

MECHWARRIOR 2 • RALLY CROSS • SENTIENT • TOTAL NBA '97

issue nineteen Easter '97

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PLAY

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EXCLUSIVE REVIEW of the PlayStation's greatest adventure yet!

MICRO MACHINES V3

FULL REVIEW! The most fun eight people can have with their clothes on!

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THE BIG GAME



5 WAYS TO CONTACT PLAY!

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Home page: http://www.paragon.co.uk/play/
Tel: (01202)200228
(5-6pm weekdays only!)

THE REGULARS...

[PLAYSTATION WIRED]
06 We cast a topical eye over the very latest news stories breaking on Planet PlayStation. Brand new games you've never heard of, secret sequels, new peripherals – the bloomin' lot!

[WALL OF GAME]
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 a great big *Soul Edge* tips special – every move of every character explained!

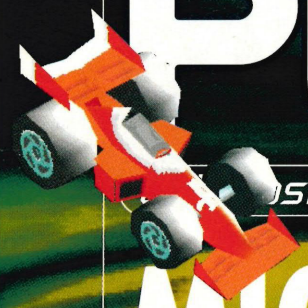
[STATION MASTER]
72 The very best solutions every month. Maps, cheats, tips and your gaming queries answered.
COMMAND & CONQUER PT 3 74
JET RIDER 80

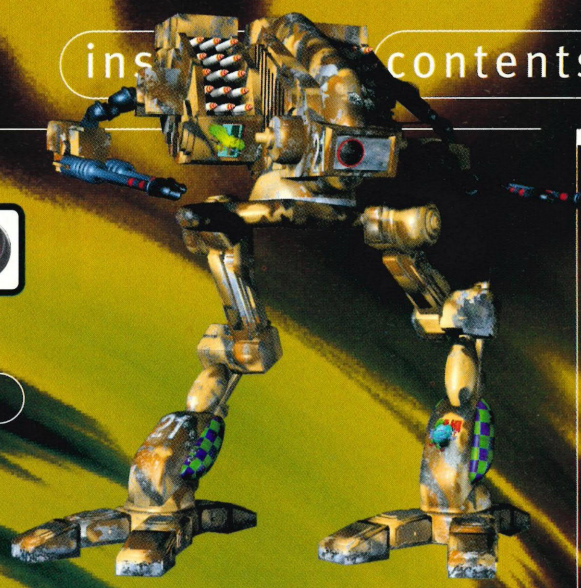
[SUBSCRIPTIONS]
52 Join the UK's best selling unofficial PlayStation magazine team and receive PLAY every month.

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

[PLAYBACK]
96 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.

inside
PLAY
issue Nineteen
...stest Growing PLAYSTATION Magazine!





MICRO MANIA!

36 At last *Micro Machines* hits the PlayStation and it's eight player game is unbeatable!



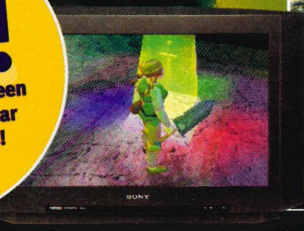
SONY SLASH PRICE OF PLAYSTATIONS!

06 Yes it's true – PlayStations prices are tumbling! Read about this and other late breaking news in PlayStation Wired.

BECAUSE OF THIS...



WIN!
17 A 28" widescreen TV with Telstar Electronic Studios!



MECHWARRIOR 2

44 Big robots – lots of damage, burning parts, huge weapons and it's far better than the PC version. Full review!

RALLY CROSS

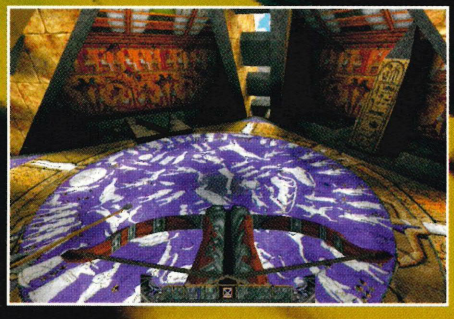
62 FIRST REVIEW of Sony's incredible *Sega Rally* beater. You want to own this game now – it's that good!



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!

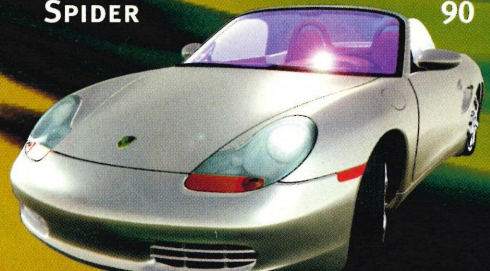
APOCALYPSE 30
HEXEN 2 31
PITFALL 3D 32



WIRED UPS

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

TOTAL NBA '97 82
PORSCHE CHALLENGE 84
TEST DRIVE OFF-ROAD 86
SWAGMAN 87
SPIDER 90



PLAY REVIEWS

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

LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE 20
MICRO MACHINES V3 36
KING'S FIELD 40
PERFECT WEAPON 42
MECHWARRIOR 2 44
SENTIENT 54
EXCALIBUR 2555AD 58
RAY STORM 60
RALLY CROSS 62
EPIDEMIC 66
ALLIED GENERAL 68
ADIDAS POWER SOCCER INT 69
2XTREME 70



WELL THIS IS IT. It's crunch time for the PlayStation as the first real competition in over a year is launched – the much hyped Nintendo 64.

Now many of you will probably see me as a bit of a traitor because as well as PLAY, I am also the co-ordinator of 64 MAGAZINE, but to be honest it puts me in the enviable position of seeing everything both consoles have to offer and then I can tell you what I think. At the moment I have to say that Nintendo has got it badly wrong. Not only is the N64 too expensive to stand a chance of being mass-market, but because of the cartridge format of the games, each one is likely to cost between 50 and 70 pounds. That's outrageous!

Surely Nintendo should have seen Sony's shock move of dramatically lowering the price of the PSX in response to their own launch and priced the N64 accordingly, but no.

And the games look a bit dodgy too. *Mario 64* is of course fantastic, but I am not convinced by *Doom*, *Wave Race* or even *Mario Kart*. *Turok* is also not meant to be worth the 95% scores it has received so far. Perhaps that's why I haven't been sent a copy by Acclaim.

Luckily for you though, the PlayStation goes from strength to strength. From 24 March, the base unit will cost £129, games are down to £35 right across the board, and as you can see in this issue of PLAY magazine, the best games are on PlayStation.

In particular check out our superb reviews of *Little Big Adventure*, *Mechwarrior 2* and *Micro Machines V3*, and I hope you enjoy the FREE tips book on the cover of this issue. It all goes to prove what I, and hopefully you, already know. PLAY is by far the best PSX mag – enjoy!

Damian Butt
Managing editor

PLAYSTAT wire

EVERYTHING MU

SONY RESPONDS TO N64 THREAT WITH CUT-PRICE PLAYSTATIONS AND GAMES!

SHOCK news reached the PLAY News Dog this month as Sony has announced an unprecidented price cut for the PlayStation. From 24 March, a standalone PlayStation will cost £129 – a reduction of over a third of the RRP on the base unit.

And this sensational move has also been reflected in the price of software too. By the time you read this, almost all of the official Sony games, including *Porsche Challenge*, *Total NBA '97*, *Epidemic* and even *Rage Racer* and *Soul Blade* will sell for just £35. At last Sony has kept its promise of lower prices thanks to its CD technology. It's about time, but it has to be said, not entirely unexpected.

The annoucement by Sony was cleverly timed to dampen the enthusiasm for the launch on the 1 March of the eagerly anticipated 64-bit console, the Nintendo 64.

Nintendo apparently tried desperately to get its launch price down to £199 after Sony dropped down to that from £250 mid last year, but couldn't due to the price of the catridges it uses for software.

It is now widely known that Nintendo software currently retails at £50-70, which means you can now buy two PlayStation games for each N64 one – a major feather in Sony's cap. This great news, complete with the newly launched Platinum budget range, means that the PlayStation now has more and cheaper games than any other console.

A massive press campaign is scheduled for Easter to really drive home the message and put severe pressure on Nintendo in its tentative first steps. Certainly the launch of the N64 has been surrounded by nothing like the hype created by Sony in September 1995.

Sega meanwhile has promised to drop the price of its troubled Saturn to match Sony, but with sales in Japan currently running at a 30:1 ratio in favour of the PSX (according to importers), is this too little too late?

At the time of going to print the many third party developers had not revealed whether their games would be similarly priced. At this stage it is doubtful. One question remains. Will the new £129 PSXs be the cut down ones with missing ports in the back, as has been rumoured in Japan? And is one of the missing ports the one for link-up? Stay tuned as we investigate.



a y s t a t i o n

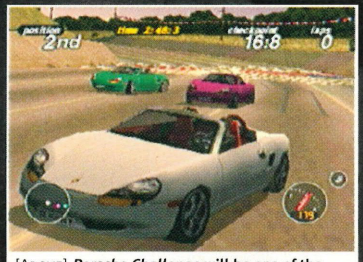
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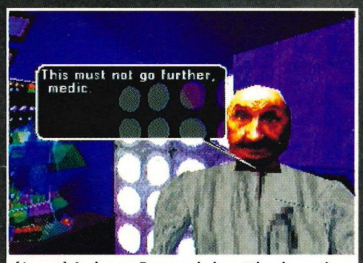
ST GO!



[Above] **Nintendo 64 games cost up to £70 – you can now get two PSX games for that price. Oops!**



[Above] ***Porsche Challenge* will be one of the first range of games to sell for £35. Excellent.**



[Above] **And even Psygnosis is getting in on the act with *Sentient* going for 35 smackers too!**

INTERNATIONAL PLAY BOYS

Who to contact at Play magazine...



Damian Butt

Where does the month go? Oh yes, we only had two weeks to do this issue, didn't we? The gaffer has spent most of his time trying to get 'into' *Sentient* and being burried under the mail for the Bloodstation compo. **play@paragon.co.uk**.



Graeme Nicholson

Right from the start Graeme pronounced *Rally Cross* as one of the best driving games ever "look at the suspension etc," but it has been his first Big Game, *LBA* which has taken all his time this month. **silencio@paragon.co.uk**



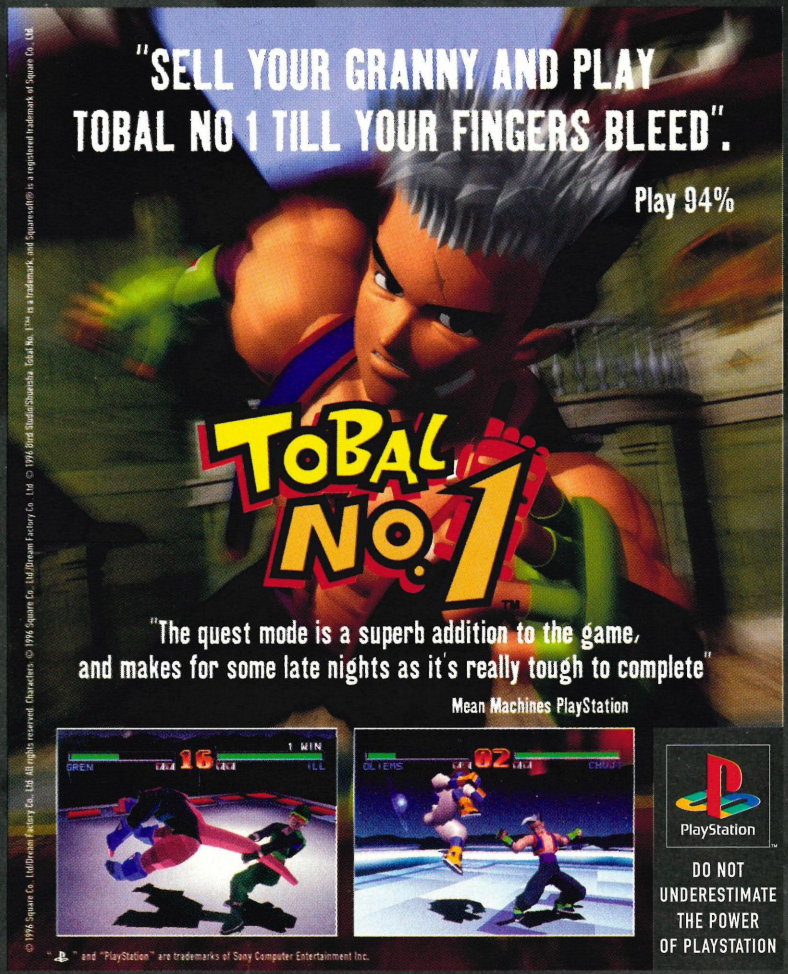
Tom Sargent

Micro Machines V3 – the highlight of Tom's month had the little Yorkshire lad veritably jumping up and down with excitement. Pity he also had to review *Allied General* though. **tomsargent@paragon.co.uk**



The Masked Reviewer

Known by few, feared by many, the Masked Reviewer will cast his critical eye over only a very select number of games, but those that come under his glare are mercilessly rated without compassion. If you have to believe in something, believe in the Masked Reviewer. **maskedr@paragon.co.uk**



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.

There are wild rumours this month that the Sega/Bandai partnership may be working on a PlayStation version of their own *Virtua Cop* Series to be found in the arcades and on the Sega Saturn. Apparently a senior executive at the company mooted the idea to a Japanese newspaper. If true it would mean a whole new games publisher for the PlayStation.

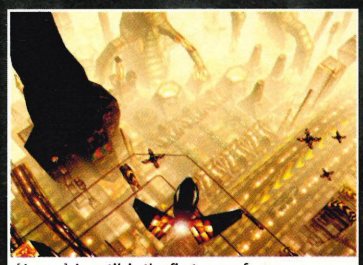
Single Trac, the developer behind *Twisted Metal 2* and *Jet Rider* is currently working on two new games so we've heard. The first is called *Critical Depth*, and it's said to be like *TM2* but using submarines. The second game is not even in production yet, but will apparently features *Mechwarrior*-style suits.

We've heard through the grapevine that Telstar may well be bringing out a go-karting game called *Formula Karts*, based on the two karting games published by Virgin on the PC.

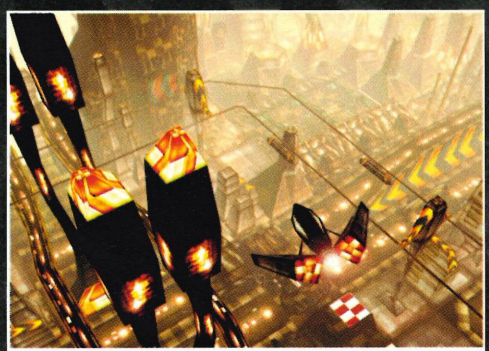
Sony is supposed to be developing a ten demo CD which is going to be released soon, with money raised going to the Prince's Trust. The CD, which is belived to be a compilation of all the new releases, including Telstar's *Excalibur 2555AD*, should retail for around £10, although how much of that is going to the Trust is not yet known. As usual, Sony has kept a low profile, but expect firm news soon.

IT'S NICE TO BE A LUNATIK!

LET'S HAVE a warm welcome to Pure Entertainment, the PlayStation's newest developer which has just signed up with Eidos to produce its first game due at the end of the year. *Lunatik* is a fast scrolling 3-D shoot-'em-up boasting impressive graphics (well just look for yourselves), and since its formation in April 1996, Pure has had 14 people working flat out on the project. The game is largely set in a city, with plenty of structures to avoid during the conflict, and at this stage we are particularly impressed with the dynamic lighting effects. It is also rumoured that the company is developing two new games for other publishers, but as yet these have not been confirmed.



[ABOVE] ***Lunatik*** **is the first game from newcomers Pure entertainment. Looks good...**

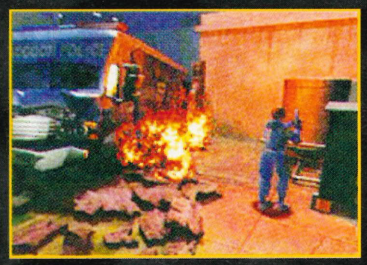


[ABOVE] **The game is a shoot-'em-up set within a futuristic city and as you can see, the graphics are exquisite. One to watch.**

RE2 – WHY ARE WE WAITING?

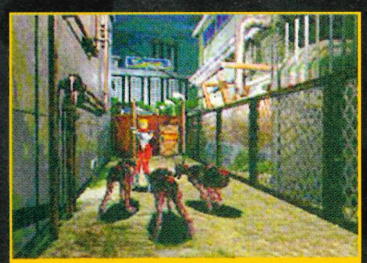
WELL IT would seem that the rumours about a much delayed *Resident Evil 2* are true, as this month Capcom made a statement that the game would be undergoing minor plot and scenery changes after criticism of it being too similar to the original. What has been confirmed is that *RE2* will now come on two CDs, but not until the end of the year.

PLAY has been told that Capcom has not had to go back to the drawing board following the criticism, thought to be from the Japanese press, but rather the game is having some cosmetic changes such as new monsters, enhanced graphics and some brand new cinematic scenes like the ones in *Resident Evil*. We also believe that the plots of the two characters will be more diverse than before. Whatever the new tweaks, it does mean we won't see the game in the UK for some months yet; way after Virgin's March '97 release date.





[ABOVE] **Why are we waiting? We are suffocating. *Resident Evil 2* is now feared delayed until Xmas.**



[ABOVE] **It is thought the cause of the delay is to add more plot and characters. Hmm.**

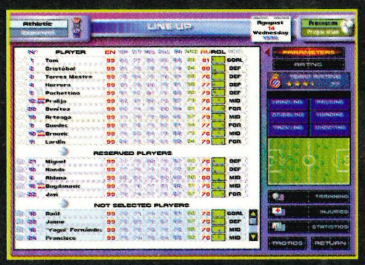
PREMIER PLAYSTATION TREATEMENT FROM GREMLIN

PLAYER MANAGER was the first shot at converting a football management game to the PlayStation and unfortunately for the thousands of fans out there it was punted far wide of the mark. It wasn't comprehensive enough, lacked tense decision making, and never once did you actually play on the pitch as the name suggested.

Premier Manager '97 from Gremlin is next up to take the penalty kick and from early on looks to be more of a Stuart Pearce than a Gareth Southgate. *PM '97* wants so desperately to be the definitive footy management game on the PSX that it features not only the chance to train, trade and select your teams, but also such time consuming options as hiring and firing everyone from the groundskeeper to the Psysio, the financial side of the clib (building extra stands, sorting out season ticket prices, meat pies etc), and then of course there's the touchline anguish as your team fights through the many leagues on offer. You can watch matches live or as part of a replay service, and once again Barry Davis gets to flex his vocals for that authentic match report.

Premier Manager '97 is set for an April release on PC, with the PlayStation version not long after. With Gremlin having secured the football 'Action' award with *Actua Soccer*, can they go for the double? More news soon.







TOP FIVE...

EXCESSIVE INSTRUMENTS OF VIRTUAL VIOLENCE!



You can't beat a good old fashioned Desert Eagle stuffed into a zombie's face, or a cosmic death ray that fills the entire screen. Whatever the dealer of death, it's surprising how often the PlayStation is the console with the most impressive armaments.

1. The death ray in *Ray Storm*
2. The BFG from *Doom*
3. The nuclear strike in *C&C*
4. The bombs in *Die Hard 3*
5. Remote bombs in *Twisted Metal 2*



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PLAYSTATION PERFECTION!

PLAY DISCOVERS THE ULTIMATE TV TO PLAY GAMES ON...

FACE FACTS, if you haven't got an abnormally sized TV to play PlayStation games on then you're missing out. The PlayStation was designed to work best on a 16:9 proportion screen, that's widescreen format to you and me, but up until now the biggest you could have your digital chums was 28" via the Sony Widescreen. Well now that's about to change...

Forget your conventional TVs – be they 30", 35" or even 40" – and the new 32" Widescreen TV is history too, because Sony has just released into the free world a widescreen projection TV of such... big-ness, that it will render all other models redundant. Ladies and gentlemen, we present the KL-50W1 – a 50" monster of a TV – the ultimate PlayStation accessory!

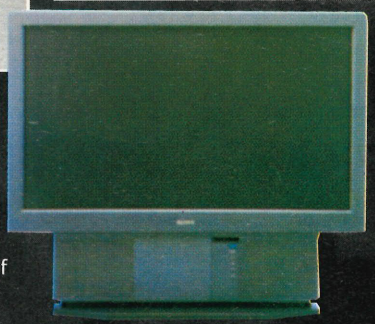
Having been invited to a presentation to unveil the new model, PLAY can fill you in on just some of its features. For starters, it's got a 50" LCD projection screen and a scratch-proof screen which does not feel as plastic or brittle as previous projection units.



You also get NICAM stereo, a 3-D sound system, three SCART sockets, it's multi-standard, and best of all, you can split the screen right down the middle and have two different channels at once, or even two PlayStation games linked up – each using a 25" portion of the screen. Just think what *Wipeout 2097* or *The Need for Speed* would be like! This incredible TV is a snip at £5,000 and if you can afford it, it's the ultimate...



[ABOVE] **Pah! Forget ickle TVs like this one, you want to get the new Sony 50" widescreen.** [BELOW]



NAMCO SIGNS UP FOR NINE MORE GAMES EXCLUSIVELY ON PLAYSTATION!

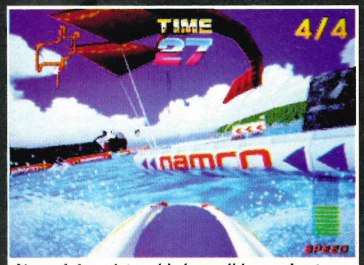
GREAT NEWS for all PlayStation owners is that Sony and Namco have just signed a renewal of their long term contract which guarantees a further nine new games from the best PSX developer in the world. This deal includes *Time Crisis*, a new game called *Point Blank*, and of course the conversion of *Tekken 3*. You can also expect *Namco Museum Vol 4&5*, another *Rage Racer* style game (possible *Rave Racer*) and *Air Combat 2*.

This is a significant deal as it confirms the *Tekken 3* conversion for the first time and it means Namco games will continue to appear ONLY on the PlayStation for at least another year. President of Sony Computer Entertainment, Chris Deering said of the partnership:

"Namco has the most impressive library of high end arcade titles in the world. We are very excited to renew the partnership. Under the current agreement, *Soul Blade*, one of the most eagerly awaited PlayStation games will be released in April." And the Managing Director of Namco, Mr Yasuhiko Asada added:

"The fact that we have chosen to continue the solid partnership with Sony exclusively, is a testament to the quality of the PlayStation..."

Namco games have now accumilated sales of over $1 billion and the likes of *Tekken 3* only help to secure the PlayStation at the top of the console tree.



[ABOVE] ***Aqua Jet*** **could also well be coming to a PSX near you; taking on the N64's *Wave Race*.**



[ABOVE] **And of course don't forget the incredible conversion of *Tekken 3*, and maybe *Alpine Racer*.**



[ABOVE] **A great hope for a conversion to the PlayStation is *Tokyo Wars* – a driving game where you blunder through the streets of Tokyo smashing things up and taking out enemy tanks. Top.**

ATARI – BLADE RUNNER MYSTERY SOLVED!

YOU ALL remember that bit in Ridley Scott's film, *Blade Runner*, where the ship soars across the dingy city and an Atari logo can clearly be seen? Well many thought this prophecy could never be fulfilled because the company went through some distinctly shady times in the Eighties and early Nineties, and pundits predicted the company would never make it past the Millenium. But it looks like the Atari mentioned in the film refers not to the company itself, but a new collection for the PlayStation: *Arcade's Greatest Hits: Atari Collection Vol 1*, published by GT. This fantastic package tugs at the nostalgia strings even more so that *Williams' Arcade Classics* because it contains six of the most addictive games ever made: *Asteroids, Missile Command, Tempest, Centipede, Breakout* and *Battlezone*. The game is out in April and we'll have a full review soon.



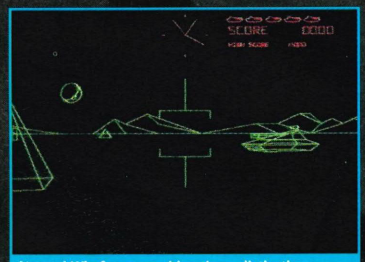
[ABOVE] ***Missile Command*** **is still fantastic today, but will there be a PSX trackball?**



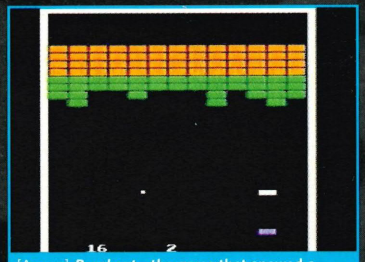
[ABOVE] **Although *Tempest X3* has just been released, surely there's still room for the original?**



[ABOVE] ***Centipede*** **is an undisputed classic which still populates train stations today.**



[ABOVE] **Wireframe graphics, those distinctive 'blippy bloppy' sounds – it could only be *Battlezone*.**



[ABOVE] ***Breakout*** **– the game that spawed a million clones – best of all was *Arkanoid*.**

READERS REQUEST

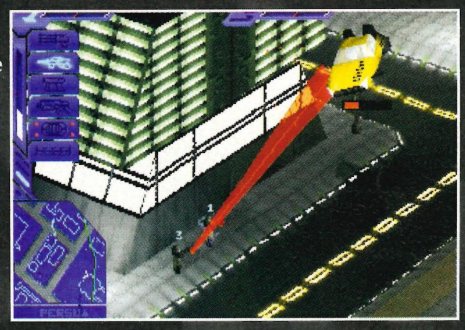
VALUING our readers like we do, we at PLAY decided it was time to let you have your say, and so every month from now on we'll be printing the readers five most eagerly anticipated games on the PlayStation. To start with we contacted our many loyal fans on the Internet who were only too generous in flooding the offices with suggestions. What we're looking for are the games you are just gagging to play but have not yet arrived. We don't much care for the ones that have been reviewed because you already have them in your sweaty mitts, but we want an accurate indication of the games you want to see the most and therfore we should devote more time to. Get your votes in now to:

Readers Request,
Play magazine,
Paragon House, St Peter's Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH1 2JS.

We want your views every month, so get them to us by e-mail, letter, or phone after 5pm on weekdays.

TOP FIVE MOST WANTED GAMES

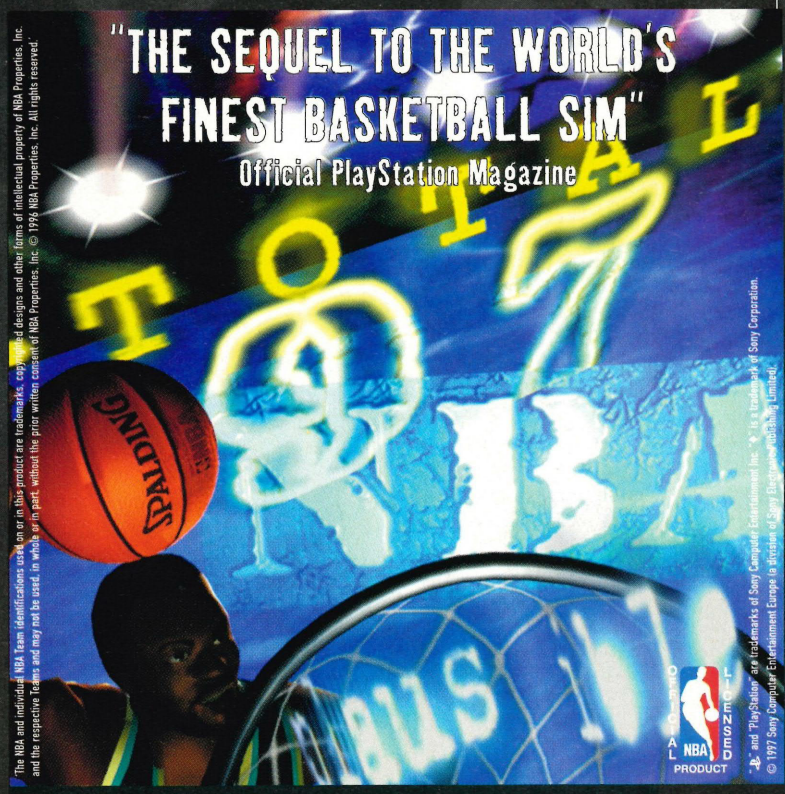
1. SYNDICATE WARS
2. FINAL FANTASY VII
3. TOMB RAIDER 2
4. FORMULA 1 SEQUEL
5. RESIDENT EVIL 2



CHARTS

In association with ChartTrack

POS	GAME	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	PLAY SCORE
1.	DESTRUCTION DERBY	REFLECTIONS	PSYGNOSIS	82%
2.	COOLBOARDERS	UEP SYSTEMS	SONY	82%
3.	TOMB RAIDER	CORE DESIGN	EIDOS INT	94%
4.	DIE HARD TRILOGY	PROBE	EA/FOX	93%
5.	CRASH BANDICOOT	NAUGHTY DOG	SONY	84%
6.	FIFA '97	EA SPORTS	EA	70%
7.	TEKKEN 2	NAMCO	SONY	95%
8.	ALIEN TRILOGY	PROBE	ACCLAIM	91%
9.	JET RIDER	SINGLE TRAC	SONY	85%
10.	COMMAND & CONQUER	WESTWOOD	VIE	79%



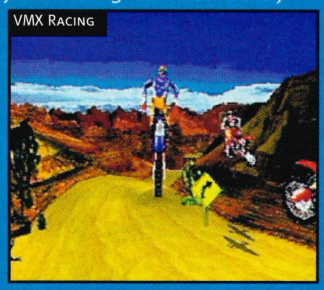
USA ENTERTAINMENT

ENTERTAINMENT USA

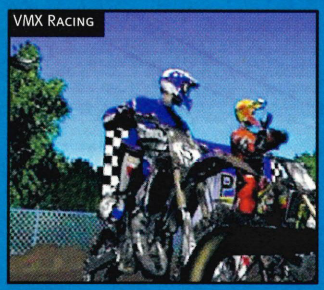


CAT BUCANNON brings you all the news on what's hot in the land of OJ Simpson and numerous fake UFO sightings.

A great new game has emerged in the States called *VMX Racing* from Playmates. Basically *VMX Racing* is a cross country motorcycle racing game which includes Supercross and Enduro off-road racing, and from the screenshots you can see that it looks amazing – far better than the yet to be released over here game from Mirage called *MotoX*. Like *Jet Rider*, the human on the bike can shift his body to help turning in the air and making sure that the bike is going to land without throwing him over the handlebars, and you can even glance behind you to check out the competition. Each character in the race also has a different personality and storyline, which is just like the system in *Porsche Challenge* and *Twisted Metal 2*. Also like those two games, *VMX Racing* features a two player split screen mode which can be viewed horizontally or vertically, and the developers claim that up to 16 riders can be on-screen at once. *VMX Racing* is long overdue for a release in this country, but it should be out soon and you lucky PLAY readers can decide whether to wait for a probable UK release, or simply get it on import.



VMX RACING



VMX RACING



COOL SPOT

A word of warning. *Cool Spot* has just been released over here and in Europe simultaneously, but suspicously, no review copies have been made available. I have played the game and it's rubbish, so please don't buy a copy until you've read the PLAY review.

Rumours are abound in the US that the PlayStation will soon go down to just $149 following the £129 price announcement in the UK. At the moment you can pick one up for $199 and if this happens it will be the second cheapest compared to Japan. According to sources in Japan, the PlayStation and Nintendo 64 are now both selling for the equivalent of £99. This is getting scary.



[ABOVE] **Cat Bucannon – cannot be bothered to send us another picture of her.**



ALL STAR SOCCA SHOCKER! (WELL, SORT OF)

FRANKENSTEIN MEETS *Roy of the Rovers* is the most accurate description of Eidos Interactive's new football game with a twist, *All Star Soccer* (not to be confused with *Soccer '97* also by Eidos). Instead of just being a football simulation, with all the usual statistics and players, the developers have made this a mix 'n' match arcade affair, with you able to compile your very own players from a wide choice of body parts and skills. Take a hint of Cantona, give him the added aggression of a Vinnie Jones, and then top it off with the frame of Carlton Palmer. Simmer for three seasons and watch those karate kicks fly! Seriously though, *All Star Soccer* does contain all the rules and physics of the real game, but the graphics are obviously more cartoon-like than the crafted wonders in *FIFA '97*. Although they are still motion captured to appear realistic. But sprites have been used instead of Polygons for the sake of speed and smooth animation. Up to eight players can take part in the game simultaneously and there are 36 teams already included, ten stadiums and some tongue-in-cheek commentary. *All Star Soccer* looks like a laugh and you can expect it on the shelves in May.

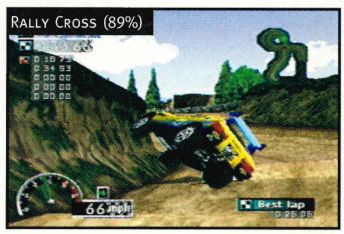




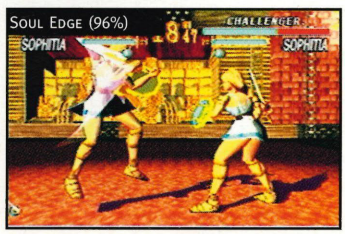


[ABOVE] ***All Star Soccer*** **– a more fun look at a game which many take too seriously...**

PLAY RECOMMENDS...



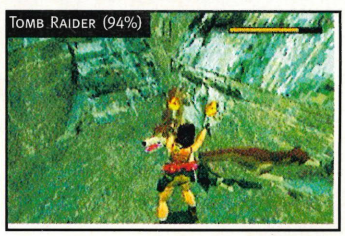
RALLY CROSS (89%)



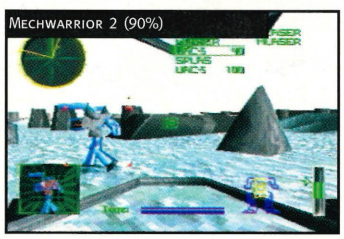
SOUL EDGE (96%)



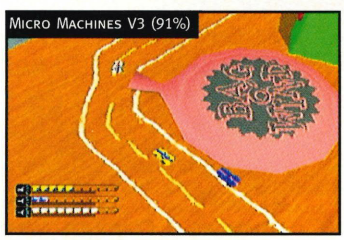
RAGE RACER (IMPORT) (94%)



TOMB RAIDER (94%)



MECHWARRIOR 2 (90%)



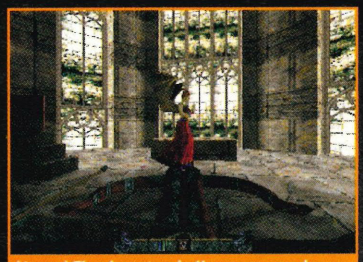
MICRO MACHINES V3 (91%)

ACTIVISION NAB HEXEN 2!

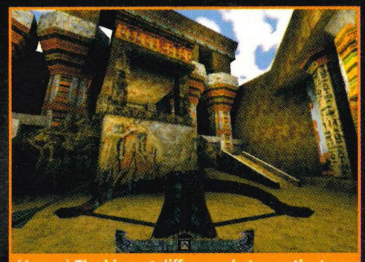
NEW GAME WILL USE EXACTLY THE SAME ENGINE AS PSX *QUAKE* SAY DEVELOPERS...

***HEXEN* ISN'T EVEN OUT YET** but already news of the sequel has been leaked to PLAY magazine. Although the first game has been signed by GT, for release soon, *Hexen 2* will be under the wing of Activision and it is without a doubt their most exciting release for the end of the year. *Hexen 2* follows the same formula as the original, whereby you can control one of four characters: Palladin, Cleric, Assassin and necromancer, and each has his own type of weapon and power-up – 12 in all. Basically the sequel will contain more textures and a quicker 3-D engine which is based on the one being used for *Quake*. Activision is keen to stress at this point that more will be known about the capabilities of the new engine when *Quake* emerges, so for the moment we have no information on whether there will be a link-up mode or the exact nature of being able to view your surroundings. Perhaps the analogue controller could be used to simulate your head movement for example. Check out the Activision report on page 30 for more details.





[ABOVE] The characters in *Hexen 2* are made up of polygons – unlike those in *Final Doom*.



[ABOVE] The biggest difference between the two games will be the level layouts and textures.



[ABOVE] At the moment, *Hexen 2* uses many of the weapons from *Quake*. This will change.



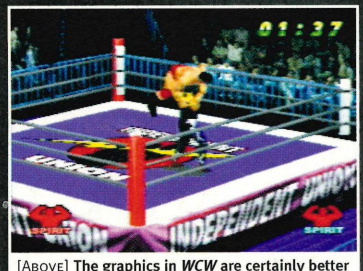
[ABOVE] The scope for producing realistic environments is immense.

YOU GOTTA WRESTLE WITH IT

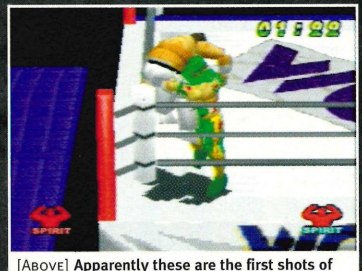
JUST WHEN will software companies stop bombarding us with wrestling games? The sport has a limited following in the UK at best. And of those fans, how many have PlayStations? Not many. The latest to join the ranks of *WWF In the House* and *Power Move* is *WCW Vs the World* from THQ. As you can see the graphics of this game are far better than the other wrestling games, but the big question is how will it play? A combination of *Tekken 2* and *Tobal No.1* would be nice. *WCW Vs the World* boasts 52 wrestlers from six federations who have all been texture mapped and you control one of nine of them. The usual liggers – Hulk Hogan, Lex Luger and Dean Malenko – also appear. Look for the game later in the year.



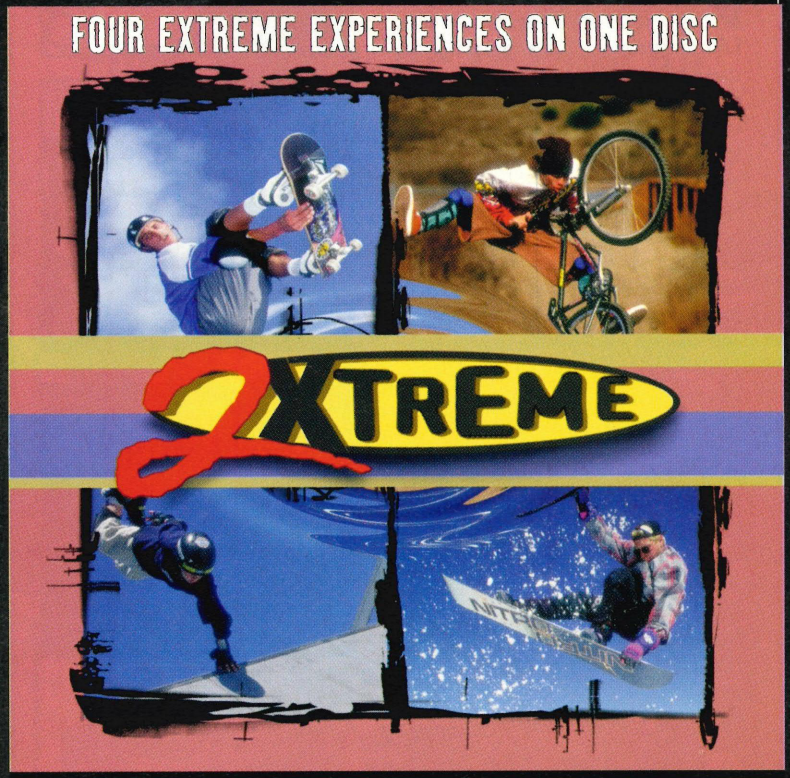
[ABOVE] *WCW VS the World* – another nail in the coffin of light entertainment? We reserve judgement.



[ABOVE] The graphics in *WCW* are certainly better than most, but the control method is the key.



[ABOVE] Apparently these are the first shots of this new game to be printed. Cool.

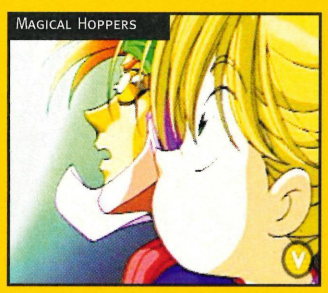


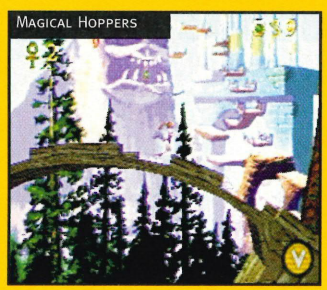
JAPS EYE

Deep Sea Adventure has just been unveiled to the press here in Japan and it looks to be *Aquanaught's Adventure* meets Captain Nemo. More of a simulation than action game, *Deep Sea Adventure* is set on a planet where 90% of the land has been submerged after a great war. You play a scavenger who searches the ocean floors for wrecks and sunken treasures, whilst encountering weird lifeforms which you hope to identify. The more booty you collect, the better sub you can afford and the graphics are certainly top notch. Whether this game will surface in Europe in not yet confirmed, but hopefully it will have success than *Depth*, which has still not yet been completed over here.



Magical Hoppers is an interesting new game from, hang on a minute, Crystal Dynamics? Yes it would seem that Japan is now to get the slick platform game *Pandemonium* under a completely different name and with many new additions. The basic game remains the same, but gone is the sinister looking jester and the nubile Nikki – to be replaced by Clam and Guppie, a couple of spunky girls. And the reason? Because Japanese publisher Bandai wants to push its latest toy line and needed a videogame to whip up some hype. If you haven't yet got *Pandemonium*, perhaps this Japanese curio is worth a look?





Squarsoft has at last announced the Japanese release dates of its new batch of software – all of it is definitely worth a look on import. *Bushido Blade* should be out by the time you read this, *Tobal 2* is scheduled for 25 April, *Final Fantasy Tactics* 23 May and *SaGa Frontier* is hopefully going to come out on 11 July. Also don't forget Square also has *Grand Championship Rally.*



NET PLAY

A SELECTION OF THE FINEST PLAYSTATION SITES ON THE INTERNET

WITH THE Internet now widely available in many homes, including those of PLAY readers, we thought it was high time to give you some handy addresses of our favourite web sites. Some have links to PLAY itself, others offer tips and complete solutions, and you also get news services, reviews, previews and movies to download. The Internet will never replace traditional print magazines (you couldn't take a PC into the toilet with you after all), but for those of you who are connected it is an invaluable addition to your PSX gaming.

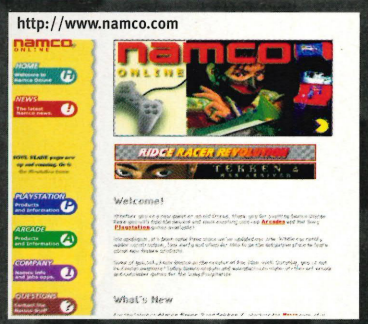
http://www.paragon.co.uk/play



http://www.videogamespot.com/psx



http://www.namco.com



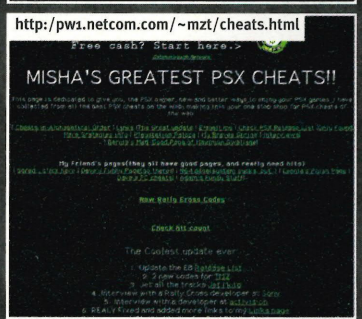
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http://www.vidgames.com



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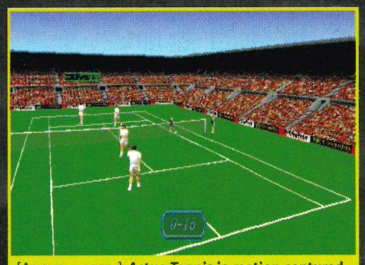
ACTUA SPORTS CASUALS

AT LAST we have some more Actua sports titles on the way. First up in May is *Actua Golf 2*, which is a much enhanced version of the original, featuring more realistic envinroment touches like water reflections and new scenery. You even get full in-game commentary and six new courses. *Actua Tennis* meanwhile is the long awaited fully motion captured tennis game and we now have a confirmed release date of June. More news soon.



[ABOVE] *Actua Golf 2* features improved textures all round and full match commentary.

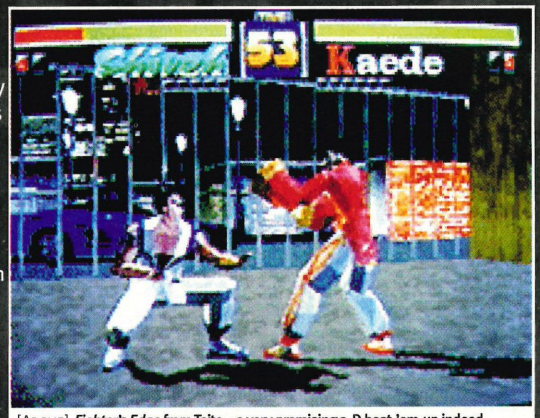




[ABOVE + LEFT] *Actua Tennis* is motion captured and features celebrity play by play commentary.

SUDDEN IMPACT

TAITO HAS SO FAR resisted the allures of the three-dimensional beat-'em-up route, but that's all changes with the announcement of *Fighter's Impact*. This game (converted from the coin-op to the PlayStation) features eight fighters, all of whom look like a cross between *Tekken 2* and *Tobal No.1 (ie* very textured, but you can still see they are made out of geometric shapes) and each one has a primary fighting style and two sub-styles. That means each combatant has three sets of power moves to unleash. The fighting styles on offer include karate, tae kwon do, pro wrestling (there's always one isn't there?), streetfighting and jujitsu. All of which must be trained and mastered before you'll achieve total success. Apparently one of the major new features of *Fighter's Impact* is the Slide Compo, which is completely unblockable unless a secret move is initiated on the joypad. If you use the same combo moves as your opponent, you both go into a spectacular overheating mode. *Fighter's Impact* will be out later in the year.



[ABOVE] *Fighter's Edge* from Taito – a very promising 3-D beat-'em-up indeed.

THOSE RELEASE DATES IN FULL

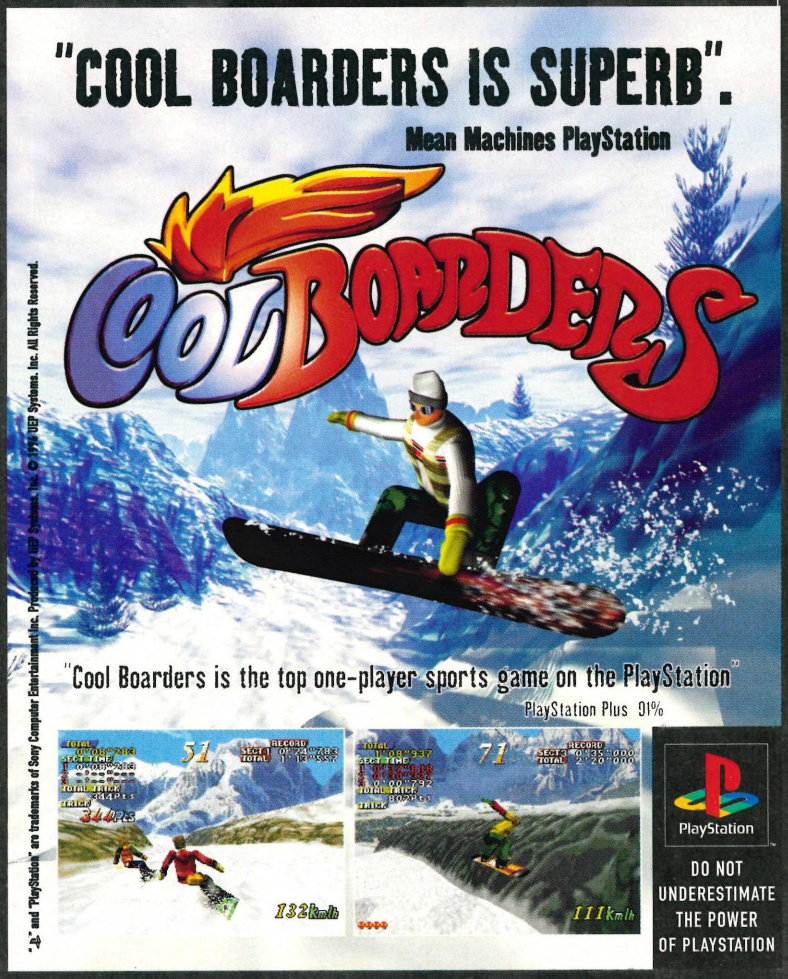
What games will be out during the time this magazine is on the shelves? We present a handy guide to new releases and those that have slipped.

MARCH/ APRIL

2Xtreme (Sony)
Air combat (Platinum)
Area 51 (GT)
Cool Spot (Virgin)
Crusader: No Remorse (EA)
Destruction Derby (Platnium)
Epidemic (Sony)
Exhumed (BMG)
King's Field (Sony)
Mechwarrior 2 (Activision)
Megaman X3 (Virgin)
Micro Machines V3 (Codemasters)
MTV Slamscape (Virgin)
NBA In the Zone '97 (Konami)
NHL Hockey '97 (Sony)
Porsche Challenge (Sony)
Powerplay Hockey (Virgin)
Ridge Racer (Platinum)
Space Jam (Acclaim)
Tekken (Platinum)
Ten Pin Alley (EA)
Toshinden (Platinum)
Total NBA '97 (Sony)
Wipeout (Platinum)

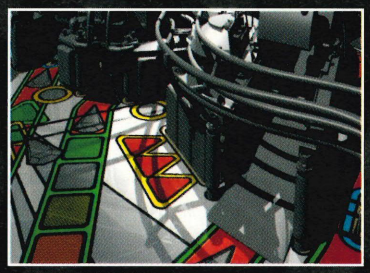
AND THE SLIPPERS...

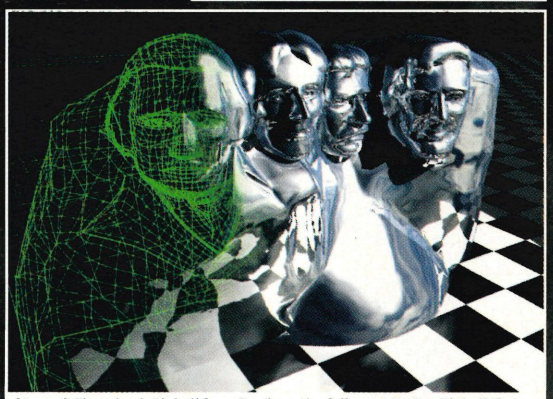
GAME (PUBLISHER)	WAS	NOW
Resident Evil	March	Winter
Spider	March	April/May



SHOCKING! THE TERMINATOR

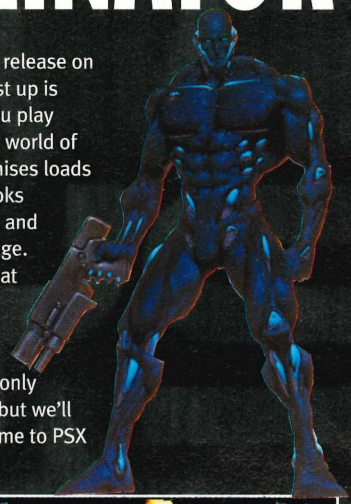
IN THE battle to be the best pinball simulation on PlayStation, Empire Interactive's *Pro Pinball – The Web* came out top of the league for its playability and realism. Now it seems you are going to have even less excuses to visit the pub this summer as their new game, *Pro Pinball – Timeshock!* hits the shelves around May. With gloriously sharp graphics using the PlayStation's high resolution mode and 32,000 colours at a promised 50 frames per second, there is no doubt that it will be pretty, and Empire reckon its table design is so accurate that a real pinball table could be produced from the blueprints!

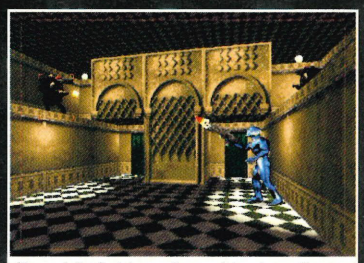




[ABOVE] *Timeshock Pinball* from Empire – the follow up to *Pro Pinball the Web* and it's obviously not even nearly finished yet.

NEW from Grolier are two games set for release on the PlayStation near the end of the year. First up is *Perfect Assassin* a 3D adventure in which you play Charon, the titular terminator, in the fantasy world of the Kobrai Citadel (or something). This promises loads of character interaction and killing, but it looks markedly diffrent from anything so far seen, and we're still at the 'prodding it with a stick' stage. Some of its notable features include: "combat with big alien warriors, megabytes of pre-rendered sequences and great music." So it could be anything really. Expect a deeper look in a few months. Also from Grolier and only just signed is the shoot-'em-up *Solar Wars*, but we'll have a full report on this next month. Welcome to PSX Grolier. It's about time.





[ABOVE] *Perfect Assassin* – a picture's worth a thousand words. Just as well.



[ABOVE] *Solar Wars* is a superb looking space shoot-'em-up. Very similar to Rage's *Darklight*.

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



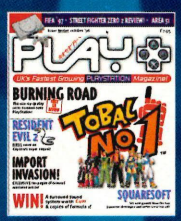
ISSUE [6]
Viper and *Tunnel B1* exposed, *addidas Soccer* FREE postcards.



ISSUE [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*!

Back ISSUES

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!*



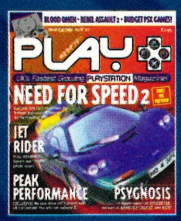
ISSUE [15]
Command & Conquer, Pandemonium, FIFA '97 reviewed!



ISSUE [16]
Rage Racer reviewed, *Porsche Challenge* in-depth look, *Tekken 3* news and more *RE2!*



ISSUE [18]
Massive exclusive *NFS2* feature, *Peak Performance, Jet Rider* and loads more!





WIN A WIDESCREEN TV WORTH £700 WITH TELSTAR!

1ST PRIZE
A 28" widescreen TV and a copy of Excalibur 2555AD

FEEL THE WIDTH WITH THIS, THE ULTIMATE VEWING EXPERIENCE!

To celebrate the imminent release of the epic first-person 3-D adventure, Excalibur 2555 AD, we've teamed up with industry wizards Telstar to give away a fantastic 28" widescreen TV to one ludicrously lucky reader. Even wider than the sword used by Beth in the game itself, the TV features:

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- Nicam Stereo
- Fastext
- IQ Picture, Commander, Menu and Sound (including DSP)
- Auto Tuning
- Wide Spectrum Sound
- Cabinet Supplied
- Sleep Timer

Read our lips. You want to win this prize! But in order to get that magical phone call by one of our sultry secretaries, informing you that you're the proud owner of a TV wider than the average front room, you must first embark on our own little quest of knowledge, compiled by that gnarled and erudite conjurer, Merlin. Five runners up will win a copy of the excellent *Excalibur 2555 AD*, so make haste people and get to it.

WHAT IS EXCALIBUR?

A. A brand of condom
B. A skin irritation
C. An impressive gleaming sword with magical properties

To stand any chance whatsoever of getting your grubby paws on the goodies, all entries must be written on the back of a postcard or a stuck-down envelope, together with your name and address and sent to:

I want to play Excalibur until 2555 AD
Play Magazine
Paragon House
St Peter's Road
Bournemouth
Dorset
BH1 2JS



2ND PRIZE
Five copies of Telstar's new game, Excalibur 2555AD

EXCALIBUR 2555AD

The editor's decision is final. No correspondence may be entered into. Employees of Paragon Publishing or its suppliers Telstar Electronic Studios may not enter. The closing date is 21 April 1997. All winners will be available in writing on request from Paragon Publishing. The sponsors reserve the right to supply a prize of equivalent value than the one illustrated. No cash alternatives, sorry.

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!



20 Is this the most stunningly beautiful and fully interactive graphical adventure yet? We think so , and to celebrate Adeline's success in converting their epic PC game, *LBA*, to the PlayStation, we've devoted a dizzying nine pages to showing you every nuance. It may be excessive, but good adventures are hard to find. Enjoy...



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

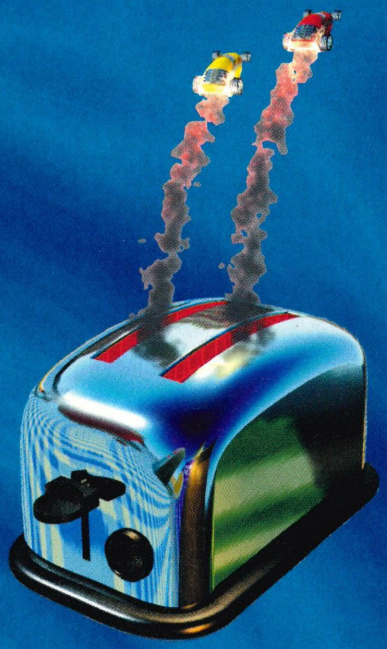

Uses a Memory Card
(for save games)


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

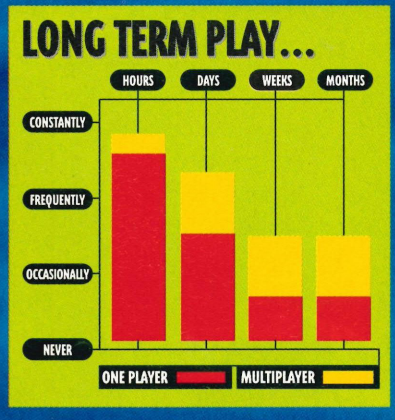
You want in-depth features on the latest software? You got it!

APOCALYPSE 30
HEXEN 2 31
PITFALL 3D 32



CHALLENGE BOX

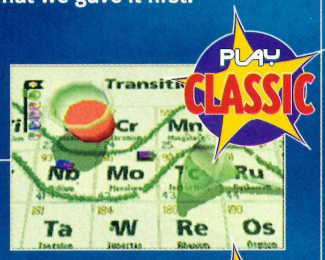
This clever little box is designed to show you instantly how long a game will last (in our opinion) based on the review. The one player game (in red) will more often than not be lower than multiple players because it's more fun playing a friend than the computer. Although it is entirely subjective, we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

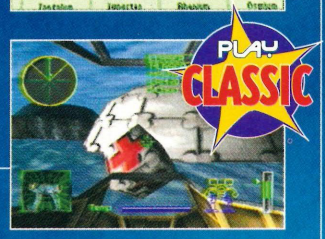


PLAY REVIEWS

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.

LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE 20
MICRO MACHINES V3 36
KING'S FIELD 40
PERFECT WEAPON 42
MECHWARRIOR 2 44
SENTIENT 54
EXCALIBUR 2555AD 58
RAY STORM 60
RALLY CROSS 62
EPIDEMIC 66
ALLIED GENERAL 68
ADIDAS POWER SOCCER INT 69
2XTREME 70





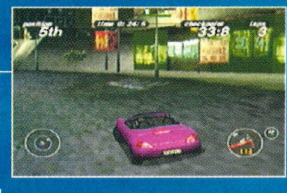




WIRED UP

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

TOTAL NBA '97 82
PORSCHE CHALLENGE 84
TEST DRIVE OFF-ROAD 86
SWAGMAN 87
SPIDER 90





THE BIG GAME LITTLE BIG

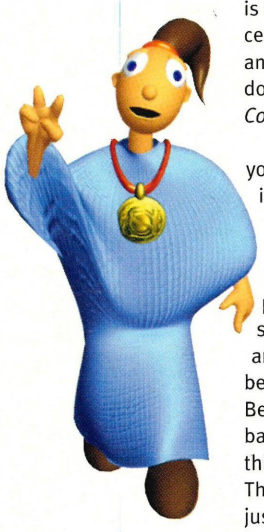


ADVENTURE

A MAGICALLY POWERFUL BALD CREATURE, AN EVIL DICTATORSHIP AND PLANETARY EXTINCTION. WHAT DO THESE THINGS HAVE IN COMMON? YOU IN LESS THAN A MONTH!

Written By Graeme Nicholson

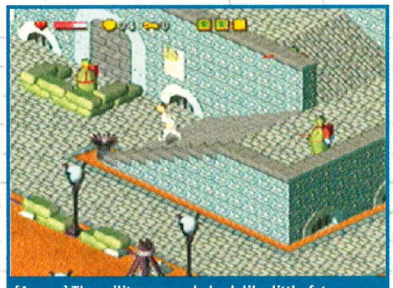
"What's this?" you're thinking. "Another damn PC conversion?" Well, yes, but it may surprise you to know that this is one of the PC's games that was certainly worth converting to PlayStation, and the conversion has actually been done well, unlike say *Command & Conquer* with its lobotomised code.



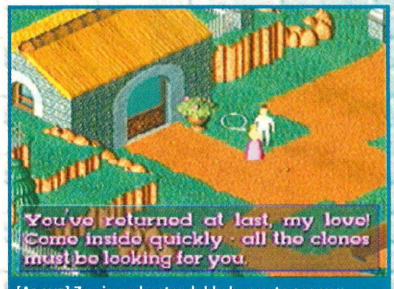
To understand the significance of what your character, Twinsen, is out to achieve in *Little Big Adventure* as well as why things are the way they are in the world he inhabits, you have to know the story behind the whole thing. The planet Twinsun has, as the name suggests, two suns which give it light and heat independently, with the planet being situated in-between the two. Because of this, its coldest part is the band that runs around the very middle, as this is the area furthest from both suns. This equator is all mountains and snow, just like our north and south poles, and is therefore uninhabited, but the otherwise perfect conditions on the planet meant that four intelligent species evolved into existence on Twinsun. These are the Quetches, the Rabbibunnies, the Spheros and the Grobos, and all was tranquil and well for some time until the evil dictator Dr. FunFrock started running the show. Things started to change for the worse, ever since FunFrock presented himself to the population as some kind of saviour only a few years ago, and warned everyone to move into the southern hemisphere of Twinsun. Now he runs everything in a scary, big brother-style, with an oppressed society, guards and military surveillance equipment everywhere. For a faithful staff he uses his secret cloning technology to produce copies of any of the four species whenever he feels like it, and these are the unsettling half-mechanical beings that will give you the majority of your grief throughout the game. The doctor has installed teleportation units throughout the community too, and it is by way of these that he can send a clone almost anywhere when there is trouble.

Whenever a race is heavily oppressed, they will always come up with something to provide a little hope, as with the black slaves of the late 19th

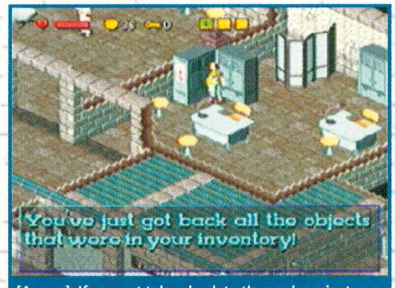
"Staggering around with your fists outstretched like some kind of hooligan..."



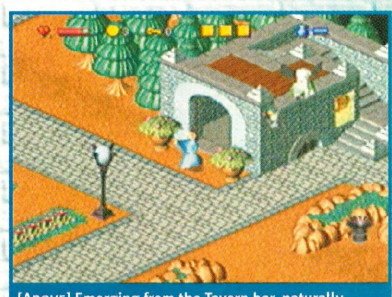
[ABOVE] The military guards look like little fat Christmas puddings in overcoats, it's hard to believe they want to perforate you with gun fire.



[ABOVE] Zoe is understandably happy to see you when you return home, but the reunion doesn't last long thanks to that dastardly doctor.



[ABOVE] If you get taken back to the asylum, just break out of your cell again and all your items will be in a nearby locker!



[ABOVE] Emerging from the Tavern bar, naturally looking for a fight, don't forget to rootle through the flower pots to see what you can find.

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Customer support: 01753 549 442
Price: TBA
Release date: End of March



ONE PLAYER



MEMORY CARD

THE GREAT ESCAPE

THE FIRST PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED IN *LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE* IS GETTING TWINSEN OUT OF THE MAD HOUSE. FOLLOW OUR EASY STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO JUSTICE, AND GET ON YOUR WAY TO HELPING THE POPULATION OF TWINSUN.



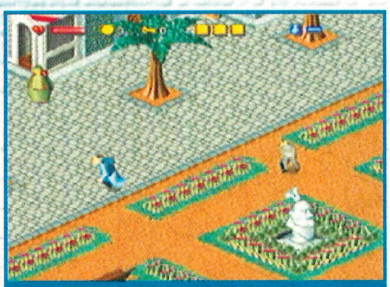
BEGINNING IN THE PRISON CELL, YOU MUST SWITCH TO THE AGGRESSIVE MODE TO ATTRACT THE ATTENTION OF THE FIRST NURSE. HE WILL ARRIVE IN JUST A FEW SECONDS TIME.



"STOP SQUIRMING, PRISONER TWINSEN" SNEERS THE NURSE AS HE ARRIVES ON HIS LITTLE PLATFORM. MAKE SURE YOU'RE NOT UNDERNEATH BEFORE HE STARTS TO COME INTO THE CELL.



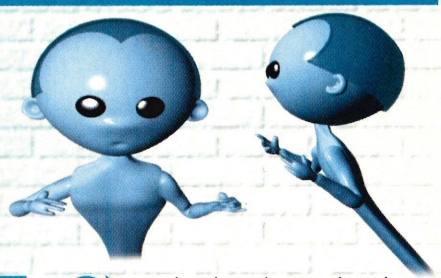
[Above] A wrong turn when exploring the asylum can lead you straight into the range of one of these horrible white Groboclones.



[Above] Try to remember where you see all the busts of Dr FunFrock around the place, you will need to go back to them as the game continues.



[Above] Is your women's safety worth the price of a drink for this tight-lipped Grobo? Bit of a tough one that...





[Above] Take a look at the Holomap in your inventory for a hi-res, rotatable globe of Twinsun.

HE WALKS THE WALK, BUT CAN HE TALK THE TALK?

A BIZARRE CONVERSATION IS ONLY ONE PRESS OF THE ACTION BUTTON AWAY WHEN YOU'RE NEAR ANY OF TWINSUN'S INHABITANTS. UNFORTUNATELY, IT IS ONLY VERY RARELY THAT YOU GET TO CHOOSE FROM VARIOUS RESPONSES IN A CONVERSATION, BUT NEVER MIND, GET CHATTING ANYWAY!



YOU'LL GET NOTHING VERY USEFUL OUT OF THIS OLD WOMAN, BUT SHE'S WORTH TALKING TO FOR HER EXTREMELY FUNNY IRISH ACCENT.



LIKE THE TV SHOW *HOME IMPROVEMENT*, YOU CAN TURN TO YOUR NEIGHBOUR FOR ADVICE WHEN THINGS AREN'T GOING WELL AT HOME...



MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE SURPRISINGLY FORTHCOMING WITH ALL SORTS OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE TOWN, ESPECIALLY THE TALKATIVE RABBIBUNNIES.



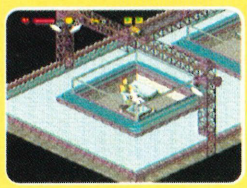
and early 20th centuries who relied on blues and religion, or perhaps the staff at PLAY Towers who rely on Pizza Hut and caffeine during deadline. The inhabitants of Twinsun began to turn to the old legend of a goddess, Sendell. But Dr FunFrock soon caught on and banned anything to do with the goddess, effectively stamping out all hope. Meanwhile, the central character, Twinsen dreams of flying to the equator on the back of a dragon and witnessing the planet's destruction. What can it mean?

CLOBBER A CLONE

Little Big Adventure is rather different from most PlayStation games, but comes under the category of action-adventure, viewed from an isometric angle with walls dissolving out of the way if they stand between the character and the camera, items to pick up and fights to start. The hero is the little cute bloke, a slightly chubby member of the Quetch race, (those most resembling humans on the planet Twinsun) and looks like something Jim Henson might have created, sporting an oval-shaped bald head except for a thick pony-tail and big stuck-on oval eyes. Twinsen and in fact all characters are surprisingly sharply detailed, and at times could pass for a pre-rendered, ray traced sprites although they are made entirely of gouraud shaded polygons which are generated live.

Twinsen moves around in a kind of radio-controlled way, so you rotate him to face the direction you want and then press forward on the D-pad to make him walk, and for the action parts where your reflexes are called upon to get you out of trouble, this is often an annoying way to play as opposed to the more arcade oriented control method of left being left, up being up and so on, but you'll get used to it. The option of changing the controls to an Arcade setting where your movement would be directional in this way would have been welcome though.

LBA's gimmick that makes it stand out from the crowd of other adventure games is the innovative way in which you have to solve certain room puzzles from the very beginning of the game. To get through a puzzle you will have to figure out what psychological state would be relevant to the situation, because Twinsen has four "moods" to choose from and picking the right one is vital to your progress. Each of the four shoulder buttons triggers a



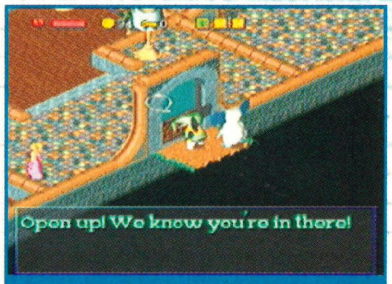
AS SOON AS THE NURSE LANDS ON THE GROUND OF YOUR CELL, KICK HIS ASS UNTIL HE IS DEAD. THINK OF ALL THE UNNECESSARY PHYSICALS AND ELECTRIC SHOCK TREATMENTS.



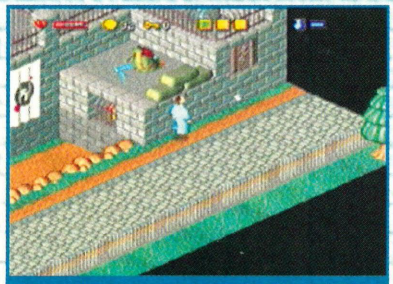
CLIMB ABOARD THE NURSE'S FLOATING PLATFORM AND RIDE IT TO THIS ROOM WITH THE TWO GUYS WAITING. SPRINT OFF IN ATHLETIC MODE WHEN IT REACHES THE TOP OF THE STAIRS. TIME IS SHORT.



[Above] This poor old man has trouble with his back. *LBA* teaches you to take advantage of this and steal his money from that chest. What is this teaching to our children etc.



[Above] No sooner have you escaped the asylum and made for home when two of the doctor's henchmen show up and abduct your girl. There's no rest for this Quetch.

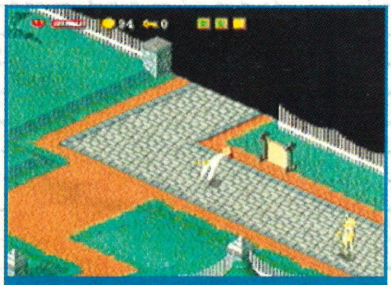


[Above] The army guards don't just walk around toting their guns, as you can see with this outstretched sniper waiting to pick you off with a tripod-mounted rifle.

"You end up in a constant state of paranoia only previously experienced by PC users..."



[Above] In a tip of the hat to the famous trilogy, Twinsen discovers a Grobo in the library's cinema waiting to see *The Empire Strikes Back!*



[Above] The vicious Rabbiclones should be avoided at all costs, as they are a decidedly better shot with their guns than the army guys.

mood, and you have Normal, Athletic, Aggressive, and Discreet to use, with your character being able to perform different abilities in each one, so you have to really get thinking about what makes the most sense.

In Discreet mode, people are less likely to notice Twinsen as he creeps past in his exaggerated way, lifting each leg high in the air, his back arched, before softly placing a foot on the ground to the sound of a double bass note. Athletic mode lets you run at a fair old rate, handy for dodging guards with large weapons, but not very subtle, and Aggressive mode is the one you need to fight in staggering around with your fists outstretched like some kind of hooligan. Twinsen reacts in a fantastically cartoonish manner to whatever mode you put him in, suspiciously looking from side to side in Discreet mode or limbering up in Athletic mode.

Relentless

LBA begins with Twinsen trapped in a prison cell inside some kind of lunatic asylum, and immediately you have to get to grips with his different modes as you murder the guard in Aggressive mode, and get on the moving platform ready to pounce off in Athletic mode to reach a nurse before he raises the alarm. This being such a new idea to the PlayStation it can be pretty weird getting used to switching modes as quickly as is sometimes required, but it's such a clever way to add a whole new dimension to an adventure game that it pays off to stick with it.

A little way into the game and you'll realise that your main concern is getting your wife back from wherever the authorities have taken her. Sometimes the ability to change moods isn't enough to get you out of a tight situation, and so before long you find your Magic Ball when rummaging around in your house. You simply throw the ball at an opponent and hope for the best, especially as Twinsen isn't what you'd call accurate at first. Each throw of the ball takes

Quetch your thirst

You can tell Twinsen's current mood at any time just by looking at him, because he adopts such theatrical poses for each one that you couldn't possibly get them mixed up.



Twinsen doing some warm-up exercises in Athletic mode. He can run and jump while in this mode.



Peering from side to side in Discreet mode, Twinsen will walk very slowly and avoid attention in this mode.



A little fist raised to one side in Aggressive mode. He will stagger and grunt as he punches and kicks.



[Above] Principal Island Library can be a good source of information, but unfortunately the staff are a bit dodgy about you killing the librarian and raiding the till.



[Above] After coming back to Citadel Island on the ferry, it is a good idea to walk slowly and avoid drawing attention to yourself.



[Above] These two army clones take turns to sleep on the grass while the other guards the exit road. You hear the snoring before you see them.



Switch to Aggressive mode and kill the left nurse before the right one, so he can't press the Big Red Button and sound the alarm. The bloke on the right will leave you a key.



With three of Doctor FunFrock's cronies dead behind you, jump down to where this door is. The key you just picked up should get you through.



Get into Discreet mode and walk along to the corner here. There is a man just out of view who would push the alarm button if he saw you. Keep moving but stay close to the wall.

SIGN
READ THE SIGNS FOR HANDY ADVICE ABOUT THE CITY. YOU MAY EVEN FIND YOUR OWN WANTED POSTER! 1

GUARD
THEY'LL SHOOT AT YOU, BUT THEIR GUNS ARE VERY PRIMITIVE AND THEY CAN'T RUN WHILE THEY FIRE. 2

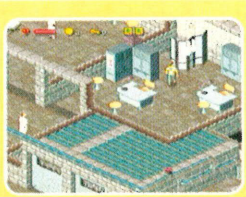
TELEPORTER
THE CLONES MOVE AROUND BY USING THESE, BUT IT ISN'T SAFE FOR AN ILL EQUIPPED YOUNG QUETCH TO TRY. 3

SEWER
JUMP ON THIS IRON GRID TO ENTER THE SECRET SEWER SYSTEM WHERE YOU'LL FIND SOME HELPFUL PICK-UPS. 4

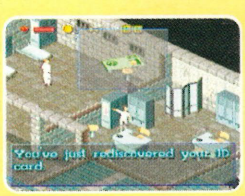
CLONE
A CONSTANT THREAT TO YOUR FRAGILE EXISTENCE, THE CLONES CAN BE FOUND ANYWHERE AND EVERYWHERE. 5



STILL IN DISCREET MODE, TAKE A RIGHT AND HEAD FOR THE FIRST OPEN DOOR. WASTING ANY TIME OR WALKING INTO THE WALL COULD MEAN THE NURSE WOULD GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO SEE YOU.

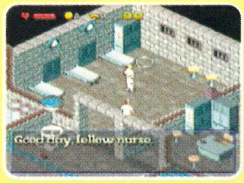


ONCE INSIDE THE ROOM, IT IS SAFE TO FLICK BACK TO NORMAL MODE. GO BEHIND THE FOLDING SCREEN AND YOU'LL COME BACK OUT WEARING A NURSE'S UNIFORM.



SEARCH ALL THE LOCKERS, INCLUDING THE ONES FURTHER BACK WHERE YOU'LL FIND EXTRA HEALTH. THE LOCKERS CLOSEST TO THE DOOR HOUSE YOUR BELONGINGS – YOUR ID AND HOLOMAP.

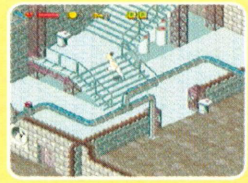
CITADEL ISLAND



WALK OUT THE DOOR AND INTO THE ROOM NEXT DOOR. THE NURSE THERE WILL NOT REACT IN A HOSTILE MANNER BECAUSE OF YOUR DISGUISE. SEARCH THE LOCKER AT THE BACK OF THE ROOM.



IT IS NOW SAFE TO BOX THE LIFE OUT OF THE NURSE IN THE MAIN AREA, ALTHOUGH YOU DON'T HAVE TO. BUT IT'S WORTH REMEMBERING THAT THERE COULD BE A FEW KASHES IN IT FOR YOU...



FLEE UP THE STAIRS IN ATHLETIC MODE BECAUSE IT SAVES TIME, BUT STEER CLEAR OF THE EXIT TO THE LEFT AS A GROBOCLONE IS LURKING THERE, JUST WAITING TO NAB YOU.

THE TWINSUNIANS

THE PEOPLE OF TWINSUN ARE, WELL, A BIT ODD. IF YOU KNOW WHO YOU'RE GOING TO MEET WHEN YOU PLAY *LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE*, IT CAN ONLY BE A GOOD THING, SO PAY ATTENTION TO OUR GUIDE TO THE TWINSUNIANS. QUESTIONS WILL BE ASKED AT THE END.

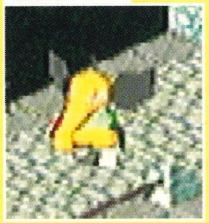


GROBO



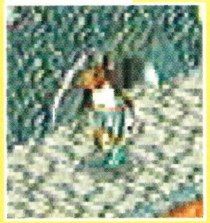
IT DOESN'T TAKE A GENIUS TO WORK OUT THAT THESE PODGY GUYS ARE BASED ON ELEPHANTS. THEY MOVE SLOWLY AND HAVE A CLUMSY KIND OF SWEETNESS ABOUT THEM. BUT DON'T PICK ANY FIGHTS – THEY'RE STRONG.

GROBOCLONE



DR FUNFROCK'S ARMOURED CLONES OF THE GROBO RACE, THE GROBOCLONES ARE RUTHLESSLY VIOLENT AND WILL BEAT YOU REPEATEDLY WITH STICKS, SHOOT AT YOU OR TRANQUILLISE YOU.

RABBIBUNNY



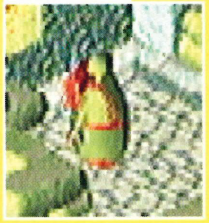
THE LANKY RABBIBUNNIES ARE BASICALLY TALL, THIN RABBITS. THEY ARE FOREVER RUNNING AROUND AND BUSILY SCRATCHING AT THE GROUND. MOST OF THEM HAVE PLENTY TO SAY, SO TALK TO THEM FOR INFO.

RABBICLONE



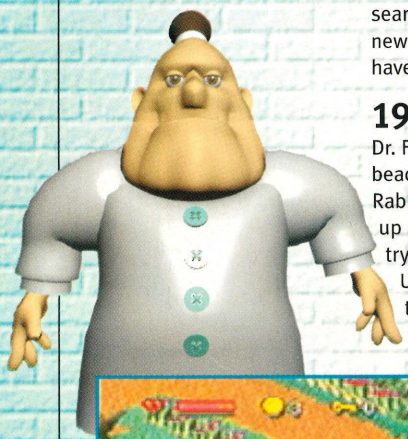
RABBICLONES ARE THE DOCTOR'S CLONED RABBIBUNNIES. THEY USUALLY CARRY STRONG THREE-WAY CANNONS BUT CAN BE AVOIDED BECAUSE THEY ARE MUCH SLOWER THAN THE REAL RABBIBUNNIES.

GAURD



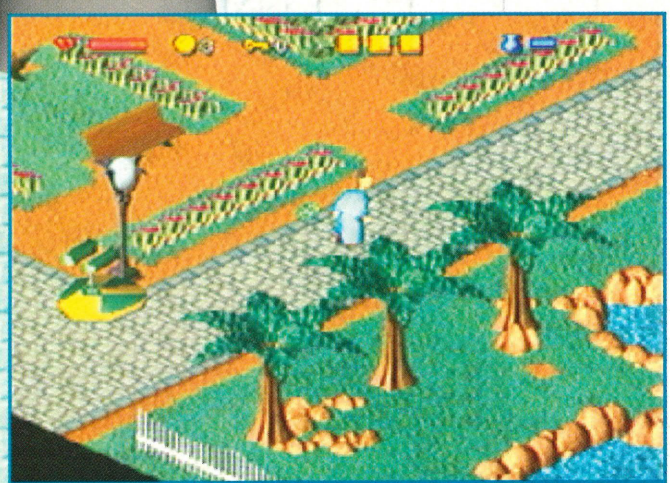
THE FUNNY LITTLE GUARDS ARE DIFFICULT TO TAKE SERIOUSLY, BUT THEY ARE TOTALLY BRUTAL. THEY SHOOT AT YOU WITH RIFLES OR SMACK YOU WITH THEM IF YOU'RE TOO CLOSE.

energy from your magic power source, which you can refill by picking up little blue bottles of magic that are hidden around the scenery. As health is often found in the form of hearts spread all over the place you soon learn that searching anything and everything in a new area is a good idea, because you have no idea just what you'll find.



1984

Dr. FunFrock always seems to have his beady eye on your actions, with Rabbiclones and Groboclones springing up at teleporters nearby when you're trying to get somewhere important. Usually the best method of survival is to get into Athletic mode and run away when faced with such a biomechanical threat, unless you want to be shot and savagely beaten to the ground.



[ABOVE] A notice stuck to a wall lets you know that a new drone is in operation on the streets and that all residents must stay perfectly still when they see it. Could this be such a drone?



[ABOVE] Sometimes Dr FunFrock's clones will violently swing truncheons at you with worrying force. Run or be killed.



[ABOVE] This ordinary-looking iron grating only needs a good nudge to turn into an elevator to the underground...

It's all presented in a light-hearted and humourous way, and steals your attention enough so that you really feel you want to finish the game, with its bubbly and fun atmosphere keeping a smile on your face as you play. The design of the planet Twinsun is just beautiful, with very crisp and brightly coloured graphics used everywhere, and this fresh new look could be enough to drive you ever onward through the game until you've seen everything, but alas, there are a few complaints to make.

Often the way things work in *LBA* are completely atypical and so detract from the gaming experience, making it all seem like the story line is just a bit thin. Take the way you get off Citadel Island as an example. After killing a Groboclone guard to get through the port to the ferry, you find a regular Grobo sitting in a corner. If you talk to him he'll tell you that he just cannot arrange the four crates in the next room on the crosses on the floor, but that he would gladly give anyone who could do it a ferry ticket. That doesn't make any sense, except for maybe in one of those simple "edutainment" titles for under twelve's, and it is merely a thinly disguised method of putting another puzzle between you and the next part of the game.

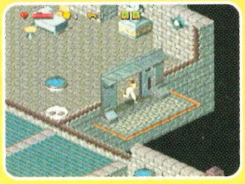
There is also a rather horrible method of trial and error, like when you are thrown in prison shortly after coming to ground on Principal Island and must, of course, escape. You tell the man guarding the cell that there is a loose stone in the back wall, he comes in to check, and you clobber him. After retrieving all of your possessions from the locker, you head for the door. Right outside the door is one of the Grobos that is dressed as a surgeon, who immediately tranquillises you, before you wake up back in the same cell. Pull the same trick on the guard, get your inventory back again, and this time leave through a different exit, a small window that you can squeeze through. See if you can shoot the Groboclone doc with your magic ball. Nope, you



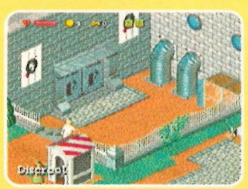
KEEP RUNNING AND COME DIRECTLY INTO THIS ROOM. WITHOUT STOPPING, HEAD FOR THE NURSE NEAREST THE DOOR AND SWITCH TO AGGRESSIVE MODE TO THUMP HIM BEFORE HE CAN REACH THAT BUTTON!



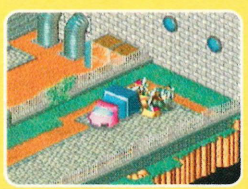
STAY AGGRESSIVE, SQUARE UP TO THE OTHER GUY, AND KILL HIM. DON'T EVEN LET UP WHEN HE'S BENT DOUBLE ON THE FLOOR IN FRONT OF YOU. HE'S GOT ANOTHER KEY AND YOU NEED IT.



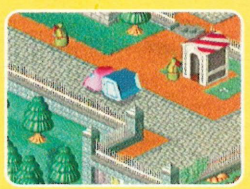
NOW GO TOWARDS THE STEEL DOOR, WHICH YOUR NEW KEY SHOULD OPEN AUTOMATICALLY. IS THAT FRESH AIR YOU SMELL? COULD BE, BUT DON'T GET COMPLACENT YET.



OUTSIDE AT LAST! GET TO THE TOP OF THESE STEPS, AND CHANGE TO DISCREET MODE TO GET BEHIND THAT GUARD'S HUT UNDETECTED. CONTINUE ROUND THE FENCE TO THE TRASH.



MAKE SURE YOU ARE IN DISCREET MODE, AND PRESS ■ WHILE STANDING IN THE TRASH. TWINSEN WILL KNEEL DOWN AND WAIT FOR THIS VAN TO APPEAR.



THE VAN PICKS YOU UP WITH THE RUBBISH. HIDDEN AWAY INSIDE THE GARBAGE TRUCK, GETTING PAST THESE GUARDS IS NOT A PROBLEM. JUST HOLD TIGHT.

INNOCENT BYSTANDER

MOST OF THE CIVILIAN FOLKS ON TWINSUN CAN BE KILLED FAIRLY QUICKLY, SOMETIMES LEAVING A COIN OR TWO FOR YOUR TROUBLE. BUT IN A FRANKLY TASTELESS EXPERIMENT, WE FOUND THAT THIS CRUMPLED OLD SALESMAN IN THE MIDDLE SECTION OF CITADEL ISLAND CAN BE CRUELLY BEATEN FOR AS LONG AS YOU LIKE! KICK HIM, PUNCH HIM – IT DOESN'T MATTER – HE'LL GROAN AND PICK HIMSELF BACK UP TIME AND TIME AGAIN. HE DOESN'T EVEN LET GO OF HIS SUITCASE!













can only get one shot off at him before he sends out his homing tranquilliser and, yes, you're back in the cell. There is no indication that the real way to pass this section from the beginning is to exit through the window, engage Discreet mode, and slip past the Grobo doctor undetected.

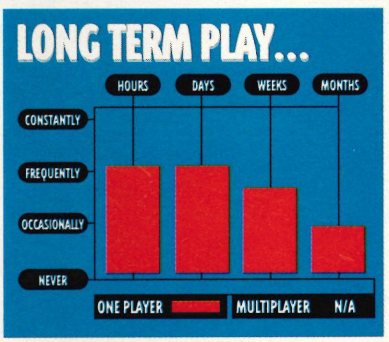
POLICE STATE

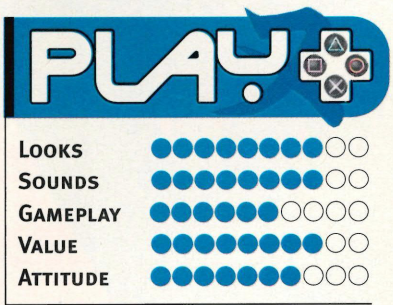
This kind of thing can happen to a lesser degree at other points where you can be exploring a new bit of land, and turn a corner into a teleporting clone who shoots you once to knock you out cold, before it's back to the cell again, miles from where you want to be. Because of all these things you end up in a constant state of paranoia only previously experienced by PC users, frantically saving on every new screen or after every puzzle. Yes, you can save at any point in *LBA* which is something quite unique for a PlayStation game, but for this market it would have been a better idea to iron out the problems that persist from the PC version, where you can be killed by surprise and just continue loading up the most recently saved game until you get it right.

So *Little Big Adventure* does have its faults, but for the majority of people buying the game these things might not be intrusive enough to spoil the overall fun which it brings. If you don't play *LBA* with expectations for an extremely deep adventure, aimed at the older end of the market, then you will not be disappointed.



[ABOVE] The ferry to Principal Island. After getting your ticket, don't forget to talk to the Rabbibunny and search the oil drums before stepping aboard.





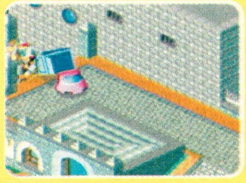
PLAYED **83%**

At last, something new

ALTERNATIVELY:
BLOOD OMEN: LOK (81%)
CITY OF LOST CHILDREN (78%)



THROUGH THE GATES OF THE ASYLUM! THEY OPEN UP FOR THE TRUCK, NOT SUSPECTING A STOWAWAY, AND BEFORE YOU KNOW IT YOU ARE OUT OF THE ASYLUM GROUNDS.



OKAY, SO IT MAY NOT BE VERY DIGNIFIED LANDING IN ALL THIS RUBBISH, BUT IT'S FREEDOM YOU CAN SMELL, NOT NAPPIES AND ROTTEN APPLES. YOU'RE TRULY FREE! LET THE ADVENTURE BEGIN...

Jet Rider™

"SURE TO GET THE ADRENALINE PUMPING"
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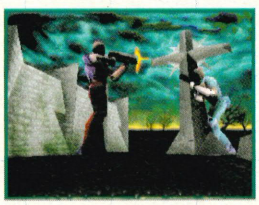
APOCALYPSE

THEY SAY BALD IS SEXY, BALD IS BEAUTFUL. IT WORKED FOR SEAN CONNERY AND DUNCAN GOODHEW, AND NOW ACTIVISION HOPE IT'S GOING TO WORK FOR BRUCE WILLIS TOO.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Written By Damian Butt

Activision is back





Blueprint

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Activision
% Complete: 40%
Expected Release Date: October '97
Origin: US
No of Players: 1

with a vengeance. Since the dark days in the early Nineties where the American company was nearly extinguised entirely due to bad investment in the 16-bit cartidge market, Activision has slowly clawed its way back into the top five software companies in the States. But now it's time to get Europe back into order and the assault begins on the PlayStation.

If you're one of those impatient people who starts at the back of the magazine and then flicks foward then you may have already seen the review of *Mechwarrior 2* on the PSX; Activision's first real stab at a next generation game. Based on the now venerable PC series of games, *Mechwarrior 2* has been totally re-written for the 32-bit console and it now boasts light sourced texture maps on all surfaces (ground, buildings, your robot etc) and many new features.

We scored *Mechwarrior 2* highly because it managed to implement a great many features well using only the limited number of buttons on the PSX pad. Very little was sacrificed and much was added to give it a 32-bit feel. The only flaw is that there is no multi-player mode – a big mistake in our opinion.

But *MW2* is just the start, and this month PLAY was privvy to Activision's 1997 new releases including a brand new game featuring none other than Bruce '*Die Hard* and former bartender' Willis, which you would already know about if you read issue 18. And there's also a big surprise in the offing, something to do with a *Quake*-style game...

THE BALD ONE COMETH

First up, chonologically speaking is *Apocalypse*, starring Bruce Willis. It is also Activision's biggest ever game, its first totally in-house title, and the very first time that an 'A list star' has agreed to feature heavily in a game. This is no Christoper 'moody and pensive' Walken, or Mark 'I've done nothing else good since *Return of the Jedi*' Hamill, we're talking $20 million a film Willis, who has just had an enormous hit with *Twelve Monkeys*.

When the news broke last month of Willis' involvement in the game it was unclear what part he would play or how he would interact with the player. Naturally everyone assumed that Bruce would pop up every now and then in a video sequence and give you advice, but no FMV will be used in the game, and Willis plays your on-screen polygon partner, who in true 'buddy movie' fashion, yells wise-ass comments whilst blasting the bad guys. It's a sort of *Die Hard 2* scenario with two players, one of whom is wholly controlled by Willis. There is no real two player mode.

Apocalypse is set in the future where in time

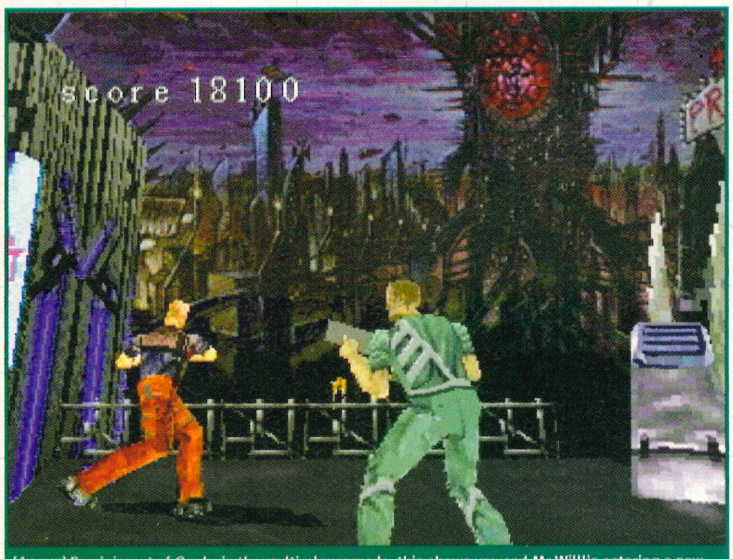


[ABOVE] Some preliminary artwork for *Apocalypse*. The idea is to have Bruce covering your back and vice versa. A vertiable digital buddy movie.

"Willis, in true 'buddy movie' fashion, yells wise-ass comments..."



[ABOVE] *Apocalypse* will feature both you and Bruce on-screen at once; covering each others' backs. This is Bruce, who now prefers the Yule Brenner look.



[ABOVE] Reminiscent of *Quake* in the multi-player mode, this shows you and Mr Willlis entering a new section cautiously. Note your big gun. Hmm, big guns.

HEAVY METAL

Heavy Gear is basically the successor to the *Mechwarrior* series. Having dropped the FASA licence, Activision needed something to fill the hole and the newly formed *Heavy Gear* big robot universe (developed by Dream Pod 9) was perfect. More strategic, brutal and complicated than *Mechwarrior*, *Heavy Gear* boast smaller 'Gears' as opposed to 'Mechs,' which are basically walking tanks.

Set on the Earth-colonised planet of Terra Nova and after the War of Alliance, Heavy Gear is set in a time of conflict between the Northern and Southern forces. You choose which. The game is being written by the same team who did *MW2* on PlayStation and so much of the same technology can be used. The main differences will be more lush graphical presentation (700 polygons on the Gears instead of 400 on the Mechs), a wider range of combat options, and it is thought that the Gears themselves will be able to move more like a human, with crouching and strafing entirely possible. You will also have wingmen on some missions, and even be able to call in airstrikes. Unfortunately, like *MW2*, the link option is still in doubt. Activision is planning a massive launch for *Heavy Gear* at the end of the year.



[Above] *Mechwarrior 2* was texture mapped, but these babies take it to a completely new level. The 'Gears' in *Heavy Gear* will also move more like a human, which is nice.



[Above] Both the central characters in *Apocalypse* have been ruthlessly motion captured, and this crouching pose is a great example. The weapon even bucks in your hands.



[Above] This level is set in a graveyard and in an effort to go into stealth mode, both you and Bruce are armed with silenced pistols. Cool.

honoured tradition, everything has gone to hell and the world is threatened by a being called The Reverand, who has conjured up the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse and plans to rid the world of living things ("the crime is life, the sentance is death" sort of thing). Willis is a nanotechnologist (scientist dealing in inner space and minaturisation) who has developed weapons which can be used against the Four Horsemen, and as his partner you must cover him and fight through the many levels. Activision claims 40 hours of gameplay, and that's a lot for a running and shooting game.

I HAD A RUMOUR

Willis was cyberscanned by the developers to get perfect texture maps of his face and body for the 3-D polygon model used in the game, and a motion capture unit was employed for his many moves. What's really amazing is that the amount of material needed for the game is the equivalent of 20 or more feature films – all crammed into, so far, three days of filming. And yes. Demi Moore did turn up to hold the cue cards. Woof woof.

At the present time we have not had the chance to play *Apocalypse*, but we do know the following. The cameras are dramatically placed to heighten the action, but you have no control of how each section is viewed. Bruce is AI controlled so that he'll cover you if you do something stupid. Bruce has lots of cool lines to say, as in pretty much all his films. The control system is similar to *Robotron X* and *Smash TV*. Bruce is bald. There are nine weapons including such delights as spear guns, lasers, a flame-thrower and a grenade launcher. Each level boss is one of the Four Horsemen.

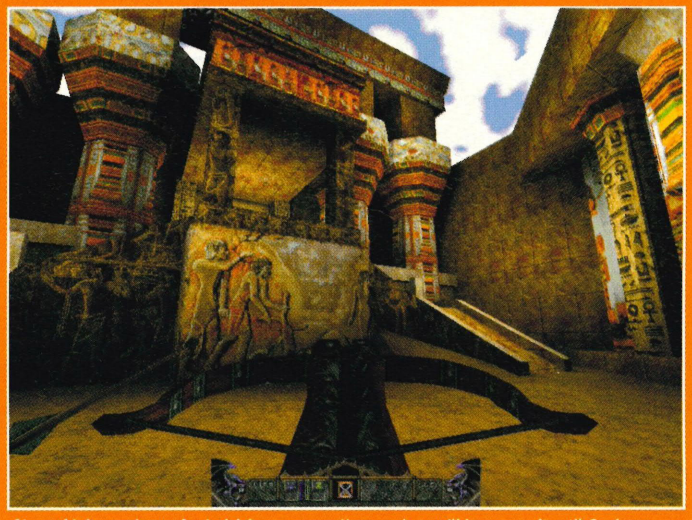
Apocalpse looks very promising as it offers gameplay which has never been done before. The traditional route would have been to have you playing Willis, but the fact that you can hide behind walls, pop up and shoot in unison is exciting, and there's no doubting that Willis is a cool dude. The only problem we can forsee is that to justify Willis' no doubt immense price tag, *Apocalypse* will have to sell a vast number of copies, and it is only available on the PlayStation, and it isn't a big name licence. Hmm, risky. If Activision really wants to get back the money on this one, it should convert to as many formats as possible. *Apocalypse* should be out in October 1997.

HEXEN – THE DEFECTION

Truly sensational news revealed at Activision's development conference this month is that the US firm has the rights to publish *Hexen 2* on PlayStation. Developed by Raven Software, *Hexen 2* will use the same game engine as PSX *Quake* (published by GT over here) and features four characters who you can become, 12 types of enemy and over 35 different weapons! From the early version we've seen, this game looks to be far better than either *Final Doom* or *Disruptor*, but the question remains, what is the point of buying Hexen if the much better *Hexen 2* is right around the corner? The screenshots included here are from the PC version, but expect a more detailed report in a few months. *Hexen 2* is reputedly going to be released at Christmas.



[Above] *Hexen 2* promises more textures, bigger enemies and more complex level designs – better all round really.



[Above] It is a real coup for Activision to secure *Hexen 2*, but we'll have to wait until *Quake* on PSX before knowing exactly what it will be like.







SOFTOGRAPHY

Mechwarrior 2 (PSX)
Power Move Wrestling (PSX)

PITFALL 3D

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

PITFALL STARTED IT ALL OFF FOR ACTIVISION AND NOW IT'S BACK – BIGGER, BRIGHTER, BETTER. BUT DOES IT STILL HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

Perhaps its most famous brand name, Activision has rightly brought *Pitfall* bang up to date with a PlayStation version due at the same time as *Apocalypse*. This being a 32-bit console though, the simple horizontal action of the original Atari 2600 version was not enough, and so *Pitfall* on PSX becomes *Pitfall 3D*, and the game turns into a kind of *Contra* meets *Indiana Jones* affair.

"Activision has even included the complete original game in a secret room..."

Harry, the game's central character is now a 3-D polygonal model very much like Lara Croft in *Tomb Raider*, but the main difference between the two games is that the developers of *Pitfall 3D* wanted you to be constantly dicing with death, rather than simply exploring. Consequently, the levels are packed to the gills with vertigo-inducing drops, spikes, timed jumps, and over 14 different denzins who are all baying for your blood.

In keeping with the original concept there are plenty of pits to swing across, although now everything is light sourced and Harry himself has hundreds of animations instead of just two. The anims are also loaded in as each new weapon is acquired, very much like *Blood Omen*, and there is even scope for completely new moves on each level.

Viewed from above and to the side of Harry, with the camera assuming a different angle depending on where you're running, *Pitfall 3D* not only features sprawling multi-layered levels but also morphing enemies (remember *Fade to Black*?), and plenty of traditional *Pitfall* action. A new addition is the fact that you can now swing on a vine in all directions – not just left/right – and this means plenty more avenues of escape are open to you.

Pitfall 3D certainly looks far better than its ancient ancestor, but if you're feeling a little nostalgic and can't find an Atari, then you'll be glad to know that Activision has even included the complete original game in a secret room somewhere. We'll have a more detailed look at this game later on in the year, but the developers will have to do something pretty special because that's when *Tomb Raider 2* is scheduled for release.

Blueprint

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Activision
% Complete: 50%
Expected Release Date: October '97
Origin: US
No of Players: 1



[Above] The control system in *Pitfall 3D* is very much like *Robotron X*. You use the D-pad for movement and the four buttons to shoot in all directions. Gameplay is similar to Contra, but hopefully much better.



[Above] One of the objectives of the developers on *Pitfall 3D* was to create a sense of every-present danger. So these statues are bound to do something nasty then...



[Above] As we were saying, it's a little bit more detailed than the original game.

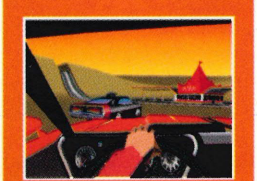
INTERSTATE 66

IT WAS LET SLIP AT THE CONFERENCE THAT ACTIVISION MIGHT WELL BE CONVERTING ITS PC GAME, *INTERSTATE 76* TO THE PLAYSTATION. CALLED *INTERSTATE 66* (SET BEFORE THE OTHER GAME), IT WILL LOOK SOMETHING LIKE THIS...



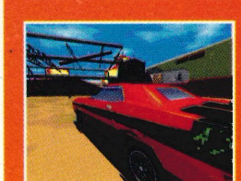














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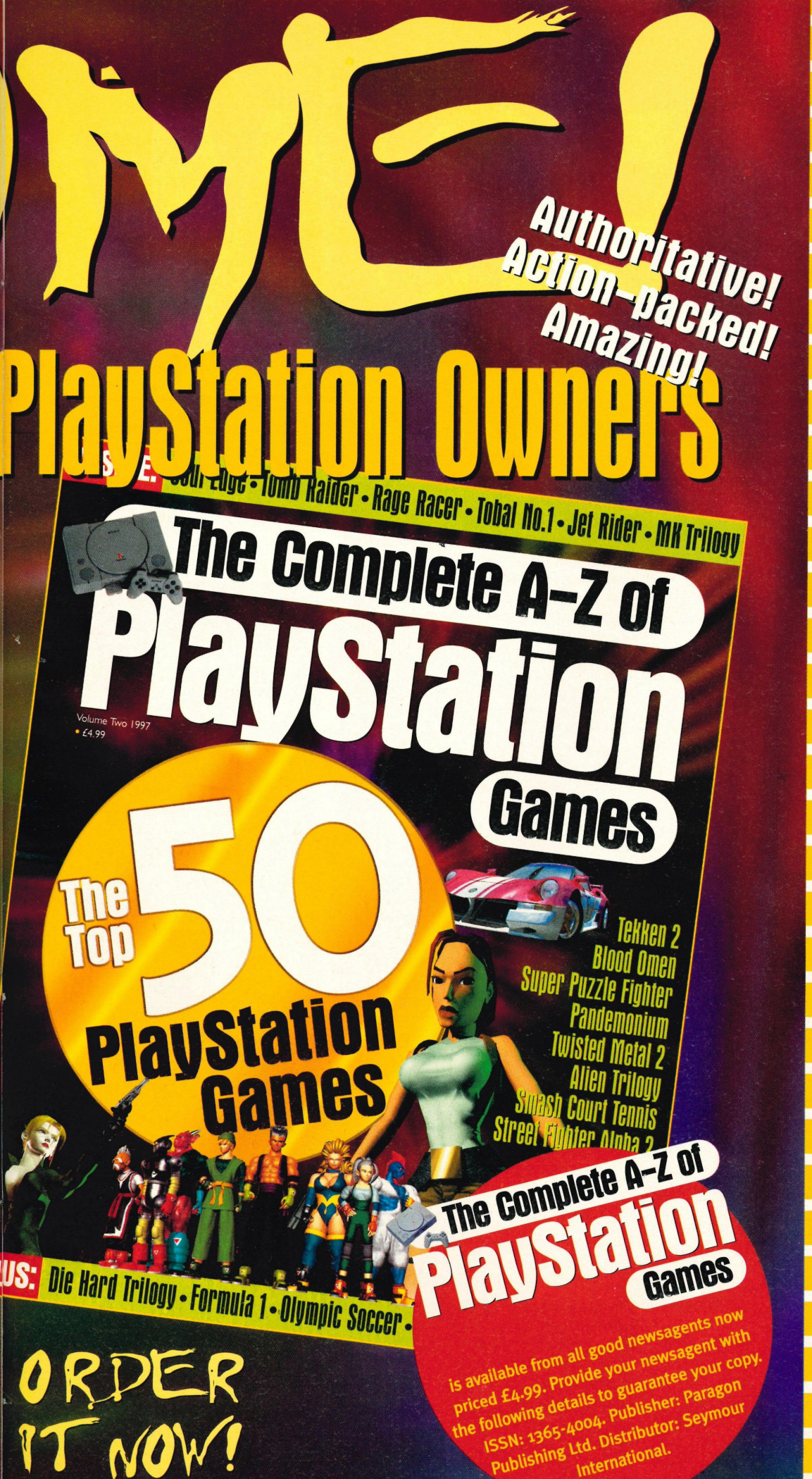
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MICRO MA



FREE FROM THE SHACKLES OF A TOP-DOWN PERSPECTIVE, *MICRO MACHINES* ROARS ONTO PLAYSTATION IN GLORIOUS 3-D. OH YES.

If there's one thing that you can rely upon without fail in the games industry, it's sequels. Love 'em or hate 'em, they are the staple diet of most software houses, and usually guarantee them an extra bob or two as well as satisfying the fans' lust for more of the same. Every now and then though, an original concept spawns an even superior follow-up. *Micro Machines 2* proved this beyond doubt. But, just when we thought that Codemasters could do no more to the genre, it has managed to achieve what everyone thought was impossible and surpassed even its own high standards. Suffice to say, *Micro Machines v3* is shear, unadulterated poetry in motion.

Micro Machines V3

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Codemasters
Customer support: 01926 814132
Price: £44.99
Release date: 21 March '97





DINKY

Gone is the functional, if not visually stunning, plan view for a more dynamic, fully interactive 3-D modelled world, where careering around various household courses in those sprightly and diminutive racers has never been so much fun. For those of you who have never had the pleasure of playing *Micro Machines* before, the idea is simple yet brilliant. You race around scenery which looks huge, due to your miniscule size, and it's the first to the finishing line who wins. It's that simple.

The first thing that strikes you is the wealth of options available to the player, and these can all be accessed via the beautifully innovative event selection screen which could almost pass as a mini game in itself. Any pre-game options can be chosen by simply guiding a buggy along the isometric landscape of roads, garages and carwashes to exit at the game style of your choice.

An astonishing eight players can now participate simultaneously in what can only be described as the mother of all multi-player events. The bad news is, you need not one, but two multi-taps to experience all the thrills of this particular option, although you can obviously plump for the one or two player games as well. In total there are 48 racing circuits to be explored and 32 different Micro Machines in which to find them (and no doubt many extra courses and bonus buggies to discover along the way). Whether you decide to race in trucks, power boats, hovercraft, buggies or even camper vans, the tracks are set in and around the *Micro Machines* house, where hundreds of enormous objects either help



[ABOVE] Raring to go, the camera pans-in to the sand buggies before the race begins.

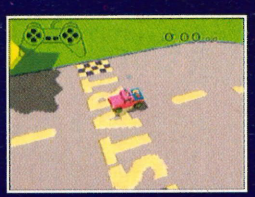




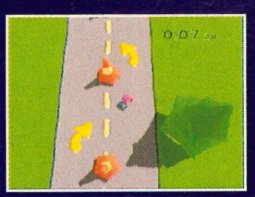
[ABOVE] The boats provide a satisfying ripple-effect throughout the pond level.

CHERRY-GO-ROUND

GIRL-RACER CHERRY IS MORE THAN WILLING (BY THE SOUND OF HER VOICE) TO PUT THE NOVICE DRIVER THROUGH THE *MICRO MACHINES* DRIVING SCHOOL. AFTER COMPLETING ONE OF FIVE PROGRESSIVELY DIFFICULT COURSES YOU SHOULD BE PREPARED TO TAKE ON THE MAIN CHALLENGE.



TO GET YOU GOING, CHERRY ASSUMES THAT WE ARE ALL TWO YEAR OLDS. LEFT, RIGHT, UP, DOWN, BRAKE, JUMP AND REVERSE. AMAZING!



DRIVING UP THE SCREEN YOU HAVE TO NEGOTIATE A SERIES OF CONES. SIMILARLY, YOU HAVE TO DO THE SAME AGAIN BUT DOWN SCREEN, WHICH IS HARDER.



THINGS ARE STARTING TO HOT UP NOW. DRIVE AROUND THE CIRCUIT DODGING AND WEAVING AROUND CONES, BUT WITH THE PEDAL TO THE METAL.

MICRO MACHINES V3

PLAY CLASSIC





[Above] Let sleeping dogs lie. That is unless you ram him, in which case he barks his disapproval.

MICRO MANIACS

All the favourite race drivers are back behind the wheel. Each one has been modelled and characterised resulting in cartoon dudes who talk and act in different ways. You may be interested to note that although the characters vary in eccentricity, this doesn't affect the way they drive.



Spider's one cool cat, bearing more than a passing resemblance to Elvis.



Jethro is a stereotypical Rasta – he's hip to the jive and ready for action.



Walter is the token fat man and a bit of an intellectual – you know the type.



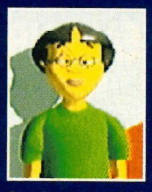
Cherry is the sexy voice of the learners course and she giggles a lot.



Dwayne is the stereotypical surfing dude and basically looks deranged.



Jade is silky smooth, but ever-so serious. Nice hair-do though.



Chen looks out of place, appearing timid and uneasy most of the time.



Bonnie is a bit of a looker and always seems to be smiling. We always pick her.

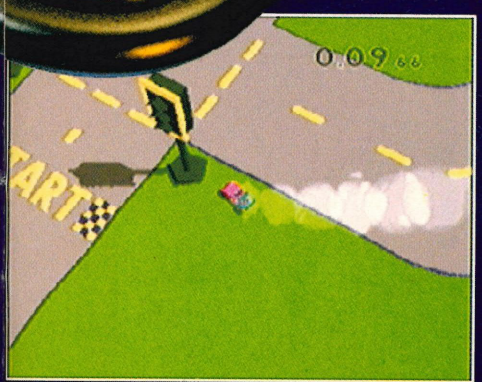
"Micro Machines V3 is shear, unadulterated poetry in motion!"

or hinder your progress, more often than not in spectacular fashion.

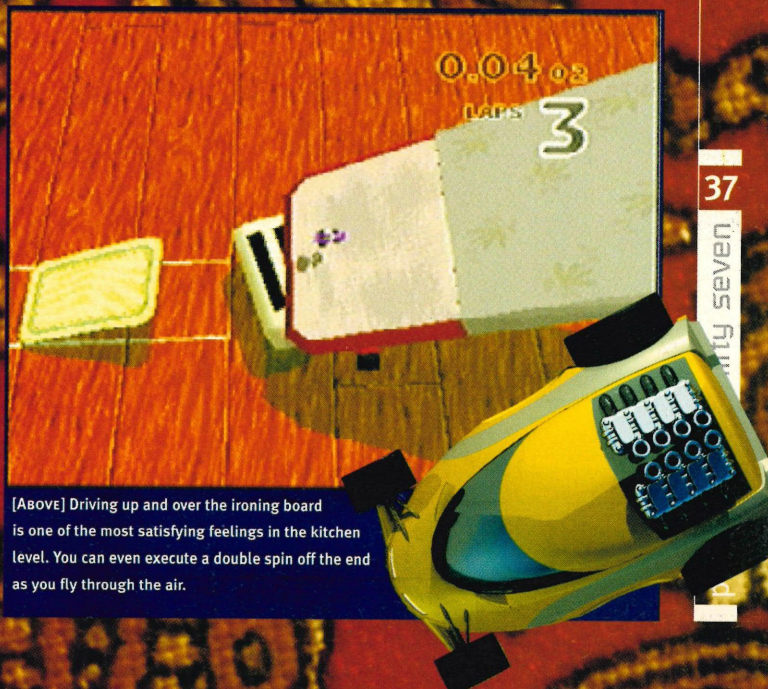
PEEL-OUT!

Control of the vehicles is easier than falling off a cliff. You can accelerate, jump, brake and even honk your horn. As with all the best games, it's easy to play but hard to master. There are various subtleties such as precisely when to reduce speed, activate power-ups, skid and make best use of the obstacles in your path which add immeasurably to the gameplay. Its a case of putting in quality time to get the most out of what's on offer.

There are ten different events to take part in providing the freedom to race in a variety of challenges and guaranteeing genuine longevity in the gameplay department. The driving school lets you brush up on the driving skills before the real challenge kicks-off and in one player mode, you can compete in one of four events, the first of which is Head to Head. Here it's just you against the computer controlled adversaries, racing through a set of tracks



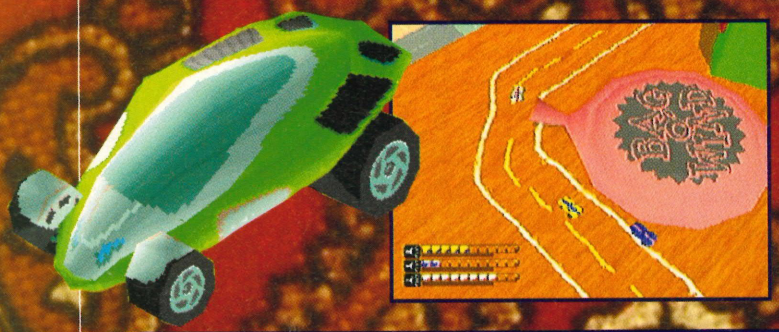
Combine everything you've previously been taught in a no holds barred swerve and skid. Now get your licence!



[Above] Driving up and over the ironing board is one of the most satisfying feelings in the kitchen level. You can even execute a double spin off the end as you fly through the air.



[Above] The evening meal course provides a tricky, twisting challenge. It's best to use tanks on this level, otherwise you'll find yourself hurtling to the carpet. Not advisable.



represented in groups. Each time you complete a group, you are rewarded with a Prize Car, which can be kept when your character is saved and used later in the Test Drive and Keepsies modes (where you can win cars from friends).

In Challenge mode, you race against four CPU-controlled opponents in a three lap race, where power-ups can be collected making the race to the finish more frantic than ever, and in the Time Trial everything is against the clock. More prize vehicles can be won in this mode and the addition of a ghost car makes beating that illusive best time even more exciting.

Burnin'

Multi-player mode is undeniably the main attraction of *MMv3*. Witness the mad rush for a controller when playing in either the Tournament, Teams, or Party Play modes, where the delights of Time Trial single races, Time Trial Tournaments, Knockout and Player share can be sampled. They're all tremendously fun and provide hours of entertainment, but don't blame us if it all ends in tears and a mad fisticuffs ensues.

In various modes of play, you'll be pleased to note the inclusion of small green parcels littering the course. Collecting one of these unveils power-ups, these include: force fields, fireballs, a hammer and the awesome Acme grabber claw, where you snatch the opponents vehicle and throw it aside. Fantastic.

Pole position

Micro Machines V3 has that indefinable something which keeps you coming back for more. In a nutshell, it has to be the almost perfect inertial control of the vehicles. Add to this the marvellous graphics (especially the pond and kitchen courses), and the maddeningly addictive multi-player modes and you can begin to fathom just why it is so compelling. There are moments where you wished that the horizon was longer, especially when using some of the faster sport scars, but other than this minor grumble. There just aren't enough hours in the day to play this seminal racer, and bold as this statement may seem, this is my favourite game currently available on PlayStation. If racing around imaginatively designed courses in an impressive range of all-terrain vehicles is your thang, then pass up this chance at your own peril. Highly recommended.

WACKY WEAPONRY

Various weapons can be either picked up or utilised in various modes of racing. By simply picking up one of the tiny green parcels found scattered around the courses you can give yourself the edge over other racers. Listed below are just a smattering of those weapons, but there are plenty more for you to discover.



The fireball enables you to reduce your opponents to a pile of ash. The great thing is that they can still move, albeit in a confused fashion.



The grabber claw is the most fun of all. Simply position yourself behind the buggy in front and snatch them up – tossing them aside. Excellent fun.



The hammer allows you to either smash the hell out of adversaries or create a small shockwave around them. This one looks spectacular.



If you're lumbering along in one of the tanks, simply drop back behind the player in front and let loose a barrage of hot lead.

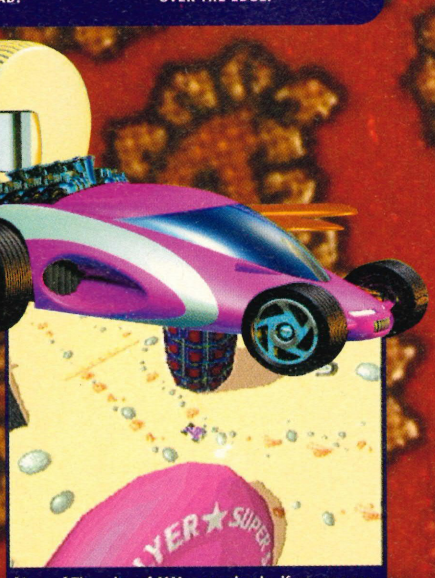


To use the mines, just drop them behind you when another Micro Machine is sneaking up on you. Do this on a bend and he'll plunge over the edge.



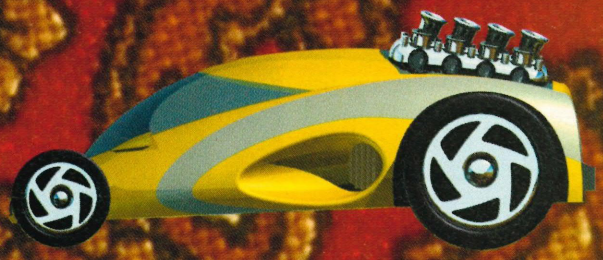
[Above] Lush 3-D graphics provide the backdrop for the pond level. Sometimes they obscure the player's view for a split second, but this adds to the fun.

"An astonishing eight players can now participate simultaneously..."



[Above] The rules of *MMv3* are simple, if you can see it, you can either bang into it or leap over it.





WHAT DO POINTS MAKE?

Every time you complete a group you are awarded a 'Prize Car'. These cars can be kept when your character is saved. These cars can then be used in Keepsies and Test Drive modes. We've only managed to see a few of the extra vehicles, but note that the more groups you manage to win, the faster and better the buggies you can win and save for challenges later on.







The Camper van and the Beetle come your way relatively early on, but there's cars in them thar courses – go get 'em.



[Above] In four player mode, space is tight and negotiating obstacles can be tricky, usually culminating in a four car pile-up.



[Above] The periodic table provides a stunning back-drop for this superb science lab level. The whole level is littered with Bunsen burners, spatulas, beakers, microscopes. All in glorious 3-D, of course.



[Above] One, two, three, easy as ABC. Although there are a wealth of options, it's still fun to choose with whom and where you want to play.





[Above] A nice touch is the background chatter as you hurtle around the dinner table, dodging wallets, wine glasses and trying to avoid the spilled wine(which slows you down).







[Above] Interaction with the scenery is part and parcel of the MM experience.



[Above] Don't get caught up in that bra elastic on this vibrant beach circuit.



"The mother of all multi-player events..."







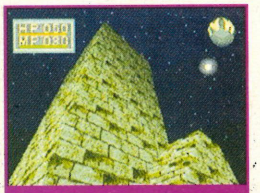
More addictive than crack! (probably)

ALTERNATIVELY:
SUPERSONIC RACERS (91%)
SPEEDSTER (OUT IN APRIL)

KING'S FIELD

IT'S DARK ELVES AND DEMONS TIME AGAIN, AS SONY LAYS DOWN THE GAUNTLET IN ITS ULTRA-DELAYED DUNGEON ROMP.

Written By Tom Sargent



[Above] The tower reveals a 'Firestar', initiating you into the ways of magic. The game is always viewed in a first-person perspective and never changes.



[Above] Squid man and the blob. Cue for a comedy double-act? Perhaps not. Combat is strictly in-yer-face; hack, slash, carve, dice.



[Above] This bloke's monster-bashing day's are over, but fleece his corpse and a handy 'slipgate' token can be found.

ANYONE FOR DARTS?

Surprises lurk around every corner. One minute you're rewarded with a bag of gold coins, the next you're 'doing a King Harold' and pulling a bloody great arrow out of your eye. A dungeon just wouldn't be a dungeon without fatal traps.



Ah hah! A secret panel with three switches to press. Mmm, which one should you choose.



Hang on a second, they're not switches, they're arro...



...ws. Aaaaaggghhhheeeeee!!!



Has anybody get a bandage?

Dungeon and beasty-type role-player games on the PlayStation are few and far between. In fact it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that they're as rare as chicken's teeth. So it's with great expectations, but unfortunately zero originality, that you find yourself shipwrecked on the cursed island of Melant, with only a dagger and your wits about you. Further investigation of the immediate surroundings reveals a couple of residents though. One in particular is a poisoned, but sociable fisherman who willingly dishes out helpful hints, and the other is not so helpful, as he's pushing up daisies.

First impressions last, so the saying goes, but don't be fooled by the spartan and relatively texture-shy graphics on display here. Or the fact that you have a habit of dying too frequently on the first few outings. Yes, we know the graphics could have, and most definitely should have, been superlative. The playStation eats first person perspective games for breakfast and to be honest we expected something bathed in luscious textures and vibrant colours. But fear not brave elf, there's gameplay to be had if you battle through *King's Field*'s initial teething problems.

"We were expecting something bathed in luscious textures..."

PLAY INFORMATION

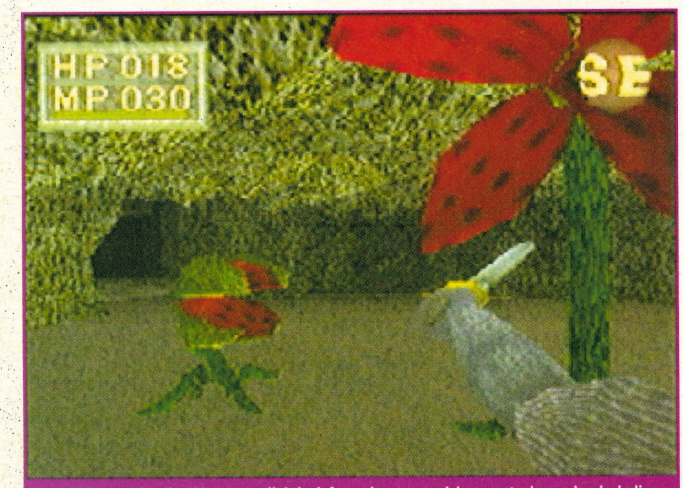
Publisher: Sony
Customer support: 0881 505505
Price: £44.99
Release date: Out now



ONE PLAYER



MEMORY CARD



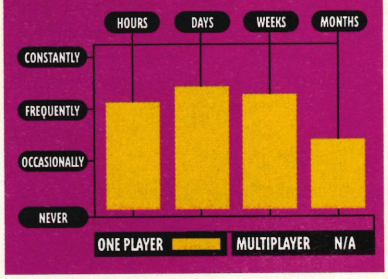
[Above] By pressing the X button, a slightly deformed arm vanquishes most adversaries, including a vicious man-eating plant.

MURKY

The level maps are conspicuous by their absence, and sometimes you wish that there was some way of speeding your character up, both in combat and generally rushing around the place. In addition to hand-to-hand combat, there's a spell-casting option and this proves crucial against some of the mightier foes later on in this extensive adventure. All sorts of goodies can be found littered-around the varied locations, including crystals, weapons, gold coins, secret entrances, shards, healing and man-eating plants, armour, etc to ease the suffering too.

If *King's Field* had been released over a year ago, then more praise would have been heaped highly upon it. As it stands though, this is primitive looking and more than a bit sluggish to offer a PlayStation gamer who's fresh from *Tomb Raider*. The *Doom* mets *Dungeon Master* idea is a proven formula, but it has to be better presented than this. An average game.

LONG TERM PLAY...



PLAY

LOOKS	●●●●●●○○○○
SOUNDS	●●●●●○○○○○
GAMEPLAY	●●●●●●●○○○
VALUE	●●●●●●○○○○
GREYS	●●●●●●○○○○

PLAYED 61%

Mildly engrossing RPG that lacks finesse

ALTERNATIVELY:
TOMB RAIDER (94%)
FADE TO BLACK (90%)

TEMPEST X3™

"One of the fastest, hardest, most intense and exciting games you'll ever play, whatever the format."

"It's arguably one of the best games ever created full stop."

Official Playstation 9/10

"Thrilling!"

"I couldn't help but be dazzled. The new effects are mind blowing."

"Tempest X is an exceptional blaster. It's like a '96 dance remix of an old rave hardcore classic! I want it!"

C&VG 5/5





WARNING
ADDICTIVE GAMEPLAY

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OR LOWER
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"Players will be blown away by the visual elegance of Tempest"

Mean Machines Sega 88%

(Tempest 2000)

"Stare fixedly at the screen, hold down the fire button and relive the old days... with added bosh and weird spinning colours!"

Play 86%



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PERFECT WI

MERGING ACTION ADVENTURE WITH MARTIAL-ARTS FIGHTING. CAN ELECTRONIC ARTS PULL-OFF THE ULTIMATE COMBO?

Written By Tom Sargent

We've just cancelled our monthly visit to the hair dressers here at PLAY Towers. "What the heck are they on about?" you might be tempted to say. But fear not, we haven't gone totally mad just yet, oh no. You see, we're tearing our hair out in total frustration at trying to complete EA's latest release, *Perfect Weapon*.

Set on a distant alien planet without any clues as to your precise whereabouts, you play Commander Blake Hunter, Earth Defence Force's number one agent and World Champion Martial Artist. Why have you been brought here, and more importantly, how the hell do you get off this god-forsaken planet? Problems, problems.

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Customer support: 01753 549 442
Price: £44.99
Release date: Out now


ONE PLAYER


MEMORY CARD

LV426

First impressions of *Perfect Weapon* are promising, and although it looks uncannily like Adeline's *Time Commando*, the feeling of being trapped and alone in a hostile environment is conveyed convincingly. Washed-out, pastel landscapes stretch off in every direction and the eerie silence is quite deafening.

Prospects of a fluid, interactive adventure are soon dashed against the rocks however, because as soon as you walk off the edge of the screen, the camera manages to disrupt a perfectly natural manoeuvre by altering the immediate view (no doubt for artistic reasons) and this swooping of the perspective plays havok with your sense of direction; confusing matters unnecessarily. The whole *Alone in the Dark* camera technique is still open to debate – you either love or hate it, but this reviewer never felt entirely comfortable wrestling with a controller which would try the patience of angels.

To control Hunter, you rotate the D-pad to choose his direction and then press up. Sounds simple enough, right? But quite often you find yourself either dodging a piece of invisible scenery, or having to take a leap of faith because the camera stubbornly refuses to flick to the next section. These are small niggles, which initially annoy, but with perseverance, a fascinating adventure unfolds, making for a strangely compelling experience.

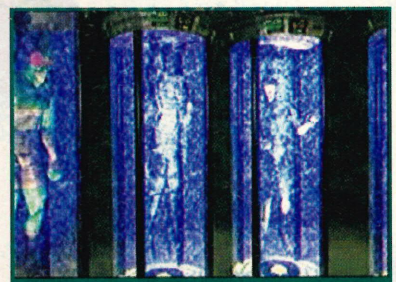

[ABOVE] Each level is full of caves and dimly-lit locations, but disappearing behind some of the scenery can break-up Hunter's polygonal character horribly.

KUNG FOO FIGHTING

There are five enormous world to explore and once you accept that the control method is flawed, a great deal of satisfaction can be gleaned from the exploratory and confrontational aspects on offer. Which brings us nicely to an integral part of the game – combat. According to EA, "behavioural Artificial Intelligence" is *Perfect Weapon*'s reason d'être. Not only can up to five polygon constructed fighters battle on the same screen, but the AI is actually pretty convincing. If, for example, they are taking a licking, they'll back off, re-group and attack once more; quite unnerving when you take into consideration the fact that they remember your fighting technique and adapt their defence accordingly.

The only problem here, is the collision detection – it's awful. Sometimes you produce a real spine-crushing move, only to kick fresh air. This is especially aggrivating, because although the response is ever-so


[ABOVE] The start of level two, where attacks come in the form of wild cats, and martial arts warrior-types.


[ABOVE] Take too many hit and you become one of many pickled curiosities in a twisted alien's museum.

THE BAD AND THE UGLY

PERFECT WEAPON COULD HAVE SO EASILY HAVE BEEN A CLASSIC. BUT AS SEEMS TO BE THE CASE WITH SO MANY 'WANNABE' GAMES, IT SADLY MISSED THE BOAT IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

1. FLUID ANIMATION, SPOILT BY ROTTEN COLLISION DETECTION AND SLUGGISH RESPONSE OF THE MAIN CHARACTER.
2. SCENERY THAT LOOKS OKAY, BUT PROVES VERY FIDDLY TO NEGOTIATE. WHY?
3. POLYGON BREAK-UP OF BLAKE WHEN HE WALKS BEHIND A PILLAR OR OTHER STATIC OBJECT.
4. NO INTERACTION WITH THE SCENERY, FOR EXAMPLE, LIGHTING EFFECTS ARE NOT REAL-TIME AND CONSEQUENTLY LOOK UNINSPIRING.
5. THE CAMERA ANGLES FLICK ABOUT SO MUCH, IT EVENTUALLY GIVES YOU A THROBBING HEADACHE.

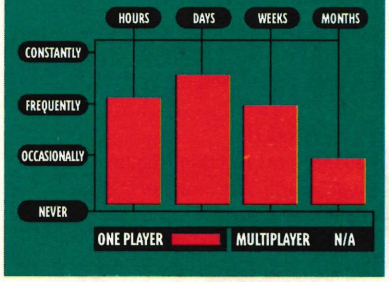
IF THERE'S GOING TO BE A *PERFECT WEAPON 2*, THESE FAULTS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED IMMEDIATELY.

EAPON



[Above] The background scenery can be quite breath-taking at times.

LONG TERM PLAY...



slightly sluggish, the animation of all characters is excellent throughout.

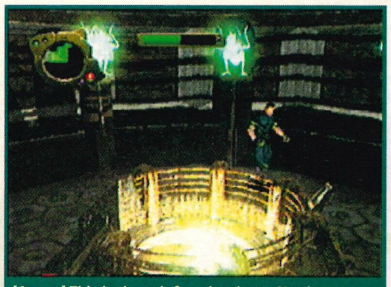
Overall, *Perfect Weapon* certainly isn't what it purports to be, but it really should have come somewhere close due to its many endearing qualities, such as the nature of the problem solving, a kill bar which must be filled before progression to the next level is allowed and four-against-one combat. So near... yet so far – this is most definitely a case where the developer's aspirations were not matched by their ability. A bit of a shame that.

PICK 'N' MIX

In time-honoured fashion, various useful items can be collected to aid you in your quest. Some are more important than others, but all are useful.



- **METABOLISM ADJUST:** On the ice world, Blake must find this immediately or he'll freeze.
- **VACCINE:** Use against poison or bites.
- **HEALTH PACKS:** Obvious really, there are plenty of these just dying to be picked up. Fills up about a quarter of your energy bar.
- **BEACON:** Very useful, as they reveal a quarter of the whole map. (They vary in appearance from level to level).
- **TRANSMITTER:** Disable lasers blocking doors.
- **KEY:** Er, now let me think...
- **POWER GLOVES:** Increase the power of your punch.
- **AMULET:** Four sections to collect and put in special areas.
- **HEX SWITCH:** Hidden areas can be accessed.
- **JUMPING BOOTS:** Find these and leap longer and higher.



[Above] This is the exit from level one. You have to work hard both physically and mentally before you're allowed to leave.



[Above] As the camera angles change, so do the variety of attacks. In this instance two enemies rush at Hunter from off the screen.



[Above] Extra health pick-ups can be found dotted around this area. Try picking one up while the wolves are sleeping and they give chase immediately. Let sleeping dogs lie we say.

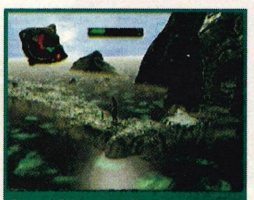


[Above] Up to four enemies can (and usually do) attack Hunter, the variety of attacks is impressive for this type of game.

"Prospects of a fluid, interactive adventure are soon dashed..."



[Above] When your body is facing away from an adversary, you still look at him – a neat touch.



[Above] Some of the scenery, although static and non-interactive is quite atmospheric.

PLAY

Looks	7/10
Sounds	7/10
Gameplay	5/10
Value	6/10
Punches	6/10

PLAYED 65%

Would've, could've, should've.

ALTERNATIVELY:
The City of Lost Children (78%)
Alone In The Dark (77%)

MECHWARRI

IF YOU'VE READ A BATTLETECH STORY, THERE'S PROBABLY NOTHING YOU WOULDN'T GIVE FOR JUST ONE SHOT AT DRIVING THOSE MACHINES. HERE'S YOUR CHANCE!

Written By Graeme Nicholson



It's 3097. As always, war is still a popular pastime for the human race, and there are two forces in particular who are in a disagreement of military significance. Having once gone into battle together against an outside threat from the feared Inner Sphere in the Battle of Tukayyid, the Wolf Clan and Clan Jade-Falcon were forced to agree to a cease-fire with the Inner Sphere to prevent further destruction of their worlds.

On leaving the fight, both Clans were filled with anger and began to blame each other for their honourless defeat. It was not long before this escalated into a full-scale war between the two, with no aim besides establishing which Clan is the mightiest.

Combat hasn't become a cold and removed affair with battles fought on virtual battlefields as was predicted back in the twentieth century. Oh no. Real, human Mechwarriors pilot these awesome, gigantic, two-legged hydraulically powered beasts into combat against one another, armed with a sinister array of weapons and gadgets. The machines are the BattleMechs, and this is the BattleTech universe – welcome!

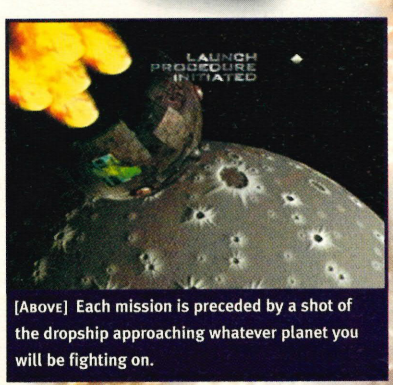
Mechwarrior 2 is the game that lets you take one of these BattleMechs (Mechs for short) into several high risk combat situations and fight to the death for your chosen Clan. With one of the best control systems yet, it is bound to have your pulse racing and generally please you with its gross-scale violence as you strut around, scanning the land and your instruments for anything moving, a hostile target target to extinguish...

FIREMOTH

Causing a respectable amount of mania in the PC world, *Mechwarrior 2* shows significant signs of enhancement on the PlayStation. With things like detailed texture mapping and some very realistic light sourcing being used throughout. The nicest touches in the original *Mechwarrior 2* were only available on the 3-D accelerated versions of the PC game, so you know the developers have put some



[Above] Here you can see the right arm of an enemy Mech coming off after a cruel barrage of gunfire from me. He's already lost his right leg – that should teach him.



[Above] Each mission is preceded by a shot of the dropship approaching whatever planet you will be fighting on.

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Activision
Customer support: 0181 742 9400
Price: £44.99
Release date: 21 March

ONE PLAYER

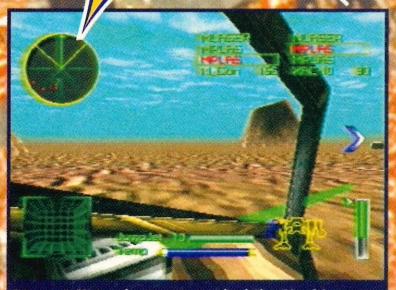
MEMORY CARD

OR2

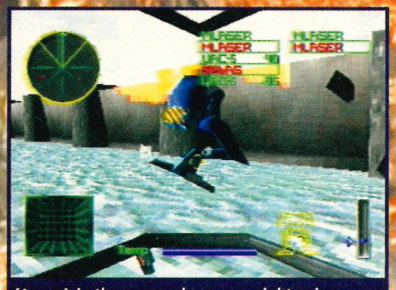
PLAY CLASSIC



[Above] The Mechs look quite nice up close, letting you see the detailed texture maps and light sourcing.



[Above] Not only can you swivel the Mech's upper body, but you can turn the pilot's head too and look out of either window.



[Above] In the arena where you might gain a promotion in your Clan, it pays to be utterly ruthless. Don't hold back.



[Above] The rotating health power-up will repair all damage you have sustained, and even regenerate destroyed limbs.



MECH MY DAY!

Mastering the peculiar controls of the BattleMechs is the only way to combat glory. Simply running directly at the enemy as though this was *Doom* is going to get you nowhere, in fact you're positively inviting flaming death if you fight that way. So take a look at these tips on how best to engage and destroy an opponent Mech with minimal damage to yourself.



As you see the other Mech, press the Target Select button to highlight it in the distance, and keep walking directly towards it.



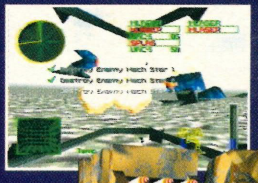
Steer off to one side as you get nearer, keeping an eye on him the whole time and continuing to walk. Select a suitable weapon.



Swivel your Mech's body when you're close enough for a good shot and move him into your sights as you begin to fire. The radar at top-left shows which way the Mech's turret is facing.



Continue to fire and adjust the angle at which your Mech is turned. In this picture we are still travelling forwards as the top half faces left.



Keep going until your opponent's machine ruptures and explodes into several parts, and start scanning for the next target.

"*Mechwarrior 2* has everything you wished *Krazy Ivan* had..."

effort into making it as good as it can be on PlayStation.

Regardless of what scenery, landscape and Mechs are being shifted around, it seems impossible to get *Mechwarrior 2* to deviate from its solid frame rate too. So you needn't worry about the illusion of the battlefield being destroyed as everything judders to only a few frames per second when a large object passes by.

For those unfamiliar with the gameplay, it is exactly what Psygnosis' *Krazy Ivan* wanted to be so badly – a game that conveys the feeling of controlling a huge steel exoskeleton, and engaging in totally involving conflict with other similar sized machines. *Mechwarrior 2* has everything you wished *Krazy Ivan* had, and it's all wrapped up in state-of-the-art 32-bit presentation.

Timber Wolf

Your Mechs are around 60 feet tall, with a very grubby, industrial look to them, and you stomp over the varying planets with that insanely cool *Robocop* "Schtum, schtum" sound, as the heavy iron feet slam into the ground. Each of the 12 Mechs which can be selected has its own individual body design and armaments, as well as different cockpits to view the action from as you do your death thing. There are also many kinds of weapons

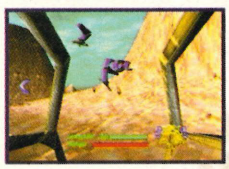


MECH IT STOP!

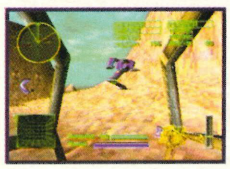
GETTING TOO CARRIED AWAY DURING BATTLE CAN HAVE ITS BAD POINTS, NOTABLY THE HORROR OF FINDING YOUR GUNS HAVE OVERHEATED AND CAN'T FIRE ANYMORE WHEN YOU'RE IN A TIGHT SPOT. THIS IS HOW IT HAPPENS:



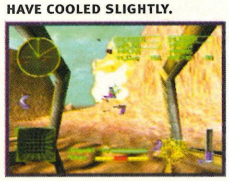
DISCOVERING A STARTLED BATTLEMECH BY THE MOUNTAINSIDE, YOU TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION BY USING THREE GUNS AT ONCE AND HAMMERING AT IT FOR ALL YOU'RE WORTH.



THE RED GAUGE AT THE BOTTOM REACHES ITS LIMIT, AND THE AUTOMATIC SYSTEM SHUTDOWN KICKS IN TO PREVENT ANY DAMAGE TO YOUR MECH BY THE OVERHEATING. ALL DIALS BLINK OUT AND YOU ARE IMMOBILIZED.



AFTER A FEW SECONDS OF TERRIFYING VULNERABILITY, THE DISPLAY FLICKERS BACK ON AND CONTROL IS ON YOUR HANDS AGAIN AS THE GUNS HAVE COOLED SLIGHTLY.



TERMINATE THE ENEMY FOR PUTTING YOU IN SUCH AN INCONSIDERATE POSITION, AND MOVE ON TO HIS FRIENDS.



[ABOVE] The explosions in *MechWarrior 2* are really quite something, and all the individual pieces rain down afterwards and explode seperately .



[ABOVE] Switch to the trusty old LRM-20 missiles, select your target and wait for the beep. As soon as you hear it, unleash your laser guided weapons of death and watch.



[ABOVE] This is the Planet Baker 3 mission where you have to provide safe passage to a nearby structure for that tiny truck. Try not to tread on him.

bolted onto your Mech's body, usually with an array of guns mounted on both arms and, for example, missile launchers stuffed with heat seekers on the shoulders.

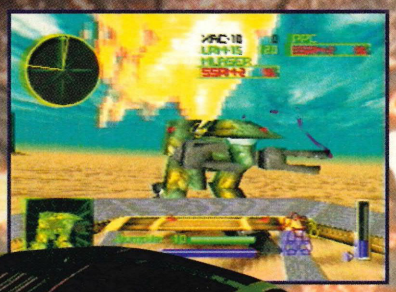
All the controls described in the BattleTech books are included, like raising and lowering the head of the Mech, as well as rotating it at the waist like the turret of a tank. Using this technique becomes one of the most important factors of the game from an early stage, offering some fantastic versatility in the heat of battle as you march through a danger zone and lock on to an enemy Clan's Mech taking shots at you.

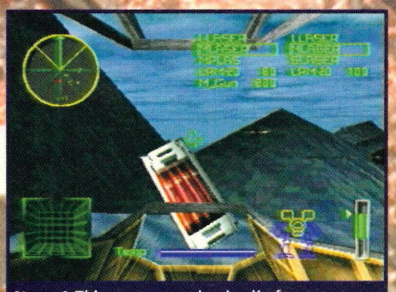
If you were both to just face each other without this ability, it would be down to which Mech had the most armour and the strongest guns. But swivel around to keep him in your sights and it gets harder for him to hit you as you walk in one direction and shoot in the other. The amount you can rotate like this differs from Mech to Mech, with the ones which can rotate less having some other asset like being faster or stronger.

HELLBRINGER

While keeping yourself and your machine in one piece may seem like enough to worry about, you are in actual fact trying to make a career within the hierarchy of your Clan out of this conflict. Starting at the lowest possible level (where it is wise to make use of the incredibly comprehensive training missions on offer) embarking on a Mechwarrior career will mean that you are set a series of missions and will move through the ranks depending on your achievements and losses in battle. Every once in a while there will be a chance to prove your worth by going head to head with some of your own people in a specially constructed arena. The winner gets promoted far quicker and so this is a great way to tongue your way through the ranks.

The missions in *Mechwarrior 2* are created in a way that stops it all from getting too repetitive and boring, and there are 16 new sorties which those damp and smelly PC users have never even seen. You could be deployed to simply destroy all enemy Mechs in an area of tactical importance. Or do something far more delicate like escort





[Above] This power-up reloads all of your exhaustible weapons supply, but some things like lasers never run out.



[Above] Enemy Mechs that start whooshing around in the sky are a constant annoyance. We recommend blasting their legs off in mid flight.





THE THREE TRIALS OF THE CLANS





The BattleTech world is an elaborate and often confusing place for beginners. Over years of the story evolving, a massive range of words and terms have been invented, and it makes sense to learn some of them before you throw yourself in at the deep end. These terms are those which will affect you most while playing *MechWarrior 2*, so start taking notes...

Trial of Position:

Determines if you will be eligible for promotion to a warrior in the Clans. You must terminate at least one of three opponents.

Trial of Possession:

A way of deciding which of the two Clans can lay claim to something they both dispute over, whether it's territory, a warrior's genes, anything.

Trial of Refusal:

The rules made by the authorities can be challenged in a Trial of Refusal, so that a political issue can be settled by combat between the Clans.

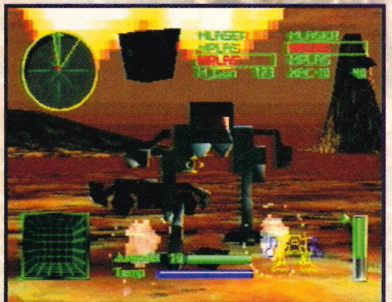
"16 new sorties which those damp and smelly PC users have never even seen!"

and protect a cute little truck on its way to a structure it must repair on the planet Baker 3. Relentless members of Clan Jade-Falcon are all around. When there is fragile equipment around, it's best to use the zoom function to surgically pick off the enemy at distance, rather than inviting them to attack you point blank. Indeed, some missions encourage you to become a covert sniper; erasing a Mech before tabbing it back to the dropship.

SUMMONER

Mechwarrior 2 catches your attention and holds it; crammed as it is with quality gameplay and lovingly implemented detail. The way the cockpit view dips and raises accordingly to your walking instead of *Krazy Ivan's* hovering sensation. The variation in settings and surroundings as you visit planets at different times of day. And the sheer rush of power as you blast your way out of an enemy ambush – it all makes *Mechwarrior 2* one severely addictive battle-fest that is hampered only by the fact that they took the link-up option out half way through development.

Graphically it is far better than the PC game, with smooth light sourcing on the cockpit, and a great deal more colours. The campaigns are many, strategy rears a welcome head, and if you get tired of stealth, there's a gunfight worthy of John Wayne waiting around every corner. With a link-up mode, this would have been scored even higher. A solid, high quality blast.



[Above] This naive MechWarrior of Clan Jade-Falcon thinks he can protect that little car that looks just like an APC from *Aliens*. He will learn – the hard way.







PLAY

Looks	9
Sounds	5
Gameplay	9
Value	9
Artillery	9

PLAYED **91%**

Powerfully addictive. Recommended

ALTERNATIVELY:
Krazy Ivan (90%)
Descent (85%)

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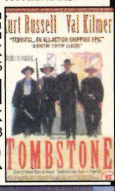
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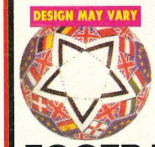
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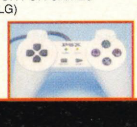


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WALL OF GAME

SOUL EDGE



What greater beat-'em-up is there to cover in the Wall of Game than *Soul Edge* (known as *Soul Blade* when it's officially released)? Sporting the best graphics, sound and gameplay of any of the PlayStation's many fighting games (*Tekken 2* is its only equal), this game has hundreds of special moves, a complex Edge Master mode, and more combos and killer weapons than anything else in the gaming world. This is part one of our extensive guide...

KEY FOR THE MOVES:

■ – Weak Slash (horizontal)
▲ – Strong Slash (vertical)
● – Kick
× – Guard

H – High attack (dodge by ducking)
M – Medium attack (block standing)
L – Low attack (dodge by hop or jump or block ducking)
WS – Whilst Standing from crouch (down to neutral)

3D Movement

e, e – Move towards the camera
e, a – Move away from the camera

Ground Attacks

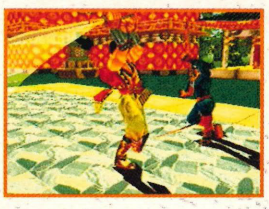
Tap a + ▲ – Quick pounce
Hold a + ▲ – Long pounce
× + ■ or × + ▲ – Basic throws (facing or behind)

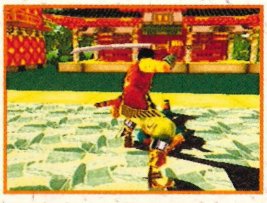
Replay

■ – Zoom In
▲ – Zoom Out
Any direction – Rotate Axis

CHEATS







MOVES, COMMON NOTES:

Float Combos

All characters have a d + ▲ attack which sends the opponent into the air. If the attack is a 'counter' (struck while the opponent is attacking you), you have the option of attacking them with a variety of moves before they hit the ground. To inflict even more damage, you have time to add your ground attack at the end. Also note that there are specific moves for each character which may permit float combos.

Weapon Defence Power

Each time an opponent strikes you with a special attack or combination of attacks which are blocked, you will lose weapon power. The bar is situated under your health bar and is indicated by the sword. When the meter reads zero, you'll lose your weapon, and must then resort to unarmed combat to try and salvage the round – not easy. The bar rejuvenates some power after each round.

Guard Impact

The Guard Impact is c + ×. If someone attacks you when the guard impact is active, you'll flash for a second, and have time to counter the attack while your opponent recoils. It can be done at any time, so practise the timing when you're NOT being slaughtered.
Note: You cannot Guard Impact kicks.

Ending Stances

Each character has a total of six ending stances: four winning, two losing. The winning stances are activated depending on which button-related action was last used during the match – either ■, ▲, or ●. The fourth is the unarmed stance. The two losing stances are only possible through a time-out. The armed stances differ, but losing by time-out while unarmed gives the same effect for all characters: they all lower their heads while standing, with their hands on their knees.

Critical Edges

Critical Edges are automatic four-hit combos which every fighter possesses by pressing ■, ▲, and ● at the same time. In order to activate the Critical Edge, you must have sufficient weapon power which is used by the Critical Edge (33% approx). Critical Edge Extensions are movements made during a Critical Edge's four attacks in order to add an extra three to four hits to the auto combo, depending on the character.
Note: If your Critical Edge is Guard Impacted, you will lose 50% of your sword power rather than the usual 33%.

Unblockable And Critical Edge Cancelling

Both of these attacks can be cancelled by pressing the Guard Button (×). In addition, most characters can perform flash attacks after cancelling these moves. By cancelling and quickly following with ■ and/or ▲ attacks, the weapon trail will follow while the Unblockable or Critical Edge power goes down.

Costumes

Every character has three costumes – two from the arcade, while one is an original PlayStation outfit (having been designed by a fan of the game in a competition run in Japan).

PLAY Information

Publisher: Sony
Customer Support: 0881 505505
Price: £55-70 (import)
TBA (official)
Release date: Out now (import)
18 April (official)

WALL OF GAME NUMBER 19

SOULEDGE





HEISHIRO MITSURUGI

General moves
Samurai Slash – ■ (H)
Samurai Slashes – ■, ■ (HH)
No Escape – ■, ■, ■ (HHH)
Slice & Dice – ■, ■, ⇩ + ■ (HHL)
Wind Storm – ■, ■, ▲ (HHM)
Tiger Sweep – ▲ + ■ (H)
Hard Slash – ⇨+ ■ (M)
Hard Slash + Low Spin Slash – ⇨+ ■, ⇩ + ■ (ML)
Hard Slash Blade Uppercut – ⇨ + ■, ▲ (MM)
Hilt Gut-Strike – ⇘ + ■ (M)
Shin Slicer – ⇙ + ■ (L)
Low Spinning Slash – ⇩ + ■ (L)
Rising Spin Slash – WS + ■ (M)
Rising Spin Slash, Low Spin Slash – WS + ■, ⇩ + ■ (ML)
Rising Spin Slash, Blade Uppercut WS + ■, ▲ (MM)
Shoulder Cutter – ▲ (M)
V-Cutter – ▲, ▲ (MM)
Triangle Cutter ▲, ▲, ■ (Counter, With Weapon)
Life After Death – ▲ + ■ + ✕ (Counter, Without Weapon)
Final Strike – ⇘ + ▲ (Strikes Downed Opponent)

Unblockable – ⇨ ⇘ ⇩ ⇙ ⇦ + ▲
Critical Edge + Cross The Styx – ■ + ▲ + ●, ⇦ ⇙ ⇩ ⇘ ⇨ + ▲ + ●
Critical Edge + Rising Uppercut – ■ + ▲ + ●, ⇦ ⇙ ⇩ ⇘ ⇨ + ■ + ●

Edge Master Quest
EPISODE 1: ROCK
Conditions: Beat Rock.
Weapon Received: Onimaru. This weapon drains your life.
EPISODE 2: TAKI
Conditions: Beat her within the time limit.
Weapon Received:
Zantetsuken
EPISODE 3: SEUNG MINA



SEUNG MINA

General moves
Fly Flapper – ■ (H)
Triangle Flap – ■, ■ (HH)
Fly Flipper Kick – ■, ● (HH)
Sparrow's Rush – ■, ■, ■ (HHH)
Rising Sparrow – ■, ■, ■, ● (HHHM)
Burning Sparrow – ■, ■, ■, ⇩ + ● (HHHL)
Lightning Sparrow – ■, ■, ▲ (HHM)
Flashing Sparrow – ■, ■, ● (HHH)
Crazy See-Saw – ■, ⇨ + ■ (HH)
Bad Attitude – ■, ⇨ + ■, ■ (HHH)
Dancing Souls – ■, ⇨ + ■, ■, ● (HHHM)
Sleeping Souls – ■, ⇨ + ■, ■, ⇩ + ● (HHHL)
Breathtaker – ⇨ + ■ (M)
Xylophonist – ⇨ + ■, ● (MH)
Quick Low Slash – ⇩ + ■ (L)
Spark Spin Slash – WS + ■ (M)
● (MMM)
Sliding Kick – Dash + ● (L)
Starlight Explosion – ■ + ▲ (M)
Orion Express – ■ + ▲, ⇨ + ■ (MH)
Star Destroyer – ■ + ▲, ⇨ + ■, ▲ (MHM)
Baton Twirler – ■ + ▲, ■ + ▲ (MM)
High Kick – ⇨ + ● (M)
Vertical Kick WS + ● (M)
Vane Kick – ▲, ⇨ + ● (MM)

Rail Crusher – ■ + ✕ (Throw)
Super Zonk – ▲ + ✕ (Throw)
Knee Crusher (hits downed opponent) – ⇘ + ●

Unblockable Killing Vault – ⇙ + ■ + ▲
Critical Edge + Crystal Cyclone – ■ + ▲ + ●, ▲, ▲ + ■ + ▲

Edge Master Quest
EPISODE 1: MITSURUGI



SIEGFRIED SCHTAUFFEN

General moves
Slash – ■ (H)
Double Slash – ■, ■ (HH)
Spiral Attack – ■, ■, ▲ (HHM)
Eagle's Flap – ■, ⇩ + ■ (HL)
Wheel Turner – ⇨+ ■ (H)
Back Spin Slash – ⇦+ ■ (H)
Low Slash – ⇩ + ■ (L)
Hard Gut-Slice – ⇘ + ■ (M)
Ankle Slice – ⇙ + ■ (L)
Royal Crash – ▲ (M)
Knight Crasher – ▲, ▲ (MM)
Brain Smasher – ▲, ▲, ▲ (MML)
Manslaughter – ▲, ▲, ● MMH)
Cross Cutter – ▲, ⇩ + ■ (ML)
Brainstormer – ▲, ● (MM)
Drilling Horn – ⇨ + ▲ (M)
Cannonball Lifter – ⇘ + ▲ (M)
Low Centre Slice – ⇩ + ▲ (M)
Headbutt – ⇦ + ▲ (H)
Flapjack – ⇩ + ▲ + ✕ (Throw)
Stomping (hits downed opponent) – ⇘ + ●, ●, ●, ●

Unblockable Earth Divide – ⇨ + ▲
Critical Edge + Command Of The Blade – ■ + ▲ + ●, ⇨ ⇩ ⇘ + ▲ + ●

Edge Master Quest
EPISODE 1: MITSURUGI
Conditions: Defeat him.
Weapon Received: Glum. This weapon has high attack power but drains your life.
EPISODE 2: SOPHITIA
Conditions: Defeat all-comers.
Weapon Received: Atlas Sword. This sword refills your life.
EPISODE 3: COLOSSEUM
Conditions: Defeat everyone.
Weapon Received: Flamberge

Triangle Cutter ▲, ▲, ■ (MMH)
Wipe Out – ▲, ▲, ■, ▲ (MMHM)
Sudden Wind – ▲, ▲, ■, ⇩ + ■ (MMHL)
Wasp Stinger – ⇨ + ▲ (M)
Let it Roll – ⇦ + ▲ (M)
Drop Slash – ⇩ + ▲ (M)
Thunder Strike – ⇨, ⇨+ ▲ (M)
Uppercut – ⇘ + ▲ (M)
Rising Stab – WS + ▲ (M)
High Kick – ● (H)
Side Kick – ⇘ + ● (M)
Charging Lance – ⇦+ ● (M)
Wood Chopper – ⇦+ ●, ▲ (MM)
Coiling Snake – ⇩ + ● (L)
Leg Sweeper – ⇩ + ●, ▲ (LM)
Steel Slicer – ▲ + ■ (MM)
Phoenix Tail – ⇨, ⇨ + ■ + Z (M)
Silent Step – ⇩ ⇘ ⇨
Step Swing, Low Slash – ⇨ + ■, ⇩ + ■
Stepping Steel Slicer – ⇨ + ■ + ▲ (MM)
Silent Stab – ⇨ + ▲ (M)
Stepping Kick – ⇨ + ● (M)
Sliding Kick – Dash + ● (L)
Rising Knee – WS + ● (M)

Sea Of Madness – ■ + ✕ (Throw)
Hell Striker – ▲ + ✕ (Throw)
Dirty Stab – ▲ + ■ + ✕

EPISODE 3: SEUNG MINA
Conditions: Beat her with throws only.
Weapon Received: None
EPISODE 4: LI LONG
Conditions: You have been poisoned by Li Long's Chinese potions. Defeat Li Long before you die.
Weapon Received: Bussen
EPISODE 5: COLOSSEUM
Conditions: Beat everyone.
Weapon Received: Suigetsuto. This weapon refills your life.
EPISODE 6: SIEGFRIED
Conditions: Ostrheinsburg Castle is about to be destroyed; beat Siegfried before the time runs out (20 secs).
Weapon Received: Zweihander Sword
EPISODE 7: VOLDO.
Conditions: Beat Voldo with a Critical Edge.
Weapon Received: Falcus
Episode 8: Cervantes/Soul Edge
Conditions: Beat Them.
Weapon Received: None
Final Weapon: Muramasa. Takes damage from enemies even if they block!

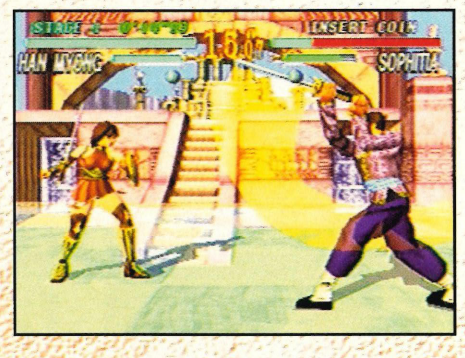
Spark Spin Slash – WS + ■ (M)
Spinning Sparrow – ⇘ + ■ (M)
Trick Retreat Low Strike – f + ■ (L)
Star Dancer – ⇧ + ■ + ▲ (M)
Garden Plower – ▲ (M)
Sheep Chaser – ▲, ▲ (MM)
Meteor Shower – ▲, ▲, ▲ (MMM)
Triple Wave – ▲, ▲, ⇩ + ■ (MML)
Art Of Heaven – ▲, ■ (MH)
Art Of Earth – ▲, ⇩ + ■ (ML)
Fire Dance – ▲, ● (MH)
Spear – ⇨ + ▲ (M)
High Tide – ⇨ + ▲, ▲ (MM)
Rip Tide – ⇨ + ▲, ■ (MM)
Low Tide – ⇨ + ▲, ⇩ + ■ (MML)
Enchanted Spear – ⇦ + ▲ (M)
Glaive Drop – ⇩ + ▲ (M)
Skyscraper (hits downed opponent) – ⇦ + ▲, ⇩ + ■ + ▲ (MM)
Big Dipper – ⇘ + ▲ (M)
Glitter Big Dipper – WS + ▲ (M)
Meteor Explosion – ⇗ + ▲ + ● (MM)
High Kick – ● (H)
Middle Kick – ⇘ + ● (M)
Spinning Kick – ▲ + ● (H)
Low Kick – ⇩ + ● (L)
Sweeping Kick – f + ● (L)
Rocket Launcher – ⇨, ⇨ + ● (M)
Moon Crusher – ⇨, ⇨ + ●, ● (MM)
Earth Crusher – ⇨, ⇨ + ●, ●,

EPISODE 1: MITSURUGI
Conditions: Beat him before the time runs out.
Weapon Received: None
EPISODE 2: ROCK
Conditions: Beat him.
Weapon Received: Kogato
EPISODE 3: TAKI
Conditions: Beat her before the time runs out.
Weapon Received: Kanji
EPISODE 4: LI LONG
Conditions: Beat him with throws.
Weapon Received: Chomaki
EPISODE 5: HWANG
Conditions: Break his weapon.
Weapon Received: None
EPISODE 6: SOPHITIA
Conditions: Beat her.
Weapon Received: Halberd. This weapon refills your life.
EPISODE 7: SIEGFRIED
Conditions: Beat him.
Weapon Received: Morning Star
EPISODE 8: VOLDO
Conditions: Beat him with your tiny amount of life.
Weapon Received: Ren Kanji
EPISODE 9: CERVANTES/SOUL EDGE
Conditions: Beat them.
Weapon Received: None
Final Weapon: Zanretsu

Headbutt – ⇦ + ▲ (H)
Double Headbutt – ⇦ + ▲, ■ (HH)
Triple Headbutt – ⇦ + ▲, ■, ▲ (HH)
OverKill – ⇗ + ▲ (M)
Mortal Slaughter – ⇗ + ▲, ⇦ + ▲
Invader – ▲, ⇦ + ▲ (M)
Blackmail – ▲, ⇦ + ▲, ▲ (ML)
Blade Uppercut – WS + ▲ (M)
High Kick – ● (H)
Roundhouse – ⇨ + ● (H)
Lancer – ⇘ + ● (M)
Double Lancers – ⇘ + ●, ● (ML)
Unicorn's Charge – ⇘ + ●, ●, ▲ (MLM)
Low Kick – ⇩ + ● (L)
Edge Of Blade – WS + ■ (M)
Spiral Blade – WS + ■, ■ (ML)
Rising Kick – WS + ● (M)
Jump Kick – ⇨, ⇨ + ● (H)
Sliding Kick – Dash + ● (L)
Drop Kick – Dash + ▲ + ● (H)
Spin Kick – ■ + ● (H)
SledgeHammer – ⇨, ⇨ + ■ + ▲ (M)
Shoulder Charge – ⇨ + ▲ + ● (M)

Brutal Smack – ■ + ✕ (Throw)
Hurricane Slash – ▲ + ✕ (Throw)

Weapon Received: Flamberge
EPISODE 4: ROCK
Conditions: Defeat Rock before you die from poison.
Weapon Received: None
EPISODE 5: TAKI
Conditions: Defeat her before the time runs out.
Weapon Received: Seven-Edged Blade. This weapon refills your weapon/Critical Edge gauge.
EPISODE 6: LI LONG
Conditions: Defeat him with throws.
Weapon Received: Shukutetsuto
EPISODE 7: VOLDO
Conditions: Siegfried was caught in several traps getting in to Voldo's money pit and he is severely damaged. Beat Voldo with your small amount of life.
Weapon Received: Claymore
EPISODE 8: CERVANTES/SOUL EDGE
Conditions: Beat them.
Weapon Received: None
Final Weapon: Soul Edge. This weapon has INSANE attack power.









PLAY

PLAY CLASSIC



PLAY's news section is the envy of the world! With late-breaking exclusive stories, PlayStation revelations and items on every new game coming to the console. It's always in PLAY first!

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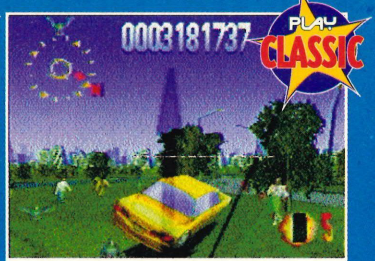
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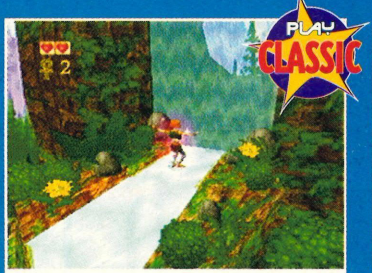
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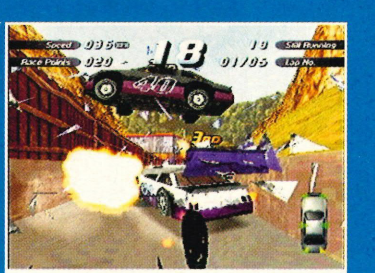
[ABOVE] *Tomb Raider* was rated 94% in issue 14 and we reckon it's the best PSX game ever!



[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.



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SENTIENT

PREPARE TO BE AMAZED BY AN ADVENTURE GAME SO CLEVER YOU COULD STAPLE A TAIL TO IT AND CALL IT A WEASEL.

Written By Damian Butt

Delayed like you wouldn't believe,

Sentient from Psygnosis is nevertheless one of the most ambitious games ever undertaken. The game is set on a doomed Icarus mining station whose orbit is steadily decaying and with the population rapidly succumbing to a mystery virus. You play Garrit, a medical officer who crash lands in the main docking bay during a solar flare and is unceremoniously dumped into a hive of conspiracy that would have even Oliver Stone shaking his head in disbelief.

It would appear that apart from a flesh rotting disease and plunging into the heart of the sun, you also face open hostility on all decks, plus there's a mutiny plot on the boil, an assassination attempt on a prominent political figure and you are even on the run from manic security offices with *Midnight Express* fixations! *Sentient* has all the plot twists and involvement of a John Grisham novel and is utterly gripping.

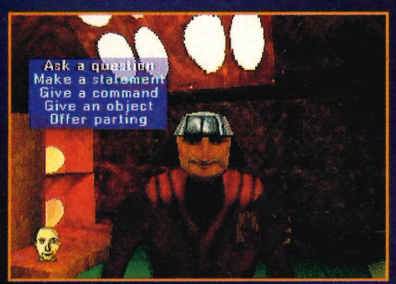


PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Psygnosis
Customer support: 0151 2823000
Price: £34.99
Release date: April '97

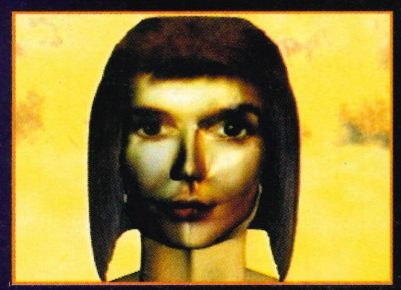


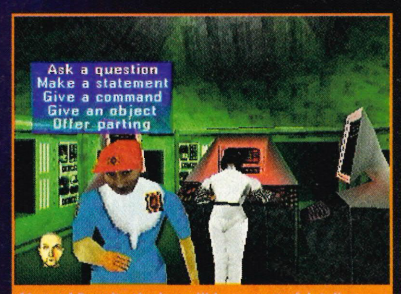
ONE PLAYER



MURDER

Sentient is an impressive game indeed and you can't help but be impressed by huge polygon characters smoothly walking around with real faces texture mapped onto their frames. It's quite unnerving talking to each one of the 62 men and women aboard because you know that they are in fact real life people who have had their faces nicked for the game. Another impressive aspect is the way each character (including yourself) changes his/her expression depending on their mood, and so you can tell instantly if they are going to be hostile or open to





[ABOVE] Despite the incredible amount of detail on show, *Sentient* never slows down, even with two huge polygon characters both sporting texture mapped faces.



[ABOVE] You get a radiation report from this engineer, and it is one of the first few tasks in the game. Boy is he ugly though...

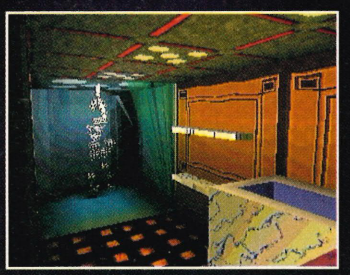
LITTLE APRIL SHOWERS

IT IS VITAL THAT YOU TAKE AS MANY SHOWERS AS POSSIBLE IN *SENTIENT* BECAUSE IT'S SO DAMN HOT. PEOPLE ARE SWEATING ALL THE TIME AND YOU WILL FIND THAT MANY CHARACTERS, PARTICULARLY THE FEMALE DOCTOR, WILL NOT TALK TO YOU UNLESS YOU SMELL SWEET (PROBABLY). BUT THE STRANGE THING IS, YOU DON'T HAVE TO JUST USE THE ONE IN YOUR QUARTERS, YOU CAN VISIT THEM ALL OVER THE PLACE. HERE'S JUST TWO OF THE MANY ORNATE WATERY PLACES YOU CAN HAVE A CRAFTY WASH IN.



BASIC SHOWER

FOUND IN THE FIRST LEVEL, THIS IS YER BOG STANDARD WATER COMING OUT OF A HOLE IN THE ROOF MODEL. IT'S SUFFICIENT.



POSH SHOWER

AS YOU GAIN ACCESS TO THE HIGHER GEODOME LEVELS YOU CAN SNEAK INTO THE EXECUTIVES BATHROOMS AND LIVE IT UP A LITTLE.

"A hive of conspiracy that would have even Oliver Stone shaking his head in disbelief..."

conversation. This is breaking new grounds in computer entertainment, and it is glimpse into the future.

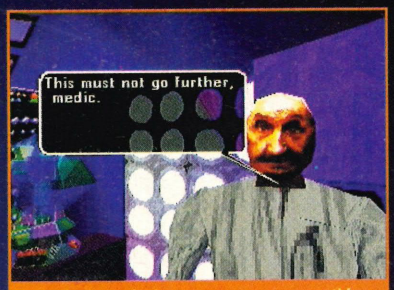
The space station is beautifully detailed with thousands of different features, and each level is sufficiently different looking to aid navigation. Add to this the fact that as you nonchalantly walk around the frame update never slows down or jerks and you've got the recipe for the most atmospheric adventure yet on PlayStation. We already know that Psygnosis can create the best lighting effects on the PSX, and with *Sentient* they pull every trick out of the bag to bestow the environment with a gritty workplace feeling unmatched by anything else on any system.

MYSTERY

The game is played from a first person perspective, with occasional graphical interludes to explain the story, and you have complete freedom of movement; able to look up and down and get into every area of the ship. With so many non player characters (NPCs) going about their daily routines the scope for conversation is vast, and so it's a good thing you have one of the most comprehensive and facile interfaces yet seen.

From the initial menu of questions, orders, statements, commands and greetings, you are then taken to many sub-menus containing possible variants. These are constantly updated so that if you find out some juicy gossip about the radiation report, for example, the keyword "report" will be added to your glossary. This is very reminiscent of the system used in the old David Jones games *Spellbound* and *Knight Tyme*.

Unfortunately all these great hopes and well conceived ideas have been let down by poor implementation and there is simply no excuse for it because all other bases have been touched. The major letdown as far as gameplay goes is the ease of navigation, or rather the lack of it. Psygnosis informed us that there will now be a map of a level included in the packaging of *Sentient* and this would certainly go some way to solving the problem, but the fact remains that it is almost impossible to



[Above] Later on in the game you come across this scientist who is willingly plunging the space station into the sun to prove that intelligent life lives there. He is obviously insane.



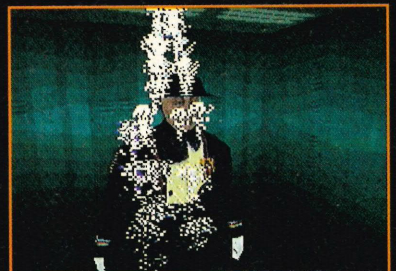
[Above] This is SUZIE, the central computer for the mining station who informs you of imminent solar flares and can also be used to analyse strange communications.



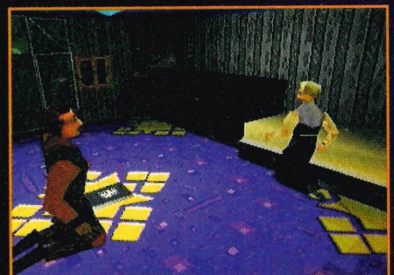
[Above] This shows how the conversation system works. You first select the initial question/ command/ statement and then follow it up with different alternatives. Note your expression in the bottom left corner.







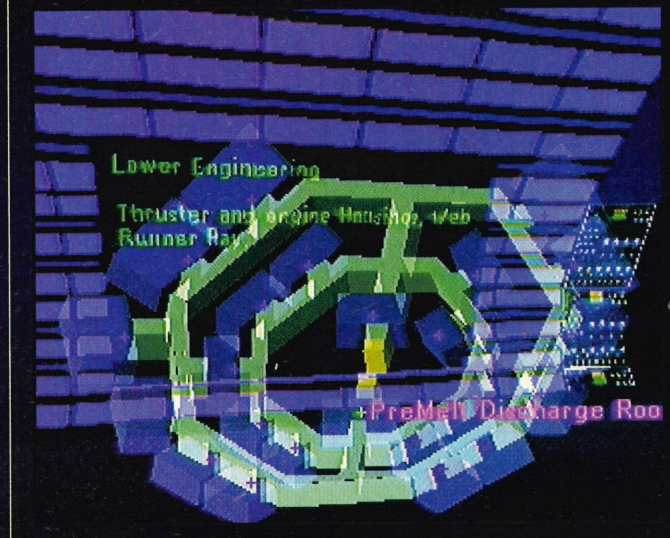
[Above] This woman has been badly exposed to radiation in the greenhouse level and is now confined to a shower. You meet her here to talk in secret. And no funny business.



[Above] Blundering around the top Geodome you come across this cosy little arrangement. These two subdued characters are praying with the book on the floor. Weird.

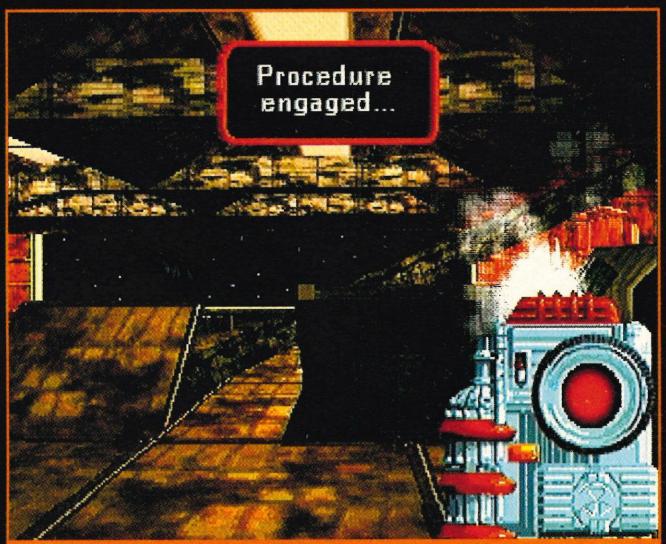
TERMINAL ACCESS

DOTTED AROUND THE SHIP FEATURED IN *SENTIENT* ARE TERMINALS FOR THE MAIN SUZIE COMPUTER. EACH ONE OF THESE SCREENS WILL GIVE YOU ACCESS TO THE VAST DATA BANKS, AND YOU CAN LOOK AT PERSONNEL RECORDS, MAPS OF THE LEVELS, A GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND LOADS OF PLANETARY INFORMATION. IT'S VERY USEFUL, BUT YOU PROBABLY WON'T HAVE MUCH TIME TO SCAN IT ALL.





[Above] Cornered by a suspicious looking guy in the medical centre you are suddenly overcome with the desire to escape and run.



[Above] Certain objects in the game, such as this radiation detector, can be used on-screen at any time. When in areas of extreme danger, this device glows red. Oops.



[Above] As you can see, the faces are slapped onto the polygon frame to give added realism. How many other games have you see with characters this close to the real thing? They even change their expressions.

find your way around the mining ship with some of the time constraints pressed upon you.

SUSPENSE

Although each room is clearly marked with a clever numbering system (low numbers are the inside of the ship's rings, moving outward for the higher digits), this is incongruous with where the humans aboard tell you to go. Instead of simply saying "Malichek is probably in room 245." You get the unfathomable "Ah, yes, I believe you'll find him in the outer quadrant, L ring." The developers should have chosen one system and stuck to it.

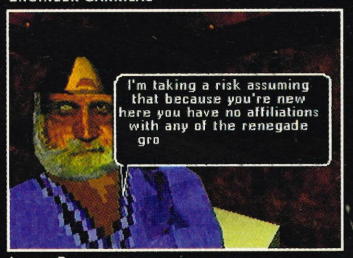
As it is you wander aimlessly around the huge ship without a clue of what to do, and you often miss vast sections of plot because of it. There is also no clear idea of what you are supposed to do, and this is the most frustrating thing. In the end the grand scope of the game works against you, and it's altogether easier to sit dribbling in someone's shower than try to work out what the hell is going on. More guidance is definitely needed at key points and an on-screen map would be perfect.

It is also annoying that even when the station is visibly melting around your ears, you can still only walk at a leisurely pace. Running is most definitely called for when you're being pursued – but no, that is not an option.

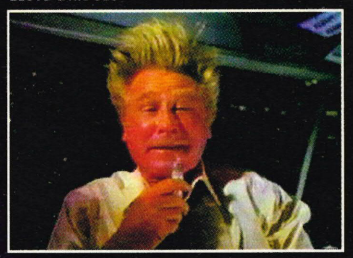
Ultimately, *Sentient* is a brilliant concept let down at the last minute by fudged implementation. The problems are easy to fix, and perhaps Psygnosis will take heed before the game arrives, but I doubt it. You can't deny though that trapped at the core of *Sentient* is one of the most exciting new gameplay experiences in recent times. Bring on *Sentient 2* – I'll happily be a consultant.

SEPARATED AT BIRTH...

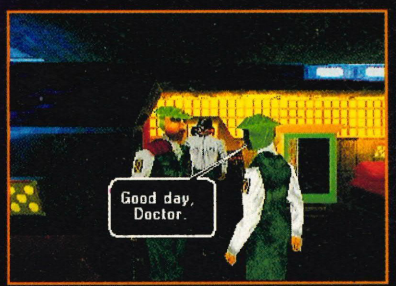
ENGINEER GARRILAC



LLOYD BRIDGES

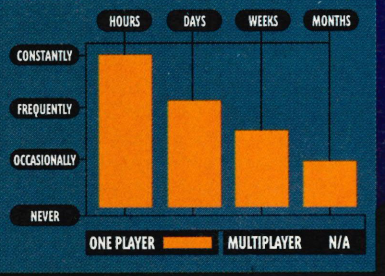






"This is breaking new grounds in computer entertainment..."

LONG TERM PLAY...



PLAY

LOOKS	9
SOUNDS	5
GAMEPLAY	8
VALUE	9
CRISIS	9

PLAYED **84%**

Deeply atmospheric, but a slight let-down

ALTERNATIVELY:
BROKEN SWORD (84%)
EXCALIBUR 2555AD (86%)

The Future Is About To Become History

EXCALIBUR 2555 AD

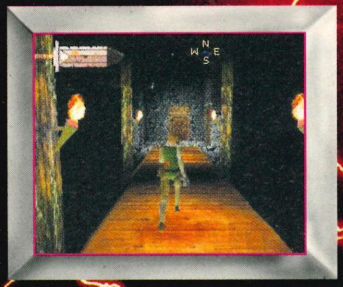
A totally unique and ground-breaking adventure, combining the best graphical elements of *Tomb Raider* and the atmosphere, depth and playability of *The Legend of Zelda*.

Plus, massive panoramic 3D environments and intricate consuming puzzles make Excalibur 2555AD an absolute epic.

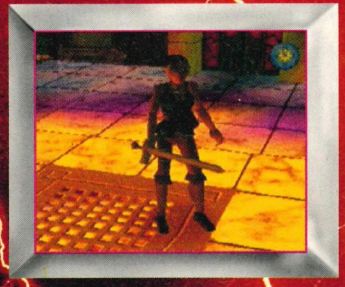
Featuring: over 200 massive locations, 80 fully talking characters, incredible realistic light-sourcing, intriguing puzzles and hand-to-hand combat.

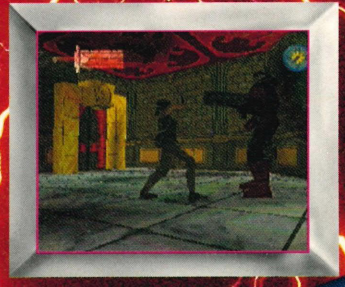
"...could well do for 3D action adventures what *Tomb Raider* did for 3D platformers" EDGE

"...has atmosphere in spades" PlayStation plus









PlayStation

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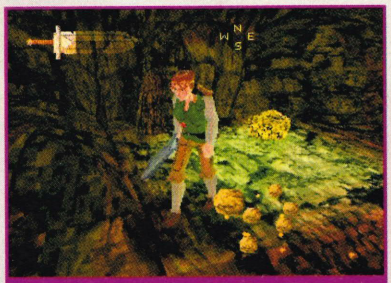
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TELSTAR
Electronic Studios





[Above] This is what we want, blood and lots of it. But hang on a mo, it can't be coming from the skeleton...



[Above] Ah... these mushrooms look interesting. let's hope they're magic. No not the type your thinking of.



[Above] Beam me up Merlin. Beth uses a teleport to arrive at each new level.

EXCALIBUR 2555 AD

For those of you with memories longer than the average goldfish, seeing *Excalibur 2555 AD* for the first time is bound to set alarm bells ringing. And yes, we can't hide the fact that it looks remarkably similar to a certain adventure featuring a young filly named Lara Croft. But Telstar has wisely avoided trying to take on Eidos at their own game, opting instead to take the third-person genre down a more NPC-interactive path.

The legendary sword of Excalibur has been nicked by bandits from the future. Only you, playing Beth-Merlin's junior assistant can retrieve it by journeying into to the future with just a sword and limited spellcasting knowledge. *Excalibur 2555 AD* is set in the three-tiered city of Salto, namely the Upper, Mid and Lower realms, where an increasingly arduous challenge awaits anybody mad enough to enter its vast chambers.

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Telstar
Customer support: 01932 222232
Price: £44.99
Release date: Out now



ONE PLAYER



MEMORY CARD

LEGEND

Controlling Beth is straightforward enough, utilising the D-pad for movement and the facia buttons for both combat and interaction modes. Viewing her as she confidently struts around her surroundings is implemented effectively by the two intelligent camera options. The former is set directly behind the character and remains static, and the latter is a more *Alone In The Dark* dynamic affair, which can be set from a distance or closer in. Either way, the camera is used superbly and always provides you with the best view.

The lighting too, is simply fabulous. When Beth walks past a well lit area, the real-time shadows kick in and ripple over her body. Similarly, torches on cave walls constantly cast light and dark shadows as you make your way through colourful and varied locations. Each area is well-detailed, but your character and those you subsequently come across consist of fairly basic polygons. However, they are extremely well-animated and display unique mannerisms, which add spice to each and every encounter.

Interacting with inhabitants of Salto is simply a matter of walking up to them, where typically, information or vital objects can be traded for a favour. This might involve various sub-tasks with other people/ objects and to keep you busy along the way, there's always someone trying to hack your head off or club you to death. Unfortunately, talking to them can be a lengthy and subsequently painful event. Not in terms of content, but in the actual time that the CPU takes to sort out the answers.

WOULD YOU ENTRUST A HUGE DOUBLED-EDGED KILLING INSTRUMENT TO AN IMPRESSIONABLE TEENAGER?

TELSTAR OBVIOUSLY WOULD...

MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR

Combat is fun, but ultimately simplistic. Luckily Excalibur doesn't try to take on the likes of Tekken 2, keeping all moves to a minimum so that it just becomes a slice of the whole gaming cake. Up to four enemies can attack you, but not at once, which is a shame. This is a minor gripe though, as the three basic attacking moves, block and two combos that you possess are more than adequate. Certainly you have more moves than *Tomb Raider* and the combat is



[Above] Doors, and there's plenty of 'em. Unfortunately there's a slight pause while the next room is loaded.

SPELL OF PERFECTION

There's no such thing as a perfect game. So in an effort to justify this statement we believe that *Excalibur 2555 AD* could be improved in the following five ways, pending a sequel of course.

1. Character graphics could be spruced-up. Better textures in the polygons etc.
2. Interaction could be speeded up somewhat.
3. Pauses to load data between certain rooms could be made more seamless.
4. The inclusion of outdoor locations would be cool.
5. More variety in the attacks and the change to upgrade weapons.



[Above] More often than not, you have to complete a task for someone in exchange for a vital object or piece of good advice.

Written By Tom Sargent

BUBBLE, BUBBLE...

Undertaking tasks for NPCs is an integral part of *Excalibur's* charm. Level one's are pretty easy, but early on in the second level (Death Crypt), things begin to hot up when you come across a poor sod whose been badly stung by a scorpion. He needs an antidote quickly and the only way to get one is by helping out an old witch.



He... help me, I've been stung by a g... giant scorpion, which is giving me a st... stutter. I need an antidote...



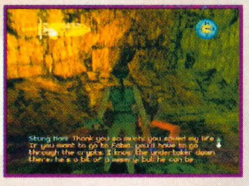
Heh, heh, heh. Young maaan! Get this cackling old hag some dry logs for the fire, and who knows what she'll give you.



You can find a couple of dry logs within the local vicinity. Don't give her any wet ones though or she gets a bit upset.



Phew. She gives you a potion of healing. Are you beginning to get the picture? Let's hope we can get back to the dying man in time.



Hand over the antidote , and he gratefully rewards you with a potion of 'Charm'. Where on earth can you use this, though?



With this spell, I thee open... Huzzah! By casting the Charm spell at the door , you can continue with your quest.

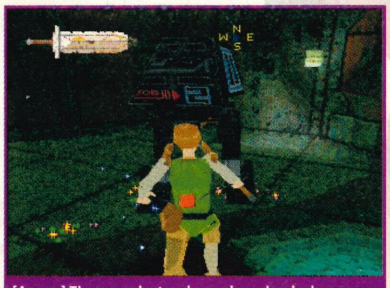


[Above] Hack this giant scorpion, lest ye want a big sting in your rump. Notice the lighting effects, they cast shadows and really add to the atmosphere.

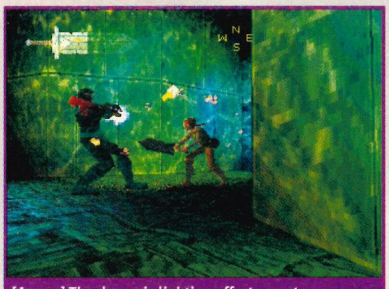
"There's always someone trying to hack your head off..."



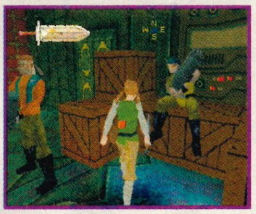
[Above] Behold! The might sword of Excalibur. But how do you go about retaining it?

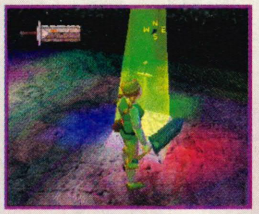


[Above] Those pesky two legged mechanical menaces seem to get everywhere these days. One of the more unlikely opponents in this dungeon romp.



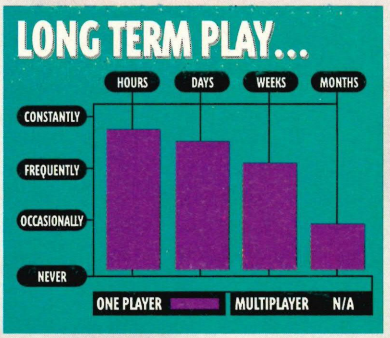
[Above] The dynamic lighting effects create an excellent atmosphere, viewed hear from the second-intelligent camera.









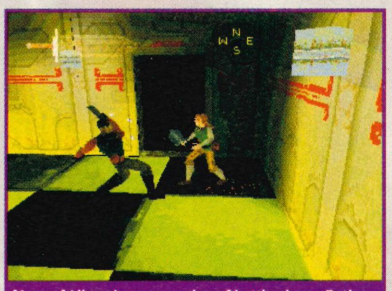


therefore more satisfying.

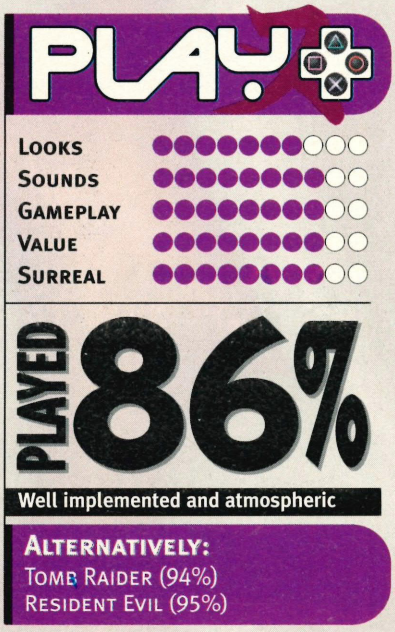
The strength of *Excalibur* lies in the way it combines all the elements of adventuring so tidily, not a just a few isolated areas. So what do you have at the end of the day? Progressively difficult tasks wrapped around a good storyline. Unusual and often surreal characters. Superlative dynamic lighting, and elementary, yet seamless combat. Deficiencies aside, such as an inability to climb or crouch, or the slight pauses as each new room is loaded from the CD are really just token grumbles in an otherwise complete game. If your idea of fun is frolicking through 12 incident-filled levels of adventuring with a difference, then look no further. Just don't expect *Tomb Raider 2*.



[Above] Chatting with the locals as they die from thirst is great fun. Get the relevant information from him then scarper.

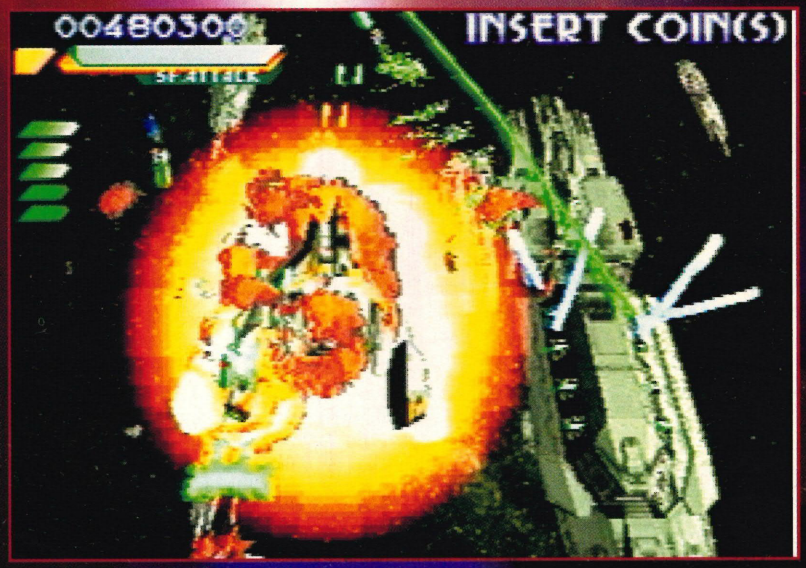


[Above] Like a human version of battle chess, Beth battles it out with this guard. The dynamic camera works to provide the best view.



RAY STORM

THE LATEST CURIOSITY TO LAND ON OUR DOORSTEP FROM JAPAN IS MAGNESIUM BRIGHT, BUT IS IT HOT ENOUGH FOR YOUR CASH?



A word of advice:

get some shades if you're going to play *Ray Storm*, and wear them throughout each game if you don't want to end up blind. The large scale, dazzling pyrotechnics that characterize each and every second of gameplay are grounds enough for a warning on the packaging that should say "Over 20 seconds unprotected retinal exposure hazardous – use of eye gear advised."

Yes, this is epilepsy material indeed, and for what is really just an old fashioned shoot-'em-up in the style of *1942* and so many others, *Ray Storm* compensates for its dated gameplay with enough explosions and gloss to fill a James Cameron movie! Underneath a constant bombardment of fire, special effects and smouldering metal parts is a two-dimensional, vertical shoot-'em-up with all the classic features of those old arcade machines we have all spent a tad too much money on at some time.



PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Taito
Contact: The Video Game Centre on 01202 527314
Price: £79.99
Release date: Out Now (import)



ONE PLAYER MUTIPLE PLAYERS

INVASION

Although every last detail is made from three-dimensional texture mapped polygons, the game itself is played entirely on a flat plane, so you can't fly down to the ground or higher into the air for example, unless the predefined flight path takes you there. As with all these games, the screen scrolls ever upwards by itself too, so your movement is confined to up, down, left and right across the screen, but that is just something you expect in this genre and is not really a bad point.

To shoot things which are not at the same altitude as you, including little structures on the ground or subs under the sea as well as approaching flying enemies, there is a lock-on feature where you have to pass a floating aimer that sits directly in front of your ship over them, and fire your second weapon when you have a lock. You can drag the crosshair over several opposing ships, and your second weapon will take every one of them out when you launch it, so this method becomes more essential as you progress into the increasingly frantic, heavily populated areas further into the game.

GLOBAL THREAT

This brings us to *Ray Storm's* biggest problem. Surprisingly, often during play, the screen becomes so incredibly packed with bad guys exploding and flying around, bigger structues burning in the background, and the constant stream of fire from one or two human players, that you can hardly see what's going on. There's no slowdown or any technical deficiency at all, but on many occasions you will suddenly explode because you didn't see one projectile heading your way. Teeth grinding material and no mistake.

Take one of the outer space levels as an example. Great big star destroyer type ships are passing closeby with all kinds



[ABOVE] Of course, there are some large boss characters to take care of along the way, like this one bearing the brunt of the Really Huge weapon.



[ABOVE] The secondary weapon has sent out all these green lasers, each one rushing to a previously targeted individual tank or car on the ground.



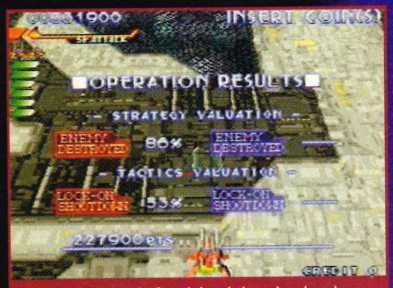
Written By Graeme Nicholson



[Above] There are only a pitiful two ships to choose from, and frankly more variations would have been appreciated.



[Above] In space, just out of Earth orbit, the flight path takes some very dramatic twists and turns past the huge motherships.



[Above] At the end of each level there is a handy breakdown of what percentage of the enemy each player shot down.

MAGIC MOMENTS

Ray Storm has such bonkers over-the-top action that we think it deserves praise. These are our favourite moments from the many examples of fiery destruction to be found within the game, and it is obvious that the developers decided big is best.



This gargantuan end-of-level scumbag takes many minutes of continuous fire to kill, but every now and then he'll sweep the screen with his splendid Death Ray, hundreds of feet in diameter.



Flying over the the floating industrial rig, you can lock onto the big metal bridges and shoot them until they collapse into the water in a cool way.



In space, the sight of those enormous vessels finally bursting into a violent explosion after several hits is truly glorious. When the flames clear, there will be only two ragged ends of the ship left hanging there.



[Above] This level has some sneaky submarines below the waves that you have to destroy while dealing with the threat from the air.



[Above] See, that's the problem when playing games with the Masked Reviewer – he steals all the power-ups in two player mode, then shows off by killing everything really quickly.







"Enough explosions and gloss to fill a James Cameron movie!"

of hatches open, spewing missiles and lasers, and six kinds of small fighter ships are zipping around, exploding as you catch them with your massively powered-up guns. At the same time, you are locking onto things in the distance and sending your target-seeking weapons off from another part of your ship, and every now and then, you fire the Really Huge Special Weapon to clear the immediate area with something that just has to be nuclear powered due to its size and brilliance.

Meanwhile, you may have a friend doing all the same things on the other side of the screen. Impressive as it looks, it gets to the stage where it's just ridiculous and relies more on the luck of not being hit than the skill of destroying your opponents.

At normal prices, *Ray Storm* would give you the attractive luxury of having an authentic Japanese arcade machine in your house. But for 80 quid, you'd have to be a fully signed-up member of the dribbling, mad, talking to walls brigade to buy it. Hope for an official release and a sensible price.

PLAY

Looks	●●●●●●○○○○
Sounds	●●●○○○○○○○
Gameplay	●●●●●●○○○○
Value	●●●○○○○○○○
English	●○○○○○○○○○

PLAYED **75%**

Very plug and play, but flawed

Alternatively:
Raiden Project (68%)
X2 (77%)

FLIPPIN' GOOD

THE CRASHES IN *RALLY CROSS* PLAY A BIG PART IN MAKING THE WHOLE THING SO EXCITING. HERE, TAKING A CORNER TOO SHARPLY RESULTS IN FLIPPING THE CAR SEVERAL TIMES.



RALLY CROSS

IS THIS SONY'S ANSWER TO *SEGA RALLY*? IT'S GOT THE LOOKS, THE HANDLING AND THE OPTIONS – START YOUR ENGINES...

After last month's overwhelming amount of racing games, along comes yet another contender, this time from the US to confuse your decision further still. How can you tell which one of these automotive delights is for you? Is it this one? Let's see...



First off, the Americans are hailing this as Sony's stab at *Sega Rally*, but that's not true – it's far better than that. Although the graphics might look a little blocky to the untrained eye, you've really got to see them moving to fully appreciate the programming prowess that's gone into this game. Great touches like lightbulb flashes from cameras as you pass, and some truly wonderful weather effects like real snow flakes further help to make *Rally Cross* a very special game indeed.

When you first take one of the nippy little cars out for a spin on the mud in *Rally Cross*, it can be easy to be put off by the greatly exaggerated physics that make it feel like the car is just too eager to launch itself into the air and tumble along the ground at the slightest provocation. But after a few goes you will realise that this is merely part of the challenge, something to be tamed as though it were a wild horse.

On a tough corner where you would bump into the side of the track on most other games and therefore learn to slow down, in *Rally Cross* it is more likely you'll suffer a violent triple roll, smash a brake light and land upside-down facing the wrong way. That's fine, and it means the same thing – you took the corner too fast. The most gratifying way to do it is to keep pushing harder and harder on a tricky bend each time until you are taking it on two wheels, the suspension creaking. More obvious, sharper bends require you to hit the brakes and powerslide your way round. Sega Rally – you can keep it!

LOUISE AITKEN WALKER

Part of what makes *Rally Cross* such fun to play is that although the cars get smashed up from collisions with others cars and dodgy driving, it's not like the *Destruction Derby* games where eventually they will stop working and your game is over. So you're not worried about really thrashing them for all they're worth and doing everything within your power to make trouble for the other cars you encounter.

If you get flipped over, you have to use the L2 and R2 buttons to rock yourself back up-right, and then you're off again. The collision detection is very sharp and fair for the scenery and other cars, and there are some brutal metal-on-metal sounds to accompany the action.

The artificial intelligence of the computer controlled drivers is certainly the best yet seen in all of these forthcoming car games too, as you can really see them swerving dangerously from side to side trying to block you from getting past in a way that looks like a human is at the wheel, or trying to grate you into the sidewalls before tearing off into the distance.

It's also not uncommon to see an



[ABOVE] In the closed arena of the Stadium, you can get away with a lot of under-handed tactics as it's basically just a free-for-all.



[ABOVE] The first version of the Stadium track you'll unlock is just a big muddy rectangle, but it sure is fun!

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: SCEA
Contact: Skill Academy (0181) 567 9174
Price: £49.99
Release date: out now (import)

ONE PLAYER
MUTIPLE PLAYERS
MUTIPLE PLAYERS
MULTI-TAP
MEMORY CARD
STEERING WHEEL



[ABOVE] The sand dunes at the side of the Oasis course can leave send you hurtling into the road at the most unfortunate angles.



[ABOVE] As the next course loads, the loading bar reveals your opponents' cars so you can know what to expect.

Written By Graeme Nicholson



[Above] The cars sport some cool custom paint-jobs in *Rally Cross*, like this little stars-and-stripes Ford KA.



[Above] The Alpine track is entirely covered in snow and has fluffy cartoon snowflakes falling throughout.



[Above] Only the second lap of the Lost Mines track and already there's a wrinkle in the "hood" and you're getting thrown around like a dummy. It's a tough one.

"Suffer a violent triple roll, smash a brake light and land upside-down facing the wrong way!"

SUICIDE MISSION

You know when you just get aggravated while playing a car game and decide to throw caution to the wind by spinning the car around and heading in the wrong direction? The guys who put *Rally Cross* together have clearly seen the fun which can be had going the opposite way to the other cars, and have included it in the game with the Head On and Suicide options.



The Head On mode puts you on a course against a single other driver, facing opposite ways. You can do this with two human players or one human against a computer controlled player. If you find you and your friend don't see enough of each other in the normal two player mode, give this a try.



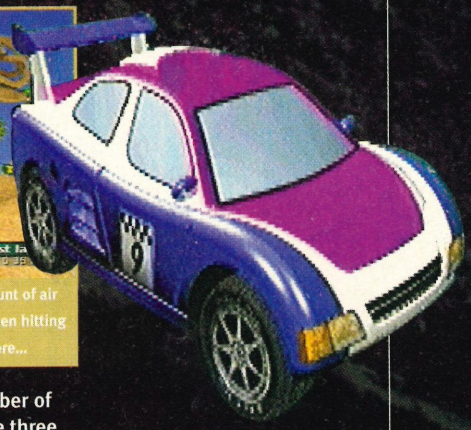
Suicide mode is a full race, with the normal four competitors you would expect to find a regular game of *Rally Cross*, but again you race the other way round from everyone else. Facing three oncoming cars every lap is very hard going though, and is only recommended for the pros.



[Above] The computer controlled car at the right took the corner all wrong, and as you can see ended up paying the price.



[Above] You can catch a truly amazing amount of air sometimes if you judge the speed badly when hitting a jump. Something's going to get broken here...



unfortunate opponent on his roof after misjudging a turn or getting into a bit of a fight with another car, just as we would do. Some cars brave the hazards of using the shortcuts while others chicken out, and none of them stick to a single racing line like they do in so many other games. At last somebody has realised what we want, and while it has taken long enough, *Rally Cross* brings so many good things to the racing genre that it has been worth he wait.

Gwydaf Evans

Rally Cross has almost everything you could want in a car game: cars that damage as you bump and smash your way around the tracks, a physics system that allows you to roll the car and do spectacular crashes, multiple racing surfaces, loads of cars, and 1-4 player driving. So where does it fall down?

Well, it's not the fastest of racing games, and this along with the bouncy nature of the cars can make it feel more like driving the moon buggy on a lunar surface to the uninitiated. But sheer forward speed really doesn't come into the equation when you are experiencing all the other joys which *Rally Cross* throws at you. Once you have the springy handling figured out, what lays ahead of you is a new and professional driving experience.

As the driving view from inside the car is merely there to add to the number of perspectives, you are left with the three surprisingly similar chase-views. The camera could do with being raised ever so slightly for the external ones because you are looking almost directly at the back of the car instead of down on it and so you can't see what is right in front of the car.

Another minor problem caused by this is that when someone drives up behind you, their car can totally obscure the view of your own,



[Above] *Rally Cross* has its fair share of good background scenery as well as the great roadside graphics. With the detail of the cars too, it's one of the best looking car games of the moment.



[Above] Even a seemingly doomed turn like this doesn't have to end in tears if you slow down and steer softly.











IS FOUR MORE?



MAKE NO MISTAKE, RALLY CROSS IS THE ONLY DRIVING GAME EVER TO APPEAR ON PLAYSTATION WHICH HAS A FOUR PLAYER SPLIT SCREEN MODE, AND IT IS A FANTASTIC IDEA. THE GRAPHICS DON'T EVEN SUFFER MUCH. BUT SORRY, IT IS IN FACT RUBBISH. THE SPEED AT WHICH THE GAME MOVES WHEN BURDONED WITH THE STRESS OF TRYING TO DISPLAY FOUR INDIVIDUAL VIEWPOINTS SIMULTANEOUSLY IS ABSOLUTELY TRAGIC, SO MUCH THAT ANY 'FEEL' YOU HAVE ACQUIRED FOR THE CARS WILL LEAVE YOU COMPLETELY BECAUSE IT'S SO SLOW. IF THIS MODE IS THE REASON YOU WERE THINKING ON BUYING *RALLY CROSS*, THINK AGAIN.



but with some practice this can be used to your advantage when playing the split screen two player mode. Drive intentionally close to the other player's bumper and there is every possibility he'll lose it completely and roll the thing onto its roof while being unable to see his car.

STEPHANIE SIMMONITE

Each racing surface affects the car's performance in a unique and relevant way, and there can be several different surfaces in a single course. Soft snow with occassional ice, the desert course with deep, loose sand at the sides of the track, wet mud, dry dirt, streams crossing the road, gravel, tarmac – it's a lot to cope with as you must instantly adjust to whatever is under your wheels to stand a chance.

With six well designed courses, all of which can be raced backwards and have their own shortcuts, 16 cars and four trucks to race in, at last we have a racing game which has sugar-coated visuals and equally tasty gameplay to match. All you have to decide now is whether you will wait for the official UK release, which Sony says will be priced at 34.99 and have an unspecified amount of changes and enhancements. Frankly, you can get your own – this one's coming home with me!



[Above] Leaves blow up into the air realistically as you roar past on the Lakes track.

"Rally Cross has almost everything you could want in a car game..."

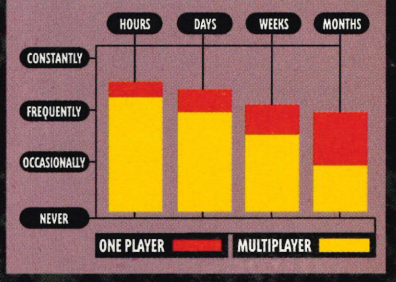


[Above] Here you can see how two cars out of the pack have chosen the grassy route to the right while one remains on the road. The AI provides a lot of variety.



[Above] The sneaky shortcut on the Oasis course gives you a brief break from the thick sand where your tyres can really grip the stone surface for some increased speed.

LONG TERM PLAY...



PLAY

LOOKS	9
SOUNDS	8
GAMEPLAY	9
VALUE	9
MOMENTUM	9

PLAYED 89%

Rally Cross will rock your world!

ALTERNATIVELY:
POWERSLIDE (JUNE '97)
MONSTER TRUCKS (74%)

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EPIDEMIC

TAKE A KILLER PLAGUE. ADD A REPRESSED SOCIETY SET IN A SUBTERRANEAN NIGHTMARE CITY AND WHAT DO YOU HAVE? *DOOM* MEETS *KILEAK THE BLOOD* AND MAKE NO MISTAKE.

Written By Tom Sargent

Forget mad cow

disease, the deadly virus Gigari has reduced society as we know it to a miserable confined existence hundreds of meters below the ground. To top it all, a megalomaniac called Michael Byflos and his mad Lieutenants run the whole show aided by the sinister giant computer, Sirus.

You play Marsao Coda, weary ex-captain of the freedom fighters called Del Sol (De La Soul?), who wage a relentless battle against all of this propaganda nonsense. But as your girlfriend Layla slowly succumbs to the fatal plague, you decide take up the challenge of trying to find an antidote for her. Perhaps your old buddies at Del Sol can help.



[Above] Access to the blue door is restricted until you decipher how to get the blue key card.



[Above] Looking up and down is useful, as more advanced adversaries tend to swoop in at all angles.

Down under

Best described as a cross between *Doom* and *Mechwarrior*, *Epidemic* is the follow up to the below-par *Kileak the Blood* and is a first person mechanical body suit battle game. Problem-solving tasks, map reading, and waving dangerous guns around is the order of the day. To help you in your ultimate goal of putting a stop to the Byflos regime, you're kitted out with an comprehensive arsenal of weaponry and a huge metal exoskeleton called a Protect Armour suit. Various mission objectives must be completed while fighting enemies, which are made easier by paying close attention to the video clips which break up the action.

During play you have the option to display three important HUDs which indicate: the status of weapons and ammo, current level position (a useful voice activated information system which informs you of any interesting shenanigans around the immediate vicinity), and a status screen displaying the percentage of parameters of the Protect Armour-shield, health, energy points (special options) and current player capabilities.

Klunk

Particular emphasis has been put on problem solving and following detailed map layouts. Your map screen, which operates in conjunction with the main area map on each level, looks particularly impressive as it rotates around you *Elite*-style.

You never seem to get disorientated or lost (unlike *Sentient* – Ed), which is good news as each level is absolutely enormous. It's just a shame that the combat pales in comparison. Incursions with the enemy are far too infrequent and about as much fun as a colonic irrigation. The weapon sight is effective and works well, changing its shape and range depending on which weapon is activated, but we were hoping to physically see each weapon on-screen, as opposed to being restricted to checking out a static screen piccy of them.



[Above] At any computer terminal just stand directly in front of it and press the circle button on the controller for access.

Key cards, ammunition pick-ups and Protect Armour enhancements play an important role in the overall progression of the player. Typically, you have to work out the combination of a sequence in order to access a vital blue key-card, but to achieve this you have to pick up clues elsewhere.

Corridors

Generally in *Epidemic*, there's a lot of too-ing and fro-ing between locations and on a brighter note, movement throughout is slick, with no visible slowdown. But you often find yourself grinding your teeth into fine powder because the pace of your 'bot is

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Sony
Customer support: 0881 505505
Price: £44.99
Release date: Out now



ONE PLAYER

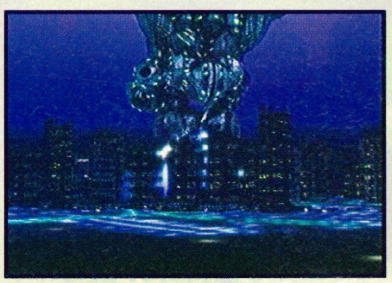


MEMORY CARD

BIG BROTHER

THE INTRODUCTORY SEQUENCE SETS A GRIM SCENARIO WHERE HUMANITY HAS BEEN REDUCED TO LIVING A LIFE OF SERVITUDE BENEATH THE EARTH IN THE STERILE ENVIRONMENT OF NEURAL CITY. A BIT LIKE THE FILM *TWELVE MONKEYS* REALLY.

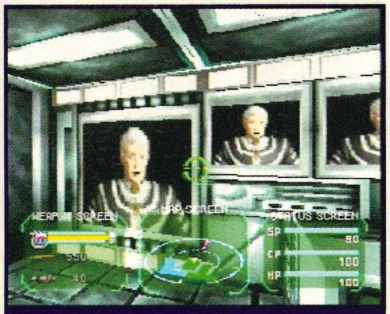




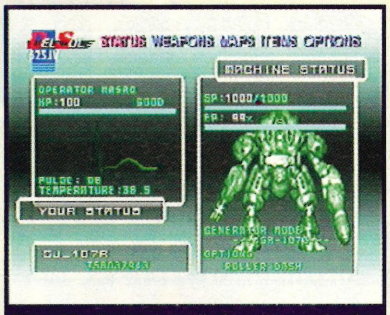
NEURAL METROPOLIS, WHERE YOU RESIDE FOR MUCH OF THE GAME. LOOKS A BIT LIKE THE ONE IN *BLADE RUNNER* DOESN'T IT?



DEL SOL ARE THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS WHO ARE TRYING TO BREAK FROM THE PROPAGANDA AND LIES OF MICHAEL BYFLOS, RULER OF THE BYFLOS DYNASTY.



[Above] To play recorded data, use one of your Record cards, then just sit back and listen to the message. This is the megalomaniac Byflos drivelling on about how wonderful life is in Neural city.



[Above] The Status screen displays the operational status (equipment and capabilities) of your protect armour. It also displays the performance status of Defence Systems and Energy Charge.

GANG OF FOUR

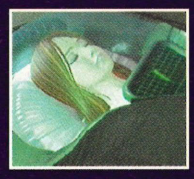
There are various characters to meet throughout the game, most of them enemies, but to begin with let's have a look at your allies...



Jim Flannery

Age 58

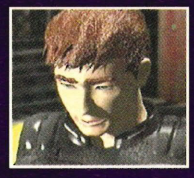
Jim is a Technical expert with the defunct International Peace keeping force, and leading weapons and Protect Armour expert.



Layla Carmel

Age 23

Masoa Coda's girlfriend. The daughter of a rich Chilian landowner. A kind and courageous woman with a strong sense of justice. Now she's in stasis suffering from a mysterious virus.



Masoa Coda

Age 29

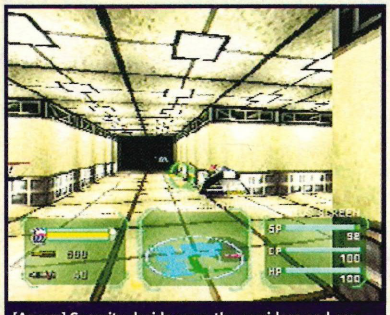
Your Alter Ego, who lost his mother and father at a very early age. Joined the Del Sol resistance at the age of twelve and rose to the rank of Captain of the elite corps.



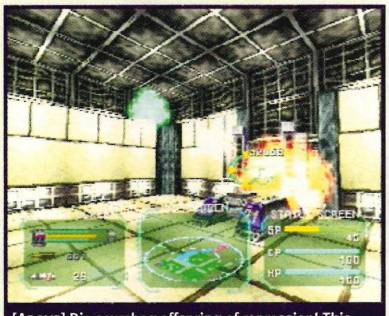
William 'Doc' Lefleur

Age 50

Ex-IPFK medic and Del Sol sympathiser. Not officially licensed to practice medicine in Neural City, but helps the Del Sol members out.



[Above] Security droids roam the corridors and can usually be dealt with quite easily with the rechargeable lasers.

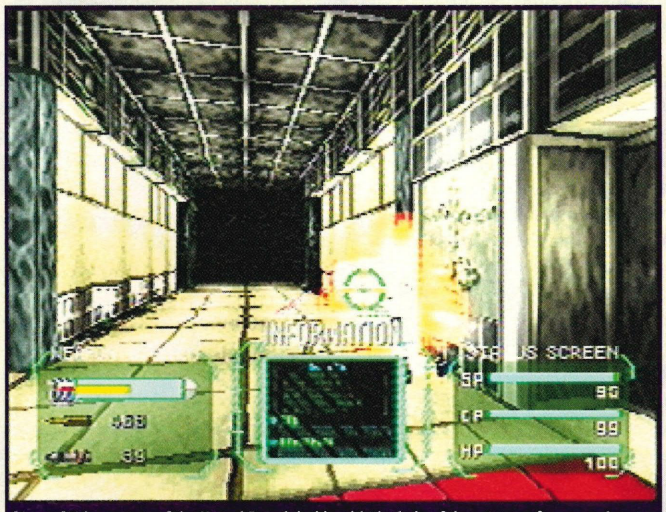


[Above] Die scumbag offspring of repression! This tank-like monstrosity is a bit aggressive, so hiding behind the scenery is highly recommended.

"About as much fun as a colonic irrigation..."

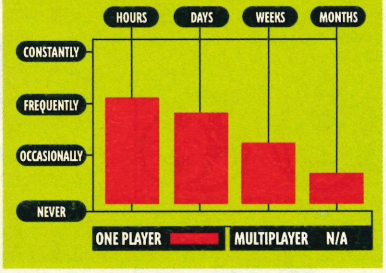
excruciatingly slow. Controlling Coda can be tricky at first, but at least the Protect Armour suit makes that impressive hydraulic 'Veee-kerchunk' noise akin to the loader in *Aliens*.

But no matter how much we try to think otherwise, Undoubtedly superior to its predecessor, *Epidemic* barely manages to raise its metallic torso above the mire of average *Doom* clones. The story's cool, but at the end of the day there's no real incentive to spur the player on through the grainy and relatively insipid locations.



[Above] Take out one of the Neural Patrol droids with the help of three types of weapon: Laser, machine guns or missiles. Use the latter two sparingly as you'll need them on later levels.

LONG TERM PLAY...



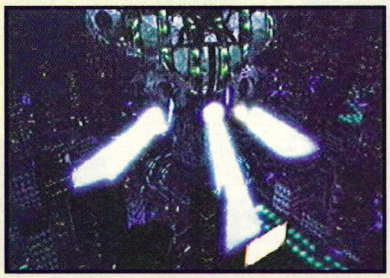
PLAY

Looks	6
Sounds	7
Gameplay	7
Value	7
Botty	7

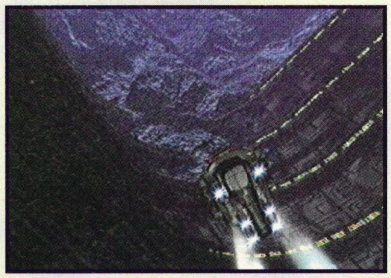
PLAYED 71%

Seen it, been there, done that.

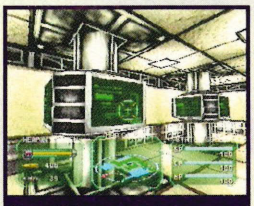
Alternatively:
Alien Trilogy (91%)
Disruptor (87%)



Cyrus is the giant computer which serves as humanity's electronic lifeline. Obviously you're going to have to do something about that.



The Gigari virus has forced people to live hundreds of feet below ground. It's deadly by the way.



[Above] There are various terminals to play with in *Epidemic*. Some of them give you clues as to where certain exits are and where to find hidden objects.

ALLIED GENERAL

YOUR PLAYSTATION NEEDS YOU. OR SO MINDSCAPE WILL HAVE US BELIEVE, IN THEIR WWII STRATEGY SIM.

Written By Tom Sargent

War! What is it

good for? Absolutely everything, according to SSI. But after only a fleeting glance at the asthetics of *Allied General*, you have to wonder why they actually bothered converting it from the PC to the PlayStation. The graphics are barely functional and look as though they've been dragged through a battle-scarred hedges backwards!



[ABOVE] At the start of every campaign, a map of the world homes in on the particular area of interest.

MONTY

Allied General is basically a top-down hexagon divided strategy sim which pits you against the Germans during the Second World War. You can opt to play a single battle or get your teeth into a full-blown campaign set in either North Africa, Europe or Russia. The best place to start is in the tutorial section, where step-by-step suggestions are made to familiarise the player with the menu-driven system.

Each scenario in *Allied General* is turn-based, with primary and secondary objectives to achieve. Activities such as moving units, attacking the enemy and re-supplying can be performed before your turn is over. Mercifully, the manual is reasonably self-explanatory, although there are complex rules that determine the outcome of all encounters (we don't want to know about that though, do we?).

The real skill comes from where and when to attack, not in juggling thousands of variables, which is all fine and dandy, but how long you can stomach the grubby-looking graphics is another matter entirely?

From the main menu you can plan all of your strategies and access various elements crucial to your success, such as viewing the strategic map, unit purchase/information, weather reports, score, deployment of resources and an options screen, where difficulty level, hidden units on/off, speed of play etc can be tweaked.

BLIGHTY

There are also various levels of difficulty to help (or hinder) the player, for instance the AI can be altered to make the CPU a more worthy opponent and this is a great feature which prolongs the challenge. The best way to play *Allied General* is against a human, if you can find someone similarly interested in ponderous war games, but at the end of the day this is something more suited to the PC.

Will anyone buy *Allied General* on PlayStation? It's doubtful. To succeed on this format, Mindscape, this sort of game needs kick-ass visuals and presentation. Otherwise you shouldn't bother.

PLAY INFORMATION

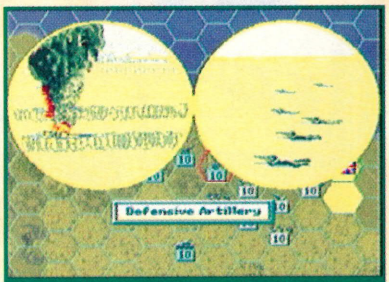
Publisher: Mindscape
Customer support: 01444 246333
Price: £44.99
Release date: Out now

ONE PLAYER | MUTIPLE PLAYERS

MEMORY CARD



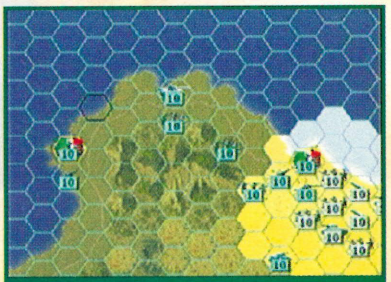
[ABOVE] Clicking on one of your units instantly reveals their strength, both in attack and defence, along with any battle honours won, fuel and ammo.



[ABOVE] When two sides engage, the action is viewed through binoculars and the computer fights through all the number-crunching to define who is winning



[ABOVE] It's the computer's turn to move and the red outline indicates that the allies are going to get bombarded by artillery shells.



[ABOVE] An enlarged view of the battlefield along with the relative strengths of both sides is useful.

"Will anyone buy *Allied General* on PlayStation? It's doubtful..."



PLAY

LOOKS	1
SOUNDS	4
GAMEPLAY	6
VALUE	6
FODDER	5

PLAYED 51%

Blindingly dull-looking strategy sim.

ALTERNATIVELY:
X-COM: TERROR FROM THE DEEP (88%)
COMMAND & CONQUER (79%)

ADIDAS POWER SOCCER INTERNATIONAL '97

OVER 'ERE SON ON ME 'ED. CAN PSYGNOSIS ADD ENOUGH POLISH TO THEIR AGING ORIGINAL AND CONVINCE US TO IT BUY AGAIN?

Written By Tom Sargent



Football's coming home. Memorable words indeed from an almost glorious summer. Euro '96 was notable for a number of reasons, but none more than England's ignominious exit against the tenacious Germans in the semi-final. Memorable for very different reasons is Psygnosis' pseudo follow-up to *Adidas Power Soccer*, the imaginatively titled *Adidas Power Soccer International '97*.

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Psygnosis
Customer support: 0151 282 3000
Price: £44.99
Release date: 11 April '97



SWEATERS FOR GOALPOSTS

Other than the addition of 56 National teams, new European squads (with real names), tournament mode, slightly tweaked gameplay elements and a couple of new options, including a radar, timer, and cup stats, there is nothing really new on offer for fans of the original game.

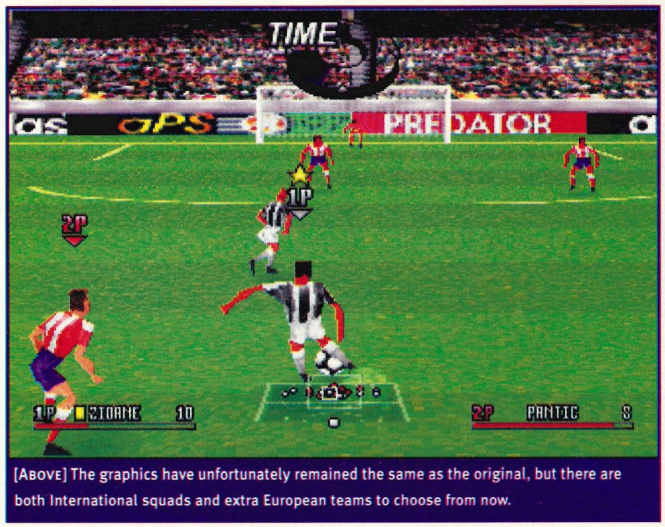
More familiar options include an arcade or simulation mode, where two styles of footy can be played depending on your mood. Arcade mode allows players to kick, punch, handball and unleash the Super Power Predator shot amongst other things, whereas simulation mode is more for the footballing purist, incorporating off-sides and the proper rules.

As far as we can tell, there have been no graphical changes pitch-side whatsoever. The polygonal players look decidedly dated now and perform identically to those in the first version. Granted, there are plenty of moves accessible via the facia buttons of the controller, which newcomers to *Power Soccer* can have a few hours fun with, but the game represents nothing more than a costly update to those already familiar with the original.

WE LOVE YOU LEEDS

As a stand-alone product, *Adidas Power Soccer International '97* is passable, but nothing more. We were hoping for a substantial graphical overhaul, improved AI and better commentary – not someone who sounds like he's been picked off the winner's podium of the 1997 World Gravel Eating competition! It seems almost criminal that Psygnosis is releasing a product which constitutes no more than a glorified data disk when we all want to see is *Adidas 2*.

If you haven't sampled the relatively limited delights of the first game then this might interest, but to be honest there will be a whole new generation of football games in time for the new season, and for now you're better off with Eidos' *Soccer '97*.



[ABOVE] The graphics have unfortunately remained the same as the original, but there are both International squads and extra European teams to choose from now.



[ABOVE] In the arcade mode, all manner of dirty tricks can be called upon to stop the opposition.



[ABOVE] After scoring a 'predator power kick', the subliminal advertising kicks in.



[ABOVE] The camera zooms around the pitch in an intelligent manner capturing all the action. Player one has a number of passes available here.



"The polygonal players look decidely dated..."



PLAY

LOOKS	●●●●●●○○○○
SOUNDS	●●●●●○○○○○
GAMEPLAY	●●●●●○○○○○
VALUE	●●●●●○○○○○
BUNGS	●●●●●○○○○○

PLAYED 52%

Little more than a data disk.

ALTERNATIVELY:
ADIDAS POWER SOCCER (95%)
SOCCER '97 (OUT MARCH)

2XTREME

Fancy trying your hand at skateboarding in Los Angeles? Snowboarding in Japan? What about hitting people in the jaw while you do it? Good, read on.

Written By Graeme Nicholson

We love sequels

here at Play. A chance to check out your favourite games from a year or two ago that have been updated to stay in tune with today's standards in graphics, sound and animation. *Twisted Metal 2*, *Tekken 2*, *Wipeout 2097* – there are many shining examples to choose from the PlayStation's large back catalogue. So loading up the sequel to *Extreme Sports*, *2Xtreme*, we could only imagine what improvements had been made to the game that brought rollerblades and skateboards into a world of *Road Rash* style competition and violence.

Hope hit the floor with a solid thud when the game filled the screen however, as nobody could understand or explain quite why it looked exactly the same as the original. There are absolutely no enhancements that are immediately obvious without a magnifying glass, and playing *2Xtreme* further showed that it has actually been made worse in some areas.

PLAY Information

Publisher: Sony
Customer support: 0881 505505
Price: £34.99
Release date: Out Now


One Player


Mutiple Players


Memory Card

Schmack!

The idea in 2Xtreme is to collect meaningless points (instead of cash as in the first game) by placing well in a race, knocking over opponents, and pulling off tricks from the ramps. Without the cash incentive to upgrade your equipment which urged you to keep putting in the effort in *Extreme Sports*, there is already a large chunk of the gameplay missing in *2Xtreme* – what good are points to anybody?

The ability to perform stunts in the air when you get enough height from a jump is new and breaks up the monotony of the courses for a while, but there are only about four moves available for this, which is hardly going to provide any kind of long term enjoyment.

Also, in a shocking bout of insanity, half of your fighting moves have been removed for no apparent reason, so now you can only punch on the skateboard when you used to be able to do punches and kicks. What kind of reasoning is this? It seems impossible that robbing a game of features could do anything besides make it worse.

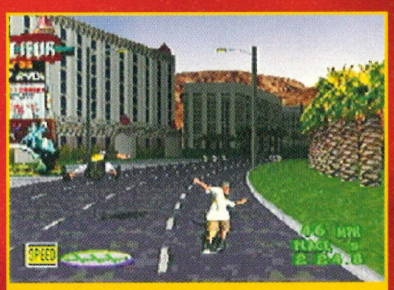
Continuing along this line of distorted logic, each of *2Xtreme*'s four locations around the world don't allow you to decide what you'd like to ride on that course, so racing in Las Vegas for example means that you are forced to use the rollerblades even if you would rather take the mountain bike. In *Extreme Sports* you could use anything on any course, so once again another good feature bites the dust.

Thwack!

In addition to the skateboard,



[Above] Something we are particularly fond of is the way snow seems to pour from the leg of your snowboarder as you skim down the mountain.


[Above] The other players can get up to some crazy things during a race, like this nutter doing the splits in mid air off to the left.

EXTREME?!

So, this is extreme is it? To be honest, we think all this prancing about on wheels with adequate padding is for kids. Take a look at our list of true extreme sports that we often take part in but please, don't try anything you see here at home.

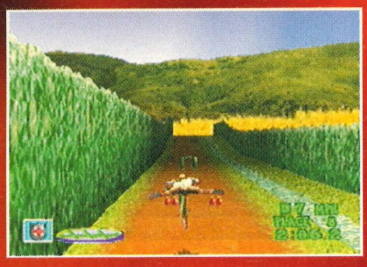
1. C4 Juggling
2. Blind Slalom
3. Naked Ice Fishing
4. Genital Bungee
5. Bull Shaving


[Above] See that big grey thing? That's an elephant that is. You never know what graphical abominations are going to pop up in the Africa courses.

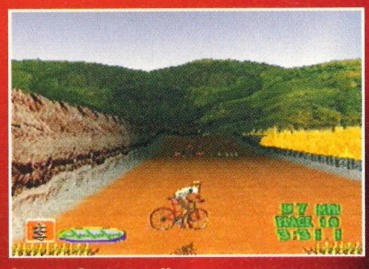

[Above] If you go through a power Jump gate, you can get much higher in the air at the next jump, giving you longer to perform a trick.

TRICK OR TREAT

The four tricks that you can do with each vehicle add points to your overall score, depending on how hard they are to execute. Using the mountain bike for these examples, here are all the stunts in order of difficulty, starting with the easiest. The button sequences are the same for each vehicle, and you can always try squeezing two tricks into one jump!



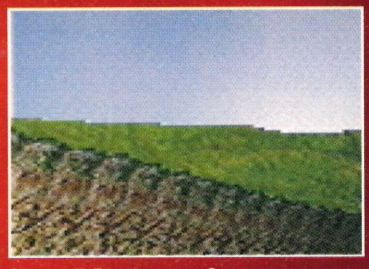
Pressing Square then Triangle during a jump makes the rider do the splits, which could be very nasty if you land too early.
50 points.



Square, Circle and X will cause your rider to spin through 360°, and takes quite a bit longer than the splits move.
100 points.



Square, Circle and Triangle pulls a full backflip off a ramp, but is just as easy as the above and so gives you the same 100 points.



Square, X, Triangle then Circle is the hardest trick, with your guy kicking the bike frame so it swivels around the handle bars.
200 points.

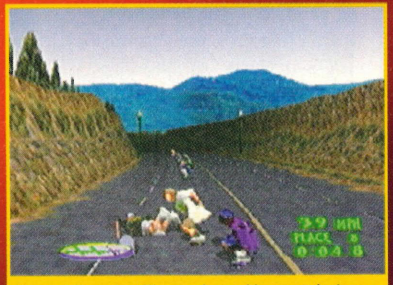


[Above] Characterised by its bright orange ground and cardboard cut-out animals, 2Xtreme brings the real Africa to your screen.









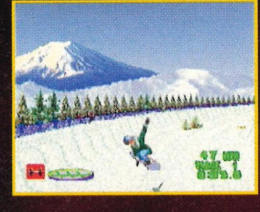
[Above] There is still a good smacking sound when you hit someone in the face; causing them to fall on their chin. But why can't we kick anymore?



[Above] Playing in the two player mode is more fun, but after you've hit each other a few times there isn't much else to do.











rollerblades and mountain bike, the street luge has been dropped in favour of the ultimately more fashionable snowboard which you must race on the frozen mountain slopes of Japan. Apart from these changes the game is the same outdated racer that *Extreme Games* was, but looks infinitely more out of place next to the *Tomb Raiders* and *Final Fantasies* of today, with its severely dodgy graphics and butchered gameplay.

> "Severely dodgy graphics and butchered gameplay..."

Even the control is badly flawed, giving the profound impression that the course is dictating where you go on the track without you having much say in the matter. So when there is a bend you just get dumped at the side of the track like a bag of unwanted puppies.

It's a sad day indeed when it is easier to recommend an original over its sequel, but *Extreme Sports* has the same graphics and superior gameplay to *2Xtreme*.

PLAY

Looks	●●●○○○○○○○
Sounds	●●○○○○○○○○
Gameplay	●●●○○○○○○○
Value	●●●○○○○○○○
Design	●●○○○○○○○○

PLAYED 52%

Not a worthy successor

ALTERNATIVELY:
Extreme Sports (73%)
Road Rash (75%)

STATION MASTER

CHEATS ▸ TIPS ▸ LETTERS

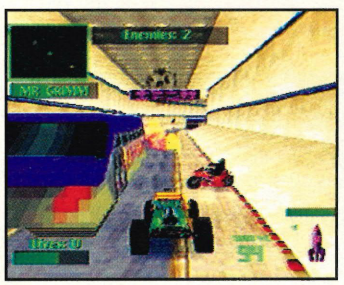
TO MAKE SPACE IN OUR EMBARRASSINGLY SWELLING CHEATS VAULT, WE MUST DUMP AS MANY OF THE NEWEST AND EXCLUSIVE CODES AND TIPS THAT WILL FIT ACROSS THESE PAGES EACH MONTH. HOWEVER, WE ALWAYS WELCOME NEW ADDITIONS, SO SEND ANY YOU HAVEN'T SEEN HERE TO: *STATION MASTER, PLAY MAGAZINE, PARAGON HOUSE, ST PETER'S ROAD, BOURNEMOUTH, DORSET BH1 2JS*

TWISTED METAL 2

LIFE FOR MURDER

Run over ten Twisted Fans to recharge your health.

TRAIN BONUS



The next weapon you fire after destroying a subway train in Hong Kong will be twice as powerful.

SELL YOUR SOUL

Pressing Down, Up, Right, Left Up, Up, Down, Down during the game will trade all your weapons for health.

The words 'Sell Your Soul' will appear at the top of the screen.

BACKWARDS FREEZE

If you have run out of weapons, tap out this combo:
Left, Right, Down, Left, Right, Up

MINION'S SPECIAL

Minion's fantastically powerful special weapon can be fired by any car. Hold R2 and press Up, Down, Up, Up to activate it, but you must have full Advanced Attack power to pull it off.

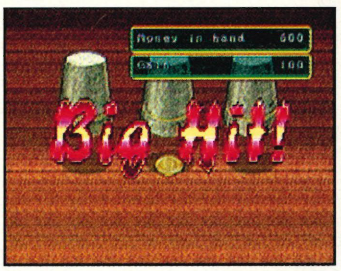
SUIKODEN

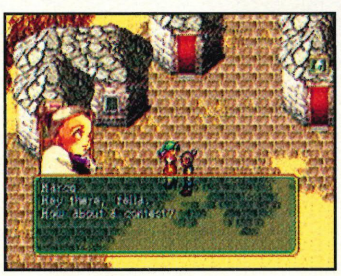
RECHARGE

Save money on expensive medical treatments such as health packs. Put any exhaustible item in the vault when it only has one charge remaining and when you take it back out, it will be completely recharged.

EXTRA GOLD

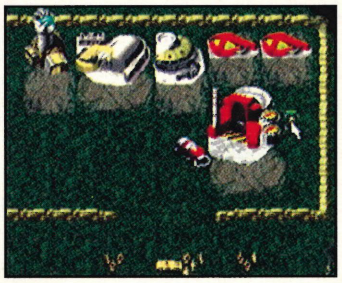
In the small village of Rockland, you'll meet Marco the hustler strolling around. Play her game and bet 10,000 bits each time using this cup sequence: right, centre, centre, left. Stop playing when you reach the end of the sequence, and then walk up to her and accept again. Keep doing this until you have about 400,000 coins, which is when she changes the sequence.





COMMAND & CONQUER

VIEW MAPS



If you want to see the entire level map for any stage in the game without having to go exploring, press and hold these buttons on the title screen all at one time:
L1, L2, R1, R2, ■, ●
Press Start and choose either Password or New Game. Don't release andy of the buttons until the level has loaded up or you'll have to do it all again.

DIE HARD TRILOGY

Some of the unknown codes embedded within the *Die Hard Trilogy* have been worked out at last. Check these out.

DIE HARD 1

●, ●, ■, ■, Right
Plants scream when shot!

DIE HARD 2 – WEAPON SELECT

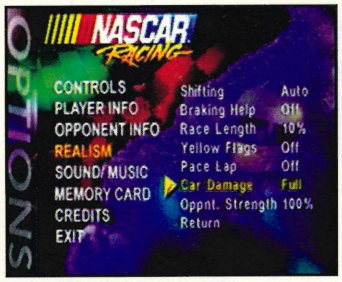


Pause the game and hold R2, then press Right, Up, Down ■. Now press ▲ during the action to change your weapon.

DIE HARD 3



Down, ■, ▲, Right, Down, ■, ▲, Right
The sky will become dark and cloudy.



NASCAR RACING

Secret Game

During the start of the title sequence, press ✕ on the second controller for an old-fashioned *Tron*-style light-cycle game. Yes, it's got just a few less options than *NASCAR* and it doesn't look quite as nice, but it's fun!

STREET RACER

Level Codes

If you're finding *Street Racer* to be a bit too hard, maybe you can make use of these level codes:

Silver – TRAFIK
Gold – NEJATI
Platinum – DOUGAL
Super – TURGAY



Secret Car

The 'Dougal' password that promotes you to Platinum level also gives you access to a new Rabbit car, with three new tracks to match.

Secret Options

By entering the 'Turgay' password, you'll see a new secret options screen which allows you to change the size of your car, turn the weapons on or off, remove the other cars, and more!

NBA IN THE ZONE 2

All-Star Team

Highlight 'Start' on the title screen, press and hold L1 + R2 + Select + Start until the screen goes black. Now you can play as the elusive All Star team in an exhibition game.



SOVIET STRIKE

More Powerful Weapons

Enter DAVEDITHER as a password on the relevant screen.

Extra Lives

Entering NOSFERATU on the password screen will give you seven lives instead of the usual three. You will be taken back to whatever level you were just playing before you used the code.

WIPEOUT 2097

Infinite Weapons

Pause a normal race and hold L1 + R1 + Select. Keep them held down and now press ✕, ✕, ■, ■, ●, ●, ▲. When you resume play you should see a green flash. Now your weapons never run out! The Drop Weapon button cycles through them all.





TEMPEST X

Extra Modes

For the extra modes hidden away in the game, *Tempest 2000* and *Tempest Plus*, play until you beat the boss score which is 500,000. This will earn you a place in the Boss Score screen, where you should enter YIFF!. Both of the extra games will now be selectable and should save to your memory card.

PLAY Q&A

NO MATTER WHAT QUESTIONS YOU THROW AT US, WE WILL HAVE THE ANSWER. NOWHERE ELSE WILL YOU FIND SUCH ACCURATE AND HELPFUL ADVICE AS IN OUR BELOVED Q&A SECTION, SO WHY DON'T YOU ASK US ABOUT WHATEVER ANNOYANCE, LARGE OR SMALL, IS RUINING YOUR PSX LIFE? WRITE TO Q&A, PLAYMAGAZINE, PARAGON HOUSE, ST PETER'S ROAD, BOURNEMOUTH BH1 2JS.

Dear Play,
After reading your review of *Tomb Raider* I rushed out and bought a copy and I have to agree that it's a damn fine game. However, I am stuck on level four (Tomb of Qualopec) at the very start. At the end of the corridor which has the 'circle/wavy line' symbol above it there is a lever, but when I go to pull it the floor gives way and I fall down to the wolves below. Can you tell me how to pull the lever?
Paul Evans, Cumbria

Unfortunately Paul, cruel blighters that Eidos are, the switch you refer to seems to be nothing more than an infuriating red herring. A dasterdly diversion. A sworded swindle. You wouldn't believe the number of people who have lost countless lives by continually falling through the trap, climbing back up, and attempting a slightly different way of pulling the lever. Just ignore it and you'll be okay.

Dear Play,
I hope you can help me as I've just purchased the Japanese version of *Soul Edge*. The game itself gets me goin' like a bitch in heat, but I'm finding it rather hard on the Edge Master mode. Guess why? Yes, the book's in Japanese. Great if you speak the language, but I don't so could you translate it for me? I always use Taki. I hope you can sort this for me as I've gone off sex with the Mrs, cheers.
Bonie K, Walsall

Bonie, to be honest we too were baffled by the Japanese manual. But luckily, the Masked Reviewer caught sight of your letter when he popped in the other day and, although he said nothing at the time, it became clear in a few days when he posted the following reply to us that he can speak and read Japanese perfectly. Here is the complete walkthrough for Taki in Edge Master mode.

EPISODE 1: VOLDO
Conditions: Beat him by ring-out.
Weapon Received: Tessen
EPISODE 2: MITSURUGI
Conditions: Beat him before the time runs out.
Weapon Received: Mekkimaru. This weapon is powerful but drains your life.
EPISODE 3: LI LONG
Conditions: Beat him with throws.
Weapon Received: None
EPISODE 4: COLOSSEUM
Conditions: Beat everyone.
Weapon Received: Jitte
EPISODE 5: SOPHITIA
Conditions: Beat her with the Critical Edge.
Weapon Received: Gaia Sword. This blade refills your life.
EPISODE 6: SIEGFRIED
Conditions: Beat him before the tower of Ostrheinsburg in the background collapses.
Weapon Received: Kunai (see Kunimitsu in *Tekken*)
EPISODE 7: LI LONG
Conditions: Beat him before you die from poison.
Weapon Received: Engetsu
EPISODE 8: ROCK
Conditions: Ring Rock out.
Weapon Received: None
EPISODE 9: CERVANTES/SOUL EDGE
Conditions: Beat them.
Weapon Received: None
Final Weapon: Soul Edge

COMMAND & CONQUER

SOLVED

THE NOD CAMPAIGN



YES, IT'S YOUR TURN TO BE THE BAD GUYS AND WHAT FUN IT IS, AFTER ALL, IT'S MUCH EASIER TO DESTROY THAN TO CREATE, SO THESE MISSIONS SHOULD BE DEAD EASY, RIGHT? ER NO.

MISSION 1: LIBYA
Password: None
This mission is easy. Just drive around the bottom of the map and to the left using your entire force; picking off GDI troops. Enter the village and go up to the top of the map and eliminate the guy in white. Simple.

MISSION 2: EGYPT
Password: C99FAXKW8
The objective is to wipe out the long-standing Egypt base, although why it has lasted so long is a mystery because it's very weak. Build your base right near the Tiberium and then flood the GDI base with men and engineers.

MISSION 3: SUDAN
Password: GB4V1S7TT
The objective of this mission is to capture the GDI prison camp, but do not destroy the prison building itself.

The easiest and quick way is to drive your forces over to prison straight away and take on the limited forces (3-4 hum-vees) and some men. Send in the engineers you have at the start whilst the fighting is going on and they will take over the major installations, most notably the barracks, refinery and the prison of course. Use your scout bikes to uncover the map early on.

MISSION 4: CHAD
Password: YK4NRTQCT
Use the map to find the village but move very slowly and do not let the bikes get way ahead of the rest of the troops of they will be sitting ducks. Try to lure the enemy back to you, perhaps by using the bikes as decoys. The GDI has no base here and so cannot bring in new men or vehicles. Wipe out the village to end the mission.

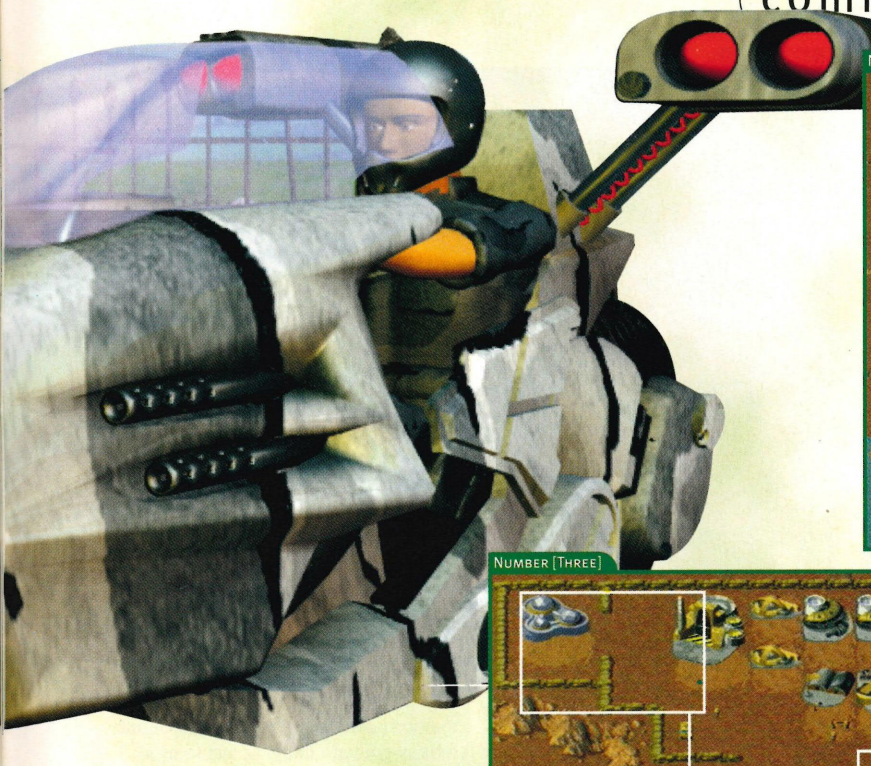
NUMBER [TWO]



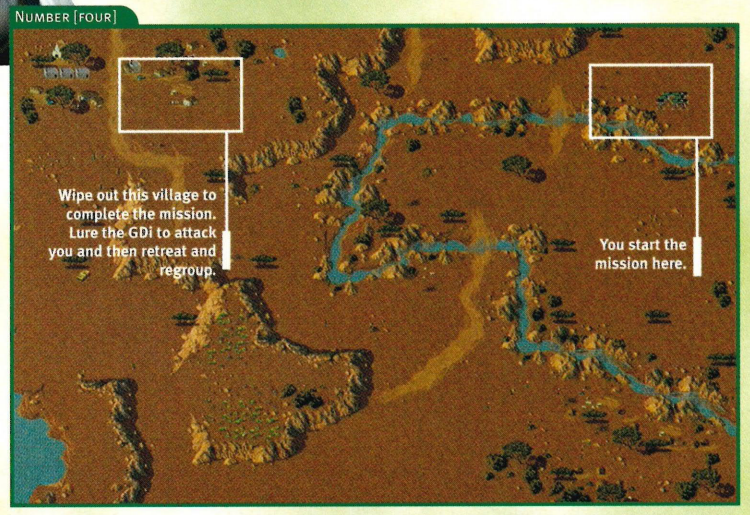
MISSION 5: MAURITANIA
Password: W15DASRS8
For this mission you have access to SAM missile launchers with which to defend your base, as the enemy will use A-10 tank busters to attack periodically. If you build enough of them, the planes will be destroyed and you can attack the base in the north without fear of being attacked.

Build your base nearest the biggest Tiberium deposit and fortify your position before moving up to the main base.

The way to defeat the base is to send up men and vehicles up the left side of the map and clear it of GDI activity. Now send some rocket men and engineers up the left and behind the base. Bomb the sandbags to make a hole and then send in the engineers to take over the MCV, refinery and weapons factory while you attack with tanks and men at the front to create a diversion. Mop up the remaining troops and destroy any buildings to finish the mission.



NUMBER [FOUR]



NUMBER [THREE]



MISSION 6C: NIGERIA
Password: AQINN7NKU
A nuclear detonator has been imported by the GDI and you must nab it before it can be used against your forces. Basically this is another completely easy mission if you've got the bottle to just charge at the enemy. Highlight your entire force and use the map to run right at the base; pausing for nothing. Move your troops/tanks over the crate and then run directly south to the bottom where there is a landing flare and a chopper waiting. Get nearby and the mission ends.

You can now go one of three ways.

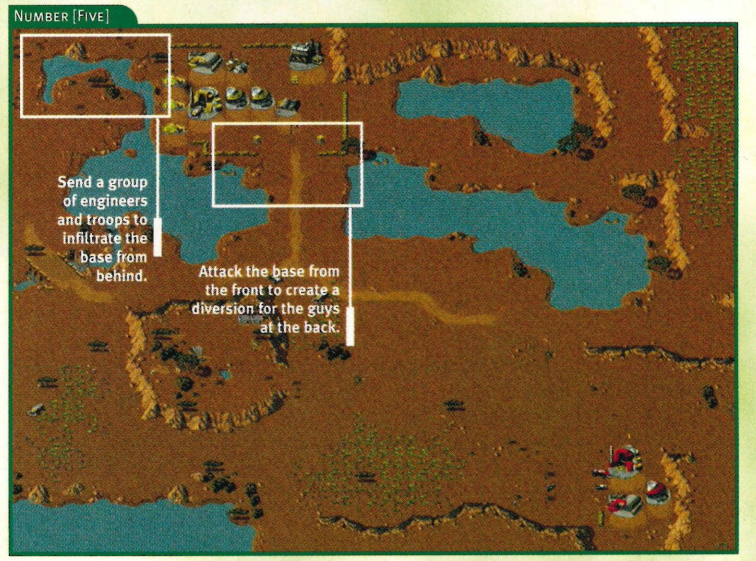
MISSION 7A: GABON (left arrow)
Password: GTJKWOJDK
Misinformation leads you to underestimate the GDI forces on this level, which could be fatal. Lead your men down and through the canyons above the GDI base and then take them up to the distress flare where there is a damaged NOD base to be taken over. Use your engineers to capture the NOD powerstation and laboratory to the left of the main base and build sandbags across to stop the GDIs escaping.

With their base block off, build up your own base and also create a Hand of NOD at the bottom left of the map to prepare an invasion. Don't forget to get the cash crate in the bottom of the village, but it will provoke an attack so be prepared. Also, don't forget to block off or defend the second bridge closer to your own base. The enemy can easily surprise you here. Also watch out that the enemy don't send tanks up onto the ridge above your base and bombard it from there. Position some rocket men there just in case.

When you're ready, build up your forces and attack the base from behind; taking over buildings and dealing with troops and tanks. And don't forget to put sandbags in the gaps where GDI buildings were standing to stop them re-appearing.

MISSION 7B: CAMEROON (middle arrow)
Password: OX3UJoV6Q
A great long term mission. First of all start your base near the crop of Tiberium immediately to your right and then use sandbags to block off the two river crossings

NUMBER [FIVE]



below. Build up your installation and then send scout bikes down the left side of the map and uncover all the black areas. You will find more Tiberium and a few GDI men, but nothing substantial. A good tactic is to starve the GDI base of Tiberium by blocking off the front entrance (bottom right) with sandbags, or at least building them across the river here. You must also block off the path to the north of this as the GDI can get around and attack from there.

Create a fleet of tanks and men and steadily move them down the map; eliminating any resistance and clearing the way for another Refinery at the bottom. The main base has three exits: one on the left, one below and one at the top. The objective of this mission is to destroy the village above the base and the only way up there is through the base. Looks like you're gonna have to do this the hard way!

Build sandbags into the base; use a scout bike to uncover as much as possible in a suicide mission. Make sure the bags lead up to the right side of the top exit and with luck you can cut the base in two and safely ferry your troops and tanks up to the village without the rest of the base being able to stop you. The guard towers are best taken out with tanks and men, but let the tanks go first so that the towers use them for target practise instead of the fleshy ones. Make sure you block off the area immediately below the entrance to the GDI base, as the enemy can sneak around and attack you from here. The mission ends when you destroy the village.

MISSION 8: ZAIRE
Password: C982ETIMY

First of all get to the NOD base located in the east. Look out for grenadiers, minigunners and a tank on the way: use minigunners to kill infantry. To defeat the tank and avoid squashing, let one man attack it and then lead it between two sets of men who can hit it while you concentrate on getting the first guy out of the way.

On arrival at the base, a Chinook will land which can be used to send your troops to capture an abandoned GDI base just to the south. Sell the construction site and repair the power station and Hand Of NOD while you build some engineers. Transport minigunners to the GDI base to clear the area of enemy infantry first. Then bring the engineers over to capture the three buildings (remember to capture the refinery only once the harvester has docked).

Build barracks and men to defend the base. Tiberium is located to the west and south of the base. The southern patch is guarded by Hum-Vees and grenadiers while the other patches are protected by enemy tanks.

Once prepared, start capturing the enemy base – located at the bottom-left of the map. Enemy tanks guard all the hills near the base. Make sure these are eliminated using bazookas and grenadiers. In addition, Orcas will attack any approaching enemy so build about four bazookas to deal with them while other units attack.

Once all hills are claimed, get your own tanks and infantry to guard them. Attacking the base from the north is straightforward but it's more heavily guarded. Get to this entrance by going through the valley which starts from the north. Then move south and destroy the first guard tower that appears.

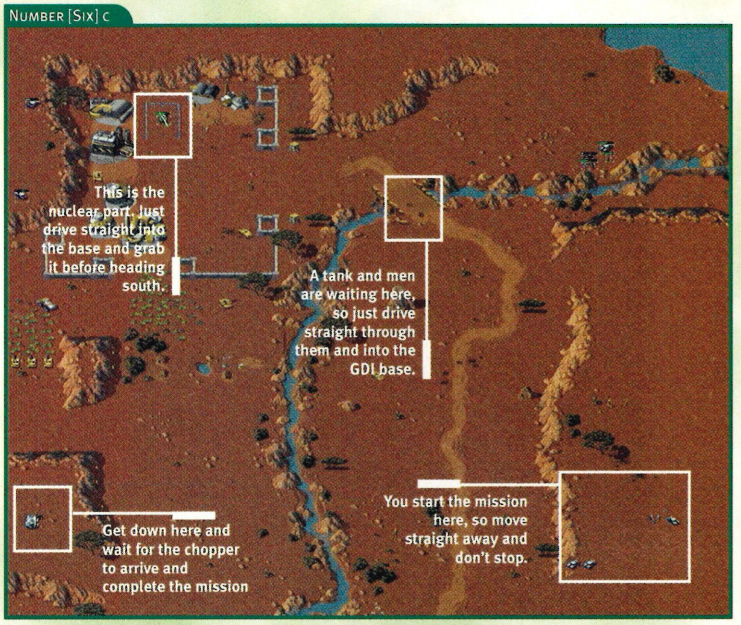
Attacking from the east requires timing to avoid the gunboat patrols. Move the units south until a river and hill is visible. When the gunboat disappears from the east side, move all units to the eastern entrance and destroy the guard towers. You can actually get under the wall here and wall right along the southern perimeter of the base and then enter on the far side. This means you can get their MCV first and it totally destroys their fighting ability.

MISSION 9: EGYPT
Password: OFDWQoJNK

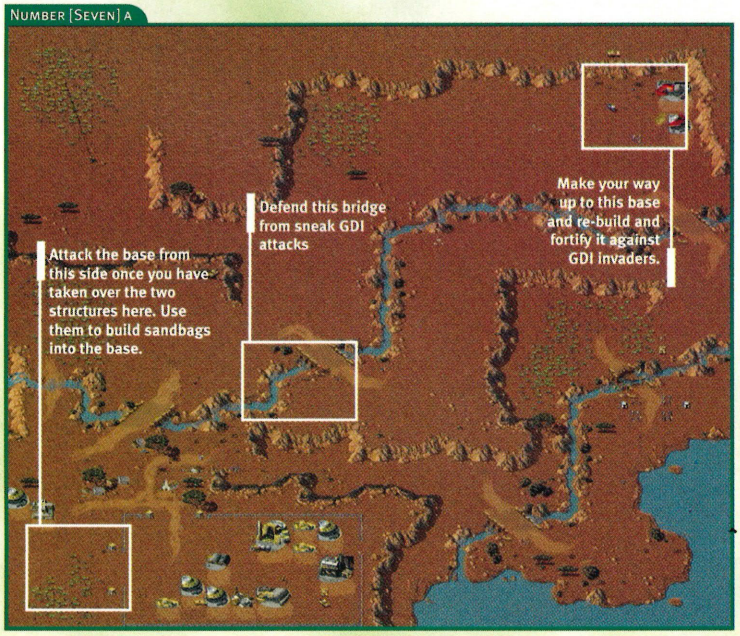
You start with just the commando who can find two other teams: two engineers and four bazookas near the top-left corner. Get the commando to shoot the infantry guarding the bridge. Then cross over and kill the three grenadiers seen under a tree just below the cliff to the west. Now move the commando towards the bazookas in the northwest while keeping a lookout for any grenade infantry, including a couple on the next bridge.

Move the bazookas south across the bridge, then to the west side of the hill to destroy the Hum-Vee that approaches. Use the commando to eliminate the accompanying grenadiers. Move the rocket infantry around the hill to the south then west through the valley. At the same time, move the commando to the southwest and kill the minigunners. Keep moving the commando southwest until you arrive at the NOD base. Build power stations and a Hand Of NOD as well as engineers to capture the GDI refinery (when harvester has docked) – the necessary extra money must be got from the crate under the church in the top-left corner. This can be grabbed by the bazookamen as they rendezvous

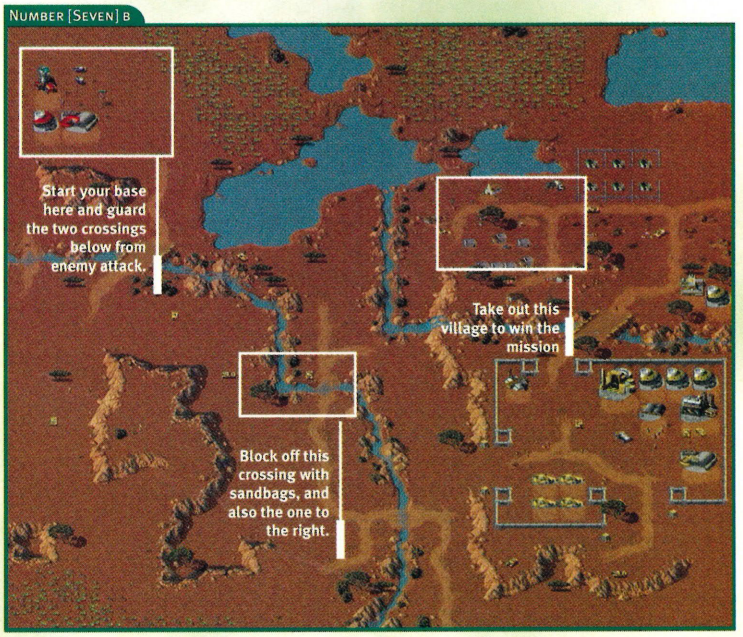
NUMBER [SIX] C



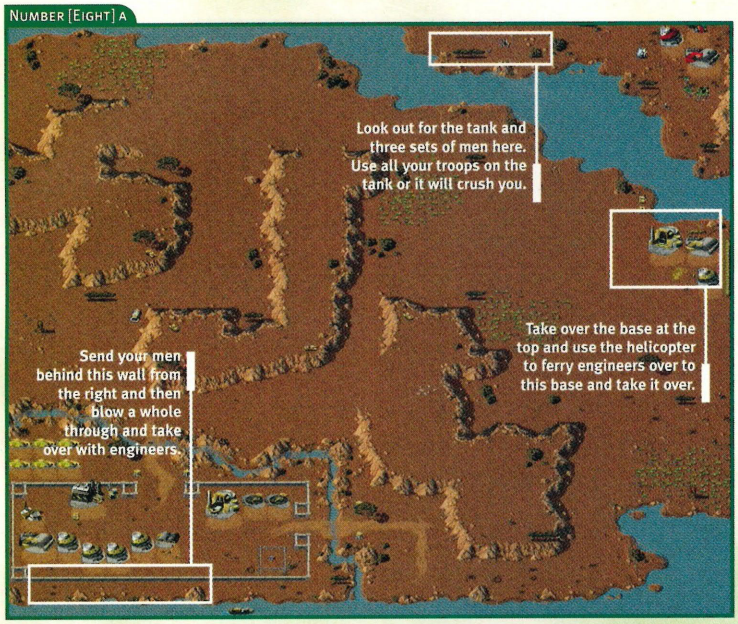
NUMBER [SEVEN] A

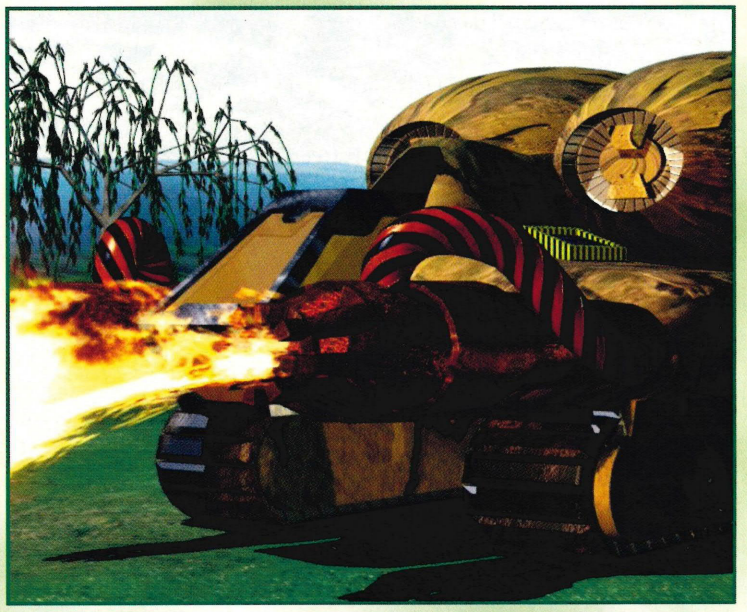


NUMBER [SEVEN] B



NUMBER [EIGHT] A



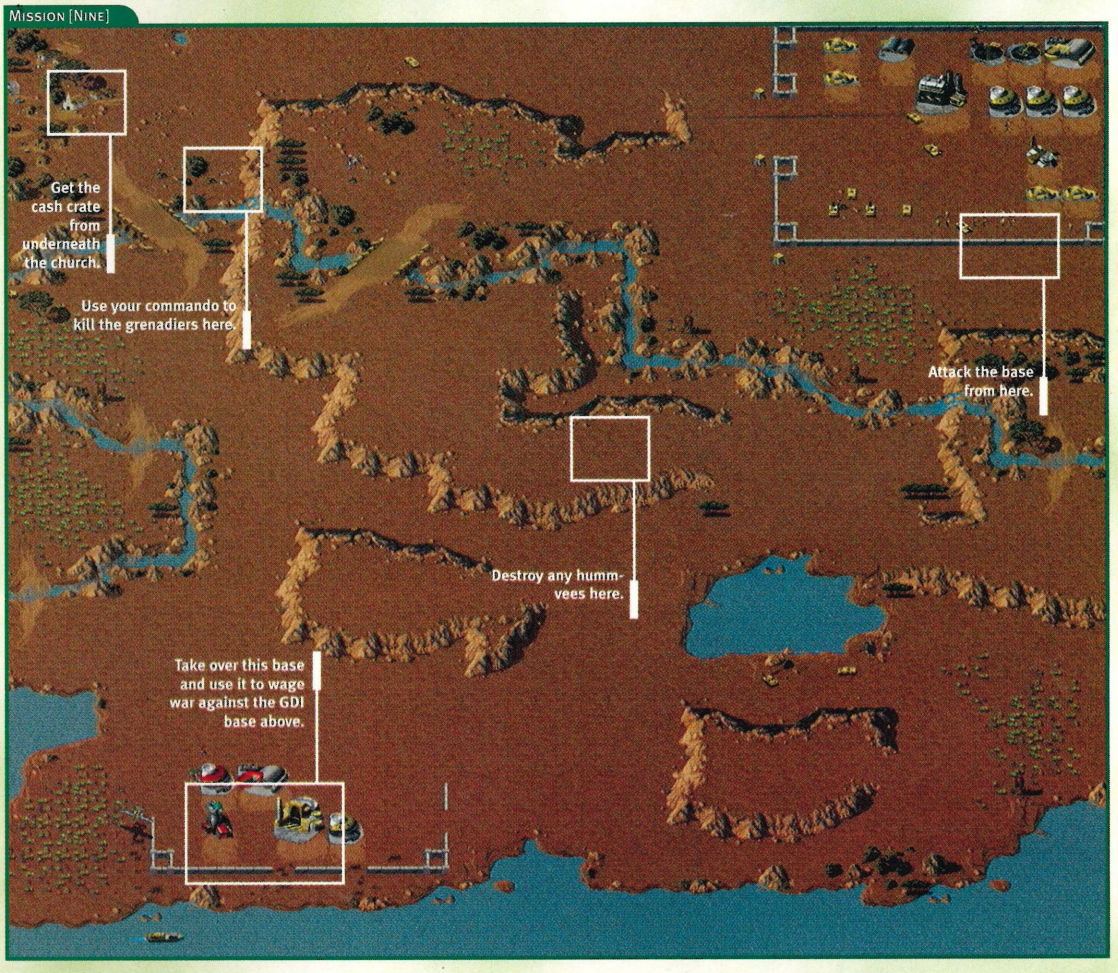


with the two engineers, whom they should then escort south to the base.

Enemy attacks come from the north, northeast and east. So build defence systems on these sides. Also there is a gunboat sailing on the river to the south: build gun turrets to destroy it. Tiberium is located in the north, north east and east.

The enemy base is located in the top-right corner of the map. There is only one entrance and this is guarded by an Advanced and two normal Guard Towers. To attack the base, make your approach from the bridge (where the bazookas first appeared), then move east. When the guard tower appears, move south until the Tiberium appears then head east. Move the units north and capture the power stations and construction site. The attack unit should consist mainly of tanks and flame tanks. Do not use mobile artillery until the guard tower is disabled.

MISSION [NINE]



MISSION 10: TANZANIA (left arrow)
Password: QG9KTOPTY

The objective of this mission is to disable the factories that are about to make a new GDI weapon, the Mammoth tank. At the north around the top of the hill are grenadiers: take the commando up to shoot them, using hit and run tactics, and another two which come from south of the hill. Then move the mobile artillery to the north of the tree on the hill to destroy two tanks while keeping out of range.

Move the rest of the units southeast of the hill. Move the commando near to the east bridge to lure the Hum-Vee round into valley to be bombarded by artillery and bazookas. Then get commando to shoot the two soldiers on the bridge.

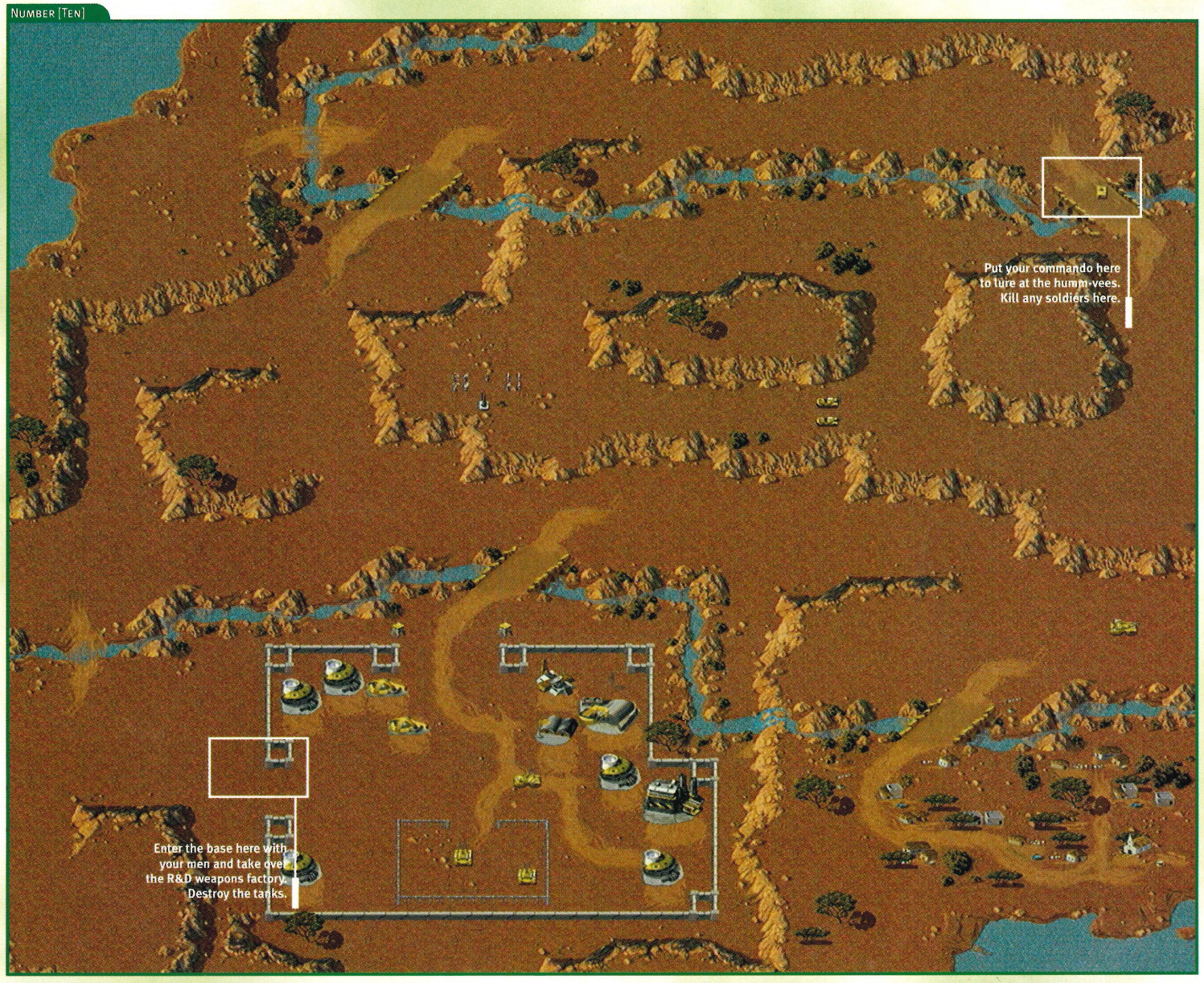
Move all units to the bridge, then take commando over and west, past the next bridge to kill four infantry (using hit and run tactics). Get the other units to join him in the safe zone on the west side of the river (once tank is out of the way). Now move the commando south over the bridge to kill more infantry, and then west to kill infantry guarding side of enemy base.

Move other units to join him and enter the west side of the base. Capture or destroy the R&D and Weapons Factory, then destroy the Mammoth tanks parked on the south side.

MISSION 11: NAMIBIA (left arrow)
Password: OX3UKOP94

The troops start in the southeast corner: minigunners, bazookas, engineers and artillery. After the attacking tank is destroyed, move the artillery west into the valley and use a minigunner to lure grenadiers into their fire. Move all units to east of next bridge and destroy the tank there with bazookas – make sure you do or it'll go and destroy the remains of your base!

Go west to the guard towers and knock the left one out with artillery/bazookas. Then sneak the infantry into the base and use the engineers to capture the refinery (with harvester docked) and other GDI buildings. Build gun



turrets and new units to defend the base against attacks from the south. Tiberium is located in the east and north. There's also a money crate under the church in the village to south of the base.

The enemy base is located in the northeast. To attack the base, the tanks patrolling it must be destroyed.

Build an attack force consisting of bazookas, attack cycles, stealth tanks, tanks and flame tanks. This should be able to deal with the enemy tanks and Orcas, plus a Mammoth tank patrolling the area. Once the tanks are destroyed, enter the base and destroy the construction site and power stations. This base is relatively easily defeated because you can drive up the left side and blow a hole in the walls to infiltrate it with engineers.

MISSION 12: BOTSWANA
Password: MEY28UCVF

A great mission this, you must capture the GDI orbital ion cannon codes from their advanced comms centre.

At the beginning, move the army west until you see a bridge and two mammoth tanks. Select one bike and get it to target the furthest tank on the bridge. Once the tanks start attacking, move your bike away from your main force and to the 'loop' around the southern hill. When the tanks see your mobile yard, they'll turn their attention to it instead. So select all your vehicles (except the bike) and move round the loop to always keep ahead one step of them. Since the tanks are now preoccupied with your other vehicles, re-select your bike and chase after them. Destroy the trailing tank, then the lead one, ensuring your other units keep out of the tanks' range.

Once the bridge is crossed, move the tank north and seek and destroy the rocket launcher. Start building the base where the rocket launcher got destroyed. Many of the attacks in this mission will come from the north and northeast, so build most defence systems on these sides. Make sure there are a large number of SAM sites (16 to 20) together in groups of four. Build an Obelisk Of Light to protect them.

Tiberium is found in the east, north west, west and north of the base. Harvest the west and north west areas first while building the defences. Once you have at least one Obelisk Of Light, harvest the east area (guarded by tanks).

The enemy base is located in the northeast. The weak point is on the west side. Build an attack force with tanks, artillery and cycles. Move cycles up through the valley and lure the tanks into your base. Once they are destroyed, move all units through the valley then move east.

Destroy the towers using the artillery. Then use stealth tanks to destroy the barrier on the north side of the base. When it is destroyed, move the engineers through this area and capture the Advanced Communications Centre.

MISSION 13: SOUTH AFRICA
Password: 45P58LIUG

The units will appear near the bottom-left of the map. To avoid the gunboat, make sure the MCV is not deployed too close to the bottom river. Start building power stations and refineries to build an Obelisk Of Light.

Build an airfield and some tanks to destroy the small base at the bottom-right of the map. This is fairly easy as it's only protected by normal guard towers, plus a tank inside. When this base is captured, build engineers to capture the helicopters just to the north. Then transport the engineers as well as infantry to the opposite side of the river and capture the refinery and powerstation. Alternatively, you can use sandbags to block up the bridge to the

north, then use long range howitzers to take care of the guard towers and advanced guard towers. Defend this refinery from attack and it can exploit the vast Tiberium deposits at the top of the map.

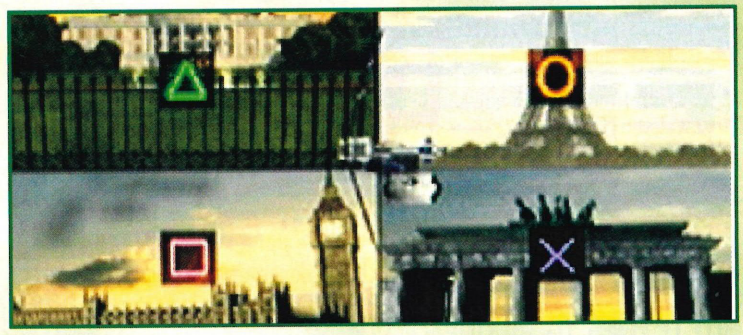
There are two main enemy bases:

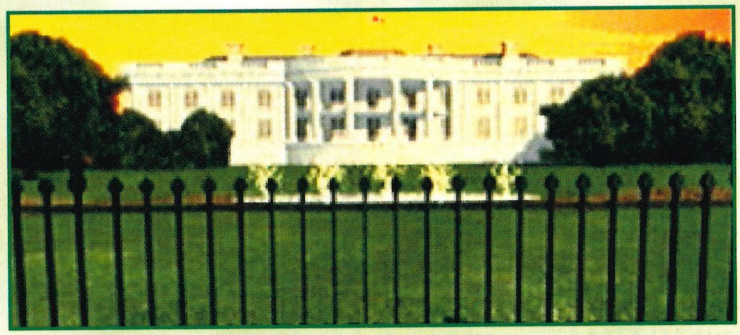
Base one is located at the top-left of the map. There is only one entrance to the base, on the east side. This is defended by Advanced and normal Guard Towers. To capture this base, try destroying the power stations on its south side. In addition there is an Advanced Guard Tower on the north side of the base. This can be shut down by capturing most of the power stations in the area. Of course, block off the entrance with bags to stop any troops escaping, and watch out for the advanced guard tower hiding behind a tree at the top.

Base two is located at the top-right of the map. The only entrance is on the south side. Again it is closely guarded by Advanced and normal Guard Towers. Defence systems are also located on the north side of the base.

Tiberium is located on the bottom, middle and right of the map. Do not harvest the northern part of the middle patch until the first base is captured or destroyed. The only thing you have to watch out for in this mission is sneaky GDI attacks on your Temple of NOD.

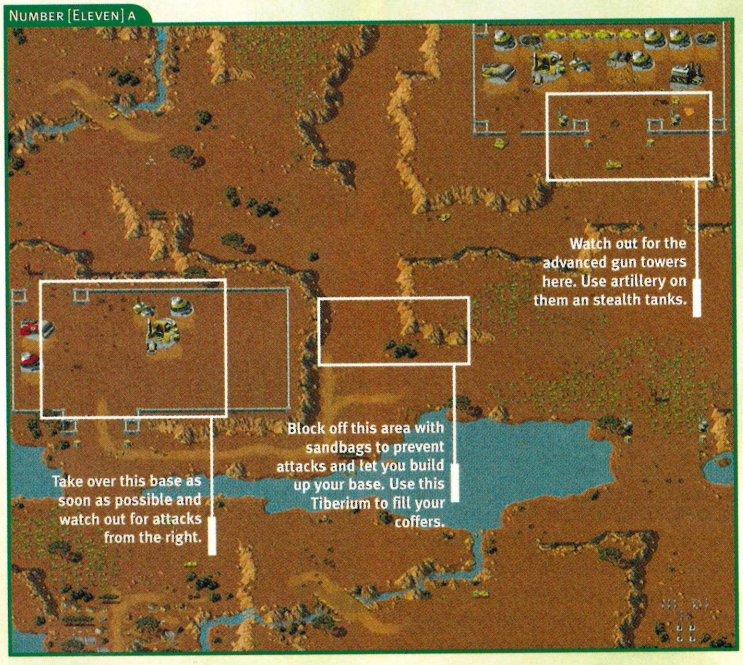
Remember that once you've built your Temple of NOD you will have nuclear capability just once, and this can be used to wipe out a vast area of enemy base. Make sure you cover the cinders with sandbags though, or GDI will rebuild them. This mission is a battle of attrition, and you must have plenty of secure areas in case the enemy overrun your forward positions. If you win, you have the chance to wipe out one of four landmarks: the house of parliment, the white house, the Brandenburg Gate, and the Eiffel Tower.



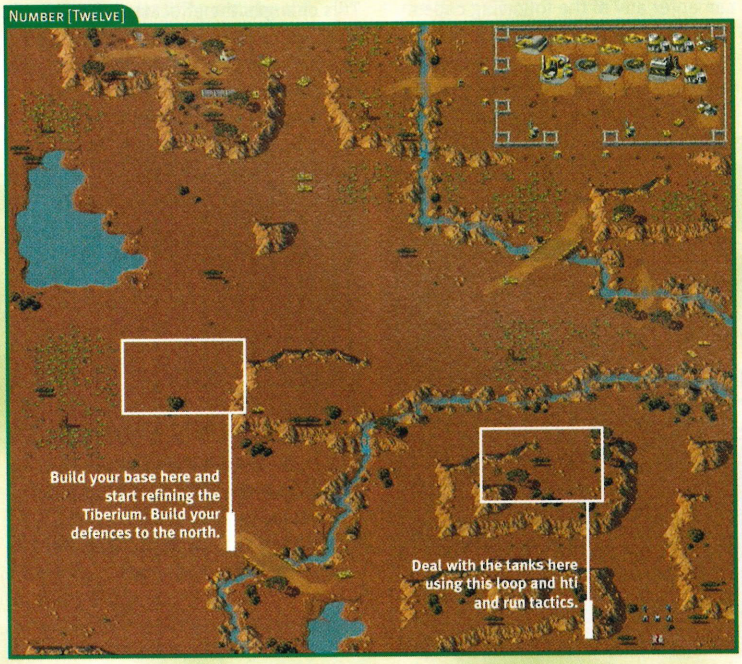




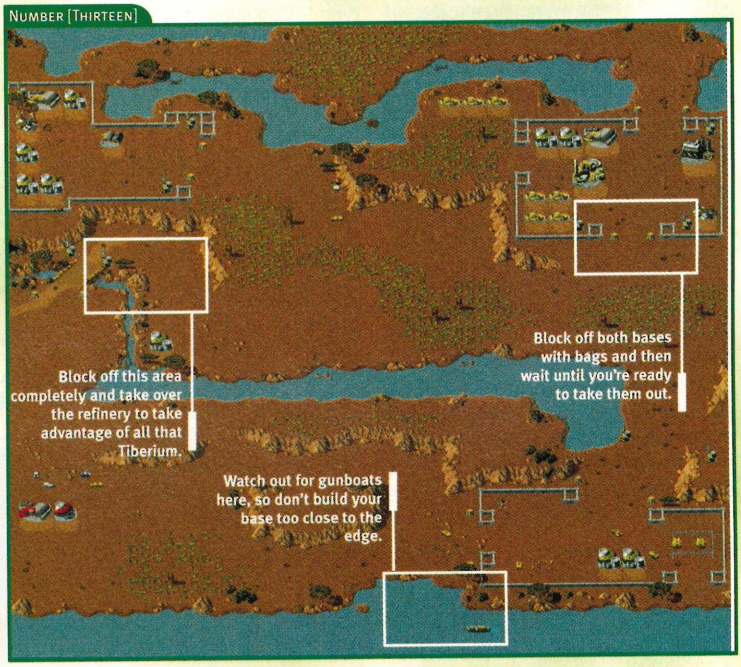
NUMBER [ELEVEN] A



NUMBER [TWELVE]



NUMBER [THIRTEEN]



JET RIDER

SOLVED

Jet Rider **SURE IS FUN, BUT IT HAS TO BE ONE OF THE TOUGHEST RACING GAMES OF RECENT TIMES. INSTEAD OF EARNING ALL THE SECRETS THE FAIR WAY, FEAST YOUR EYES ON THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO ITS HIDDEN DELIGHTS!**



Normally, you'd have to complete a Full Season at Professional level on *Jet Rider* twice to be able to use all these lovely codes here. Single Trac seems to really want you to work for your rewards, as after you had beaten the game twice already, you'd have to play it through several more times to get every code because the game only hands them out one at a time. Luckily we've done all the hard work for you, and all you need to do is enter the Enable All Tracks cheat, then win one season to get the game ready to accept any and all of the following codes.

[Enable All Tracks]

This code should give you enough fun by itself before you try out the others, as some of the tracks you haven't seen are amazing. After you play around on them though, taking in the sights, it's a good idea to really start practising on them hard so you can win the lot and so try out the rest of the cheats.

Go to the Options screen and set the Difficulty to Amateur, and switch the Trophy Presenter to male. Press Start to go back to the main screen and press: Up, Right, Down, Left, Up, Right, Down, Left.

Next, go back to the Options screen by pressing Left once and ×. Now set the Difficulty to Professional, the Trophy Presenter to Rider's Choice, and return once more to the main screen by pressing Start. Now type Up, Left, Down, Right, Up, Left, Down, Right.

If you didn't mess up, you should hear the sound of a cash register signifying that the cheat has worked. You've got immediate access to all the extra tracks!

Now all it takes is that you win one season, with any bike, before you can start using all these other cheats. Doing this successfully will mean that the title screen will have a speech bubble coming from the rider's mouth which says "Codes Enabled." Now you can enter any of the following codes right there on the title screen, and for each one you'll hear that same cash register sound.



[The Codes]

SUPER AGILITY



Perform the stunts of your dreams with added agility making it all possible.

Down, ●, Left, L1, Left, Right, Left, Right.

ZERO RESISTANCE



This changes the effect that the various surfaces have on your jet bike to seem like you're always riding on the smoothest surface possible.

■, L1, ▲, Right, L1, Down, R2, ▲

DOUBLE STUNT POINTS



Rather obviously, when you are in Stunt Mode this will double the points you receive for each trick.

Right, Up, ●, L2, ▲, ●, R1, R2

SHOW OFF CAMERA



Gives you another camera angle to play from. Unfortunately it's nearly impossible to race with this enabled.
▲, Down, ■, ▲, L1, L1, R1, R1

AIR BRAKES



Makes you brakes work in mid-air as they would on the ground, and actually adds a lot to the handling.
R1, R2, Right, L2, Up, ●, Up, ●

ROCKET RACER



Playing with the Rocket Racer code makes your bike hammer along as though you were firing a turbo the whole time.
▲, Up, Up, L2, L2, Up, Up, Up

UNLIMITED TURBOS



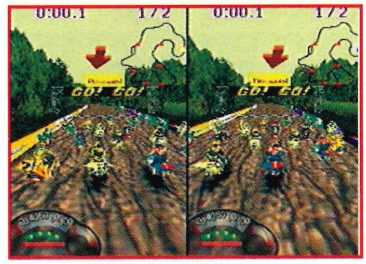
More controllable than the Rocket Racer mode because you don't have to go at turbo speed all the time.
▲, ●, Right, R2, Up, ■, Up, ▲

ICE RACING

This makes every racing surface just as slippery as ice. It's beyond us why you would want to use it, but here it is.
Up, R2, R1, Right, L1, ■, Right, Right



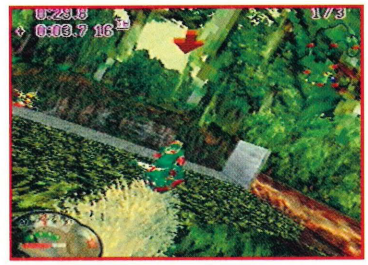
2 PLAYER COMPUTER A.I.



Finally, you get to race against the computer controlled opponents with a friend in two player mode. Slows things down a bit though.
●, ■, R2, ●, ▲, L2, Right, Up

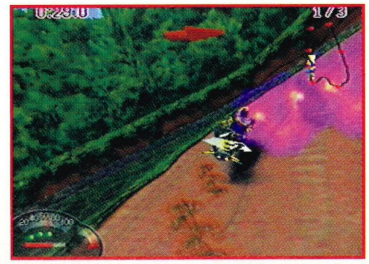
[TRACK TIPS]

BLACKWATER FALLS



A fast flowing course full of big drops, quick bends and a small amount of dry land. You can even pay a quick house call by smashing through the front door. Just watch out for those tight turns.

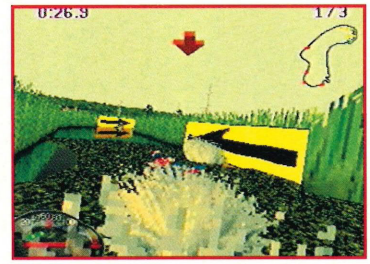
CLIFFDIVER



One of the toughest courses in *Jet Rider*, Cliffdiver provides many thrills and spills (usually right off the cliff!). If the sudden end of the cliff isn't enough, just wait until you reach those rocks – ouch!

CYPRESS RUN

To say this course is somewhat congested would be understatement. So your reactions better be good, otherwise you'll be taking an early



bath in a swamp full of trees, stumps, and god only knows what else!

HAMMERHEAD



If the French driving doesn't scare you, then Hammerhead is just the course for you. Set on a broken bridge, there are multiple routes to take. Unfortunately they're likely to take you head-on into your opposition.

ICE CRUSHER



Carved out of a fragmented glacier you'll find yourself out of control at times. Question is, how fast dare you go? How close to the edge do you travel? Just remember to keep your front end up!

JOYRIDE



An easy course, just to whet your appetite. With fast bends a plenty, many a wave to ride, a broken freeway to cruise down, and a gigantic jump to fly over, you'll be wetting something of your own in no time!

NIGHTMARE

This appropriately named track consists of large gaps, big dips and



mind-blowing bends, and that's just the easy parts! Flying into oblivion is just part of the track.

SNOW BLIND



If the ice, jumps and dangerous cliffs don't cause you any problems, then maybe the suicidal U-turns will. This course should certainly send a few cold shivers down your spine, if there's one left that is!

SUICIDE SWAMP



You won't have time to worry about the name of this track. The trees, stumps and opponents coming head-on should see to that.

WILLPOWER

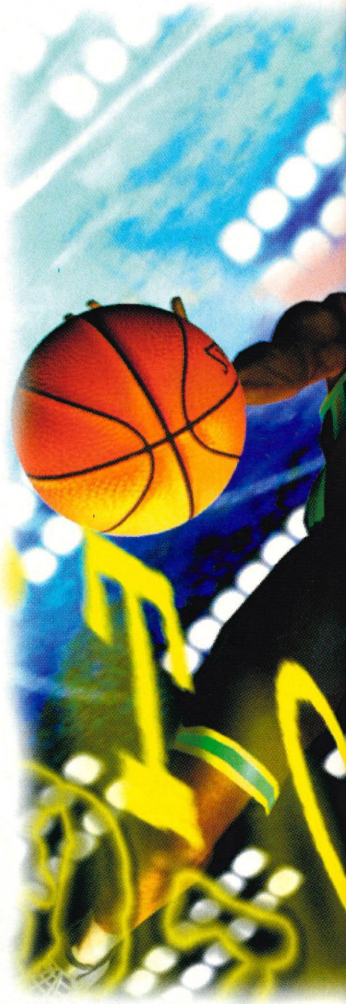


This course would be tough enough on dry land, the fact that it's on ice is certainly a test of anybody's willpower. Because with all the tight turns, big jumps, and grapple bends, death is not an option.



JAMMIN'

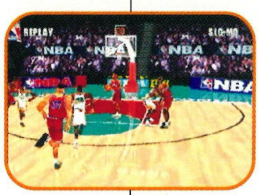
TOTAL NBA '97

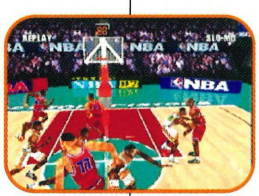


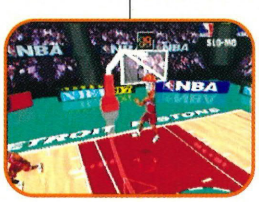
Heralded by our very own 'PLAY Tower Panthers' as the greatest basketball game ever created on a next generation console, *Total NBA* almost delivered the complete package when it came to state-of-the-art 3-D animation technology, incorporating ultra-realistic motion captured polygonal giants who danced around lifelike court designs like there was no tomorrow. Although it received almost instant acclaim, there were still a few critical fingers pointed towards over-glamorising the offensive manoeuvres at the expense of the relatively limited defensive options and this is where *Total NBA '97* will attempt to redress the balance.

DUNKIN' DELIGHT

THIS SEQUENCE DEPICTS THE BUILD UP TO ONE OF A VARIETY OF DUNKS. LOADS OF THEM ARE PROMISED IN THE FINAL VERSION, BUT FEAST YOUR EYES ON THE BUILD-UP TO THIS IMPRESSIVE '360' DUNK.





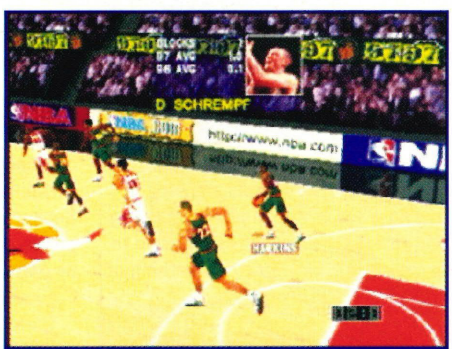


SLAM

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the rules, it takes place over four quarters with two groups of five players (chosen from a squad of 12) playing against each other with the aim being to score the most points in the baskets at each end of the court. So endeth the lesson.

What you've got with the new version is a simulation of basketball played in one of three modes: Arcade, Simulation or Custom, where via an exceptionally thorough menu and options screen, you can tailor virtually any aspect of the game.

In Exhibition mode, a single or multi-player extravaganza, utilising two multi-taps and seven mates, can be arranged, and then there's the maze of stats that any fanatical devotees of the game can wade through to their heart's content.



[ABOVE] By holding down the square button, you get a maximum of five seconds to accelerate to the desired area.



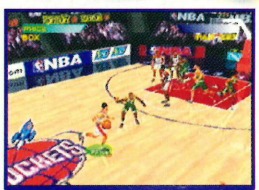
[ABOVE] Fakes are all part of the fun in *Total NBA'97*, it can fool the defence and create new openings if done effectively.

Whole seasons and playoffs will be able to be entered into and coupled with the almost infinite possibilities presented in the new Roster section, it's going to keep even the most stalwart strategists amongst you busy for hours if this level of detail tweaking is your bag.

ZONE

But undoubtedly, the $64,000 question is whether the '97 version warrants a further visit to your local games stockist. So without further delay, let's take a peruse at what's on offer second time around.

The first difference that is instantly noticeable are the graphics. Each one of the 348 real NBA players have been rendered in a higher resolution, and move extremely smoothly.



[ABOVE] At home with the rockets via the 'Action' camera view.

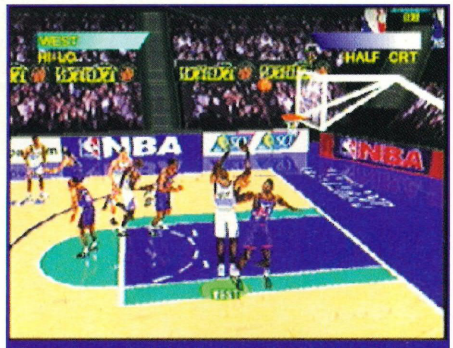


[ABOVE] The amount of players on-screen at once without any slow-down is very impressive. And they always look busy marking or running as they go.

PLAY INFORMATION

Name: Total NBA '97
Publisher: Sony
% Complete: 95%
Release Date: March '97





[Above] Two points inside the 'D' area, three points outside it. The best way to guarantee a basket is to let go of the button at the peak of the player's jump.



[Above] The defence will always try to leap up and block the offensive attempts on the basket. If you can fake a jump, it can often fool the defence though.

Apparently, the polygon count has been increased resulting in more fluidity throughout and all the faces will be digitised too. The motion capture has been brushed-up beyond all recognition and we have to say, just watching them go through their gravity-defying moves is quite astonishing. Additional features will include: new dunks, lay-ups, alley-oops, pump fakes, through the legs and behind the back cross-overs. The jump shot, block, re-bounding, running and dribbling animation look far better than the original too.

This time around, full-blown commentary, as opposed to the minimalist efforts of *Total NBA* will be included, no doubt improving the atmosphere, and we're pleased to announce that the overall standard of the sampled sound effects are crisper and of a much higher standard. *Total NBA '97* is also going to boast more control over the rosters. These new options include: release player, sign free agent, create player, players card, edit lines, and an all new ratings system.

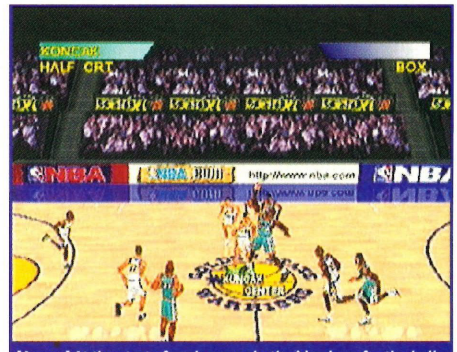
With all its new moves, wealth of statistical options and polished gameplay, Sony can give itself a well-earned pat on the back. This is hot stuff. Expect a full review in the next issue.



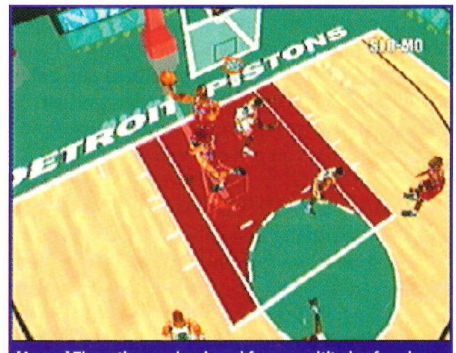
[Above] Even the most straight forward 'dunks' look spectacular.

Pump Fake

There's no denying the impressive overall feel of the game which appears to be almost complete as it stands. *Total NBA '97* is going to be big, and worries over this version being only a disappointing update should be dispelled.



[Above] At the start of each game, both sides leap for the ball to gain that all-important possession advantage.



[Above] The action can be viewed from a multitude of angles. This looks especially impressive when viewing replays.



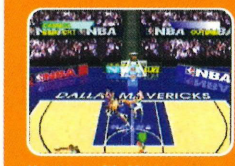
[Above] Whilst the player holds the ball trying to decide what to do, other team members run into positions depending on your chosen strategy.



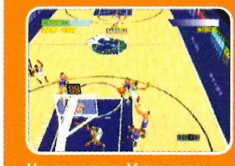
[Above] At half time, all the games stats can be examined. The game is more strategic than *Total NBA*.

SLAM CAM

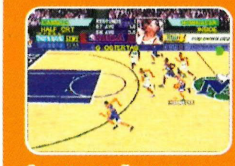
In the full version of *Total NBA '97*, there will be six ways to view the on court action, and a fully controllable replay mode camera for viewing your favourite moments.



Up court RL. View from up court, going from right to left.



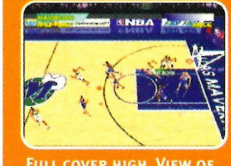
Up court LO. View from lower down, again from right to left.



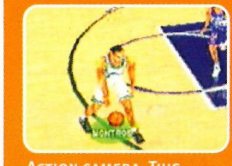
One player. Zoomed-in view from slightly behind the player whose hold the ball.



Full cover LO. View of the court, lower down



Full cover high. View of the court from a higher perspective.



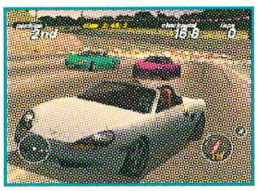
Action camera. This follows and zooms-in wherever the hottest action is.

RUSHED

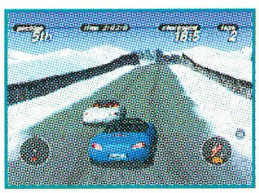
PORSCHE CHALLENGE

You may recall

It has been a long time in the making, but after all the rumours, secrecy and private viewings of this game, a fully playable version of *Porsche Challenge* has arrived just as we were going to press. Too late in the day to squeeze in a full sized review, we can at least let you know how the game looks and plays after all this time.







The Porsche Boxsters are nicely rounded to do justice to the beautiful bodywork of the real thing, although some attention will have to go to the wheel arches which still have obvious chunky flat edges. Besides the great little motion captured drivers sitting in each Boxster the most realistic aspect of the graphics has to be the smooth lighting effects that caress each car in relation to where the artificial sun is or what the surroundings are. The tracks are just as good looking, with the glowing neon lights on the USA course or busy, cluttered scenery of the Japan level. Look into the distance though and you'll see the seriously dodgy flat backdrop that appears to be made out of huge blocks and only a handful of colours, presumably this was just dropped in at the last moment to give a basic idea of what the complete game will look like.

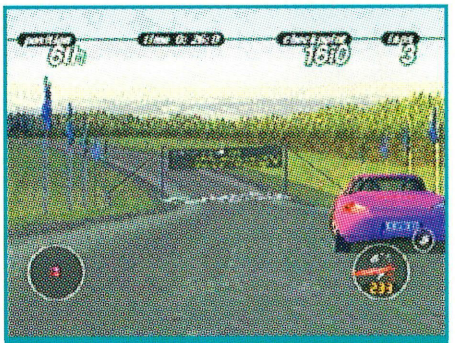
German Engineering

The most unsettling thing about *Porsche* in its current state is the total lack of speed. The speedo can be telling you that you are travelling at 140 miles per hour and yet the road passes by as though you are freely rolling down a hill without the engine switched on. After all the fuss that was made about how Sony had access to every technical detail of the Boxster and would produce an accurate simulation of its performance, it would be truly tragic if the speed was not heavily increased in the final version of the code. Surely a Porsche has such acceleration and speed that it's positively frightening to drive flat out around Tokyo? To get away with having only one car it is important for Porsche to excel in these other areas.

We will keep you informed of exactly what is happening with the development of *Porsche Challenge*, one of the most desired driving games on PlayStation, over the next month before the full and definitive review appears in these very pages. Fingers crossed.

PLAY INFORMATION

Name: Porsche Challenge
Publisher: Sony
% Complete: 90%
Release Date: 11 April



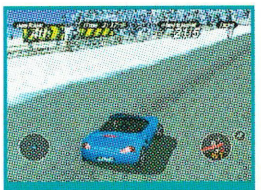
[Above] The inside view gives it a little more speed, but there's no dash view and it kind of misses the point of a perfectly detailed chassis when you can't see it.



[Above] The USA track features some sneaky shortcuts and has unique early morning soft lighting.



[Above] You come across some odd driving in *Porsche Challenge*, with people swerving madly from side to side sometimes. Perhaps it's to intimidate you.



[Above] The slippy-slidey Alpine course will test your driving skills while trying to keep control of the Boxster in winter conditions. Note the extended shadow.

DENIED!

JUST SO YOU'RE NOT CONFUSED WHEN YOU SEE PORSCHE CHALLENGE ON THE SHELVES BEFORE OUR FULL REVIEW, WE THOUGHT WE SHOULD MAKE IT CLEAR WHAT IS HAPPENING. THIS VERSION WE HAVE HAS BEEN CLASSED AS REVIEWABLE BY SONY, MEANING NORMALLY THAT WE COULD GIVE YOU THE ENTIRE LOW-DOWN IN THE NEXT ISSUE. UNFORTUNATELY, DUE TO THE GAME'S RELEASED DATE BEING SUDDENLY BROUGHT FORWARD TOGETHER WITH SOME 'EXCLUSIVE' DEALS DONE BY SONY, WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY SONY TO WAIT UNTIL PERHAPS AFTER EVEN THE NEXT ISSUE GOES TO PRESS. NATURALLY THIS IS AN UNACCEPTABLE SITUATION FOR PLAY MAGAZINE BECAUSE WE DON'T WANT TO HAVE YOU ABLE TO BUY THE GAME WITHOUT SEEING OUR UNBIASED REVIEW FIRST. STAY TUNED.

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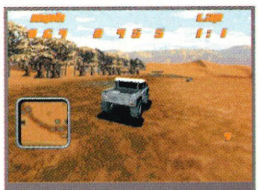
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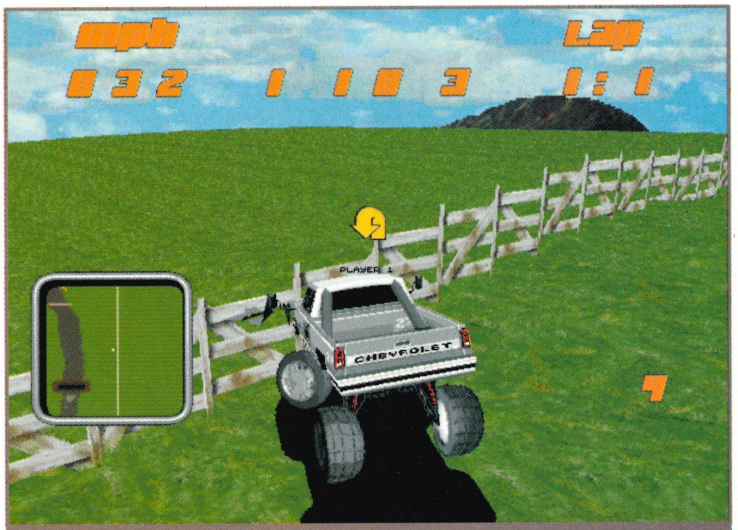
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CHUNKY

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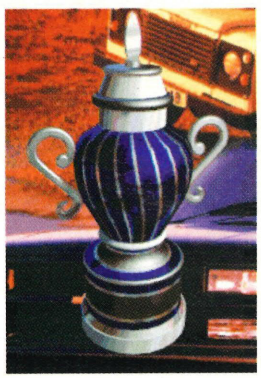
[Above] There's strong competition from the Brits in the form of the Land Rover. A good all-rounder.



[Above] There'll be plenty of opportunities to roam freely throughout the scenery.

Grinding gears, four-wheel drive and hand brake turns. Stress relief doesn't come any better than thrashing about in a suped-up off-road muscle car over varied and unforgiving territory with a crazed look in your eyes. In light of the fact that both Gremlin and Psygnosis have already attempted to lure the rage racers amongst you into rolling hills, streams jumps, trees, and deserts, Eidos obviously feel that there's room for one more foray into what could loosely be described as an extreme sport.

Expect to see four famous off-roaders, namely the Hummer, Land Rover Defender 90, Jeep Wrangler, Chevrolet K-1500 Z71 to spank around 12 varied tracks, in either the mixed or class leagues. Each type of vehicle promises to handle uniquely, as individual elements such as speed, acceleration and handling vary accordingly. You'll even have the option to customise each one on the options screen, where anti-skid, power steering, controller set-up, camera rotation, colour and braking can be tweaked too.



PLAY INFORMATION

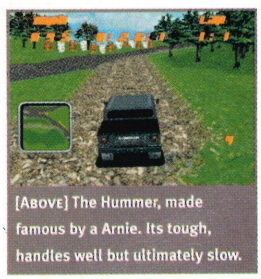
Name: Test Drive Off-Road
Publisher: Eidos Interactive
% Complete: 80%
Release Date: April '97

CRASH 'N' BURN

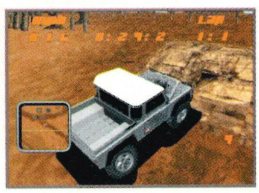
A two player split screen mode is definitely something we are looking forward to, and hopefully the horizons will be extended some more in the final version. Handling at this stage is very responsive, and the physics of each jeep are good, but still needs a little work. What we want to see is more bouncing around as they leap over hills and crunch back down to earth.

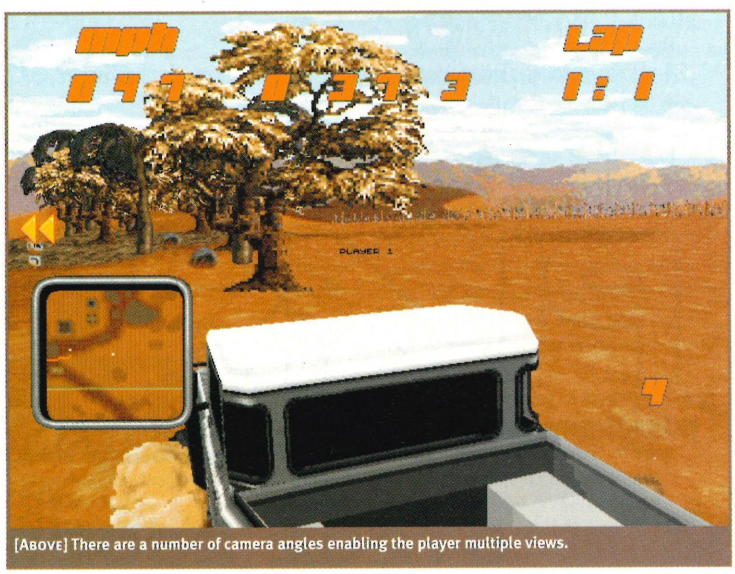
The feeling of freedom that tends to make or break a game of this ilk has been implemented well, so it looks as though you'll be able to use all manner of shortcuts and alternative routes to reach the finishing post, which is great news. Each level is a straight race though, where the player must get from A to B via any route you choose, so speed is of the essence too.

From what we've seen so far, *Test Drive Off-Road* has all the elements of a cracking alternative racer, but a few areas such as the AI and inertial bounce of these gas-guzzling brutes still need a bit of fine tuning. Let's hope these teething problems are ironed-out for the review next issue.

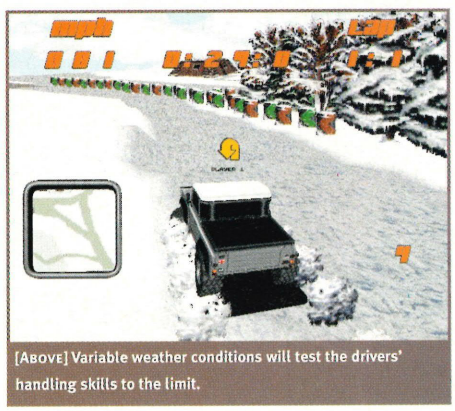


[Above] The Hummer, made famous by a Arnie. Its tough, handles well but ultimately slow.

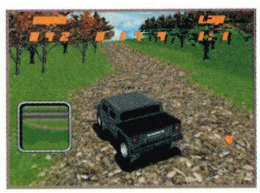




[Above] There are a number of camera angles enabling the player multiple views.



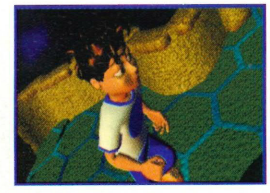
[Above] Variable weather conditions will test the drivers' handling skills to the limit.



DREAMY SWAGMAN







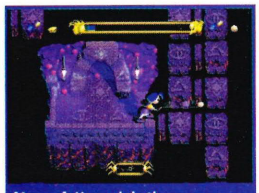




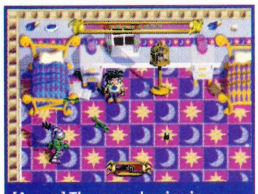
[Above] Once in the Swagman's Dreamworld, the kids can transform into monsties. Hannah now looks a bit strange doesn't she.

Once again the children's dreams aren't safe. What is it with these deranged dream-stalkers? First we had the finger-knived pizza face Freddy Kruger to deal with, who managed to survive six sequels – each one progressively worse. And now it seems the Australian based legend, Swagman wants a piece of REM-based action too.

This evil entity, and his army of night terrors have imprisoned the Dreamflight fairies so that they can eventually invade the real world. Unless Zack and his sister Hannah, under the control of your good self, can rescue these fairies, the sleeping people of your hometown, Paradise Falls, may never awaken from their nightmares.



[Above] Hannah is the Swagmans's Dreamworld and can attack enemies with a Yo-Yo.



[Above] The game begins in Zach and Hannah's house. The graphics are bright and fruiy.

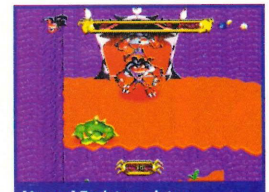
NIGHTMARE

Eidos describe the game as a 'forced action adventure, littered with puzzles', where you take simultaneous control of the two kids where co-operation is essential to make any headway. In a novel twist to the genre, both Zack and Hannah transform into 'Dreambeasts' with enhanced strength, where the gameplay becomes more action-oriented.

The screen shots that we've seen are crisp, vivid and colourful. We haven't actually seen the game up and running as yet, but are reliably informed that all character sprites have been fully rendered in 3-D. The game will feature roughly 16 levels, split into two main areas-the real world and the nightmare dreamlands which you'll be able to warp to. Some levels will be puzzle-based, whilst others will have more of a platform theme.

It should be fun controlling four characters, as each one has their own special powers and weapons in both normal and beasty modes. In terms of technical wizardry, developers Core have included transparency, rotating sprites, light-sourced 3-D objects, colour filtering and true shadow casting to maintain a polished graphical look.

We haven't been privy to many isometric puzzlers of late on PlayStation, so fingers crossed that Eidos can combine the two gameplay elements with some groovy graphics. Rest assured, there'll be a review next month.



[Above] Zack turns into a drooling Elvis lookalike, only with fangs and claws.



[Above] The action is viewed from a forced perspective, giving it a kind of *Zelda* appearance.



[Above] Zack and Hannah are about to be introduced to one of Swagman's Night Terrors.

PLAY INFORMATION

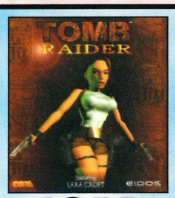
Name: Swagman
Publisher: Eidos Interactive
% Complete: 90%
Release Date: March/April '97

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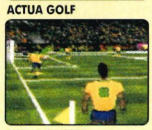
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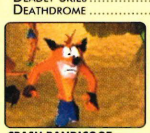


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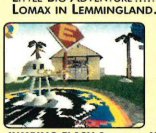


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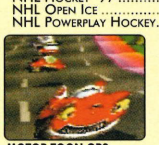


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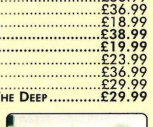


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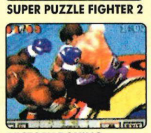
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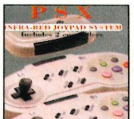
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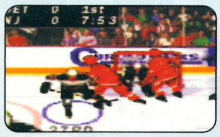
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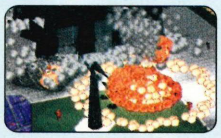
TEST DRIVE: OFF ROAD DUE APRIL



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EXCALIBUR DUE APRIL



LEGACY OF KAIN DUE MARCH



SOUL BLADE (SOUL EDGE) DUE APRIL



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TEKKEN 3 DUE AUTUMN



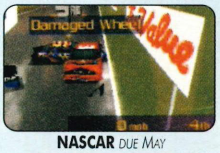
PLAYER MANAGER 2 DUE APRIL/MAY



WAR GODS DUE APRIL



X MEN COTA DUE GOD KNOWS WHEN



NASCAR DUE MAY



NEED FOR SPEED 2 DUE MAY/JUNE



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RELEASE LIST

FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF PROVISIONAL RELEASE DATES FOR FORTHCOMING RELEASES. PLEASE REMEMBER THESE ARE INTENDED AS A GUIDE ONLY AND WE CANNOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY CHANGES OR DELAYS.

ACTUA SOCCER CLUB EDITION	EARLY APRIL
ATARI GREATEST HITS	EARLY APRIL
BROKEN HELIX	1ST APRIL
BUBBLE BOBBLE 2	27TH MARCH
BUBSY 3D	24TH APRIL
CAESARS WORLD OF GAMBLING	21ST APRIL
CRUSADER NO REMORSE	28TH MARCH
CRYPT KILLER	27TH MARCH
DARK FORCES	23RD MARCH
DEADLY SKIES	MID APRIL
DESCENT 2	1ST APRIL
EXHUMED	27TH MARCH
HEXEN	27TH MARCH
JONAH LOMU RUGBY	EARLY APRIL
KILLING TIME	1ST MAY
LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE	4TH APRIL
MAGIC THE GATHERING	MID APRIL
MICRO MACHINES 3	21ST MARCH
NANOTEK WARRIOR	3RD APRIL
PERFECT WEAPON	APRIL
PFA SOCCER MANAGER	END APRIL
PLAYER MANAGER 2	MID APRIL
REBEL ASSAULT 2	15TH APRIL
ROAD RAGE	21ST MARCH
SWAGMAN	21ST MARCH
SYNDICATE WARS	MID MAY
TEN PIN ALLEY	4TH APRIL
TEST DRIVE: OFF ROAD	21ST MARCH
THE DIVIDE: ENEMIES WITHIN	15TH APRIL
TOTAL RACING	7TH APRIL
TRANSPORT TYCOON	END APRIL
TRASH IT	EARLY APRIL
VR BASEBALL '97	21ST APRIL
WING COMMANDER 4	4TH APRIL
WING OVER	17TH APRIL

OTHER ACCESSORIES



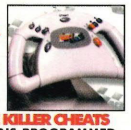
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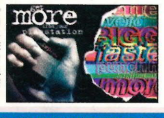
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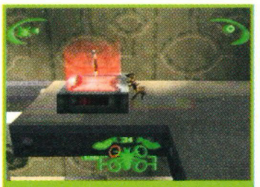
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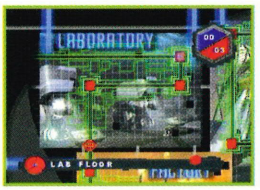
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PL2(4)

CREEPY SPIDER



[Above] High on a shelf somewhere in the complex, you find the bionic boomerang leg hovering. Pick it up for some Aussie-style fighting.







[Above] At key areas you will find this timed force field to get you through parts like the middle of a fire.



[Above] Being a spider, you can swing from the ceiling by a single strand of your web and get to things you couldn't normally reach.

You may recall

a time long ago when PLAY brought you news of a good looking platform game which stood out because the main character wasn't a man or even a rat, but an arachnid. Well, *Spider* is now almost ready for release and it is time for the final update before the full review next issue.

The most respected scientist in nanotechnology, Dr Michael Kelly has been obsessively researching and working on spiders in his lab, and he has finally discovered how to attach cybernetic limbs to our eight-legged friends, and even transmit data from a human brain into a spider's. Naturally, this kind of work attracts a lot of the wrong kind of attention given the potential of intelligent armed insects, and one day in March, the good doctor gets clobbered and dragged off by some shady characters. He had just affixed a single new limb to one of his test subjects and downloaded his consciousness into its head before he was so rudely interrupted, and when the game starts you control that very spider in the lab.

Web of deceit

As 3-D platformers go, *Spider* is much closer to *Pandemonium* than *Crash Bandicoot*, mainly because there is a pre-defined path to the left and right of the hairy little bugger that you must follow and you cannot move into or out of the screen.

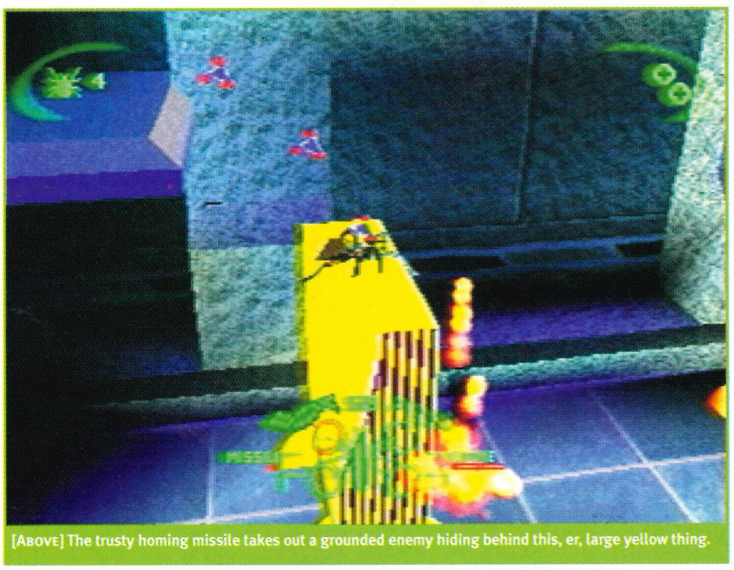
Of course, you can stick to vertical surfaces and crawl along upside down with ease, as well as performing certain tricks like hanging from a fully retractable strand of web. As you explore around the research building you will find the various mechanical appendages that Dr Kelly was planning to put in place of your normal legs, and you can switch between each artificial leg to use them as was intended. Offensive weapons plug into the front leg sockets while defensive ones go on the back. There are some quite destructive toys for such a small bug to be in charge of, such as the Homing Missile leg or the Electro-Beam, with defensive items being things like smart bombs and mines.

The enemies that you'll encounter are pests of various kinds too, many of which are failed previous attempts by the doctor to produce something as capable as the Spider unit. Little metallic spiders swipe at you with their sharpened legs, wasps fire laser bolts from their stingers, and flies drop purplish balls of fire on you from the air.

It is unfortunate that the graphics don't look quite as nice as was originally thought, but there are still nice things like light sourcing and fire, and the time spent making the main character move like a real spider seems to have paid off. With every tiny fact and detail included, next issue's review is bound to make you itch all over!



[Above] The green poisonous gas that you spray on a fellow critter causes him to explode in a cloud of black smoke and fire.



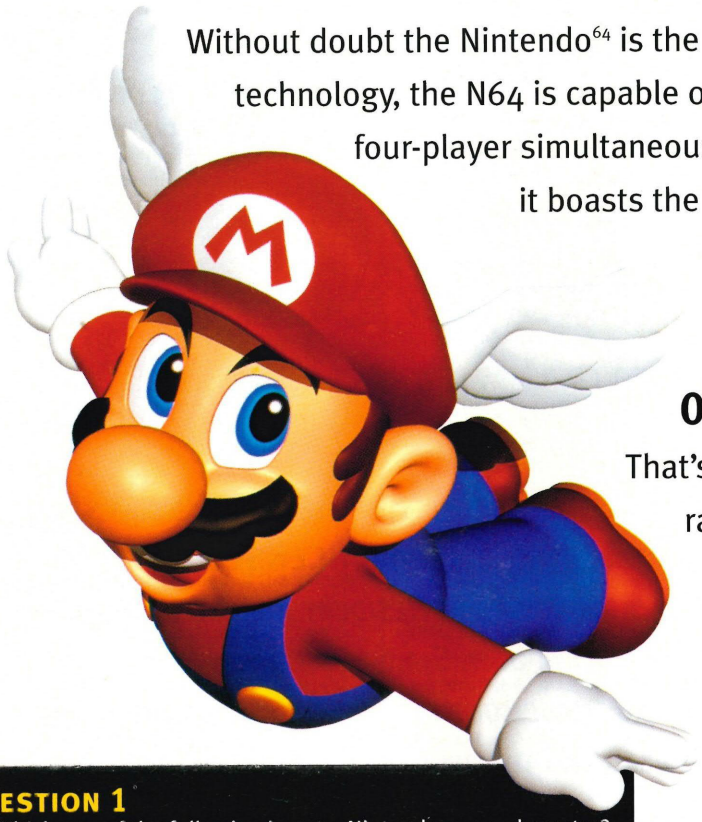
[Above] The trusty homing missile takes out a grounded enemy hiding behind this, er, large yellow thing.

PLAY INFORMATION

Name: Spider
Publisher: BMGie
% Complete: 90%
Release Date: Out Now (import)
April/May (official)

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QUESTION 1

Which one of the following is not a Nintendo game character?

A. Bowser
B. Crash Bandicoot
C. Luigi

QUESTION 2

Is the Nintendo 64 a 16-bit, 32-bit or 64-bit machine?

A. 16-bit
B. 32-bit
C. 64-bit

QUESTION 3

On what format are Nintendo 64 games stored?

A. CD-ROM
B. Cartridge
C. DAT





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arena

views · questions · criticisms · ideas

VIEWS · QUESTIONS · CRITICISMS · IDEAS

EVERY ASPECT OF OWNING A PLAYSTATION IS DISSECTED HERE, AS WE GIVE YOU, THE PLAY READERS, THE CHANCE TO AIR YOUR VIEWS AND COMMENT ON THE MAGAZINE ITSELF. ARE YOU INCENSED BY NAMCO'S STANCE ON *TIME CRISIS*, OR WORRIED ABOUT THE CUTTING OF GORY BITS IN *RESIDENT EVIL 2*? IF SO, DROP US A LINE NOW AND LET 35,000 PLAY READERS KNOW YOUR VIEWPOINT. SEND ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO: *ARENA, PLAY MAGAZINE, PARAGON HOUSE, ST PETER'S ROAD, BOURNEMOUTH, DORSET BH 1 2JS*. OR E-MAIL US AT: PLAY@PARAGON.CO.UK. ALL LETTERS ARE READ AND THE BEST ONES ARE PRINTED.

DEAR PLAY,

I have a few questions that I would like answered.

1. In issue 17 you gave a review on the import version of *Soul Edge* and it does look amazing. But my mates have said that the English version will be called *Soul Blade* which they say is the sequel to *Soul Edge*. Are they taking the piss or is what they're saying true?
2. How much, approximately will the Guncon cost for *Time Crisis*?
3. Is *Rage Racer* just *Ridge Racer 3* or will they be two separate games?
4. Do you know if *Resident Evil 2* will have an end-of-level boss like the first one?
5. Should I swap my *Ridge Racer Revolution* for *Tomb Raider* with my mate?

Lawrence Benson, Bristol

1. The European version of *Soul Edge* will indeed be called *Soul Blade* (for some pointless reason) and it is not the sequel.
2. Prices have not yet been confirmed to us, but expect the game and gun to cost around £60.
3. There is no *Ridge Racer 3* and to all intents and purposes *Rage Racer* is the third in the series, but Namco is keen not to refer to it as such.
4. Very probably, and we've certainly seen some screenshots of some big adversaries, but the game is now reportedly being re-designed so who can tell?
5. Yes. *Tomb Raider* is a must buy.

DEAR PLAY,

Having just bought your March edition (today being 30 Jan) I felt a pat on the back was overdue. I must congratulate you on a superb service you give us. I bought *Soul Edge* on 4 Jan after *Rage Racer* on 20 December so you can see I won't wait any longer than necessary for hot games. I couldn't help beaming as I read your magazine. Desperation for news on the latest gear (this time *RE2* and *Time Crisis*) drove me to buy this edition, but it was your review of *Soul Edge* that really made me smile.

I must agree wholeheartedly with your review. It is fair to say that amazing titles like this still my urge to buy the N64, but there's one point in your review I must highlight – the last paragraph. You urge players to play this game by any means, suggesting import machines, disk swapping or chip conversions in order to run this fantastic game. Well done! I find this overwhelmingly refreshing to see articles written for the sake of the reader, and not as an unofficial advert and part of Sony propaganda.

I have had a PlayStation since 3 June 1995 (Jap of course) and find it insulting to my intelligence and passion for my hobby that poor PAL conversions such as *Tekkens* and *Ridges* are reviewed in blind ignorance of their original's superior speed and resolution. Suggesting methods which are (unfairly) outlawed by Sony to play the best games shows integrity and a commitment to the games – two assets Sony clearly lacks (remember "our games will retail for £35-40 due to low licence fees"?). PLAY wins my golden joystick hands down. Keep it up.

Richard Skelton, Ashby

PS Please can you tell me how to beat Voldo with Mitsurgi in the Edge Master Mode? The only way of damaging him is with the Critical Edge, but even with three successful attacks (leaving me with no weapon!) he still keeps going!

The Play readers are the ONLY thing that drives this magazine, Richard, and we are damned proud of it. Other magazines in the PlayStation market continue to pander to the threat of pulled advertising and so you see some outrageous high reviews scores (*Dark Forces* is a good example). Games which are simply rubbish are being leniently dealt with by some and this infuriates us. The bottom line is that Sony gets money from every piece of PlayStation hardware and software around the world, so who cares if you buy a Japanese copy or an official one? Not many people do buy import games in this country of course, but by covering the import games we offer an unexpurgated view of the future UK PlayStation scene. *Rage Racer* might not be coming out for a few months, but you already know it's good and so you can start saving.

PS The key to completing the game in this mode is to use the



[Above] Richard Skelton applauds the fact that we recommended getting hold of *Soul Edge* by any means, whether it be import or official. That's because we care...

special sword which replenishes the Critical Edge power. We think it is either the Bussen, Zweihander or the Falcus.

Dear Play,

I have been a PlayStation owner for sometime now and have tried out many magazines but by far yours is the best. Anyway, enough grovelling. I am the number one fan of *Resident Evil* and am lucky enough to possess £50. Do you think I should spend the whole of 1997 sitting on my arse waiting for *Resident Evil 2* if the gore gets cut in the European version. Will it still be worth buying if it is cut, or should the money go to *Soul Edge*, for example?

Adam Kay, South Yorkshire

***Resident Evil 2* is likely to be delayed until the end of the year or only until June depending on who you believe. The game has gone back to the drawing board for some minor tweaks, including more plot development, bigger weapons and bosses and some totally new pre-rendered sequences. *RE 2* will now also come on two CDs. You should buy *Soul Edge* in the interim, Adam.**

Dear Play,

I am writing to give my ideas on demos. As they seem to cost too much, why not put them on video? Get reviewers to do their best thumb-bleeding on each game and then record it on VHS cassette. The written review could interact with the video giving the magazine a whole new dimension. No more "the grabs look good, but it glitches like a technohead under a strobe light" comments because you could see for yourself.

Rolling demos don't show the slowdown and flicker that's evident in real time. The cost would easily be under a quid and "that mag with the video on it" will stick out like a *Tekken II* blood blister in WH Smith! The game publishers could maybe meet part of the cost for the certainty of reaching at least 30,000 hungry gamers. Hope this is useful.

D Garbutt, Hull

A video is a good idea, but I'd like to hear from Play readers as to what they'd think of having a well produced preview tape on the cover of Play, perhaps with a small surcharge on the price of the magazine? Let me know now and I'll see what I can do.

Dear Play,

Being an adult of 31 years and a racing game fanatic, realism and quality is important. So why are the current crop of steering wheel/pedal systems for the PlayStation of such low manufactured quality? The Gamester/Mad Catz, VRF1 and Performer steering wheels are all made out of lightweight cheap thin plastic and are very easy to break. I make this comparison because after trying out what is available for the PC, such as the Thrustmaster Brand Systems. It's a shame that nothing of this high quality is available for the PlayStation. The Thrustmaster systems are more expensive (£140), but they are made from better materials. After playing *GP2* with a Thrustmaster and then going home to my pathetic Mad Catz, I felt sick.

I'm not saying that the PSX steering wheels are rubbish, it's just that they are only adequate for kids. Since we adults do make up a large percentage of PlayStation owners do you think there is a market for such high spec hardware on the PlayStation? And one more thing. Why do manufacturers place the gear stick on the right side of the wheel?

Richard Gordan, London

PC steering wheels are indeed far better made, but manufacturers of console peripherals seem to think that £150 for one accessory is a bit much, especially since it's almost the same price as the hardware. PCs cost thousands of pounds and so the odd video card or steering wheel for a couple of hundred is perfectly acceptable. The games are also on the whole cheaper. Only a tiny proportion of PlayStation owners want to own a steering wheel, and of them, an even smaller percentage would be prepared to pay £150. It's sadly just not worth it, although there maybe a small cottage industry out there that does provide this kind of equipment, and if so, please get in contact with us now so that we can put you in touch with Play readers.

Dear Play,

First I would like to say how good your magazine is, but issue 17 hurt me a lot as I am a vampire and the preview you did on *Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain* upset me. I am only 100 years old, so I'm still young, but I've seen the two world wars, prime ministers come and go – the lot. So I'd like to give you some facts on us vamps.

1. The sun does kill us, but a light bulb doesn't.
2. Crucifixs don't kill us.
3. Stakes do, but they'd kill you too.
4. Holy water or any water doesn't kill us.
5. We do drink blood (not just young virgins though).
6. We cannot transform into bats, wolves, mist or any other thing.
7. Some of us sleep in coffins. I do.

I Better go, the sun's coming up.

Jamie "vamp" Hagland

Yes, I suppose it was only a matter of time before letters like this started slipping under the door at midnight. Look mate if you were really a vampire then in all those years you would have learned to spell wouldn't you? Now away with you before I subject you to my appalling Peter Cushing impression.

Dear Play,

Words cannot describe how fantastically refreshing and enjoyable your magazine is, especially when compared to the remaining tripe on the market, but... yes there is a but, your reviewers do seem to go over-the-top when dishing out Play classics. In your own words they are an essential purchase.

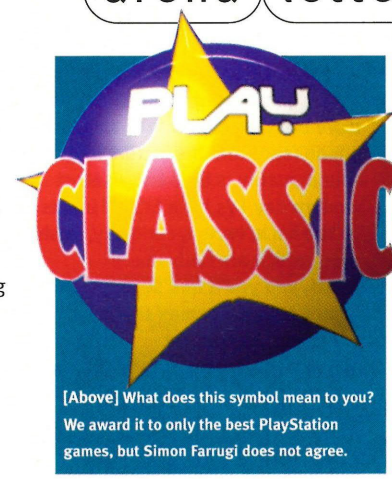
I know review scores don't always suit everybody's tastes, but when it is an essential purchase, it should appeal, in some shape or form, to any fan of the genre. Now I love platform games and so after seeing *Pandemonium*'s lush graphics and smooth scrolling I was impressed. You must have been too because it got 90%. So on the strength of its 'Classic' rating I decided to purchase it straight away.

Are you sure you played the game, and didn't just look at it as I did? After mailing off for the game and playing it for an hour, I began to wonder. You did say it was slightly easy, but I had nearly completed it after a few hours. With its dull (yet graphically impressive) levels I saw no point in continuing with the game and so was left with a mini Frisbee.

Please, please, please be more careful in giving games a 'Classic' rating in future. You are usually spot on, such as with *Soul Edge* and *Rage Racer*, but you should ALWAYS be right.

Simon Farrugi, Hillingdon

PS How about a few pages of exchange and mart for our old games? I'm sure you could do this by charging a little for an advert, or even making it FREE for subscribers.



[Above] What does this symbol mean to you? We award it to only the best PlayStation games, but Simon Farrugi does not agree.

The Classic award is only given out to games we feel deserve it, and at the time, the reviewer felt that *Pandemonium* justified the score. Because of strict deadlines and late arrival of software during each month, it is sometimes not possible for the entire team to play each game and give their comments. When this happens, you just have to trust the integrity of the reviewer. You may feel that *Pandemonium* was not fit to spin in your PlayStation, but there are a great many people who were quite happy with it.

You cannot please all of the people all of the time, and the best way to avoid being disappointed is to try before you buy. However, by the sound of it you can only get games via mail order. In this case, why not call up the Play reader line (01202) 200288 AFTER 5pm only (if at any other time we will giggle down the phone at you) and we'll tell you if the game you are thinking of buying is right for you. Can't say fairer than that – and I think you'll find we are the only magazine to offer this service.

Dear Play,

I am a very skint student and also a prospective PSX owner (a bad combination eh?), and there are a few points I am unsure of. I would appreciate some guidance.

1. SCART leads. What are they? What do they do? Is it worth getting one?
2. Is there a second hand market for PlayStations and the software.
3. Finally, I would like to know if there are any companies that can repair damaged PlayStations if there is an accident?

Leon Huner, no address given

1. A SCART lead is a multi-pin lead which carries a far more complex signal than simple phono leads and the picture and sound quality is thus better. Most modern day TVs have SCART inputs on the back, except, curiously, Bush ones, which are rubbish.
2. Yes, and you'll find second hand games in many games shops up and down the country.
3. Sony will repair your PlayStation under warranty if it is a new machine, otherwise you should check out import and electrical shops in your area. Common problems would be mis-aligned lasers and blown fuses.

Dear Play,

Issue 17 had an excellent preview of *Resident Evil 2* with some really tantalising screenshots, but my excitement was dulled severely at reading one of the captions which confirmed rumours I had heard that the game might be censored for the official release in the UK. There is no bigger fan of the original game than me, and I can't describe how upset I am at the possibility that the sequel may only be available to us in a diluted version.

Apart from video games my other main interest happens to be horror films and as other fans will appreciate, I can tell you that watching a butchered movie is a humiliating and frustrating experience. With video games, not only do we have to wait longer for titles, but when we actually get them (or if we get them, as in the case of *Overblood* and *Clock Tower 2*) we have to pay £45 for a slower letter-boxed version of a game that is available for far less money in Japan. Now, we may have to add censorship to the list of indignities and be denied the luxury of a full uncut version of *Resident Evil 2*.

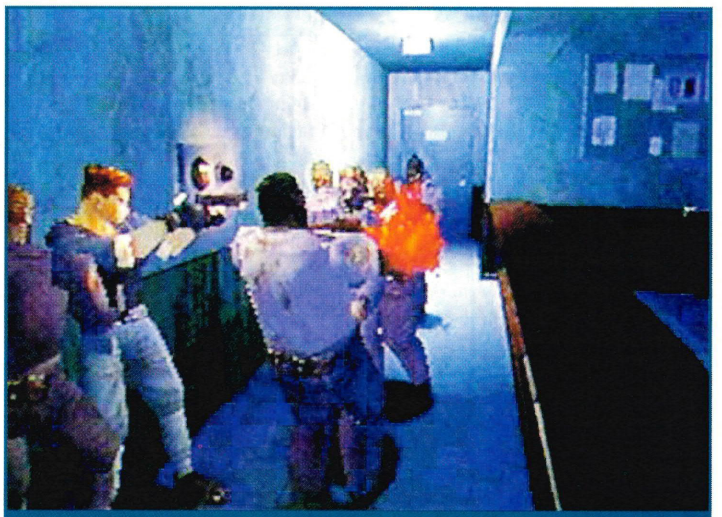
Capcom, who I presume would be responsible for carrying out potential cuts, needs to recognise that the explicit nature of the graphics in *Resident Evil* was integral to the success of the game – without it, the sheer visceral impact of the combat sequences and much of the atmosphere in general would have been lost. And the same will hold true for the sequel. Capcom is obviously worried that young children will get hold of the game and be corrupted by it. It's clear that the "evil video games" nonsense from years ago, with the tabloid-friendly *Mortal Kombat*, has not ended.

But surely Capcom realises that such a sophisticated game will not be played by youngsters? By giving it a 15 certificate they can help to ensure this. In fact it's common knowledge that the PlayStation and most of its games appeal to, and are marketed towards, a more mature audience (18+) than other systems. So if they censor *Resident Evil 2*, let them do it to the Sega version instead. I am so determined to play the proper version of it that if the official release contains cuts, then I will buy a Japanese or American console and an imported copy of the game.

I remember reading an interview with the creators of *Resident Evil* who said that the game was heavily influenced by an Italian film from 1979 called *Zombie Flesh Eaters*, which can only be seen in this country in an almost worthless censored version. It would be a sad irony if *Resident Evil 2* was to meet with the same fate as the film which inspired it.

Imaad Shan, London

An incredibly well conceived and intelligent letter, Imaad, with plenty of active points. Firstly, many thanks for your praise for young master Nicholson's preview of *RE2* – rest assured that the smug git now has an even more swollen head. On the subject of the game's censorship, well it has not been confirmed that the game will be cut (in fact nothing about *RE2* has been confirmed at all – including the release date!), but it is very likely given its history. Yes *RE* did have some of the more grotesque bits cut (the full zombie eating neck scene right at the start of the game for instance), and for sure this diminished its impact, but there seems no way to curb this pointless trend. We can bang on until we're blue in the face about degrading the art form, but just when you think the do-gooders haven't got a leg to stand on, some moron goes out and acts out a scene from a game in real life. Not because they were directly influenced, but because they are mentally unbalanced. I too am annoyed by censorship of any kind, and it is totally naive to subscribe to the philosophy that if you bleep out a few swear words, the world becomes a better place. *Splatterhouse 2* on the Mega Drive featured a scene where you chainsaw'd mutant babies to death,



[Above] Will the kill-joys censor the gloopy bits in *Resident Evil 2* as they did in the first game? Imaad Shan wants to know.

but even though the console was aimed at kids, it was not cut, which proves that giant image-conscious companies such as Sega can give us gamers what we want sometimes. In all probability *RE2* will be cut, although you'd need a Japanese PlayStation and game to play the uncensored version because the Americans are more paranoid about this kind of thing than we are. Finally, it is interesting what you say about *Zombie Flesh Eaters* as I saw the original before the Video Nasties outbreak in the mid Eighties and I was horrified upon watching the retail version to see so many classic scenes hacked to pieces. The eyeball, the corpse banquet and the arm chomp – all gone. If this happens to the game, what's the point of releasing it. Capcom might as well keep churning out *Puzzle Fighter* games.

Dear Play,

I enjoy your magazine on a monthly basis and think it's the best on the market, but I've got a couple of questions that need answering. First of all, in issue 16 you said you would be reviewing *Jet Moto* in issue 17. Then in issue 17 in the games introduction it said *Jet Rider* on page 56, but on page 56 there was only a feature on link-up games. What happened to the *Jet Rider* review?

A loyal reader

Sorry, but Sony promised us a copy of the game for that issue but it arrived too late and the games introduction page had already gone to the printers. Our wrists are now stinging from all the slapping.

Dear Play,

I am quite perturbed, pained, puzzled, piqued and pissed off that Electronic Arts has not yet released *Wing Commander IV* on PlayStation. It said in issue six of your magazine that it would be released in July, then it was changed to December, but it's still not out! Why is this and when will it be released?

Stuart Balmer, Lossiemouth

Although we have received no official confirmation from EA, we believe that *Wing IV* will be finally released in April. Maybe.

Dear Play,

I am writing in regards to *FIFA '97* as I can't understand why it has been rubbished by most magazines. I've found it to be the best soccer game on the PSX, with so much choice between over 60 international teams plus all the major European leagues. The actual gameplay can be very realistic with some intelligent goalkeeping. There's also the transfers, which means the game can always remain up-to-date. The only possible let-down is the penalty shoot-outs.

Jon Doe, Dublin

And that ladies and gentlemen is a bogus letter sent by the Electronic Arts PR department we presume.

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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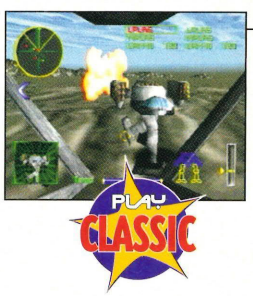
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BEAT-'EM-UPS



GAME	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	REVIEW DATE	REVIEW SCORE
1. Soul Edge (import)	Namco	Sony	March '97	96%
2. Tekken 2	Namco	Sony	May '96	95%
3. Street Fighter Zero 2 (import)	Capcom	Capcom	Oct '96	94%
4. Tobal No.1 (import)	SquareSoft	Sony	Oct '96	94%
5. Mortal Kombat Trilogy	Williams	GT Interactive	Dec '96	92%
6. Star Gladiator	Capcom	VIE	Feb '97	88%
7. Street Fighter Alpha	Capcom	Capcom/VIE	May '96	93%
8. Tekken	Namco	Sony	Nov '95	95%
9. Darkstalkers	Capcom (Japan)	Capcom/VIE	Aug '96	88%
10. MK3	Williams	Sony	Nov '95	93%

FIRST PERSON PERSPECTIVE SHOOT-'EM-UPS



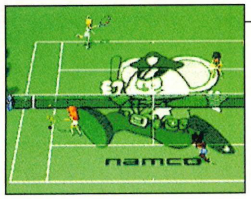
1. Mechwarrior 2	Activision	Activision	Easter '97	91%
2. Doom	id Softwave	GT Interactive	Jan '96	93%
3. Alien Trilogy	Probe	Acclaim	Easter '96	91%
4. Disruptor	Universal Interactive	Interplay	Dec '96	87%
5. Magic Carpet	Krisalis/Bullfrog	Bullfrog/EA	Apr '96	90%
6. Tunnel B1	Neon	Ocean	Aug '96	87%
7. Descent	Interplay	Interplay	Apr '96	85%
8. PO'ed	Studio3Do	Warner Interactive	May '96	87%
9. Shellshock	Core Design	Core Design	Apr '96	85%
10. Krazy Ivan	Psygnosis	Psygnosis	Feb '96	90%

ARCADE SHOOT-'EM-UPS



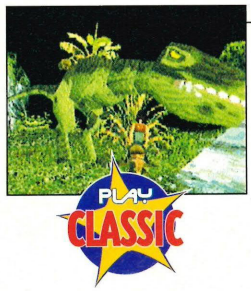
1. Die Hard Trilogy	Probe	Fox Interactive	Aug '96	93%
2. Twisted Metal 2	Single Trac	Sony	Feb '97	88%
3. Soviet Strike	EA	EA	Dec '96	83%
4. Tempest X3	Interplay	Interplay	Feb '97	86%
5. X2	Team 17	Team 17	Jan '97	77%
6. Crusader	EA	EA	Apr '97	80%
7. Project Overkill	KCEC	Konami	Nov '96	89%
8. Gunship	MicroProse	MicroProse	Jun '96	90%
9. Loaded	Gremlin Interactive	Gremlin Interactive	Nov '95	85%
10. Starfighter 3000	Krisalis	Telstar	Jun '96	85%

Sports Sims



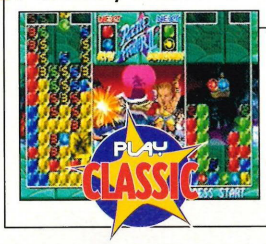
Game	Developer	Publisher	Review Date	Review Score
1. Smash Court Tennis	**Namco**	**Sony**	**Feb '97**	**86%**
2. Total NBA '96	Sony	Sony	Mar'96	94%
3. Olympic Soccer	Silicon Dreams	US Gold	Jul '96	84%
4. Int Superstar Soccer Deluxe	Konami	Konami	Mar '97	83%
5. Actua Golf	Gremlin Interactive	Gremlin Interactive	Aug '96	88%
6. Int Track & Field	Konami Japan	Konami	Jul '96	85%
7. Victory Boxing	JVC	JVC	Nov '96	90%
8. Actua Soccer	Gremlin Interactive	Gremlin Interactive	Feb '96	94%
9. Sampras Extreme	Codemasters	Codemasters	Jul '96	90%
10. CoolBoarders	UEP Systems	Sony	Feb '97	82%

Strategy/Adventure Games



1. Tomb Raider	**Core Design**	**Eidos Interactive**	**Dec '96**	**94%**
2. Resident Evil	Capcom	VIE	Jun '96	95%
3. Fade to Black	Delphine	EA	Jul '96	90%
4. X-Com: Terror from the Deep	MicroProse	MicroProse	Jan '97	88%
5. Suikoden	Konami	Konami	Feb '97	80%
6. Little Big Adventure	Adeline	EA	Easter '97	83%
7. Space Hulk	Key Games	EA	Aug '96	84%
8. Broken Sword	Revolution	Sony	Dec '96	84%
9. Command & Conquer	Westwood Studios	VIE	Feb '97	79%
10. Blood Omen: LOK	Silicon Knights	BMGie	Apr '97	81%

Puzzle/Party Games



1. Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo	**Capcom**	**Capcom (import)**	**Apr '97**	**90%**
2. Bust-A-Move 2	Taito	Acclaim	Jun '96	888%
3. Bubble Bobble	Probe	Acclaim	Sep '96	85%
4. Pro Pinball	Empire	Empire	Aug '96	90%
5. Worms	Team 17/Ocean	Team 17/Ocean	Nov '95	92%
6. Namco Museum Vol 3	Namco	Sony	Nov '96	73%
7. Hebereke's Popitto	Sunsoft	Marubeni	Dec '95	43%

Racing Games



1. Rage Racer (import)	**Namco**	**Namco**	**Feb '97**	**94%**
2. The Need for Speed	EA	EA	Apr '96	94%
3. Micro Machines V3	Codemasters	Codemasters	Easter '97	91%
4. Rally Cross	Sony US	Sony	Easter '97	89%
5. Wipeout 2097	Psygnosis	Psygnosis	Nov '96	93%
6. Formula 1	Psygnosis	Psygnosis	Sep '96	94%
7. Jet Rider	Single Trac	Sony	Apr '97	85%
8. Ridge Racer Revolution	Namco	Sony	May '96	90%
9. Destruction Derby 2	Psygnosis	Psygnosis	Dec '96	82%
10. Supersonic Racers	Supersonic Software	Mindscape	Sep '96	91%

Platformers



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

PLAYED OUT...

NEXT MONTH IN PLAY

REMEMBER THIS?

After numerous false starts, SYNDICATE WARS will finally arrive next issue. How are we so certain? Well it's because we're playing it right now. Join us for the definitive opinion in issue 20...

PLUS!

PORSCHE CHALLENGE

The controversial review!

And also: *Soccer '97, Total NBA '97, Test Drive Off-Road, Spider, Bushido Blade, Tim Crisis, Soul Blade, Tobal 2, Powerslide*, lots more car games, some beat-'em-ups, and a whole lot more cool stuff. Do not miss it!



PLAY ISSUE 20, ON SALE 10 APRIL, DON'T MISS IT!

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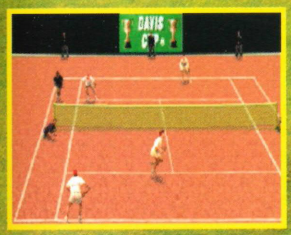
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