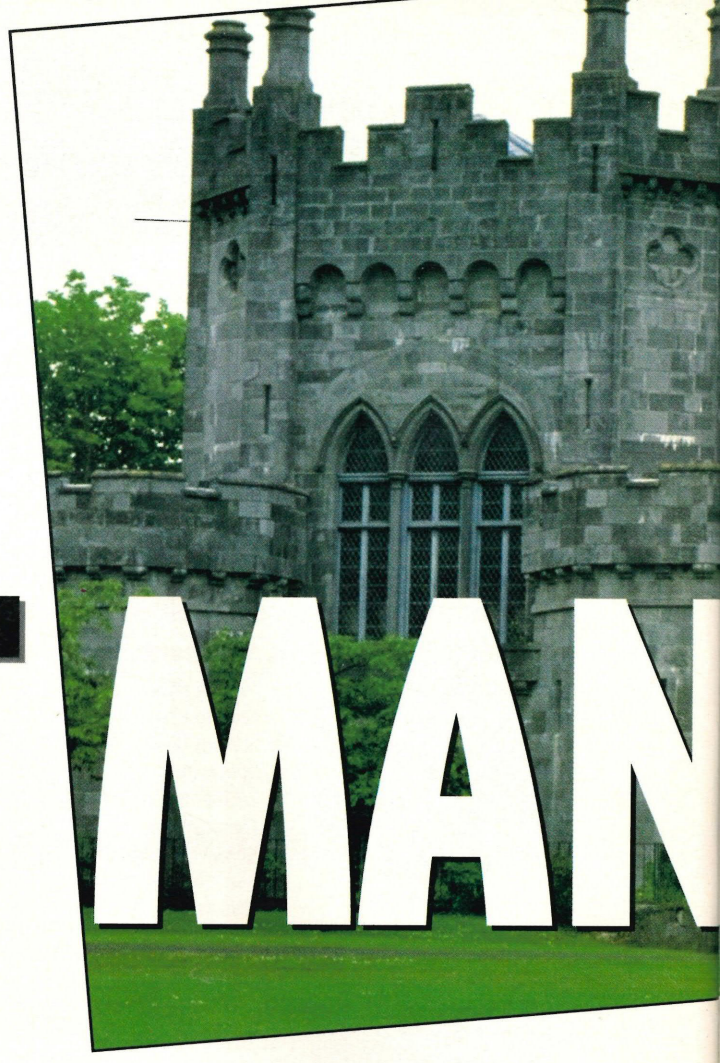
Platformers



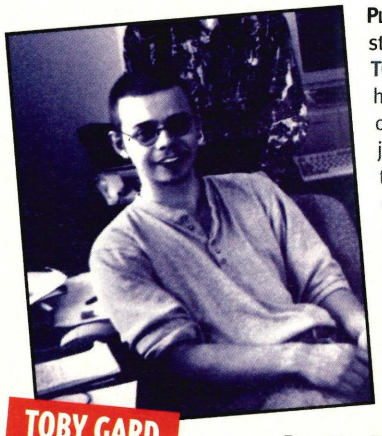
1. Pandemonium	**Crystal Dynamics**	**BMGie**	**Jan '97**	**90%**
2. Crash Bandicoot	Naughty Dog	Sony	Nov '96	84%
2. Jumping Flash 2	Sony	Sony	Jun '96	86%
3. Rayman	UbiSoft	UbiSoft	Nov '95	87%
4. Lomax	Interactive Design	Psygnosis	Dec '96	70%
5. Jumping Flash	Sony	Sony	Nov '95	87%
6. Earthworm Jim2	Shiny Entertainment	VIE	Oct '96	69%
7. Johnny Bazookatone	Arc Development	US Gold	Feb '96	85%
8. Gex	Crystal Dynamics	BMG Interactive	Apr '96	76%
9. Herme Hopperhead	Sony	Import	Dec '95	53%

AFTER WORKING SOLIDLY ON THE 94% RATED *TOMB RAIDER* FOR EVERY DAY AND NIGHT FOR FOUR MONTHS PRIOR TO ITS COMPLETITION, TOBY GARD AND HIS TEAM ARE NOW TAKING A WELL EARNED REST. PLAY FORCED THEM TO STOP PLAYING *MARIO 64* FOR JUST A COUPLE OF MINUTES TO ANSWER A FEW POST-HYPE QUESTIONS AT LARA CROFT'S ANCESTRAL HOME.

AN INTERVIEW AT CROFT MAN



PLAY: *Tomb Raider*. Where did you get the idea from?
Toby Gard: The idea for *Tomb Raider* came from a variety of sources, both games and films, mainly the *Ultima Underworld* series, *Prince of Persia, Virtua Fighter, Indiana Jones* (of course) and all John Woo films. The challenge was to take elements from all of them and try to jam them into one game that played well.



TOBY GARD

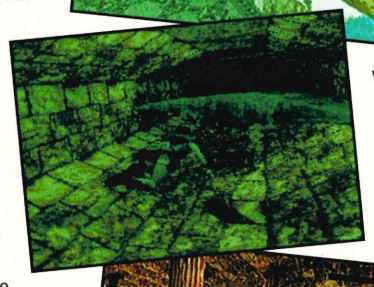
PLAY: Is it true it was pretty much you on your own at the start and that you did all the plotting and animation?
TG: While the idea was just that, I had the problem of hooking up with a programmer talented enough to pull off such a mammoth task. Luckily Paul Douglas started just at the right moment and we took it from there as a team. I did all of Lara's animations and most of the enemies. The plot of the game was co-written with our in-house script writer Vicky Arnold.

PLAY: What games have you done before on computers/consoles?
TG: Erm, *BC Racers* was my first project, but that was not my idea I can tell you.

PLAY: Has *Tomb Raider* turned out the way you envisaged it, or were there any compromises?
TG: Yes I'd say *Tomb Raider* is pretty damn close to the original game concept, in practice of course it evolved quite dramatically as it was being made. Lara's exact list of moves were made on the fly. Swimming was added to spice things up, and in the end it's less cinematic than I'd originally hoped, mainly because if you try to be too clever with the camera, it tends to confuse the player, which isn't very good. There are always compromises, deadlines dictate that there must be, but we kept them to a minimum by working every hour that God gave us for the last four months.

PLAY: What makes a good game in your opinion?
TG: I don't think you can pin down the specific elements that make a good game mainly because there are so many different types of successful games. Playability and decent presentation are essential, but basically any idea that the developers really believe in and are willing to put their all into will do pretty well I reckon.

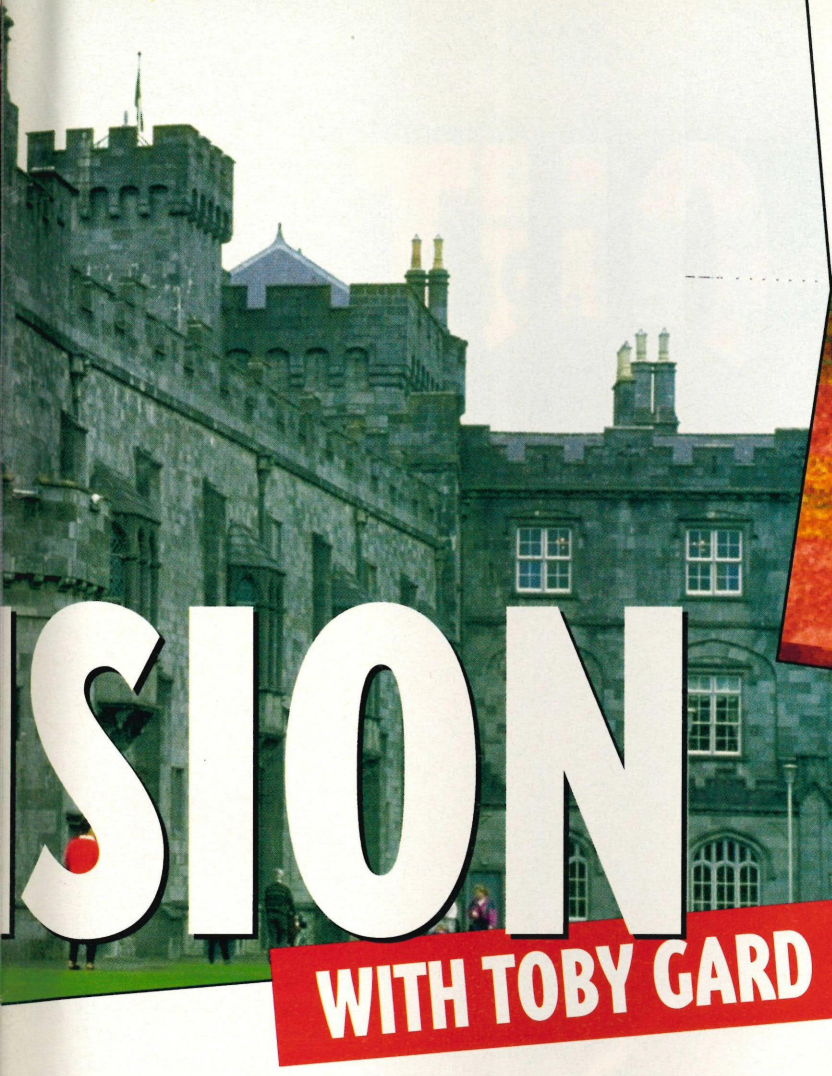
PLAY: Have any games impressed you of late on the PlayStation and why?
TG: I like *Tekken 2, Crash Bandicoot* looks nice, *Wipeout 2097* is lovely. Er, PlayStation needs more good games doesn't it?



PLAY: What do you think of the PlayStation as a development machine?
TG: I like the PlayStation because it's so damn fast, and its colours are vibrant. Certainly the PlayStation version of *Tomb Raider* looks the best of the lot.

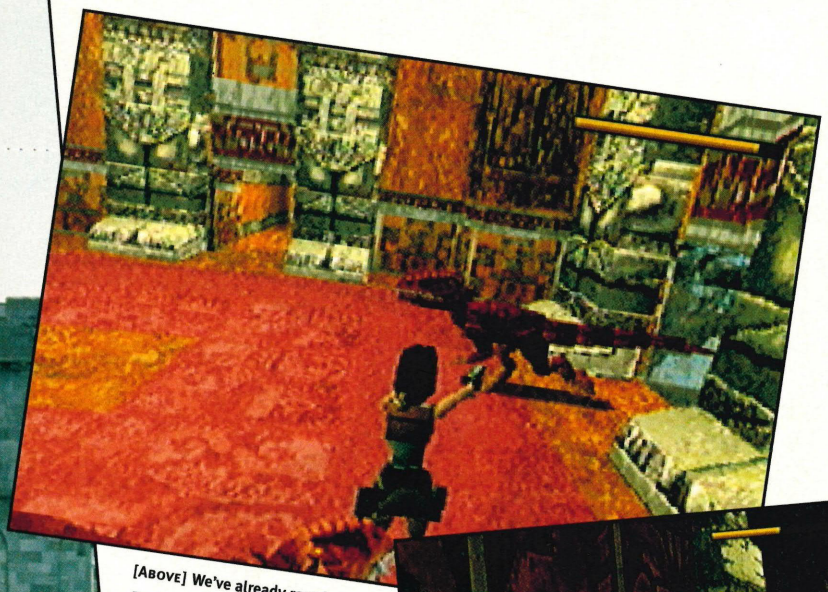
PLAY: Why do so many games simply seem to be variants on a successful formula, is it hardware limitation, lack of imagination, or something else?
TG: It's pretty hard to get a game started that is too different from what already exists. So much money is put into the development of a game, the people who hold the purse strings have to feel confident that firstly, it can actually be done, and that it can be done in

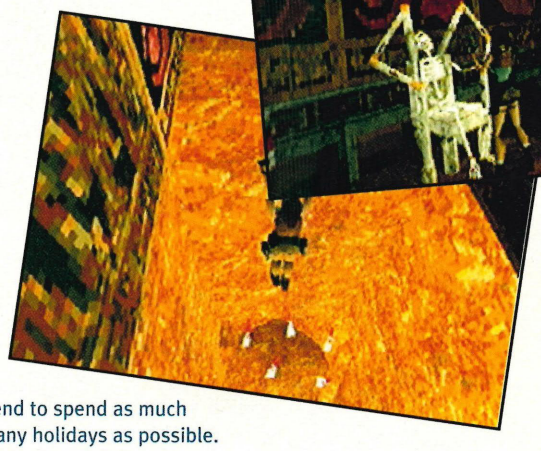
PLAY INFORMATION
Name: Toby Gard
Job title: Mr Tomb Raider
Company: Core Design



SION

WITH TOBY GARD





[Above] We've already raved over *Tomb Raider* in the last issue, so we won't now. Just buy it.

a realistic amount of time, and that there's a market for it. I think the most original game designs are probably turned down because they are seen as too much of a risk.

PLAY: What will be your next game and how far off will it be?
TG: I don't know yet (cop out – Ed).

PLAY: Are there any new gaming genres left or are we destined to re-hash the same ones over and over again?
TG: There's always going to be someone out there with such an unusual idea that it bears little or no resemblance to what has gone before, but they are few and far between. There's huge room for improvement in the genres that we already have, so long as people don't just improve the presentation but actually alter the gameplay. It's always worth re-visiting the old stuff.

PLAY: What is your all-time favourite game on any platform and what is your fondest memory of it?
TG: *Super Mario 64*. My favourite memory of it is all of it!

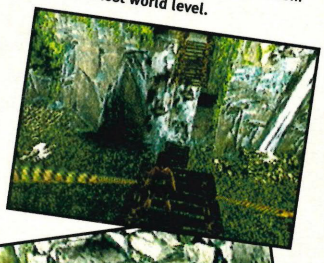
PLAY: Will *Tomb Raider* make you rich and famous and if so, what will you buy first with your new found riches?
TG: People who write computer games don't get famous because as a group we're perceived as a bunch of geeky kids with no lives, which isn't really the thing for making teen idols. I intend to spend as much money as I can on as many holidays as possible.

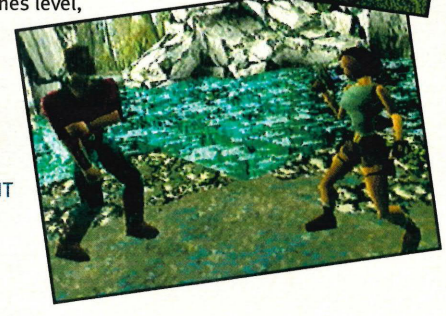
PLAY: Is Derby (Core Design's home town) a technological nirvana?
TG: Derby is a technological pus bucket!

PLAY: Now that *Tomb Raider* is completed, imagine that Core give you unlimited funds to take your team on a well deserved break. Where do you go?
TG: It would have been nice to have gone to Egypt with all you press b*stards, but we were too busy finishing the game. However, Core's unlimited funds would buy us a bus fare into the centre of Derby and a cheese sandwich from M&S. Then we could enjoy the walk back to work.

PLAY: And finally, how do you get past the jump on the Natlas mines level, after the lava section and all those pillars you have to jump across?
TG: Pull the TNT box out somewhere and get onto it and jump into an alcove type bit. Run up there and pull the switch to blow up the TNT and this allows you to progress.

PLAY: That'll do.

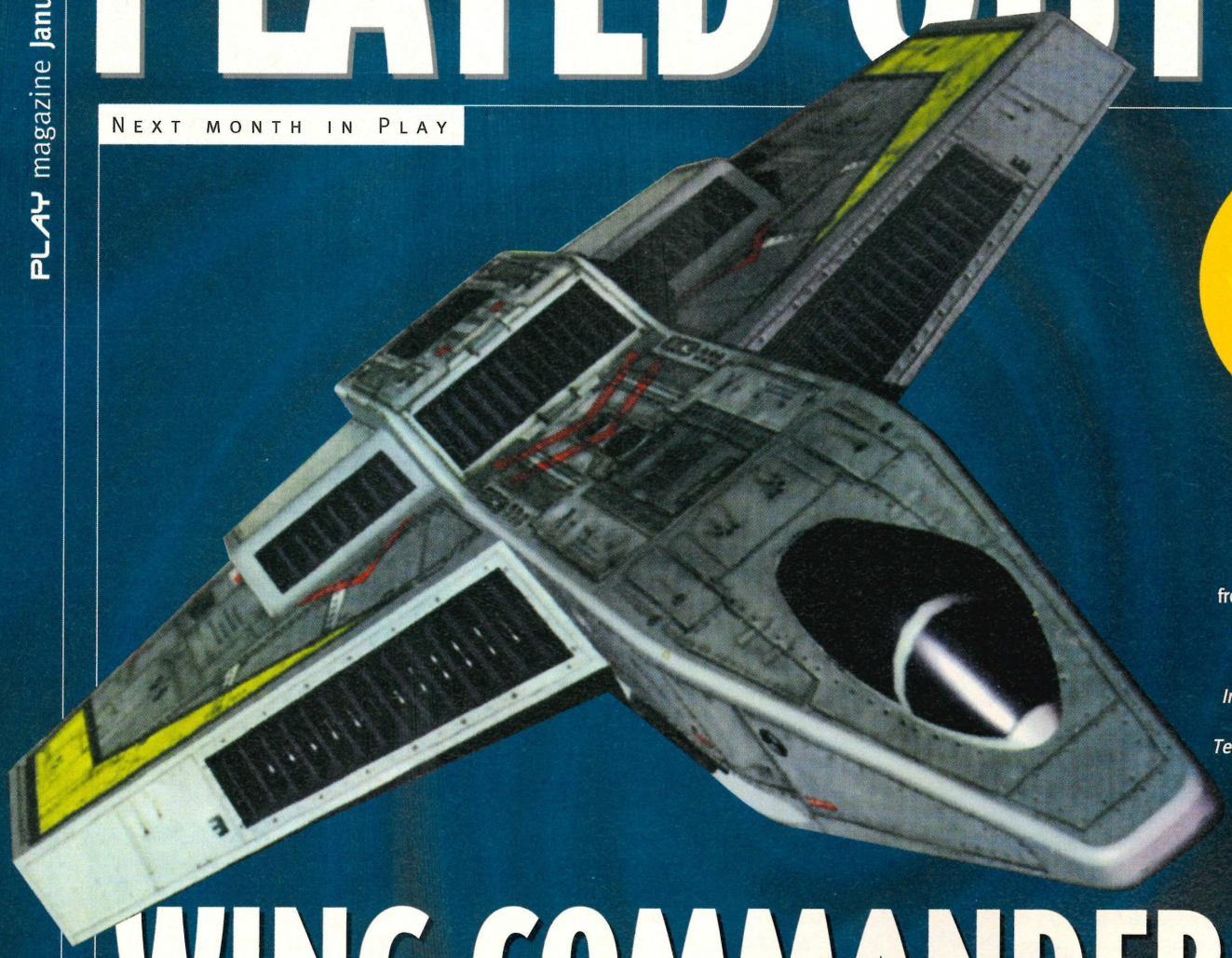




[Below] Lara Croft finds herself forced to jump across a huge chasm in the lost world level.

PLAYED OUT...

NEXT MONTH IN PLAY



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A full report on *Porsche Challenge* and *Rapid Racer* from Sony, *Darklight* from EA, *Legacy of Kain*, *Viper*, *Exhumed*, *Hyperblade*, *Moto Racing*, *Syndicate Wars*, *Incredible Hulk*, *The Need for Speed 2*, *ReLoaded*, *Actua Tennis*, *Tiger Shark*, *Command & Conquer*, *Suikoden*, *Wild 9s*, *VandalHearts*, *Monster Trucks*, *Star Gladiator* and many many more!

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