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BUSHIDO BLADE

FIRST IMPORT REVIEW!

The first cuts close, the second even closer...

PORSCHE CHALLENGE

FULL REVIEW! Can Sony teach *Rage Racer* a thing or two?

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PlayStation Power

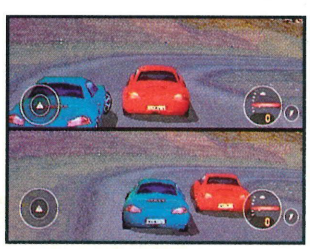
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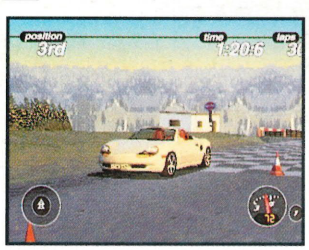
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Q: WHAT HAS

THE LOST WORLD



GOT TO DO WITH

SYNDICATE WARS



AND WHERE DOES

BUSHIDO BLADE



FIT IN?

[A: THEY'RE ALL IN THIS ISSUE OF PLAY!]

LIFEFORCE TENKA

20 The best 3-D shoot-'em-up on the PlayStation so far? Could be. Join us for the definitive review...

THE BIG GAME



5 WAYS TO CONTACT PLAY!

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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 second part of a great big *Soul Blade* tips special – every move of every character explained!

[STATION MASTER]
70 The very best solutions every month. Maps, cheats, tips and your gaming queries answered.

LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE	72
RALLY CROSS	76
BLOOD OMEN	78

[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 twenty

UK's Fastest Growing PLAYSTATION Magazine!

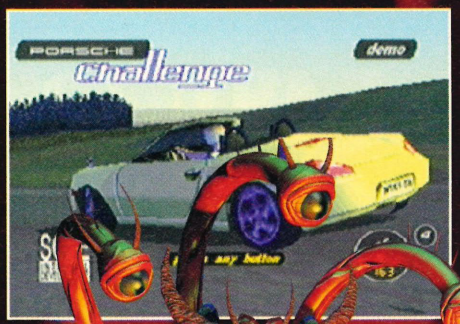


LOST WORLD

06 *Jurassic Park 2* is a PlayStation game and we've got news of it first!

PORSCHE CHALLENGE

54 Full review of Sony's great new racing game. Is it straight into top gear or lacking a few bhp?



BUSHIDO BLADE

38 The most brutal and realistic weapons game ever made! Fact.



SYNDICATE WARS

80 We have the PlayStation version in the office – yes it's good, yes it's lived up to the hype.





WIN!

17 A camcorder worth £650 with Electronic Arts and Little Big Adventure!

BLADESTATION

41 Win a totally unique BladeStation with PLAY magazine! The only one in existence and it could be yours!

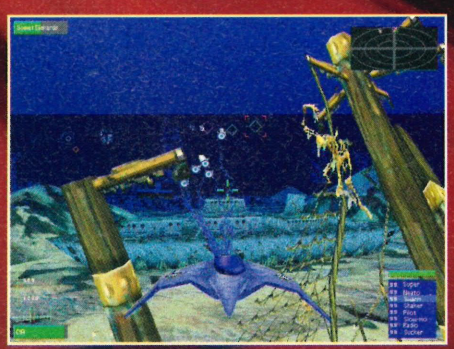
EXHUMED

58 Holy hanging bandages! We review the latest 3-D shoot-'em-up from BMG – pistols at dawn or run home to mummy?

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!

CRITICAL DEPTH 26



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.

SYNDICATE WARS 80
K1 ARENA FIGHTERS 82
WAR GODS 83
DARKLIGHT CONFLICT 84
TOTAL DRIVIN' 86
WING IV 87
WCW VS THE WORLD 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.

LIFEFORCE TENKA 20
TOTAL NBA '97 32
JONAH LOMU RUGBY 36
BUSHIDO BLADE 38
SPIDER 42
COOL SPOT 46
PORSCHE CHALLENGE 54
EXHUMED 59
SPEEDSTER 62
TOKYO HIGHWAY BATTLE 66
SOCCER '97 67



ANOTHER GREAT month to be a PlayStation owner. The N64 has only now just managed to get appear in the shops again, PlayStations are down to £129 and are literally flying off the shelves, the Platinum range is doing ten to the dozen – PLAY is selling buckets. Yes indeed, it's a time for celebration.

This month in PLAY we've got some truly great reviews. *Porsche Challenge* came in right at the start of the schedule and so we've been playing it for ages; it's like an old friend now. In contrast *Tenka* stormed in right at the last minute with no instruction manual and very little enthusiasm from Psygnosis, but we still thought it deserved serious attention. You may have read reviews of this game in other magazines already, but we have it on good authority that they hardly bothered to play the thing!

Racing games still continue to flood the office, with no sign of abating despite *Rage Racer* holding onto its crown with grim determination. The *Need for Speed 2* just missed this issue, so we hope they are taking the time to make it just right. If EA cock this one up, then we will not talk to them again; such is our devotion to the original game.

Turn to page 28 and you'll find a feature on steering wheels. We thought it was time to tell you exactly which one to buy and how much they can enhance your gamesplaying. Nowadays, when an analogue compatible game comes it, we immediately slap on the wheel and check it out. In the case of Porsche Challenge, it makes the game infinitely more playable.

Many thanks for choosing PLAY magazine, the only PlayStation mag which is actually fun to read. We don't rely on a poxy coverdisk and we are 100% independent, which means you always get a totally unbiased view of the PlayStation world.

Damian Butt
Managing editor

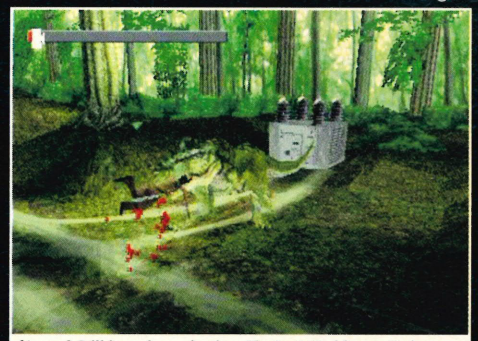
PLAYSTAT wire

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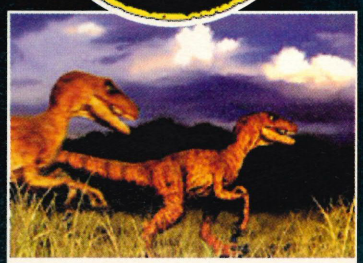
SPIELBERG'S LOST IT!

JURASSIC PARK, that was quite a successful film wasn't it? Well you may have heard of Steven Spielberg's intentions to release the sequel, *The Lost World*, due out in the cinemas this summer, but did you also now there was going to be a PlayStation game? No, neither did we. However, this month PLAY received a package from Dreamworks with some information and the first pictures of the game and it looks fantastic.

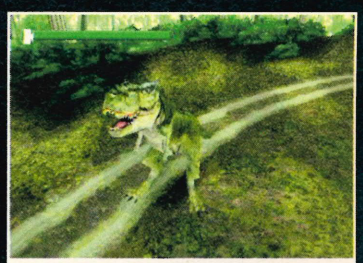
Little is known about the actual gameplay, but it is viewed slightly higher than *Tomb Raider* and although most of the shots show a first person perspective, this is not the way you see the majority of the game. Most impressive of all are the dinosaurs which put the T-Rex in *TR* to shame and were created using something called Morf-X technology. There is also talk of you being able to play one of five characters – including a small reptilian creature called a Compy (which feature heavily in the book), and even a T-Rex. Now that would be something. More news on this hot title when the film hits the UK. We have heard that EA will be releasing it.



[ABOVE] **Still in early production, *The Lost World* nevertheless contains many cool features – like playing a T-Rex for example.**



[ABOVE] **The game will contain plenty of rendered scenes showing dinosaurs mucking about.**



[ABOVE] **The graphics in the game are quite superb and rendered using Dreamworks' Morf-X technology. Whatever that means...**

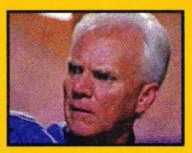
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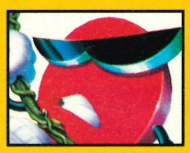
DAMIAN BUTT

If he's not complaining about how slow *Porsche Challenge* turned out to be, our leader is busy plugging in the steering wheel for another go on *Rage Racer*. The guy's obsessed! **play@paragon.co.uk.**



GRAEME NICHOLSON

Graeme had to take home *Tenka* this issue, a game which fits into his flat perfectly, as it is dark and occasionally lethal. He also fish-tailed a lot in *Speedster*. Tch. **silencio@paragon.co.uk**

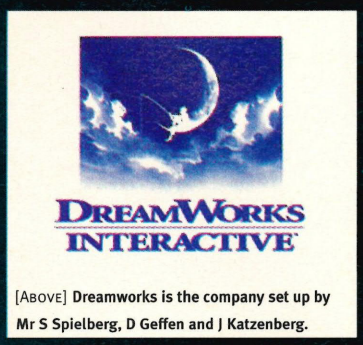


TOM SARGENT

This month if Tom wasn't raving about the control system in *Total NBA '97*, or trying to convince us to play him at *Soccer '97*, he was dreaming of watching *Star Wars: Special Edition*. **tomsargent@paragon.co.uk**



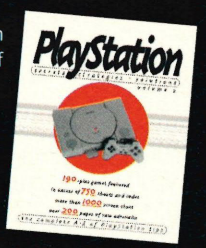
[ABOVE] **Unlike the appaling Amiga and Super NES *Jurassic Park* games, this one looks good.**



[ABOVE] **Dreamworks is the company set up by Mr S Spielberg, D Geffen and J Katzenberg.**

WET WIPE YOUR PLAYSTATION!

DIRTY disks can now be officially cleaned thanks to the latest Sony peripheral, the Sony Disk Wipe. Inside each packet are two white spirit-scented towels which can be used to wipe across the surface of the CD to clean and maintain them. And hey kids, you can also use the empty cardboard box to store CD cases – wow, the versatility of this thing. Sony Disk Wipes are out now priced £1.99. The first PLAY reader to send us one in the post with their name and address written on one wins a copy of our very own tips tome: PLAYSTATION SECRETS, STRATEGIES AND SOLUTIONS VOL 2, on sale now for £14.95.





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.

Rumour station overload! Apparently the Sega Saturn version of Bullfrog's *Syndicate Wars* has been dropped because of poor sales forecasts. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Tough luck Saturn owners!

HudsonSoft will apparently be announcing eight new PlayStation titles soon, possibly including *Super Bomberman*. Oh yes!

We have heard that Mindscape is already working on a sequel to the hit mini-racing game, *Supersonic Racers*, due for release in October. The new game will feature more extreme tracks and totally different cars and characters.

Secret industry news this month revealed that there might indeed be a *Star Wars* inspired beat-'em-up coming to the PlayStation. Probably.



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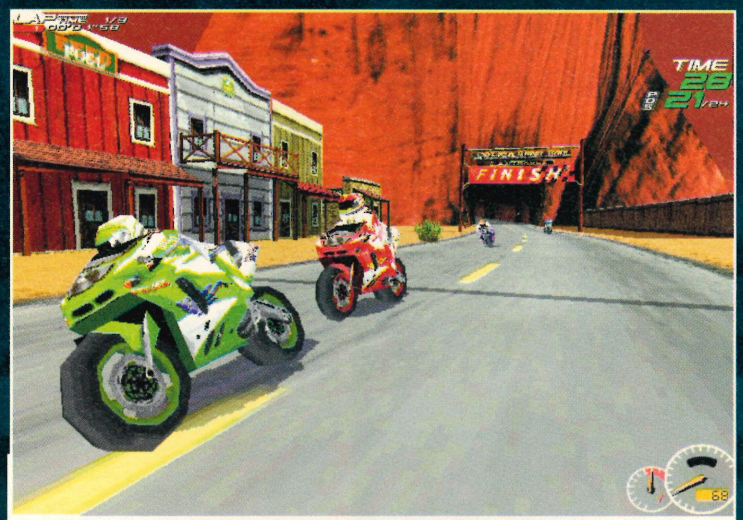
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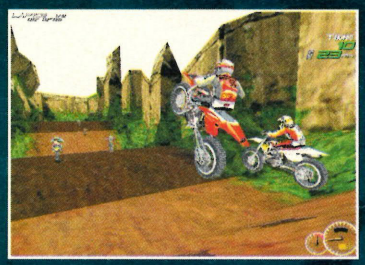
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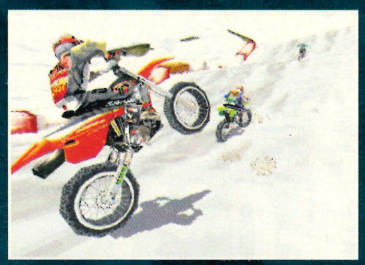
NEW RACER FROM EA

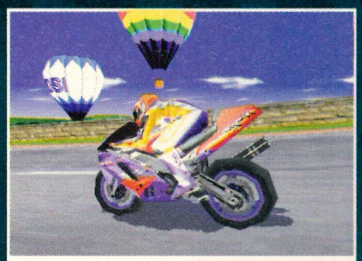
MOTO RACER is being developed by Delphine (the makers of *Fade to Black*) in France and aims to combine the high speed thrills of superbike racing with the rough and tumble of motor cross. As you can see the game looks very special and there will be nine courses, all of which feature different surfaces to test your skills. We have high hopes for this game, especially as we have already seen the split screen two player mode. As yet there is no definitive bike racing game on PlayStation, and *Moto Racer* aims to hold Sega's mighty *TT Racer* at bay. *Moto Racer* will be released on 11 July and we'll have a full review and interview with the programmers soon.



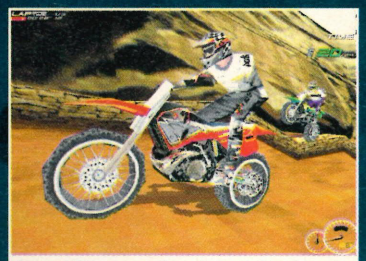
[ABOVE] ***Moto Racer*** **not only features motor cross dirt bikes, but also high powered nutter race bikes like these. Two types of gameplay, twice the fun – we can't wait.**







[ABOVE] **At the moment all there is to see is the almost finished PC game, but not for long...**



[ABOVE] **This game offers all the thrills of *MotoX*, but with a more realistic race engine.**

ARMOURED CORE

FROMSOFTWARE was last seen producing the *King's Field* series on PlayStation, but now we've heard news of their new game, *Armoured Core*. The game looks most like *Krazy Ivan*, but it features bright and textured graphics and more importantly, a split screen two player mode. An interesting feature is that not only can you build up your exoskeletons before mission, you can also pick up bits strewn throughout the battlefield and bolt them on too.



[ABOVE] **A big selling point is the split screen two player mode. Excellent fun.**

The multi-player mode also works with two TVs and two PlayStations and first reports state that they both run at EXACTLY the same speed. *Armoured Core* looks promising indeed and we'll have more information on it soon, together with the first import review naturally.



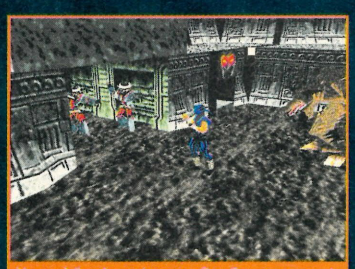
[ABOVE] ***Armoured Core*** **offers more big robot action than *Krazy Ivan*, and is even more textured than the recent Mechwarrior 2.**

NINJA – DELAYED!

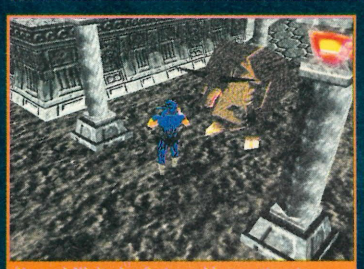
FOLLOWING the mad success of *Tomb Raider*, Core is working hard to keep the momentum going on its new found and thoroughly deserved reputation for excellence. Among the most promising of these titles is *Ninja*. While *Ninja* may resemble *Tomb Raider*. The emphasis here is on action and not so much on exploration. According to Core, there will be enemies on almost every screen. Consisting of over ten levels, Ninja will have indoor and outdoor levels and some with a combination of the two. The game still has a dynamic camera, but due to the emphasis on action, players will not have control over it. The bad news is that *Ninja* has now been delayed until 1998, most probably because Core wants to get *Tomb Raider 2* out before Christmas and it needs all available resources. This is great shame because *Ninja* was our UK hope for competing with *Bushido Blade*. Now it probably won't arrive until *Bushido Blade 2*.



[ABOVE] ***Ninja*** **– the UK answer to *Bushido Blade*? Certainly looks that way.**



[ABOVE] **Core's next game after *Swagman* was to be *Ninja* – unfortunately it's been delayed...**



[ABOVE] ***Ninja*** **also features big monsters to fight, like this bear/ demon/ carpet.**

"THE SEQUEL TO THE WORLD'S FINEST BASKETBALL SIM"

Official PlayStation Magazine

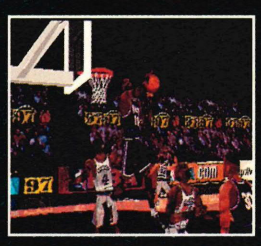
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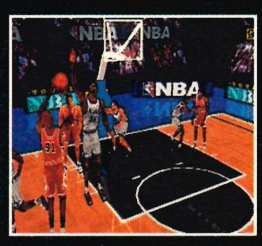
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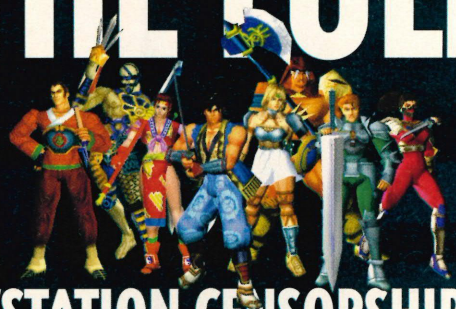
NBA TOTAL NBA'97



PlayStation

DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION

SOUL BLADE – THE FULL UNCUT STORY!



THE WHO, WHERE, WHAT AND WHY OF PLAYSTATION CENSORSHIP...

Now that we have the official copy of *Soul Blade* (which is due to be released on 9 May beat-'em-ups fans), we thought it would be the perfect time to fill you in on the differences with the import version, those infamous cuts, and of course how it plays on a PAL machine. As part of our mandate to review all import software, we must of course give you updates on how they turn out when they eventually arrive in the UK. Hopefully one day all software will achieve simultaneous worldwide release dates. We can only dream...

The most important thing to mention first is that yes, *Soul Blade* has been subtly cut to get an official rating in the UK, and it is also believed that the American version of the game is identical. The first change concerns the intro sequence, which apart from being absolutely stunning (and incredibly long – Ed) features Sophitia seen from behind rising naked from the water.

This section is not gratuitous in any way, but it would seem that many felt that a bottom crevice would incite PlayStation owners to riot, and so Sophitia now sports a white swimming costume.

The other major change concerns Li Long who in the import version uses nunchakkas, which consists of two sticks held together with a chain. In the UK this type of weapon is banned from all media by the BBFC (ask anyone with a Bruce Lee film) and so Namco had to chance Li Long's weapons into extended floppy rods. The moves are still the same though, even the one where he spins his tool on the end of this foot which is actually impossible when you look at the weapon itself.

The game certainly seems as fast the Japanese version, although there are slight borders at the top and bottom of the screen. All other moves, including Taki's vicious throat slash are still in the game (and we know 'cos we've tested the lot!).

Soul Blade is still definitely an essential official purchase, but it is just another example of meaningless censorship for the sake of it. *Resident Evil* was cut to ribbons, and who knows how many other lower profile games suffer the same treatment? Surely us official owners already have to put up with big delays between release, borders and slowdown – must we also have cut down versions too? Tell us what you think.

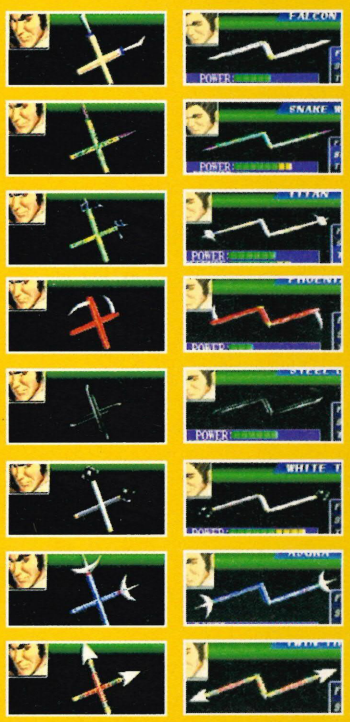


[ABOVE] **Everything else about the game remains intact, including big boss, Soul Edge.**

WHY THE LONG FACE?

LI LONG faces the most cuts in Soul Blade due to his nunchakka stick weapons being banned by the BBFC. Check out these sanitised replacements compared to the original Japanese ones. We should stress that they don't make any difference to the gameplay though.

BEFORE **AFTER**











[ABOVE] **Although Sophitia has her nakedness covered in the intro sequence, you can still see her with practically nothing on as a secret character.**

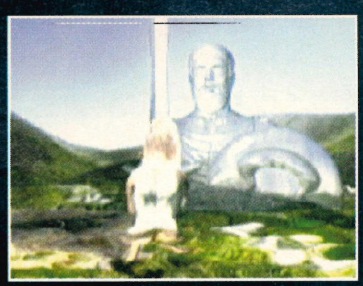
SHOCK, HORROR!

Sophitia in mysteriously appearing swimming costume scandal! Well here it is, the moment where saucy *Soul Blade* character Sophitia (24) was masked by Namco for Western eyes. In the original she's naked before the God of the sea, but to avoid parents complaining all over the world she has been covered up for the official version. Which do you prefer (don't answer that)?

JAPANESE VERSION



OFFICIAL VERSION



PLATINUM ADS – GOOD OR WHAT?

FOR SUCH an adult machine, the advertising for the Sony PlayStation has always been, let's face it, crap. Way back for the release of the machine we had to put up with Dwight P Dibley, the grinning frontman of the Society Against PlayStation (S.A.P.S) who tried to persuade us that the PlayStation was too 'dangerous' for us to use. This clever bit of anti-advertising could have worked were it not for the fact that the goofy Dibley and the bright game images appealed to exactly the wrong kind of audience. PlayStations at the time were being bought by adults, and yet the promotional rollercoaster seemed to be aimed fairly and squarely at kids. Ironically, Sega's Saturn campaign featured the kind of cool images that appealed to PSX owners (who could forget the one for *Daytona?*), but Sega's market was always much younger. Wires were obviously crossed.

Since S.A.P.S we've had all manner of bizarre mini-movies, most notably the *Crash Bandicoot* 'escaped nutter' and *Tekken 2* 'martial arts arts meet the *X-Files*' concepts. Now at last with the Platinum range Sony has got it right, with a great blend of the surreal and the humourous. Currently showing in prime time is the middle-aged black soothsayer who constantly mumbles on about "1999" and how it will be of significance to everyone. Well done Sony, this advert is excellent, as is the one for *Soul Blade* showing all sorts of psychic powers being used in an Arthur C Clarke's-style documentary. It's taken two years, but for the first time us PlayStation owners don't have to wince every time our ad comes on the telly. Your views please.



[ABOVE] **Excellent new "1999" Platinum adverts mark a new high for Sony.** [INSET] **Dwight P Dibley from S.A.P.S. "Dodgy."**

NEW F1 GAME!

JUST BEFORE this issue went to press we had EXCLUSIVE news of a new officially licenced Formula 1 game from Eidos. *F1* (working title) looks amazing, and is being developed by French coders Lankhor, who produced an F1 game on the Mega Drive. The game looks to be just as detailed as Psygnosis' blockbuster, but even more realistic. A big feature on this next month!







CHARTS

In association with ChartTrack

Pos	Game	Developer	Publisher	Play Score
1.	Destruction Derby	Psygnosis	Platinum	86% (old)
2.	Ridge Racer	Namco	Platinum	93% (old)
3.	Tekken	Namco	Platinum	95% (old)
4.	Blood Omen:LOK	Silicon Knights	BMG	81%
5.	Wipe Out	Psygnosis	Platinum	94% (old)
6.	Tomb Raider	Core Design	Eidos Int	94%
7.	Air Combat	Namco	Platinum	79% (old)
8.	CoolBoarders	UEP Systems	Sony	82%
9.	Destruction Derby 2	Reflections	Psygnosis	82%
10.	Die Hard Trilogy	Probe	EA/Fox	93%

READERS' MOST WANTED

VOTED BY THE PLAY READERS BY FAX, E-MAIL OR LETTER...

Pos	Game	Developer	Publisher
1.	Bushido Blade	Square	Sony
2.	Final Fantasy VII	Square	Sony
3.	Tomb Raider 2	Core Design	Eidos Int
4.	Rally Cross	Sony	Sony
5.	Time Crisis	NAmco	Sony



USA ENTERTAINMENT

ENTERTAINMENT USA



CAT BUCANNON brings you all the news on what's hot in the land of *Star Wars* box office records and Presidents with broken legs...

A great new game has emerged in the States. *Warcraft 2* by Blizzard entertainment is set to hit the PlayStation soon, perhaps by this summer. *Warcraft 2* is an overhead strategy/adventure game similar in appearance to Mindscape's *Warhammer*, and the series is well known on the PC as offering supreme challenge and longevity to devotees. Electronic Arts bought the console rights for any *Warcraft* games on PlayStation and so it seems likely that they will publish the game in the UK.



Suicide Run has just been shown over here by MGM Interactive. This is a shoot-'em-up with a control system very similar to *Robotron X* and you can even take over enemy droids and use their firepower to complete the game's 20 levels. It looks like good fun, but don't expect anything too brain cell-taxing. This is for adrenaline junkies only.



A word of warning for all you import buyers. *Independence Day* has just come out in the States and it's utter rubbish. Graphically it's a bit ropey, but it's also repetitive, jerky and lacks any innovation. Import copies are hard to get hold of, but I'm sending one to the PLAY guys so there should be a review next issue.



Many of Virgin Interactive Entertainment's licenced games here in the US are apparently being sold off to other publishers because the owner of VIE, Spelling, has cut its funding and written off $255 million of development costs in an effort to sell VIE off later in the year. Namco is apparently interested in a number of projects, perhaps *Treasures of the Deep* by Black Ops, which was featured in this column in issue 14 of Play. Huge losses on *Spot Goes to Hollywood* and *Heart of Darkness* are probably causes of the huge losses.



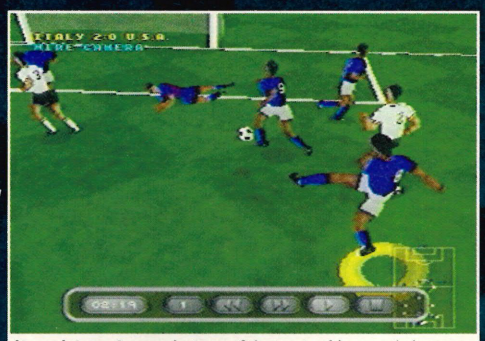
[ABOVE] Cat Bucannon – Looked a bit worse for wear last issue, but that was a printing error.



ANY MORE FOR BUDGET?

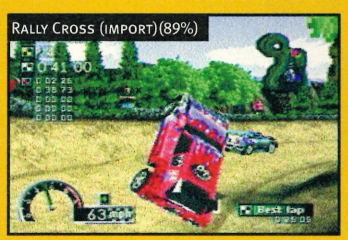
AS SPECULATED in last month's PLAY, many third party publishers are now considering moving into the PlayStation budget market following the overwhelming sales success of the Platinum range. As you can see from the charts compiled by Chart Track this month, the top three slots are occupied by Platinum games, and there are five in total in the top ten – something no-one could have predicted given the fact that many of the games now have much bigger and better sequels. *Destruction Derby* at number one must surely be due to the fact that it can be linked up, despite *DD2* being a more technically accomplished game.

So far Electronic Arts has been the first publisher outside of Sony to seriously consider a move to PlayStation budget, although it is unclear at this time whether the US company will publish the games themselves, or just sell the rights to Sony for inclusion in the Platinum range. EA has been incredibly successful on the PC side with budget games and titles under consideration on the PlayStation must include the likes of *PGA Tour Golf, FIFA '96 and Magic Carpet*, although surely *The Need for Speed* must be on the cards too. Meanwhile, Gremlin has revealed that both *Actua Soccer* and *Loaded* will join the Platinum range soon.



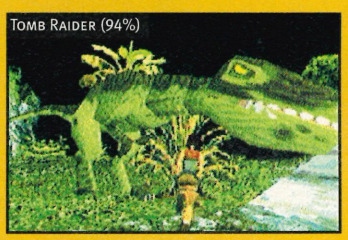
[ABOVE] ***Actua Soccer*** **– just one of the crusty old games being considered for rejuvenation in the Platinum range.**

PLAY RECOMMENDS...

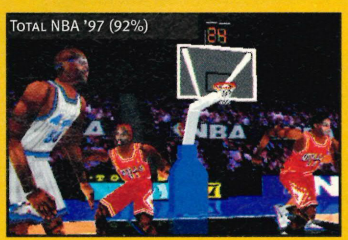








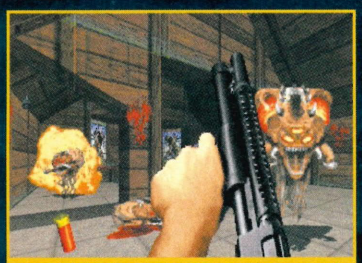




NUKEM ALL TO HELL!

JUST an update on what GT Interactive plans to release on the PlayStation this year. Unfortunately, the release dates for all these titles are still unconfirmed, but we do know that pretty much all will be out before the end of the year. First up is *Duke Nukem 3D*, a conversion of one of the PC's greatest 3-D shoot-'em-ups. It's laced with sick humour, features loads of realistic levels such as night clubs and a cinema, and the PSX conversion is looking mighty fine. *Tiger Shark* was featured many months ago in these very pages and it's a shoot-'em-up where you can plunge beneath the waves at certain points to fight the enemy. Review soon. Also from GT is *Area 51* which we still haven't had for a review despite the fact that it's out this month (draw your own conclusions). GT also has *Quake* of course, but a working version of that has not yet been seen by anybody...





[ABOVE] ***Duke Nukem 3D*** **– a *Doom* style game with plenty of sick humour which lampoons the genre.**



[ABOVE] **Shoot-'em-up fans should look forward to *Tiger Shark* – new from GT.**



[ABOVE] ***War Gods*** **is Midway's first 3-D beat-'em-up and we should have a review soon.**

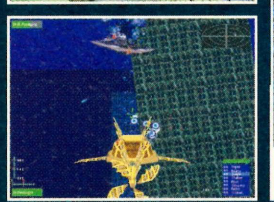


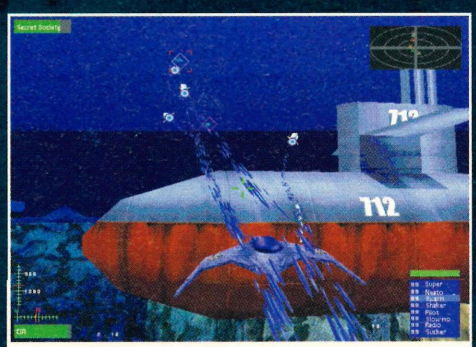
[ABOVE] ***Area 51*** **– we've had no review copy yet and it's out this month. Yikes!**

SINGLE TRAC GO IT ALONE!

SINGLE TRAC, the highly talented gameplay specialists behind *Twisted Metal 1&2* and *Jet Moto* has split from Sony Interactive and decided to go it alone. Bolstered by the phenomenal success of *Twisted Metal 2* in the US, Single Trac will now publish its own games in America and it means that its up-and-coming submarine-fest, *Critical Depth* (see a full report on page 26) can now be snapped up for release in the UK by anyone. Let's also not forget that there will also no doubt be *Twisted Metal 3* appearing later this year, plus another as yet undisclosed title. Great news for Single Trac then, but does this break from Sony mean that its games will now retail over here for more than Sony's own £34.99?





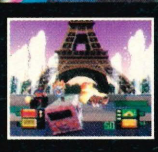


[ABOVE] ***Critical Depth*** **from Single Trac is featured on page 26. Well, go on, what are you waiting for?**



SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT





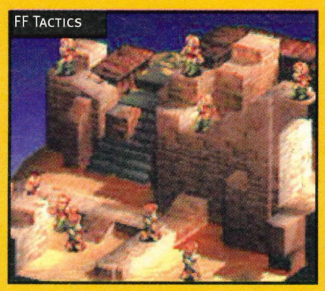
PlayStation

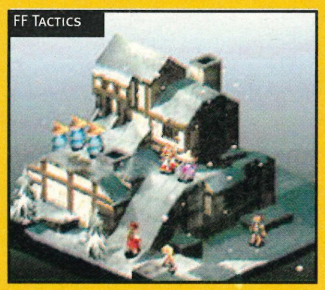
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JAPS EYE

Still set for a May release here in Japan is *Final Fantasy Tactics*, the strategy war game which uses the *Final Fantasy* universe as its inspiration. Viewed from an isometric perspective, just like the fight scenes in *FFVII*, each battle takes place on a 16x16 grid, and you can move all over the landscape to perhaps find a more strategic place to fight. If you are on a hill and your enemies are below for example, you stand a much better chance of hitting them. You will also be able to rotate the playing field so that you can always see what your characters are doing and whether or not they are going to be ambushed. *FF Tactics* boasts a new combat system which includes Charged Time Battle (CTB). What this basically means is that if you don't issue your commands in time, it moves on to the next character. Obviously this makes decision-making in the heat of the attack more tense. We'll have a more in-depth look hopefully next issue.


FF Tactics


FF Tactics

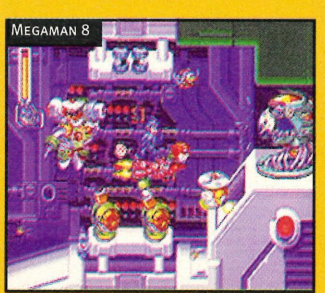
The Tokyo games show will have been held by the time you read this, but we'll have a full report on the games featured next issue. Namco, always a company you can guarantee to impress, is showing *Time Crisis*, *Ace Combat 2* and *Xevious 3D* for the PlayStation, but there is rumoured to be a secret game making a brief appearance on the last day.


Time Crisis

An interesting new game from developers Xing is the great sounding *Reciproheat 5000*, which is an aircraft racing game set over four varied stages. Little is known about this title other than it used *Sega Rally* as its inspiration (but it's planes!) and that it will be released around August time.


Reciproheat 5000

Finally don't forget that although *Megaman X3* is due out on PlayStation in Europe very soon, the much better *Megaman 8* is still in development by Capcom and is a proper 32-bit conversion of the classic NES and Super NES series. Expect ultra-colourful graphics, loads of on-screen sprites, and more platforming action than most mere humans can handle. Japanese release in the Winter.


Megaman 8

SURRENDER IS NOT AN OPTION!

Command & Conquer Red Alert

Westwood Studios' *Command & Conquer* sequel, *Red Alert* has been confirmed as being PlayStation-bound this month. Speculation about the game was rife among the console press after the release of the first game, but only now has it been confirmed. *Red Alert* is actually set before the first game in an alternate reality where World War II never happened. Instead of Hitler, the threat is Joseph Stalin and it's the Soviet forces you must conquer or campaign with. The new game features even more units, including ships, attack dogs, spies, V2 rockets and paratroopers, and naturally there will be lots more military hardware to play around with. The PC game was famed for its clever multi-player modes, but no news has leaked of whether this will be included in the PSX version. We hope so, as this was what marred *Command & Conquer* for us. More news soon.


[Above] ***C&C Red Alert*** **is now confirmed for PSX and features more varied terrain conditions.**


[Above] **You also get far more units and the whole game is more intelligent.**

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.

April/May

Actua Soccer Club (Gremlin)
Adidas Power Soccer Int (Psygnosis)
Area 51 (GT)
Battlestations (EA)
Bubble Bobble 2 (VIE)
Bubsy 3D (Telstar)
Crow: City of Angels (Acclaim)
Grand Slam '97 (VIE)
Crypt Killer (Konami)
GridRun (VIE)
Hyperblaster gun (Konami)
Independence Day (EA)
Jonah Lomu Rugby (Codemasters)
Little Big Adventure (EA)
Megaman X3 (VIE)
Perfect Weapon (EA)
Road Rage (Konami)
Soccer '97 (Eidos)
Swagman (Eidos)
Ten Pin Alley (EA)
Total Racing (Ocean)
Transport Tycoon (MicroProse)
Wing Commander IV (EA)
Wrecking Crew (Telstar)

AND THE SLIPPERS...

GAME (PUBLISHER)	WAS	NOW
Area 51	March	April
Soul Blade	April	9 May

DYNASTY WARRIORS

EXCITING NEW RIVAL TO *TEKKEN 3* EMERGES FROM KOEI!

***DYNASTY** Warriors* is similar to *Tekken 2* in look and style, but it's shaping up to be in a class of its own. The enormous amount of blocking and countering options gives the game an added of element of strategy often missing from fighting games. Those of you who rely on mashing the attack buttons are likely to get killed – fast. In *Dynasty Warriors*, a good defence makes for the best offence.

In keeping with Koei's past releases, *Dynasty Warriors* is rooted in actual historical events. In the late Han Dynasty of China, in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, warlords fought for control of China. *Dynasty Warriors* has taken these historical figures and recreated them in shaded and texture-mapped 3-D polygons. The strengths and weaknesses of each character have been modelled after historical data on the original warlords, as are the weapons they use.

In addition, the backgrounds of the fighting arenas are all taken from famous battle sights. While most games have you fighting for the right to be called Tournament Champion, *Dynasty Warriors* has you fighting for all of China.

Like Namco's *Soul Edge*, and Square's *Bushido Blade*, *Dynasty Warriors* is a weapons-based combat game, a sub-genre of the ever-popular beat-'em-up that looks set to eclipse the hand-to-hand side in the coming year.

Characters compete with swords, spears, pick-axes, and other hand-held weapons. In fact, there is little hand-to-hand combat at all.

The blocking system features a standard *Street Fighter 2*-style block , as well as a parry button and small side-step. You can also counter-strike, which, when done precisely at the same time as your opponent, causes the camera to spin wildly around the fighters while the weapons clang together. It really is spectacular.

Each of the 13 characters has his (and we do mean his, as there's only one female) own Key Power meter, that builds as you fight. Once it's reached its apex, you can pull off a special combo. There are also numerous regular combos each character can do.

Dynasty Warriors will be in pseudo-3-D, with a blistering 60fps. *Tobal No.1* also had this frame rate, but lacked the textures that *Dynasty Warriors* will have. This is an amazing feat for the PlayStation, and will ear-mark Warriors as the first PSX fighting game with heavily textured characters running at 60fps. More news soon.



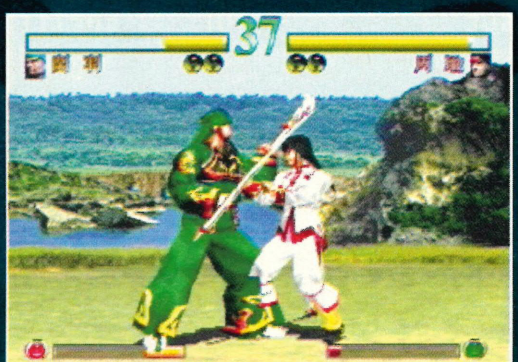


[ABOVE] **As you can see the characters in *Dynasty Warriors* are just as detailed as *Tekken 2*'s.**





[ABOVE] **Weapons play a bit part of *Dynasty Warriors* and the game has an extensive story mode too.**



[ABOVE] **Check out the level of detail on the green guy. Street fighter-style blocks are used when your weapons fail you.**



[ABOVE] **Can little known Koei challenge the might of Namco in the fighting arena?**



[ABOVE] **"Have some of that!" As in *Bushido Blade*, you can run opponents right through!**



SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT





PlayStation

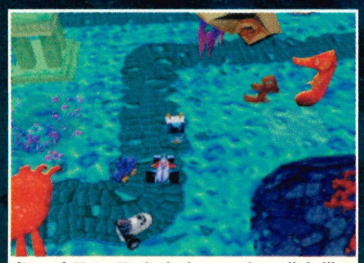
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MOTOR MASH!

FOLLOWING *Micro Machines V3* and *Speedster* in the attack of the tinies comes *Motor Mash* from Eutechnics, a cartoony miniature car game that looks most like *Supersonic Racers*. The PlayStation version is being done by Ian Copeland, the man responsible for the hugely addictive *Micro Machines 2* on the Super NES, so hopes are high for bucket-loads of supreme multi-player gameplay. The new possibilities available come from the truly interactive scenery, meaning you could, for example, destroy a bridge on the track to make someone fall down or to block another car's path with the wreckage. With 12 bonkers characters and race tracks ranging from Atlantis to Mars, *Motor Mash* is bound to be more than a little successful. More news soon.





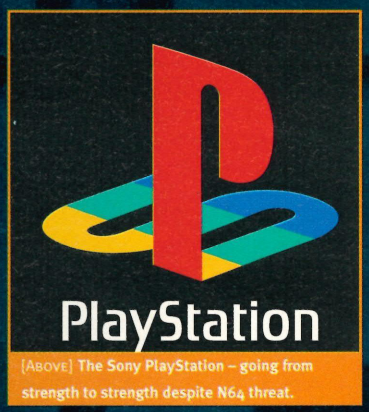
[ABOVE] ***Motor Mash* – looks more than a little like *Supersonic Racers*, but with interactive scenery.**



[ABOVE] **And here's the obligatory ice level; to be found on all racing and platform games.**

SONY'S BIG BOAST!

WITH PlayStations flying off the shelves thanks to the recent price reduction to £129, Sony this month announced its long term sales plans for the console in Europe. By the end of 1997, Sony aims to have sold five million PSXs in Europe alone, including 1.6 million units in the UK (current estimates put the number at 850,000!). The PlayStation was launched on 29 September 1995 and proceeded to sell 22,000 units on the first day, and then 60,000 in a single month. Following the price cut to £199.99 in May '96, sales increased fourfold and the most recent price cut of £70 is expected to shift even more. The Platinum budget range has also contributed to the increased rate of sales, and it is now thought that third party publishers, such as EA, are planning to either launch their own ranges, or will sell their games to Sony.



[ABOVE] **The Sony PlayStation – going from strength to strength despite N64 threat.**

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



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



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



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

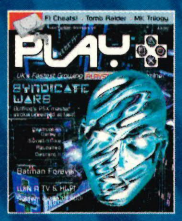


ISSUE [12]
Exclusive review of *SFZ2*, huge Jap feature, plus *Burning Road*!

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 STATE-OF-THE-ART CAMCORDER WORTH £650 WITH EA!



PLUS 10 COPIES OF THE 82% RATED LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE!



Little Big Adventure certainly caused a stir here at PLAY Towers with its engrossing gameplay and sumptuous high resolution graphics. Top that with Twinsen, the quirky main character and you can see why we rate the game so highly. To celebrate the imminent release of the game, we've gone out of our way to team up with Electronic Arts to bring you this exclusive competition, where one lucky reader can win this fantastic Sony CCD-TR510E Camcorder, featuring:

- **12 x Optical and 24 x Digital Variable Speed Zoom**
- **Electronic Steady Shot**
- **Wireless Remote Control**
- **Full Range Auto Focus**
- **4 Lux Minimum Illumination**
- **Programme AE**
- **10 Preset Titles**
- **Extra Low Power Consumption**
- **Dry Battery Use**
- **16:9 Wide Recording Mode**
- **LP Recording**





Before you book your holidays straight away and emigrate to Australia you must, in the traditional PLAY fashion, answer a ridiculously mind-bending question to stand any chance of 'capturing' the main prize. We know you 'cam' do it, so 'zoom' down to the post office, not forgetting to use 'recorded' delivery of course.

Twinsen is, of course, the main protagonist in *Little Big Adventure*. But what is the name of the world which he inhabits?

A. Moonshine
B. Twinsun
C. Fourstar

Because we know best and write the rules, 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'd adore a Camcorder!
Play Magazine
Paragon House
St Peter's Road
Bournemouth
Dorset
BH1 2JS

The editor's decision is final. No correspondence may be entered into. Employees of Paragon Publishing or its suppliers EA may enter. The closing date is the 12 May 1997. All winners will be notified in writing. A list of 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 The first mission-based shoot-'em-up of its kind, *Lifeforce Tenka* has impressed the PLAY team this month with its many innovations in graphics and gameplay. Forget *Alien Trilogy* and *Doom* – get tooled up with massively powerful morphing weapons, 3-D enemies, and reduce your enemies into pints of goo. Turn to the full review now!



GUIDE TO THE GRADES

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

PLAY CLASSIC

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

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

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

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

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

0-30 Complete tripe. Avoid at all costs!

PLAY ICONS

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


One player
eg Project Overkill


Multiple Players
eg Tekken 2


Steering/Analogue
eg NeGcon


Multi-Tap
compatible


Mouse compatible
eg Sim City 2000


Uses a Memory Card
(for save games)

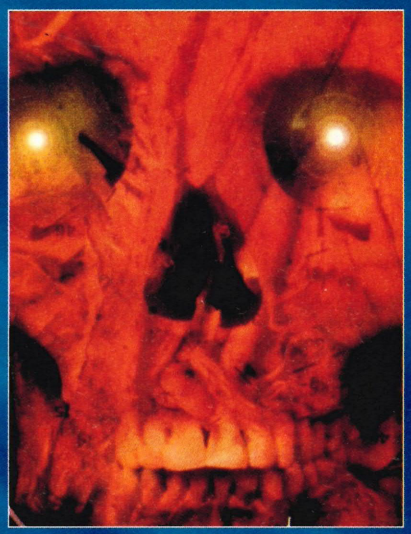

Split Screen
eg Bust-A-Move 2


Link Cable compatible
eg Formula 1


Light gun compatible
eg Die Hard Trilogy

ES

REVIEWS ▸ WORKSTATIONS ▸ WIRED UPS



WORKSTATIONS

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

CRITICAL DEPTH 26



CHALLENGE BOX

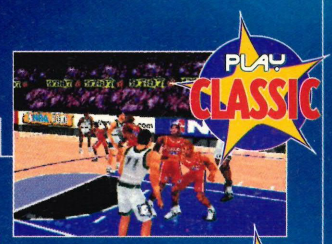
This clever little box is designed to show you instantly how long a game will last (in our opinion) based on the review. The one player game (in red) will more often than not be lower than multiple players because it's more fun playing a friend than the computer. Although it is entirely subjective, we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

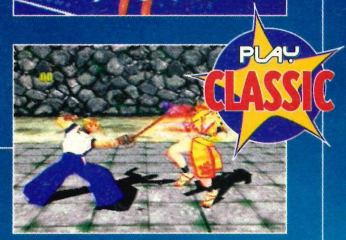


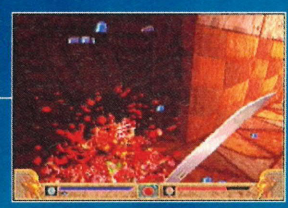
PLAY REVIEWS

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.

LIFEFORCE TENKA 20
TOTAL NBA '97 32
JONAH LOMU RUGBY 36
BUSHIDO BLADE 38
SPIDER 42
COOL SPOT 46
PORSCHE CHALLENGE 54
EXHUMED 58
SPEEDSTER 62
TOKYO HIGHWAY BATTLE 66
SOCCER '97 67







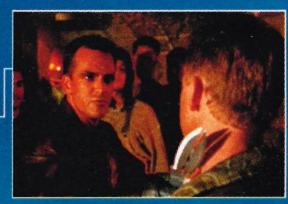


WIRED UP

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

SYNDICATE WARS 80
K1: ARENA FIGHTERS 82
WAR GODS 83
DARKLIGHT CONFLICT 84
TOTAL DRIVIN' 86
WING COMMANDER IV 87
WCW VS THE WORLD 90





LIFEFORCE

IT'S GOT **BIG GUNS**, LOTS OF **BLOOD**, AND BOOMING **PYROTECHNICS**. IT'S ALSO THE BEST LOOKING SHOOT-'EM-UP OF ITS KIND. **INTERESTED?**

THE BIG GAME

Written By Graeme Nicholson



TENKA



Everyone wanted to know, "what's *Tenka*?" The hype started when we saw the billboard ads at the side of the track in the original *Wipeout*. The seed was planted when the game must still have been nothing more than an idea scrawled on the back of a beer mat for a large-scale project that already had the attention of the games-playing masses.

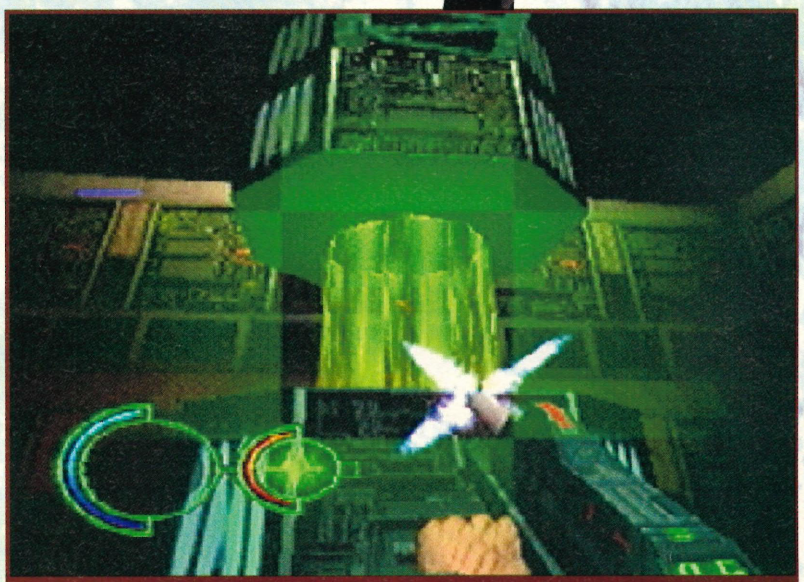




Now *Tenka* is finished, and it is immediately apparent that this is a title which has benefited greatly from not being rushed for an early release. It's one of those games that even has nice menus at the beginning, and a superbly directed introduction movie that promotes the dark, rage-filled atmosphere of the game perfectly. Getting you positively buzzing with the anticipation of assuming the role and jumping into the action.

Offering so much technical accomplishment over Id's antique classic that once set the standard for first person perspective shoot-'em-up games, the term "*Doom* clone" does not apply in *Tenka*'s case. For a start, there are real three-dimensional enemies, built entirely from polygons and so gross and eerily detailed at times that you'll be nervously checking for them under your bed before you go to sleep at night. In fact, *Tenka* is about as 3-D as you'll get without a Virtuality headset. You can get down on the ground like a sniper, jump in the air, look up and down – the lot.

"An atmospheric adventure of destruction!"



[Above] Two of the missions require that you get into a guarded room and destroy these power cores before evacuating.

Killing is my business...

The levels make good use of the 3-D engine too. Try to picture the scene: you are running backwards up a sloping hallway while aiming down and pulverising a cyborg with controlled bursts from your rifle, and spin around to see where you're going. The only way to go is down a 20-foot drop into a dark pit. After taking the jump, it's not long before you realise you're not alone and you catch a glimpse of something skimming through the shadows.

Your motion detector shows three dots moving in on you from different angles at considerable speed. You are low on energy, and escape is your only choice if you want to survive. You can just make out a small rectangular steel grating – it must lead into the air conditioning system – and in one fluid motion you blast it away and sink to the ground so you can slide into the tight metal tunnel. A few twists and turns and you're out

PLAY Information

Publisher: Psygnosis
Customer support: 0151 282 3000
Price: £39.99
Release date: April '97



One Player



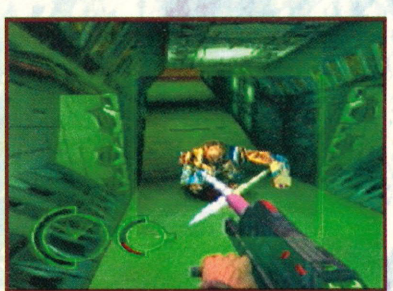
Memory Card



[Above] Unfortunately, the blocky explosions in *Tenka* betray the nicer graphical touches throughout the rest of the game.



[Above] There are moving platforms in *Tenka* just like those things at airports that carry you along. Watch out for an ambush at the end.



[Above] The gun recoils perfectly as the muzzle-fire illuminates the bad guy. It's a bit of a shame the game is mainly played in green-o-vision.



[Above] It's not all set in claustrophobic little hallways and tunnels, and once in a while you'll break out into a bigger area.



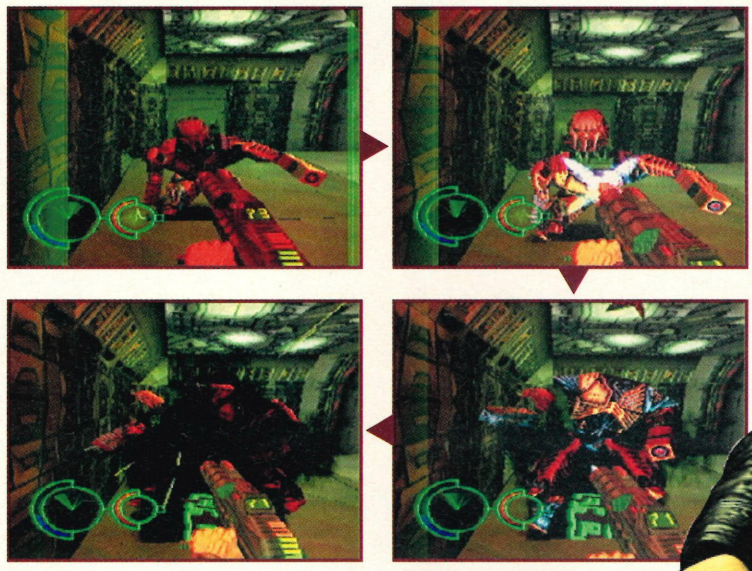
into a safe room, free to search for that much-needed health pack. Yes, when you know what you're doing, *Tenka* can give you a massive rush.

So what's next most important for this kind of game once you know the levels, are well designed and the bad guys are truly frightening? You guessed it – the guns! You only carry one gun in *Tenka*, but don't let that put you off because this is actually a whole new idea that works very well.

Starting off with a fairly long but dull rifle that is incapable of rapid-fire, as you go about your adventure you pick up add-ons for this base weapon instead of separate new guns. The way it works is that each of these add-ons stays with you, and is selectable from a simple pop-up menu during the game. Whatever one you choose will morph itself onto your existing gun and take effect immediately afterwards. And they all look distinctive enough while activated that you won't make any mistakes in the heat of the battle.

TAKE HIM APART

THE POLYGON-BUILT CHARACTERS ALLOWS YET ANOTHER GOOD FEATURE – YOU CAN LITERALLY BLOW YOUR HATED ENEMIES TO BITS! ALTHOUGH AFTER EXPLODING PROPERLY THEY MELT INTO THE GROUND WHICH IS A BIT CRAP, BUT HEY, YOU CAN'T HAVE EVERYTHING. NOTICE IN THIS SEQUENCE THE EVIL ANDROID'S HEAD DETACHES FIRST.



"*Tenka* is something special..."

...AND BUSINESS IS GOOD!

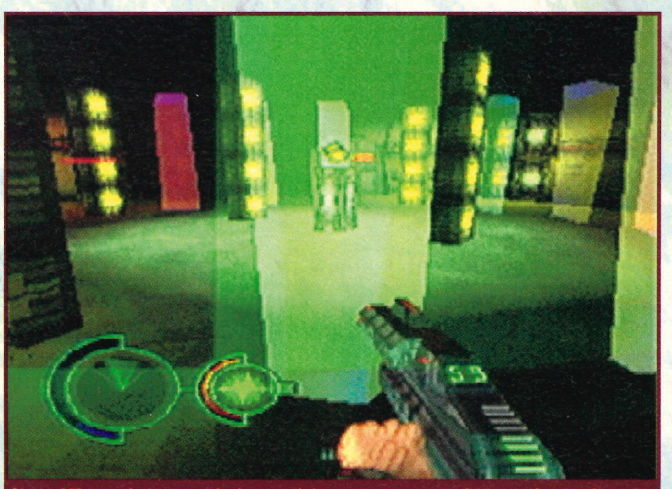
As your gun is also rendered in 3-D from polygons instead of the two-dimensional cut-outs of *Doom* or even *Alien Trilogy*, it can react in a far more believable way when in use. This can clearly be seen as the lighting affects it constantly, or the way it recoils properly after a shot; with the bolt flying back to briefly reveal the round barrel just by the way its perspective changes slightly as you stroll around. There are lasers, rocket launchers, a great array of bolt-on accessories for your gun, but the coolest



[Above] An enemy android in all it's 3-D glory. Don't hang around though – that thing on his left arm is a rocket launcher!



[Above] The first enemies you'll encounter aren't very scary at all, but they can cause quite a bit of damage when they attack in swarms.



[Above] These columns are spinning round the room at some speed. You need to get the holocube from the centre – how will you do it?



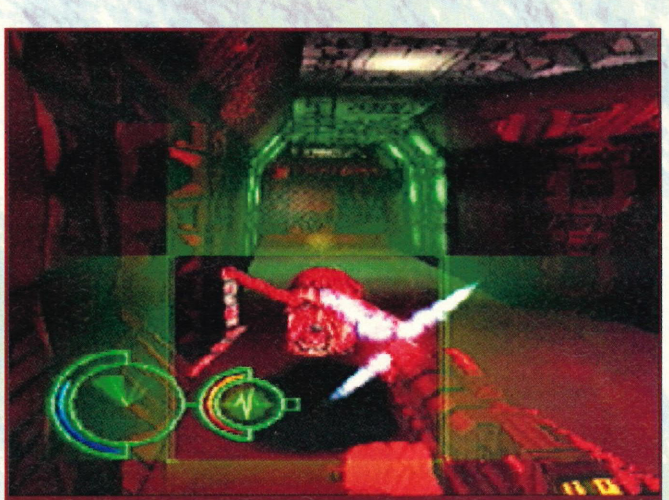
[Above] Peering out from the edge of a raised doorway gives you the offensive advantage with this cyborg.



[Above] When the action gets a bit heavy, you can often find your visor being coated with flying blood and pale, liquidised brain. It slowly slides off.



[Above] The droids that attack you just get weirder and weirder. Take this giant Yo-Yo for example.



[Above] The disgusting heads-on-legs creatures can run at a terrific rate along the straight corridors, heading right for your ankles. Yuck.



[Above] When you complete the tasks set on each level, you get the flashing "Evac" icon on your display. Search for the door with the Evac sign above it to escape.



pick up has to be one of the earliest you'll find. The laser sight. It is absolutely fantastic, and brings a moody, *Predator*-style assassin feel to the game. Although it's a bit hard to make out in the screenshots scattered around these pages, rest assured that it looks and acts exactly how a real one does. If you point it at a wall close by you can even see the three individual elements that make up the beam, and wherever you place the red dot, no matter how far away, you will hit if you fire a shot.

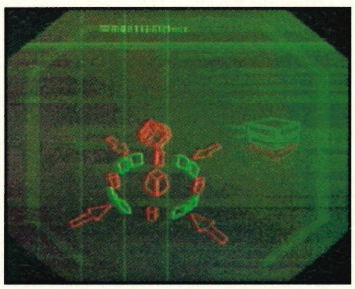
Psychotron

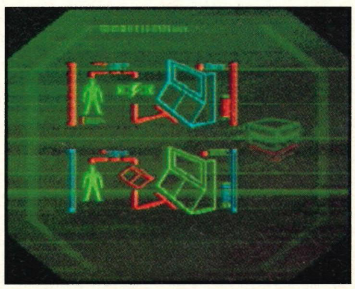
When your line of fire passes over anything interesting the object gives off a green glow, only for a second or two, to help you find important things at considerable distance or in darkness. It could be a door, a key, an enemy, a ceiling-mounted automated gun, really just anything that you should know about. This comes in particularly handy when you are dealing with the cyborgs. They have quite outstanding artificial intelligence, and, for example, one of them could be slowly, patrolling the corridors, but when he catches sight of you and runs away round a corner to save himself from injury and draw you out. If you see what you think could be, say, a

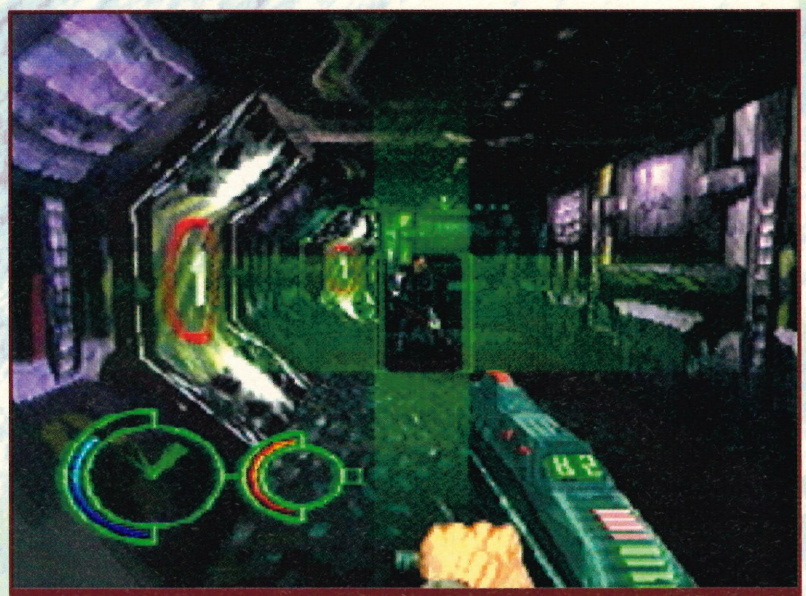


Every Move You Make

Between missions, the cybernetic head of our valiant hero is invaded by a secretive female-sounding synthetic voice. He argues with her, trying to ask who she is and what's going on, but she calmly continues to explain what you have to do to complete the next level. You can bypass these sections, but the diagrams and advice are actually quite vital to your progress. Who is she? Why is she helping you? You'll just have to wait...







[Above] The green flash highlights an otherwise hidden enemy, letting you know to stay on your toes.



[Above] It's always a good idea to cast an eye over the motion detector before entering a room, to check for any movement inside.



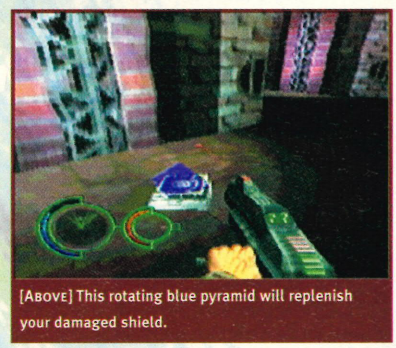
[Above] Squirming through the tight ventilation shaft you have to keep a finger over the trigger, as you can't run away when things get out of hand.



foot or arm protruding a little from behind a column or a turn in the hallway, all you have to do is place your laser sight over it and the normal green flash will be followed by red borders if the target is hostile. No more spending half an hour hiding from an ammo clip.

Tenka is something special. While die hard *Doom* fans will only clutch their beloved aging discs closer to their chest and eye you suspiciously if you suggest a quick game, take no notice, we don't need them anymore. The only criticism which could be aimed at such an atmospheric adventure of destruction is that, probably due to their detail, you never get attacked by any great number of enemies simultaneously. Well, that and it's not the most mentally challenging thing you can do with an evening, but you're hardly expecting nuclear physics if you go out and buy a shoot-'em-up, are you? A deeply engrossing sci-fi shoot-'em-up.





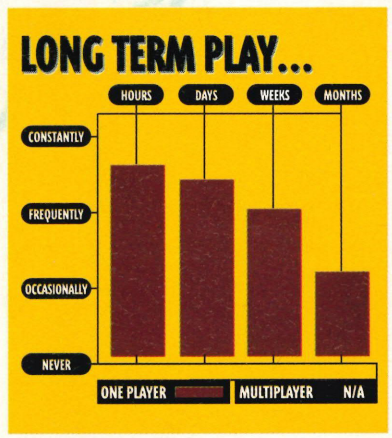
[Above] This rotating blue pyramid will replenish your damaged shield.



[Above] A recently melted cyborg has left behind this blue door key in his sticky remains. How kind.



[Above] The red window on the door means that you must find the red key to enter.



PLAY

Looks	●●●●●●●●○○
Sounds	●●●●○○○○○○
Gameplay	●●●●●●●○○○
Value	●●●●●●●●○○
Slime	●●●●●●●●○○

PLAYED 86%

Bound to be the big blast this summer!

ALTERNATIVELY:
ALIEN TRILOGY (91%)
DISRUPTOR (87%)

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*.

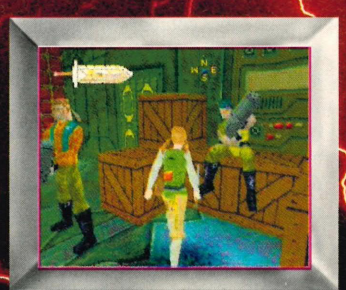
Plus, massive panoramic 3D environments and intricate consuming puzzles make Excalibur 2555AD an absolute epic.

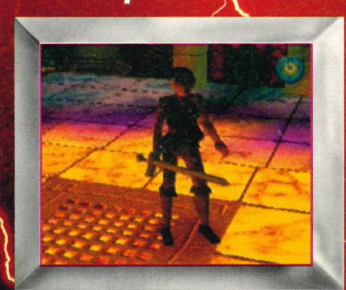
Featuring: over 200 massive locations, 80 fully talking characters, incredible realistic light-sourcing, intriguing puzzles and hand-to-hand combat.

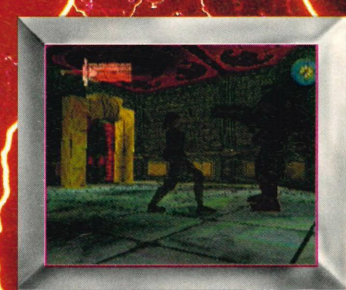
"...could well do for 3D action adventures what *Tomb Raider* did for 3D platformers" **EDGE**

"...has atmosphere in spades" **PlayStation plus**









PlayStation

For further information contact:
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TELSTAR Electronic Studios

CRITICAL critical

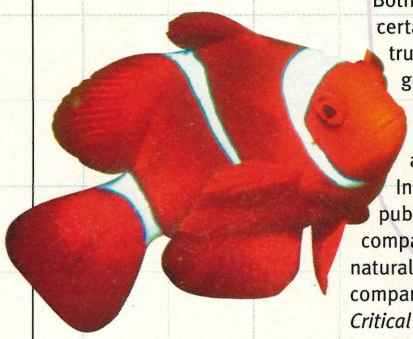
UNDER CONSTRUCTION

SING TRAC HAS BROUGHT US THE GLORIOUS *TWISTED METAL 2* AND *JET RIDER* OF LATE, BUT WITH NEWS OF ITS DEPARTURE FROM SONY, WE'VE HEARD OF A BRAND NEW GAME SET UNDERWATER...

Written By John McCleary

Perhaps as much as any other outfit, Single Trac is associated with PlayStation. It was from this Salt Lake City company that early landmarks such as *Twisted Metal* and *Warhawk* emerged.

Both games have come in for some stick from certain quarters, but despite flaws they held true to the concept of games needing to be good fun to play, and in some measure they showed off what the first generation of PlayStation games were capable of achieving.



In the past Single Trac's games have been published by Sony, and so the fast-growing company has been controlled by the desires and natural prejudices of an extremely powerful company. Now it's planning to go it alone with *Critical Depth* for PlayStation (and PC).

Critical Depth is a term which describes the depth at which a submarine finds itself getting squashed into a crumpled old can of human sardines. As the title and Single Trac's history suggests, this is a 3-D submarine shoot-'em-up very much in the style of previous offerings, especially *Warhawk*. This time the company has opted for a heavy character element, with the game changing significantly depending on the different vehicles which are chosen by the player. In this respect it seems to come from the school of *Twisted Metal* or the fabulous *Jet Moto*.



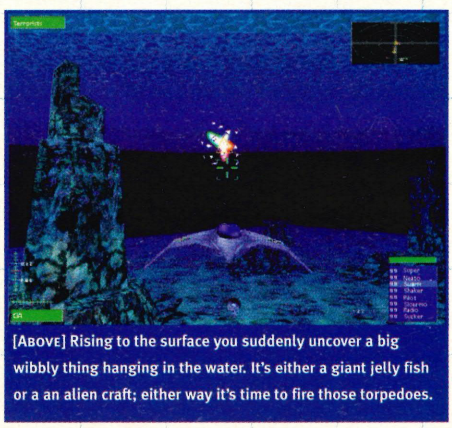
[Above] The underwater scenery is spectacular as this ship wreck proves. You must be careful not to get caught up in debris though, or you'll run out of air and power.

Although these myriad options effect the outcome and playability of the game, this is still essentially a 3-D exploration shoot-'em-up. You travel under the waves looking for treasures and killing bad guys. It's at heart a 3-D undersea adventure with aspirations of atmosphere and suspense amid a fast-paced maelstrom of high action set in spooky deep-sea environments. The player operates a submarine craft chosen from a list of 13 underwater vehicles. Players combine head-to-head combat with an array of special weapons and ambush tactics in what amounts to a game of sub-surface cat and mouse.

The story of the game is pretty ho-hum, but at least reflects on the actual gameplay. A mysterious electro-magnetic energy has been detected in the Bermuda Triangle, prompting numerous agencies – governmental, scientific, and clandestine – to investigate. A strange, Stargate-like portal is found on the floor of the ocean. Its origins are unknown, and many postulate it may be alien. The Threshold, as it has been dubbed, is powered by seven energy pods. Once you have all seven pods in your possession, you may pass through the Threshold to the next level. Naturally, you are up against a series of

"A fast-paced maelstrom of high action set in spooky deep-sea environments..."





[Above] Rising to the surface you suddenly uncover a big wibbly thing hanging in the water. It's either a giant jelly fish or a an alien craft; either way it's time to fire those torpedoes.

Blueprint

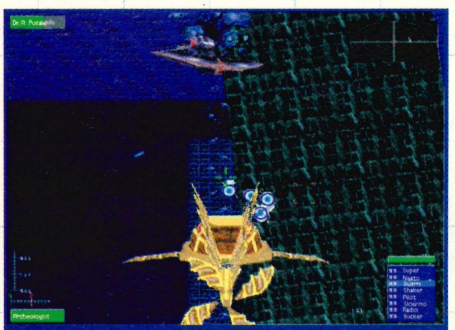
Publisher: TBA
Developer: Single Trac
% Complete: 60%
Expected Release Date: Winter '97
Origin: USA
No of Players: 1-2

DEPTH

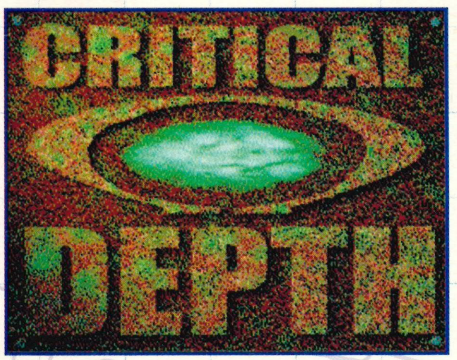
depth



[Above] Naturally there are plenty of 'nods' to the *Abyss* in the game. It really is amazing that no-one has done a proper under-sea adventure/shoot-'em-up before.



[Above] Each of the craft in *Critical Depth* are radically different and feature wild pilots a la *Twisted Metal 2*. Here we can see a bizarre beige diving bell about to intercept an enemy submarine. Note the sunken buildings – what is this *Waterworld?*



SOFTOGRAPHY

Twisted Metal 2 (PSX)
Twisted Metal (PSX)
Jet Rider (PSX)
Warhawk (PSX)



unsavoury characters each with their own designs on the prize.

The player must navigate through a series of levels to find and activate mysterious alien structures while battling other crafts controlled by either AI (in single player mode) or networked human players (in multi-player mode, but alas, only for PC). The extra element of surprise is that unknown depth to which no vehicle can descend without risking implosion and certain death (which can only be determined through trial and error). However, it is usually in your benefit to pass below this marker, as the best power-ups, and other goodies, will be below the critical depth point. Each of the 13 submarines at your disposal has a unique look, weapons, dynamics, profile, and armour rating. They all provide a slightly different feel and accommodate different play styles and strategies. For instance, a new player may do best with a vehicle that is relatively slow but heavily armoured with a medium strength homing weapon. More experienced players might prefer a fast sub that has a powerful but non-homing weapon. So far so familiar.

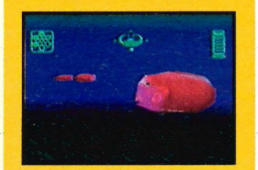
The computer players also have variations in their individual behaviours. One may have a tendency to engage in close combat, while another may prefer a hit and run approach. One may not attack unless provoked or trying to steal a pod, while another may take a shot every time an opportunity arises. A player can choose any vehicle based on a number of different criteria: look, size, maximum speed, acceleration, armour, drag, stealth ability, turn and dive rate, ramming power, and special weapon (power/range/homing) ability.

The lighting effects, although early, already look rather good. The game gets darker the lower you go, as in a real ocean, and the critical depth region is almost totally pitch black. The transition from light blue water to dark is extremely smooth, with little or no stepping of colours.

Critical Depth is certainly one to watch out for, and we'll be visiting the developers in the next few months for more exclusive information on this and other Single Trac games. Now that Sony is no longer controlling Single Trac, the added investment from interested third parties looks set to secure a host of new titles, including, hopefully, *Twisted Metal 3*.

GLUB, GLUB

You might think that an underwater game is a bit original, but you'd be wrong. Not only has the PlayStation already got a deep sea exploration game, but there's also plenty on the way.



AQUANAUGHT'S HOLIDAY

Risible underwater antics courtesy of Sony. Apparently went down a storm in Japan, but then they'll buy anything if it's got a semi naked 12 year old girl in it (has it – Ed?).



DEPTH

Attractive looking PSX rendition of Sega's cult aquatic hero, Echo the Dolphin. So far only seen in Japan, but looks very promising, especially if you get to sink Japanese whaling fleets.



TREASURES OF THE DEEP

Mentioned many times in Play's foreign columns, this is a deep sea exploration/ combat game where you can plunder ship wrecks for sunken booty and them upgrade your sub.

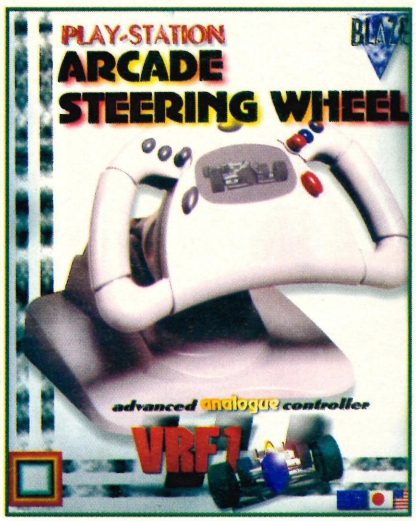
WHEELY GOOD

WITH SO MANY TOP CLASS RACING GAMES ARRIVING THIS SUMMER, ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME YOU CONSIDERED GETTING A STEERING WHEEL TO HEIGHTEN THE REALISM? PLAY TESTS THE BEST WHEELS ON THE MARKET.

So, you think you're serious about your racing games do you? You think that because you play an imported *Rage Racer* with the sound blaring through your stereo that it makes you a true thrill-seeking speed freak? Maybe you've even paid out £40 for one of those twisty-turny NegCon affairs to bring some analogue control to your gaming.

Well stop kidding yourself. The only real way to play these games is with a bloody great steering wheel stuck to your desk and two pedals jammed under your feet. Okay, so when the first wheel was released, the MadKatz, budding Schumachers up and down the country were in tears as their new peripherals snapped, cracked, and popped into an unusable state, but these brittle early units have been superseded by a new generation of add-ons.

They add a whole new joy to most racing games, and for the best possible driving experience we recommend you turn off the music completely and leave just the raw sound effects roaring out of your speakers. And please, don't let us catch you using anything except the cockpit view for whatever game is in question.



BLAZE VRF1 ACCELERATOR

Produced by: Fire International Ltd
Tel: 01302) 751428
Price: £69.99

The VRF1 lets you move it around until it is in almost any position you could want, with three angles available, from Formula One to bus driver-style and an extendible steering column too. It also sticks to the desk so hard that we had to rent a pneumatic road hammer to get it off, but that's a good thing because you don't want to worry about wrenching the wheel onto the floor during a particularly passionate

GET THE WHEELS IN LINE!

GET A STEERING WHEEL TO PLAY SOME OF THESE...

FORMULA ONE

PSYGNOSIS WAS SUITABLY IMPRESSED WITH THE BLAZE WHEEL AND HAVE ACCEPTED THE VRF1 ACCELERATOR AS AN OFFICIAL CONTROLLER FOR THEIR NEXT F1 GAME, MEANING IT WILL HAVE A PAGE IN THE MANUAL AND SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE SET-UP SCREENS. WHATEVER WHEEL YOU USE, THIS IS DEFINITELY THE ULTIMATE WAY TO PLAY THE GAME, ESPECIALLY IF YOU GET A BATH IN FRONT OF THE TV AND CLIMB INSIDE FOR WONDERFULLY AUTHENTIC SEATING CONDITIONS. THE PURE THRILL OF HAVING COMPLETE ANALOGUE CONTROL – JUST LIKE THE REAL THING! AFTER THE COMPLAINTS OF EARLY WHEELS, WE WERE AMAZED TO FIND NO PROBLEMS USING THESE TWO WHEELS WITH THIS GAME.

WE RECKON – A WHEEL FOR FORMULA ONE IS ESSENTIAL IF YOU LIKE THE GAME ALREADY.



WIPEOUT 2097

THE CONTROL OF THE ANTI-GRAVITY CRAFT IS NOT AS DIFFICULT AS YOU MIGHT EXPECT WITH THESE WHEELS THAT LOOK BEST SUITED TO CAR GAMES, AND IT WILL ONLY BE A WHILE BEFORE YOU'RE SHAVING SEVERAL SECONDS OFF YOUR OLD LAP RECORDS. THE BRAKE PEDAL ON BOTH THE GAMESTER AND THE BLAZE BECOME REDUNDANT BECAUSE *WIPEOUT 2097* WILL ONLY LET YOU BRAKE BY HOLDING THE LEFT AND RIGHT AIR-BRAKES ON, THE JOB OF THE L AND R BUTTONS. IT'S ALSO A BIT FIDDLY TRYING TO LAUNCH OR DUMP WEAPONS USING BUTTONS THAT WERE NOT DESIGNED FOR THIS PURPOSE ON EITHER WHEEL, AND SO WHILE IT IS BETTER THAN THE STANDARD PAD DUE TO TOTALLY ENHANCED STEERING CONTROL, THE NEGCON IS STILL THE DEVICE FOR FANS OF THIS GAME.

WE RECKON – STICK WITH THE NEGCON IF THIS IS THE ONLY GAME YOU WANT AN ANALOGUE CONTROLLER FOR.



RAGE RACER

WHOA, TALK ABOUT ADDED GAMEPLAY! THE BOSS'S FAVOURITE DRIVING TITLE FOR SOME TIME GOT A NEW LEASE OF LIFE WHEN WE GAVE IT THE STEERING WHEEL TEST, AND NOBODY COULD HAVE PREDICTED HOW GOOD THIS WAS GOING TO BE. BASICALLY, BECAUSE IT'S SO INDECENTLY FAST WHEN USING THE EXPENSIVE CARS, AND THE ENGINE NOISE IS SO BEAUTIFULLY HARSH, *RAGE RACER* HAS TO BE THE SINGLE MOST REWARDING GAME TO PLAY WITH A WHEEL. IT IS EXTREMELY RESPONSIVE TO EVERY TWITCH AND TWIST OF YOUR HANDS AS YOU ROCKET AROUND THE TRACKS LIKE AN AMPHETAMINE ASSISTED ROADRUNNER!

WE RECKON: IF YOU'VE GOT A STEERING WHEEL, GET RAGE RACER. IF YOU'VE GOT RAGE RACER, GET A STEERING WHEEL.



PORSCHE CHALLENGE

WHEN ONE OF THE MOST ANXIOUSLY AWAITED DRIVING GAMES ARRIVED AND SEEMED TO BE UNREASONABLY SLOW, IT WAS SURPRISING TO ATTACH ONE OF OUR ANALOGUE BEAUTIES. THE UNDER-WHEEL GEAR CHANGING BUTTONS GIVE THE GAMESTER THE EDGE WITH THIS GAME, AS THEY PERFORM EXACTLY LIKE THE TIPTRONIC GEAR SYSTEM IN A REAL PORSCHE. IT'S STILL JUST AS EASY TO GET ALL THE WAY UP TO TOP SPEED TOO EARLY USING THE ACCELERATOR, BUT THE REST OF THE DRIVING EXPERIENCE IS IMPROVED MANY FOLD. SECOND ONLY TO *RAGE RACER* IN ITS RESPONSIVENESS, *PORSCHE CHALLENGE* IS MUCH BETTER SUITED TO THESE STEERING DEVICES THAN A DIGITAL PAD, SO MUCH SO THAT PERHAPS THEY SHOULD HAVE DONE SOME KIND OF A PACKAGE DEAL.

WE RECKON: PORSCHE IS SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCED WITH A WHEEL.



moment on *Porsche Challenge's* Stuttgart circuit. Now that would be embarrassing!

Although it is quite pleasing to use, there are some annoyances like the buttons on the back of the wheel which are a bit of a stretch to get to quickly, and its slightly loose construction leaves it a bit creaky. Also, it doesn't turn as far as you'd like it to, only rotating about 90° from the centre position to either side, but overall this is still a good piece of equipment and some might prefer its lighter, sporty feel to the Gamester wheel, especially on a game like *Wipeout 2097*.

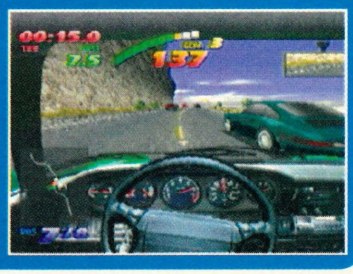
The suppliers are also eager to point out that it is a true analogue bit of kit, using similar technology to the NegCon controller and so will work 100% properly with anything that offers NegCon support. Previously the VRF1 was only available with no pedals, but that has been now rectified – good job too.

PLAY

DURABILITY	●●●●●●●○○○
FEEL	●●●●●●○○○○
FUNCTIONS	●●●●●●●○○○
VALUE	●●●●●●●●○○
OVERALL	●●●●●●●○○○

NEED FOR SPEED

THIS TIMELESS CLASSIC TURNED OUT TO BE FAIRLY DISAPPOINTING TO DRIVE WITH EITHER THE GAMESTER OR THE VRF1, PARTICULARLY BECAUSE IT DOESN'T RESPOND SHARPLY ENOUGH OR TURN FAR ENOUGH WHEN IT REALLY COUNTS. FOR THE BEST RESULTS SWITCH TO THE NOSE CAMERA VIEW AND, IF YOU'RE A REAL PROFESSIONAL, HOLD THE DOWN DIRECTION FOR TWO SECONDS TO MAKE THE VARIOUS DISPLAYS VANISH. NOW YOU HAVE AN UNRESTRICTED VIEW OF THE ROAD, AND ONLY THE SOUND OF THE ENGINE TO CHANGE GEARS BY. WE HAVE CHECKED WITH THE DEVELOPERS TO MAKE SURE *NEED 2* SUPPORTS THE WHEELS THOUGH, WHICH IT DOES, SO LET'S HOPE FOR BETTER IMPLEMENTATION. **WE RECKON: THE MOST REALISTIC DRIVING GAME ISN'T SO GOOD WITH THE MOST REALISTIC CONTROLLER. BUMMER.**





PSX STEERING WHEEL

Produced by: LMP
Tel: (01992) 503133
Price: £79.99

A huge, heavy chunk of industrial gear, the Gamester is stronger than the wheel you'd find inside a real humvee. With a great big base, a large metal plate under the wheel and some black steel hex-bolts holding it together, this brute feels like it could survive a full nuclear strike without anything more than a scratch.

Besides its strength, the most important features the PSX Steering Wheel has are the well-positioned buttons round the back of the wheel that sit comfortably under your finger tips and are used to change through the gears in most car games, making their placement vital.

In the center there is also a full D-pad, so you don't have to fumble about with new buttons when you simply want to move around the options menus at the beginning of a game. There is also a large flat switch under the lower right side of the wheel that automatically configures to be your horn on *The Need for Speed* and *Porsche Challenge*, as well as a little red light to let you know it's connected to the PSX properly – hardly essential, but nice details.

On the down side, the foot pedals sit at a rather uncomfortably sharp angle from the ground and the angle of the wheel itself cannot be altered in any way. It's reluctant to stick to the table too.

PLAY

DURABILITY	●●●●●●●●●●
FEEL	●●●●●●●●●○
FUNCTIONS	●●●●●●●●○○
VALUE	●●●●●●●○○○
OVERALL	●●●●●●●●●○

WIN FIVE GAMESTER PSX STEERING WHEELS!

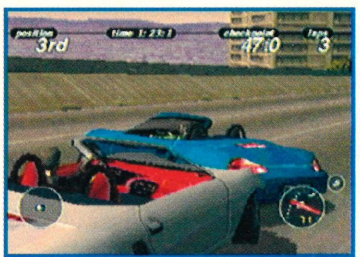
Provided the postman can lift it, you could find yourself winning one of five extremely cool Gamester PSX Steering wheels, just by answering the question below. The Gamester normally retails for £79.99, a good couple of games worth for any PlayStation addict, so it makes sense to try and win one from us before you tear off to the shops and buy one. The question is:

What is the name of the real Porsche test circuit in Germany that has been lovingly recreated in Sony's new *Porsche Challenge* game?

A. Scunthorpe
B. Stuttgart
C. Swindon

If you think you know the answer, write it on the back of a postcard or stuck-down envelope and send it to the following address. Closing date is 12 May and all usual rules apply.

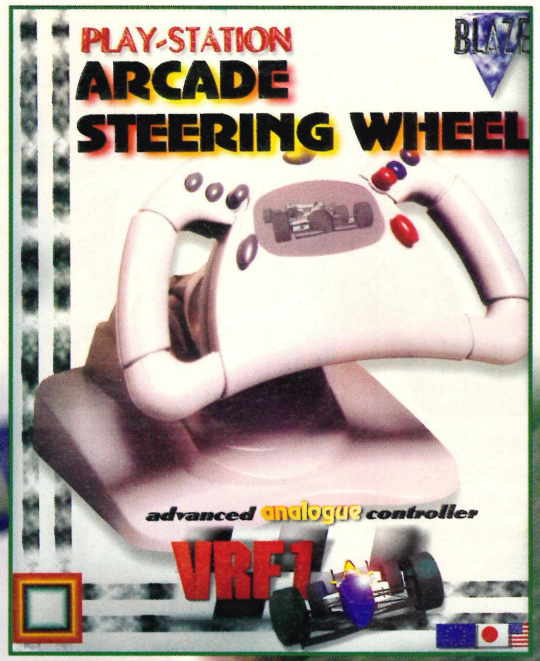
I Wanna Be a Real Gamester
Play Magazine
Paragon House
St Peters Road
Bournemouth
Dorset, BH1 2JS



[ABOVE] **The PSX Steering Wheel is particularly good with Sony's *Porsche Challenge*.**



WIN FIVE BLAZE VRF1 ACCELERATOR WHEELS!



Because it is now obvious that you simply need an analogue steering wheel if you want to get maximum enjoyment from your PlayStation's driving games, we have got together with Fire, the suppliers of the VRF1, to offer you lucky folks the chance to win one of five fantastic VRF1 Accelerator wheels! If you don't win, the VRF1 is in a store near you for £69.99... All you have to do is answer the following question:

Which Formula One racing team is world champion Damon Hill driving for this year?
A. TWR Arrows
B. BOWZN Arrows
C. Williams

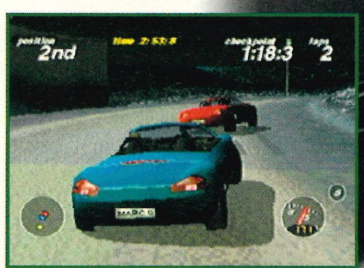
Send your answer and your name and address on the back of a postcard or stuck-down envelope to the following address. Closing date is 12 May and all usual rules apply.

Blaze My Saddles
Play Magazine
Paragon House
St Peters Road
Bournemouth
Dorset
BH1 2JS

The editor's decision is final. No correspondence may be entered into. Employees of Paragon Publishing or its suppliers LMP or Fire International may enter. The closing date is the 12 May 1997. All winners will be notified in writing. A list of 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.







NEW FROM BLAZE

NEW!

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ARCADE STEERING WHEEL
- NOW WITH FOOTPEDALS!



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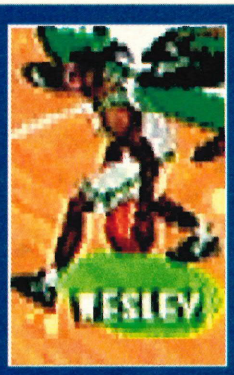
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HOOPOLOGY

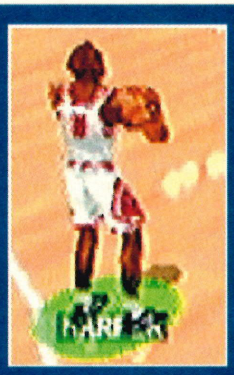
Total NBA '97 boasts some swanky new moves and a few of the old favourites too. All of these innovations make for a more involving challenge and add to gameplay no end.



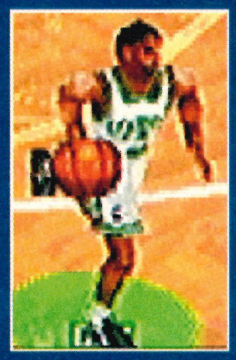
Behind the back. One of the specials, which not only looks impressive but can stop the opponents from trying to steal the ball.



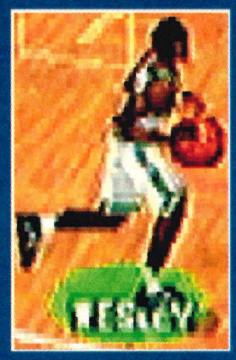
Between the legs. Another special there to confuse the opposing team. Use it just before you decide to pass.



The pass. Okay this is pretty obvious, but master this most basic of skills and you'll go a long way to winning games.



Running and dribbling. Again, one of the most basic manoeuvres in the game, but essential to master.



Sprinting. By pressing ■ when in control of the ball, a limited burst of speed can be used to get ahead of the defence.

TOTAL NBA '97

WAVE GOODBYE TO YOUR SOCIAL LIVES. *TOTAL NBA '97* HAS ARRIVED AND IT DUNKS THE OPPOSITION DOWN TOWN.

PLAY CLASSIC

EXCLUSIVE!

Written By Tom Sargent

We've seen some sports simulations over the years, but *Total NBA '97* is teetering precariously close the edge of becoming arguably the greatest conversion of a sport ever developed on a next generation console. Yes, we all love footy, and nothing will ever change this fact, but if you happen to be a fan of basketball then we strongly suggest that you lock yourself in a room and forget about the outside world for at least a week, because all of your Christmases have come at once. *Total NBA' 97*'s got more 'juice' than the man from Del Monte and more rock 'n' roll than Elvis. In fact, it's so hot we've had to buy a pair of asbestos gloves to bring you the exclusive review of this home grown classic.

PLAY INFORMATION

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

ONE PLAYER · MULTIPLE PLAYERS · MEMORY CARD · MULTI-TAP

ON FIRE

Those of you who read last month's preview will be aware of how highly we regarded the near complete version. We don't usually pass critical comment on unfinished games, but in this case the demo was so impressive that, unless you were temporarily afflicted by blindness, it was worthy of high praise even in its incomplete form.

Although *Total NBA '97* is the officially updated version of the NBA licence, nearly every single aspect of that game has been tweaked to produce a near perfect simulation of basketball, which not only looks like the real mccoy but more importantly plays like a dream. But before we get into the finer details of gameplay and control, you simply cannot fail to be impressed by the stupendously good-looking player graphics. You'll have real trouble convincing yourself that they're only computer generated polygons – such is the fluidity and attention to detail of each player.



[Above] The guard attempts to block a shot. The whole defensive element has been improved in the '97 version.

ASSIST

To create truly realistic mannerisms and authentic ball skills of the NBA pros, Sony

"*Total NBA '97*'s got more 'juice' than the man from Del Monte!"





[Above] The view is from up court and from left to right. Virtually any view can be attained by pausing the game and changing the camera angle.



[Above] Sweet as a nut. The '360' dunk is one of the most pleasing moves.







has drafted-in baggyball maestro, Lattrell Spreewell; perfectly rendering him to achieve a level of detail unsurpassed by any other game in this genre. The polygonal characters not only move with more speed and grace than in the first game, but the detail is now higher and the faces of 348 real NBA players have been digitised and texture mapped in full 3-D.

The motion capture is noticeably better than the original too, and includes a whole range of jazzy new moves including behind the back cross-overs, through the legs, pump-fakes, alley-oops, lay-ups and of course, new dunks. They are simply a joy to behold, spectacular to watch, and varied in number.

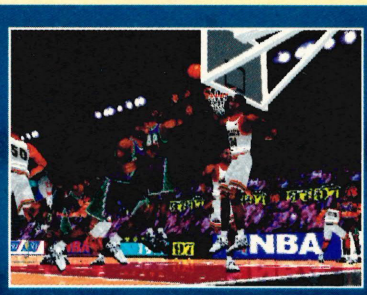
To really rub salt in your opponent's wounds, there's a replay facility, where each dunk is shown again in all its multi-angled, cinematic glory. Even the jump shot, block, running, dribbling and rebounding animations have been radically improved upon, making the whole playing experience more engrossing and compulsive.

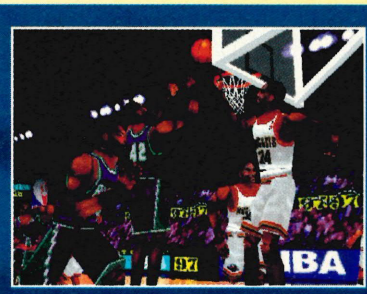
Hustle

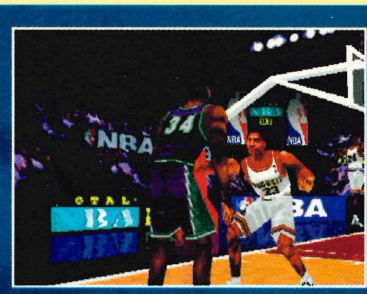
Besides the breath-taking visuals, Sony has also paid close attention to the control system, and this is where *Total NBA' 97* truly shines. Somehow, its much more intuitive than the original and this is due, in part, to a new feature called 'icon passing.' This is a simple concept which comes

REPLAY RAPTURE

EACH TIME YOU PULL OFF A SLAM DUNK, YOU CAN REPLAY THE MAGIC MOMENT VIA THE REPLAY FACILITY – ALL IN GLORIOUS FMV. IT LOOKS STUNNING AND YOU NEVER TIRE OF WATCHING YOUR STAR PLAYER OVER AND OVER AGAIN, AS THERE ARE SO MANY VARIATIONS TO WITNESS.







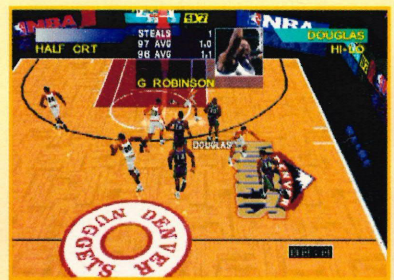


[ABOVE] During an offensive drive, you can dish out special orders to your players to comply with a specific strategy. Here one player is breaking to the right.

into play during an offensive assault, or a defensive manoeuvre, giving you total control over who you pass to.

During play hold down the L2 button and Team-mates will be highlighted with either a cross, square, triangle or circle. Choose a player to pass to and just press the appropriate button. To say that this adds a whole new dimension to the gameplay is a complete understatement – it totally revolutionises the ease of play. The controller is used to optimum effect with the inclusion of this feature and adds to the longevity of the game immeasurably.

Other new features include: on-screen help, a command to tell your player to cut (run) to the basket, full statistical tracking, where the game records the statistics for every player so that you can study the player and team records for individual games and entire seasons. The AI was heavily criticised for being biased towards offensive moves, but in an attempt to rectify this, more blocking and stealing moves and strategies have thankfully been added, resulting in a more balanced challenge.



[ABOVE] The view from up and down the screen is excellent for planning an offensive move.



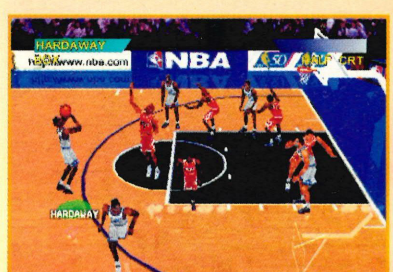
[ABOVE] The action is viewed from one of six dynamic camera angles. As usual, some of them are better than others, but it's all down personal choice.



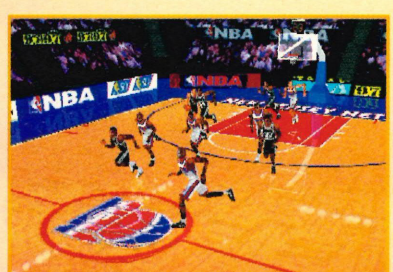
STEAL

Anything from exhibition, full seasons or playoffs can be accessed immediately from the extremely user-friendly options screen. And for the more mathematically-minded amongst you, there's an unbelievably in-depth bank of statistics to wade through and toggle via the impressive Rosters menu. Limitless fine-tuning of all featured teams and players can be achieved. There is even an option to sign, release or simply view them too, through player cards.

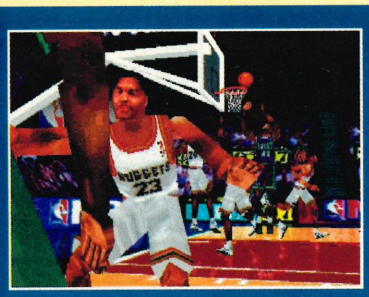
Total NBA' 97 is precisely what its name suggests, the total package. It is an achievement of gargantuan proportions, and one which is virtually fault-free. If threatened with a sharpened pencil and a set of thumb screws I'd have to mention the longevity of such a game. After all, it's only basketball, where running from one end of a pretty small court to the other could become tiresome

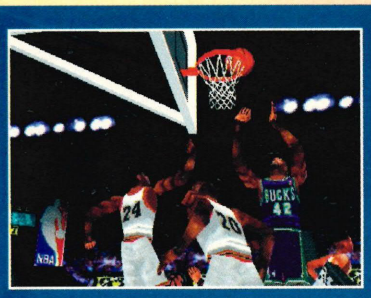


[ABOVE] If Hardaway manages to sink this basket, he'll get three points. Any scores inside this line and its a paltry two.



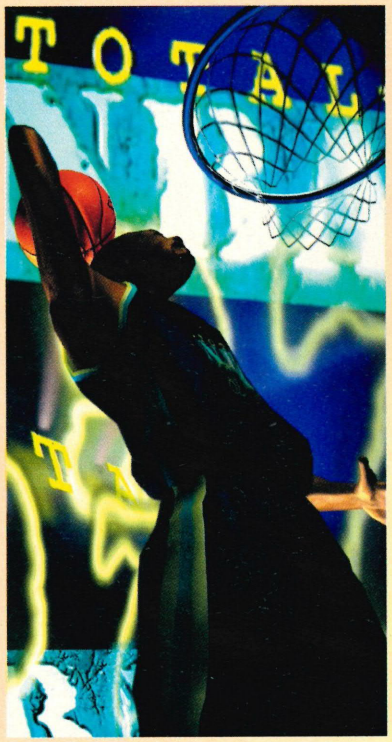
[ABOVE] Even when all ten players are on the screen at the same time, there is absolutely no slowdown whatsoever. Groovy.







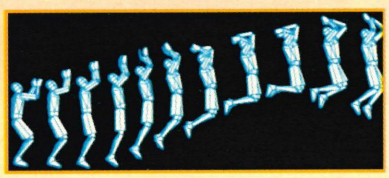
[Above] Where's the number 13 going? Not the most effective defensive move we've ever seen...

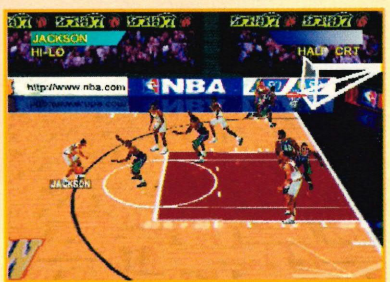




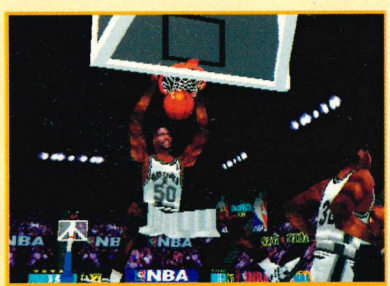
[Above] Without doubt, the icon passing system elevates *Total NBA '97* above all others with its brilliantly simple concept.

after a while, but given the fact that it manages, quite superbly, to meld nearly every aspect of the sport into one killer product (bar management) its more likely to lure non-basketball fans into its bosom than turn them away. Buy this now.





[Above] As the offensive player prepares to shoot, the defensive 'guard' prepares to block the shot.



[Above] Things don't get more spectacular than this spread eagle dunk. He'd better watch where he lands though.



[Above] The unmistakable Dennis Rodman dazzles the opposing player with another offensive... hairstyle.



[Above] The facial detail of each player is astonishing. Fans of the genre will no doubt recognise their heroes immediately. There's no sign of Jordan or Shaq, though.

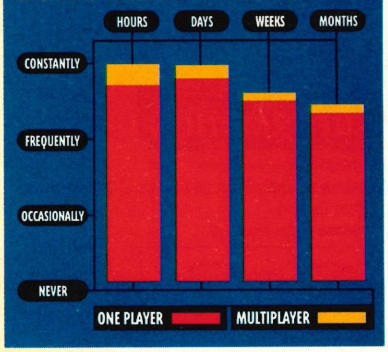
CH...CH... CHANGES

To give you some idea of the effort that has gone into *Total NBA '97*, we've compiled a list of changes, so that you can all get down on your collective knees to pray thanks to the programming team at Sony's hallowed offices.

- Massive graphical overhaul. Superior in every way imaginable.
- More detailed stadiums.
- Full-blown play by play commentary.
- Greater control over Rosters.
- Fantastic new control system, incorporating 'Icon Passing'.
- Improved statistical toggling.
- Better defensive strategies.
- Superior AI, for example, players will try to get the ball to the best player at any time.
- Special moves and new strategic elements take gameplay to new heights.
- The annoying squeaking noise has been drastically reduced.

"The motion capture is noticeably better..."

LONG TERM PLAY...



PLAY

Looks	9
Sounds	9
Gameplay	9
Value	9
Hoopla	9

PLAYED 92%

You'll be in heaven with *Total NBA '97!*

ALTERNATIVELY:
TOTAL NBA '96 (94%)
NBA IN THE ZONE 2 (APRIL '97)

JONAH LOMU RU

JOIN JONAH LOMU AND CODEMASTERS FOR A BONE-CRUNCHING ENCOUNTER AS THE PLAYSTATION PULLS ON ITS RUGBY SHORTS FOR THE FIRST TIME.

Written By Tom Sargent

Imagine being run over by a steamroller. Okay, now imagine being run over by the same machine another ten times. This is how the England rugger squad felt, particularly Rory Underwood and Will Carling, as they bravely attempted the impossible – stopping the six foot four human rhinoceros that is Jonah Lomu.

After the howling success of their previous tennis licence, featuring 'Pistol' Pete Sampras, Codemasters obviously felt that there was room for more sports related shenanigans and they've literally landed a huge deal with the infamous New Zealand All-Blacks winger.

Up to four players can tackle, ruck, maul and drop-kick their way through five types of game, including friendlies, Tournament, Territories Cup, World Cup and Classic matches. All of these games can be played with up to two players per team, but you'll need the assistance of a Multi-Tap if you want to play two-on-two.

A friendly match is the best place to begin if you're unfamiliar with the basic moves and rules. Developer Rage has made certain that a basic game of Rugby is instantly accessible through their intuitive and brilliantly simple ball passing system using the four L buttons on the controller and the learning curve is excellent, allowing for three phases of development.

HAKA

The first phase is for new players, where the basic buttons for kicking, passing, tackling, scoring a try, taking a conversion and line-outs are clearly explained. Using these key moves correctly is vital and after an hour's practice it becomes second nature. They undoubtedly lay the foundations for a deeper understanding of the more complicated (but still easy to use) moves and strategies necessary to take on the world's best at a later time.

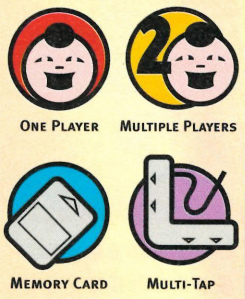
The second phase is recommended after you've been playing for a while, and covers sprinting, selection of specific players, catching a mark, quick line-outs, mauls and rucks. By the third phase you should be really cooking and trouncing the smaller nations by quite some considerable margin. Yes, its time to tighten your jock-straps and meet the South Africans, Australians et al. To stand any chance at all, the subtleties of releasing the ball just as you're about to



[ABOVE] Conversion kicks are dealt with superbly well. The camera catches the action as you would see it on TV. It's also great fun slotting it between the posts.

PLAY INFORMATION

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





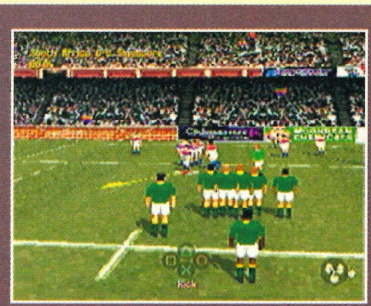
[ABOVE] The line-out is a good opportunity to gain possession of the ball. All manner of subtle little moves can be done to fool the other team. A particularly satisfying part of the game if learned properly.

COME HAIL OR SHINE

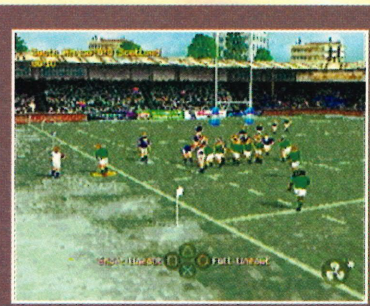
IN TRUE BRITISH TRADITION, OUR SPORTSMEN AND WOMEN ENDURE THE WRATH OF MOTHER NATURE AND RUGBY IS NO DIFFERENT THAN THE REST. RAGE HAS INCLUDED AN NUMBER OF SELECTABLE WEATHER CONDITIONS, WHICH CERTAINLY GIVES THE GAME A MORE AUTHENTIC LOOK. THE WAY THE BALL HANDLES IS ALSO AFFECTED BY CERTAIN CONDITIONS.



GIVES NEW MEANING TO THE PHRASE 'MUD BATH'. GETTING TO GRIPS WITH BALL HANDLING IS DECIDEDLY TRICKY.



AAH, IF ONLY EVERY GAME COULD BE PLAYED ON A WARM SUMMER'S EVE... PERFICK CONDITIONS FOR A GAME OF RUGGER.



BRRRR! ALL THOSE SNOTTY NOSES, CHAPPED LIPS AND NUMB FINGERS. THEY'RE MAAAAD I TELL YA. PLAYERS ARE FAR MORE LIKELY TO SLIP AND SLIDE.

JGBY



[Above] Okay, so England didn't do the Grand Slam last month, but at least you can relive our glorious victory over the Aussies in the '95 World Cup.



be hacked-down must be mastered.

If you're about to be tackled, you can press pass (L1/L2 buttons or R1/R2 buttons) but the ball won't be released until the button is released. Also, learning how to fool your opponent in the line-outs by pretending to mark one person but throwing it to someone else, drop-kick techniques, handing-off, side stepping, knowing how many men to use in rucks and the finer details of scrums will make you the complete 'rugger bugger.'

Cauliflower Ears

The encouraging news for fans of the sport is that, thanks to Rage, a fun, hands-on, dirty simulation of the beautiful(ish) game has been reproduced convincingly. The graphics are a bit blocky though, looking a bit like the old FIFA footy games from a couple of years ago, but they work well, especially with the dynamic camera angles that manage to capture the important moments such as penalties and scrums.

Player animation is unremarkable, but watching them as they go through their motions on the field you can appreciate the effort that has gone into getting every rugby move crammed in. Commentary is by the legendary Bill 'it's coming down with snow on' McClaren, assisted by ex-England hack, Bill Beaumont, and although quite informative and helpful, they eventually start to grate, particularly when the same sentences are repeated so frequently. Overall though, the learning curve is superb and *Jonah Lomu Rugby* is great fun to play once the basics have been learned. Highly recommended.

TRY HARD WITH A VENGEANCE

There are a number of moves vital to the success of a winning team. Most of them are easy to do, but it is only in the subtlety of their use that International success and a showdown with the mighty Jonah Lomu All-Star team can be achieved.



The Line-out

On frequent occasions the ball goes into touch, so mastering this skill gives your team the possession and consequently the advantage.



Catching

Whether its 'marking' the ball from the kick-off, or simply catching/tipping the ball during a line-out, this is a crucial part of the game.



The Try

All that blood and sweat as you battle up and down the field should culminate in a try. That's five points and the chance of a conversion.



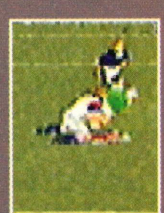
Kicking

There are a number of kicking options during any one game. These include: drop-kicks, punts, penalties and kick-offs. The drop-kick is the hardest.



Running

Learning when to use the speed-up button is crucial, as it can sap a player of energy pretty quickly. Used strategically it can be a real bonus.



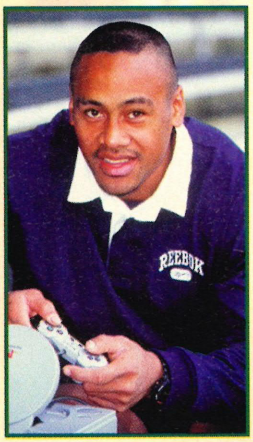
Tackling

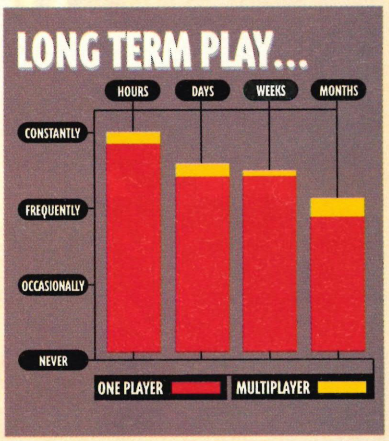
A vital aspect of any Rugby match, and if executed using a bit of momentum, can floor any opponent almost instantly. They come in high or low flavours.

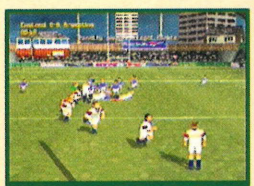


[Above] Jonah Lomu himself charges through a disorganised Japanese defence. The AI of each player is extremely good as they always stick to their specific job.

"Rage has made certain that a basic game of Rugby is instantly accessible..."







[Above] As the Argentines feed the ball out to their winger, the English defence rush out in formation to stop them.



[Above] The red cross beneath the player indicates possession of the ball. Here the Welsh forward leaps to catch the ball.

PLAY

Looks	8
Sounds	8
Gameplay	8
Value	8
Kiwi	8

PLAYED 86%

Fun with an odd-shaped ball

ALTERNATIVELY:
Soccer '97 (83%)
Total NBA '97 (92%)



BLACK LOTUS
AGE: 36
SEX: M
ORIGIN: IRELAND
HEIGHT: 189CM
WEIGHT: 81KG
BLACK LOTUS IS A HUGE HAIRY BLOKE WHO SUPPOSEDLY GOT HIS NAME BY BEING ABLE TO KILL HIS OPPONENTS WITHOUT CAUSING ANY SUFFERING (EATING A BLACK LOTUS WILL KILL YOU INSTANTLY). HIS SUB-WEAPON IS A DOUBLE EDGED BLADE.



KANNUKI
AGE: 28
SEX: M
ORIGIN: RYUKYU, JAPAN
HEIGHT: 191.5CM
WEIGHT: 90KG
KANNUKI'S NAME IS BELIEVED TO COME FROM A NINJA TECHNIQUE WHICH INVOLVES SLOWING DOWN YOUR OPPONENTS SO THAT YOU CAN INFLICT MULTIPLE HITS. KANNUKI'S SUB-WEAPON IS AN IRON FAN WHICH IS SLOW, BUT VERY PAINFUL.



UTSUSEMI
AGE: 55
SEX: M
ORIGIN: SHIMANE, JAPAN
HEIGHT: 183CM
WEIGHT: 85KG
NO GETTING A BIT LONG IN THE TOOTH, UTSUSEMI IS AN ASSASSIN WHO IS WIDELY RESPECTED FOR HIS EFFICIENT KILLING. OPPONENTS CLAIM THAT FIGHTING HIM IS LIKE FIGHTING SMOKE. UTSUSEMI'S SUB-WEAPON IS A FAST DAGGER HIDDEN IN HIS CLOAK.

SNEAKY BACK-STABB

BLACK LOTUS
WEAPON: FAST DAGGER



HOTARUBI
WEAPON: FAST DAGGER



KANNUKI
WEAPON: FAST DAGGER



BUSHIDO

SQUARE DOES IT AGAIN! *BUSHIDO BLADE* IS THE BADDEST AND MOST REALISTIC SWORD-BASED BEAT-'EM-UP YET AND WE'VE GOT THE FIRST IMPORT REVIEW!

The way of the sword has changed forever. Forget all the combat games you have played before. This is the true path. *Bushido Blade* is the pinnacle of Square's oft-criticised attempts to break away from its home territory of beautifully crafted role playing games and into the action arena. Many wondered why the company could not have stuck to that in which it excelled. After all, Capcom, Konami and Sega have gotten fighting all figured out, right?

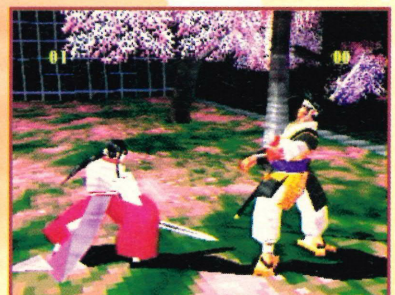
But while its traditional enemies were toying with transferring stock-game styles into 3-D, Square was re-inventing the entire genre. It meant some of the clinging effects of yesteryear had to take a bow. First to go was the health bar. In *Bushido Blade*, you are a Samurai. The very notion of a health bar is preposterous and, worse, dishonourable. One mistake and a sword is in your belly. Then you, my friend, are with the ancestors filling them in on earthly gossip.

Next to go was the ring. Samurai are not paid to fight for the delight of spectators. They fight for their masters and so choose where they feel like scrapping. Thus, it's down to the beach, out to some bamboo paddies, or even popping around the castle.

GENIN

The change from ring to new arenas is not just a matter of background art. Players can interact with their surroundings, and we're not talking about chucking a barrel at your opponent here. You can run through lapping waves on the beach as you attempt to get away from a superior fighter, or cut through bamboo as you try to get at your terrified nemesis. Or you can explore a castle looking for, perhaps, a set of stairs from which to advantageously make your attack.

But despite these quirks, this is no exploration game. It's fighting in all its brutal glory. You may be wondering how the game is scored or organised without the trinkets of traditional fighting games.



[ABOVE] Kids, if you are going to play with great big swords this summer, please try not to wear clothes that clash with the scenery.

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Squaresoft
Supplier: Skill Academy (0181) 567 9174
Price: £74.99
Release date: Out now (import)


ONE PLAYER


MULTIPLE PLAYERS


STEERING/ANALOGUE


MEMORY CARD


LINK CABLE

ING BAR STEWARDS!

MIKADO
WEAPON: FAST DAGGER



TATSUMI
WEAPON: OTHER PEOPLE'S

UTSUSEMI
WEAPON: FAST DAGGER





TATSUMI
AGE: 16
SEX: M
ORIGIN: HIROSHIMA, JAPAN
HEIGHT: 1.76CM
WEIGHT: 65KG
TATSUMI IS THE ONLY CHARACTER IN THE GAME TO USE HIS OWN NAME WHICH SHOWS HOW HONEST HE IS. TATSUMI IS NOT AN OFFICIAL MEMBER OF KAGE AND HAS ENTERED THE TOURNAMENT FOR PERSONAL REASONS. TATSUMI DOESN'T HAVE HIS OWN SUB-WEAPON, SO HE USES OTHERS.

O BLADE



HOTARUBI
AGE: 25
SEX: F
ORIGIN: RUSSIA
HEIGHT: 179.5CM
WEIGHT: 69KG
THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OF THE COMBATANTS IN BUSHIDO BLADE, HOTARUBI HAS GLOWING GOLDEN EYES AND SHE IS NAMED AFTER FIREFLIES. SHE IS EXTREMELY FAST DUE TO HER NINJA TRAINING AND CARRIES A SHURIKEN AS HER SUB-WEAPON.

PLAY CLASSIC

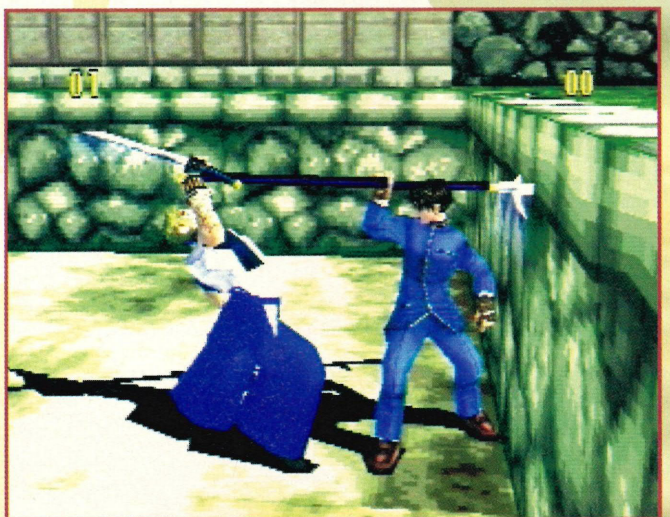
Let's look at the health bar. Imagine your opponent slicing you in the mouth with his sword. This is very simply translated to 'end-of-chat.' There's no 40 percent off your life-status. It's good-bye old chum and all that. This makes the game incredibly tense and exciting. There are no second chances. Or maybe you hit your enemy in the arm. This simply means he loses the use of that limb, thereby allowing you to slice his head off, or disembowel him. Blood squirts out, but it's stylised and not at all gross or tacky.

NINJA

There are no time limits in this game, so in theory you could be battling an opponent for hours. More likely though, the whole thing will be over in seconds. Try to think of this less as a ring combat game, and more of a Samurai simulation. Where it differs from a simulation is that controls are extremely simple. One button will execute whatever command you want to give. One button is always parry, high attack, low attack or mid-attack but the exact attacks vary greatly depending on your stance or what you are doing with your directional pad at the time. The numbers of combinations (as opposed to combos) is huge.



[ABOVE] The characters perform warm-up exercises on the selection screen so you can get an idea of how they move.



[ABOVE] You might think the guy with the huge pointy stick has the best chance of winning, but the weight of it will slow him down considerably.

"The very notion of a health bar is preposterous and, worse, dishonourable..."



MIKADO
AGE: 22
SEX: F
ORIGIN: KYOTO, JAPAN
HEIGHT: 166.8CM
WEIGHT: 56KG
A SLIP OF A GIRL, MIKADO MEANS "GATES PRESIDED OVER BY GOD" AND APART FROM BEING VERY FAST AND BRUTAL, MIKADO'S SUB-WEAPON IS THE EXTREMELY VICIOUS SHORT SWORD WHICH HAS A THICK BLADE AND CAN CUT THROUGH ARMOUR.

HIRACHI HEADACHE

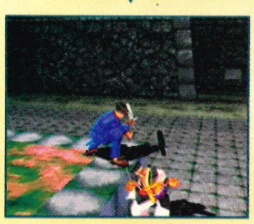
THE ABILITY TO GET THE UPPER HAND ON YOUR OPPONENT IN *BUSHIDO BLADE* BY CLIMBING UP ONTO A HIGHER LEVEL MAKES FOR SOME FANTASTIC NEW POSSIBILITIES IN GAMEPLAY. IN THIS SEQUENCE ONE LUCKY PLAYER HAS MANAGED TO GET UP ONTO A RAISED GARDEN, AND WHEN THE SECOND PLAYER TRIES TO FOLLOW HE IS DEFENCELESS WHILE HE HEAVES HIMSELF UP. THE FIRST PLAYER TAKES ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION AND JUMPS HIGH IN THE AIR BEFORE SMASHING THE SWORD DOWN ON HIS FRIEND'S HEAD. IT'S ALL IN VERY GOOD TASTE THOUGH, YOU UNDERSTAND.











The skill is in getting out of the way of your opponents, and in simply moving into advantageous positions. If you are sick to the heart of combo-memorising-droid-opponents this game is definitely going to light your wick.

There are six initial characters in the game, each with different strengths, and there are others which come to light later on. Kannuki is a 28-year-old assassin from Okinawa. His name comes from a magic trick which means to 'entwine invisible strings around an opponent.' Mikado is a young woman from Kyoto who works in a Tatara shrine. She may seem innocent, but she's well-versed in the ways of Bushido. Hotarubi is a Russian woman who came to Japan six years ago to become a ninja. Black Lotus, despite his Asian name, is a true-bred Dubliner who studied knighthood at Oxford University. Tatsumi is a cocky high school student eager to learn the truth of the sword. Utsusemi is the oldest of the six, wise and canny.



[ABOVE] One good skewering between the ribs can be all it takes to drop someone. Just like real life. Excellent.

You get to choose your character at the start of each game or bout, as well as your weapon. Each character works differently with each weapon, and there is a great deal of enjoyment in just finding the appropriate combination which suits your way of fighting. The differences are subtle and take some mastering. Some weapons are heavy, cumbersome and damaging. Others can be knocked aside because they are so light, but are fast, wicked and true. The weapons vary greatly and include pikes, hammers, swords and daggers. If you lose a weapon in a parry, there is often a secondary tool which can be thrown at your enemy but only – and this does need to be stressed – as a last resort.

Square has included a quest style element to the single-player game and is a bit weird. Essentially, it gives one player some kind of story-line to follow and extra-challenge. But it is the nature of this title to be enjoyed as a two player game. And that is where you will spend hours taking slices out of anyone else who fancies themselves as Samurai. There is also a first person mode in which you can link up two PlayStations which is tough to master, but very detailed and realistic.

Bushido Blade is a stunning game concept and it has been fully realised by Square. Much tougher to master than, say *Soul Blade*, it is nevertheless rewarding when you learn the many moves and stances, and there's simply nothing more satisfying than skewering your opponent with a massive sword.

More brutal than anything we've seen before on PlayStation, the open structure of the game and lack of energy bars are welcome additions to a genre which was frankly getting stale. There is a lot of impenetrable Japanese text in this game, so many people might be put off buying it on import, but if you want us to e-mail you the instructions in English then we are only too happy to do so. Bottom line, whether it be import or official, Bushido Blade is most definitely worth a look.



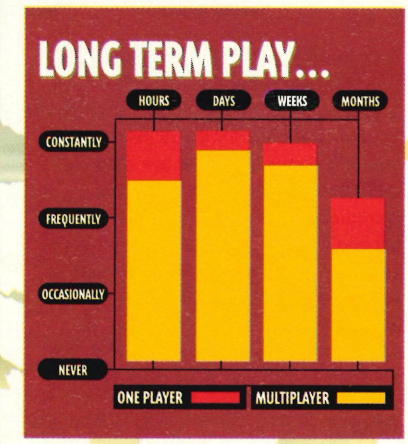
[ABOVE] The weapons all have a very nice motion-blurring effect on them.



[ABOVE] From time to time the weapons will lock together, usually if you both went for a move at exactly the same time. Rapidly hit your attacks buttons to win.



[ABOVE] In the Story mode, your fighter will interact with each person he kills on a way that depends on their relationship with that person. Here he just grabs her by the hair and sneers.



PLAY

LOOKS	8
SOUNDS	8
GAMEPLAY	9
VALUE	6
BLADES	10

PLAYED 94%

CUTS VERY CLOSE INDEED!

ALTERNATIVELY:
SOUL EDGE (96%)
TOSHINDEN (76%)

WIN A BLADESTATION!

IT'S TOTALLY UNIQUE AND IT COULD BE YOURS!





FIRST PRIZE
One lucky winner will walk away with an exclusive Sony BladeStation and a copy of the incredible *Soul Blade* game. Call **0930 162017** It's that easy!



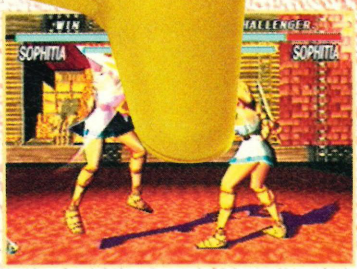
No doubt about it – the PlayStation is the ultimate games machine, with around 200 top titles to choose from. Here's your chance to win not just the ultimate machine, but one featuring exclusive *Soul Blade* artwork plus a copy of the stunning *Soul Blade* game itself (rated 96% in PLAY!). There's only one BladeStation in the world – make it yours!

Just read the three questions below and dial **0930 162017** to leave your answers, name and address. That's all there is to it. The winner will be selected by computer at random from all the correct entries received. Closing date for the competition is 31 May 1997. The winner will be informed by 14 June. Good luck!

Question 1
Soul Blade is called what in the arcades and in Japan?
A. Saw Blade
B. Soul Edge
C. Soul Lodge

Question 2
What type of game is Soul Blade?
A. Strategy war game
B. Combat flight simulator
C. 3D beat-'em-up

Question 3
Which is not a character from Soul Blade?
A. Li Long
B. Rock
C. Mario





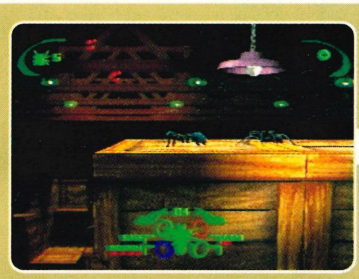


Remember, this competition is run using the telephone only and no entries will be accepted to the magazine itself. Sorry.

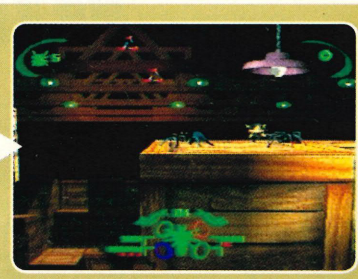
The editor's decision is final. No correspondence may be entered into. Please get permission from the person that pays the phone bill before calling. Calls cost 50p per minute. The phone message is approximately two minutes in length. The winner will be notified in writing. We reserve the right to supply a prize of equivalent value to the one illustrated. No cash alternatives, sorry.

BEST DEFENCE?

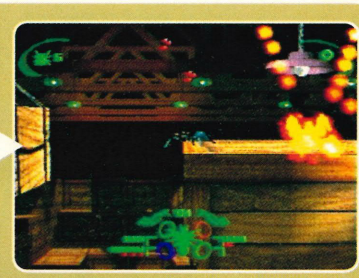
THE ADDITION OF DEFENSIVE WEAPONS TO *SPIDER* MAKES FOR A LITTLE VARIATION IN THE GAMEPLAY FROM EVERY OTHER PLATFORM GAME. TOTALLY INDEPENDENT OF EACH OTHER, THE OFFENSIVE WEAPONS ATTACH TO SPIDER'S FRONT TWO LEGS, AND THE DEFENSIVE ONES FIT ON THE BACK. USING THE MECHMINES, HERE IS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW A REAR-MOUNTED WEAPON CAN COME INTO PLAY.



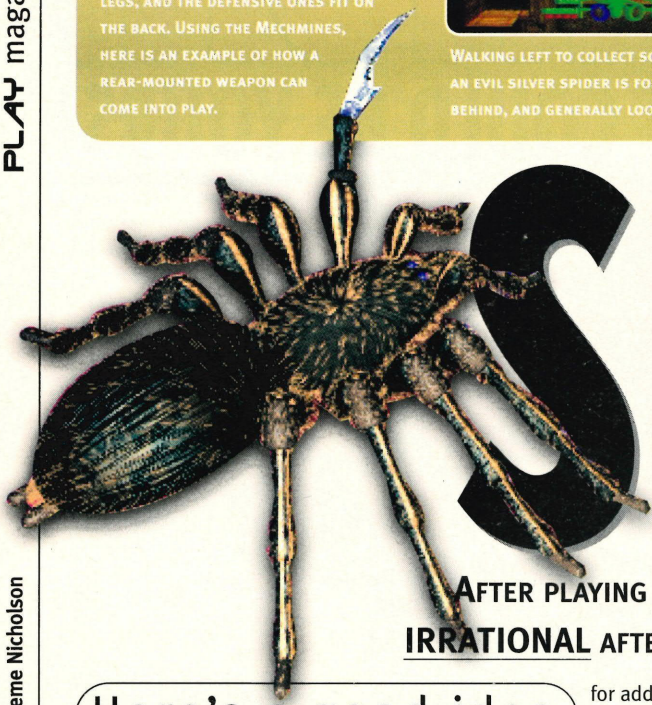
WALKING LEFT TO COLLECT SOME MISSED DNA, AN EVIL SILVER SPIDER IS FOLLOWING CLOSE BEHIND, AND GENERALLY LOOKING SHIFTY.



A GLANCE AT THE DISPLAY TO CHECK WHAT'S AVAILABLE, AND PRESSING ■ DEPLOYS A HOVERING MECHMINE ONTO THE UNSUSPECTING OCTOPED.



WHILE YOU CRAWL FORWARDS, THE MECHMINE TAKES CARE OF YOUR ENEMY IN A FLASH. AND YOU DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TO TURN AROUND.



SPIDER

AFTER PLAYING *SPIDER* YOU MAY SOON REALISE THAT ARACHNOPHOBIA ISN'T SO IRRATIONAL AFTER ALL! GRAB YOUR ROLLED-UP NEWSPAPER AND START SWEATING...

Written By Graeme Nicholson

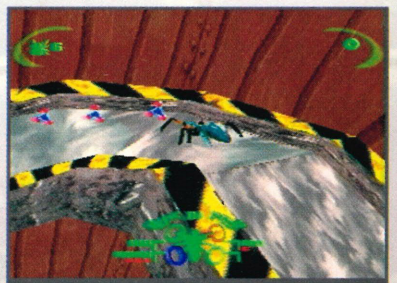
Here's a good idea

for adding that crucial new angle to the ancient side-scrolling platform game genre. Instead of some kind of rodent or all powerful little man, the hero of this dimly lit escapade is just a small spider. Not your ordinary household pest though, for this is a killing machine, a cyber-spider!

Manipulated in the laboratory of Dr Michael Kelly using leading edge nanotechnology and miniaturisation techniques, the test subject known simply as "Spider" has been fitted with artificial limbs that are capable of firing many types of weapons, both offensive and defensive. Kelly had also been experimenting with transferring his own thoughts and impulses directly into the brain of Spider. Whilst fiddling around in this manner one day he messes up and shoe-horns his entire personality and mind into the poor thing, just before some bad guys break in and abduct his body. There is no talk about how the contents of a six pound human brain can fit into the tiny milligram brain of a spider, but then that would ruin the whole story.

Now, with the mind of this great man and the body of an agile arachnid you must make your way through the laboratory complex, dealing with the bizarre dangers that face you in your new form. The main threat to your bristly existence is from your own past experiments which litter the lab. Spider certainly wasn't the first subject of Kelly's interference with nature, and there are abominations crawling, buzzing and flying

"Nothing that a child armed with a magnifying glass couldn't handle..."



[ABOVE] Those blue and red icons are the DNA strands that Spider collects all through his journey. Getting 100 earns you an extra life.



[ABOVE] The only way to beat this descending metal spider is to use the angle of the concrete wedge and fire off a weapon.



[ABOVE] The microchip in the bubble is your exit from this level to the next. Don't try to climb the fan.



[ABOVE] Could there be a more obvious obstacle than this huge pneumatic stamping thing? We think not.

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: BMGie
Contact: Skill Academy
0181 567 9174
Price: £44.99
Release date: Out Now (import)



ONE PLAYER



MEMORY CARD



[Above] This bionic bat drops big purple plasma balls on you if you're not quick enough.



[Above] The long range of the flame-thrower weapon means you can lean out and toast enemies across pits like this in total safety.



[Above] Hmmm, a hole. Horrific death or special room packed with bonuses to reward your courage? You decide.



[Above] The constantly moving conveyor belts make it tricky to jump between the many platforms with any accuracy, so keep your wits about you.



[Above] The toxic spray of the Poison leg exterminates another of Kelly's failed cybernetics subjects.

around all over the place! Nothing that a child armed with a magnifying glass couldn't handle you understand, but a considerable worry for a bloke suddenly trapped in the body of a teensy-weensy spider.

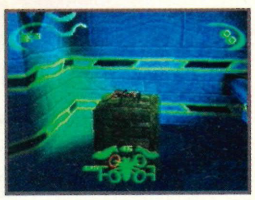
Microtechnology

The short term goal is finding the microchips that will get you out of each level, and in the long term you want to find the people who snatched your human body by searching for clues across the game's 30 rooms. Although the graphics aren't particularly special, the mostly dark environment with occasional subtle lighting, provides some atmosphere, and at times the realistic animation of the spider shines through. Well, yes, he moves well, but even this is marred by some dodgy moments where his body will sink into the scenery as though it wasn't solid, such as when climbing a slope on a laboratory shelf, parts of his back legs and pod thingy will disappear under the surface.

Using a method very similar to *Pandemonium*, *Spider* is played entirely on rails, where the 3-D effect is firmly limited to the graphics and doesn't have any bearing on the gameplay. Simply holding down right on the D-pad, for example, would make you follow the pre-defined path in that direction, which could be a straight line or round a corner. When you come across a vertical surface you press up to have Spider climb it with his sticky little feet, and you can jump in the usual manner.

It's a shame you can't just turn to face the back wall and climb it as a real spider could, because the game is so confined. The only extra element you'll encounter is Spider's ability to cling to things upside-down and walk left or right while inverted, but that is not enough to make *Spider* anything more than a very average platform experience.

There should be the ability to scuttle all over these large rooms in true 3-D with total freedom, even to spin a web that you catch the insect enemies in to eat for health. Or to climb any and every wall in pursuit of your human captors. As none of this is included, there seems little point in







[Above] You start to have second thoughts about all this fighting for justice lark when you meet these dirty great rabid rats with blood around their mouth.

Boys' Toys

The various instruments of insect death that Spider uses to attack and defend himself are specially prepared cybernetic limbs which Dr Kelly has made. Found laying around in many places all the way through the game, each tiny weapon will replace a normal looking artificial leg on Spider's body until he is killed, at which point they are all lost again.



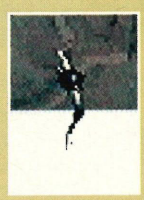
These guided missiles will outline the closest target when selected and then all you need to do is launch one to blow that target apart. There are only three in each pack, so use them wisely.



The Flame leg will shoot out a long, wide stream of fire directly in front of Spider. Use the fuel gauge to determine how sparing you can be with it and make sure enemies are caught in the middle.



This Poison leg sprays out *Batman*-style green smoke that is so toxic your enemies explode! Because it lingers and rises slightly in the air this is a good weapon to catch flying beasties with.

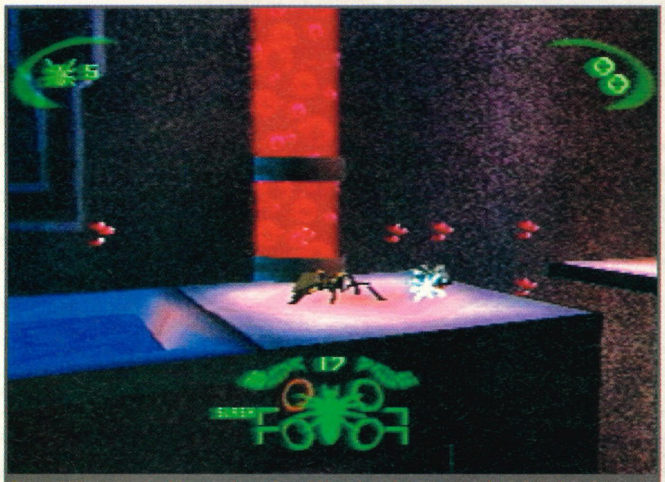


S-Bomb. Contains one single almighty bug-frying charge that should destroy everything in the immediate area in a red flash. It is defensive and so attaches to the back of Spider, triggered by the ■ button.

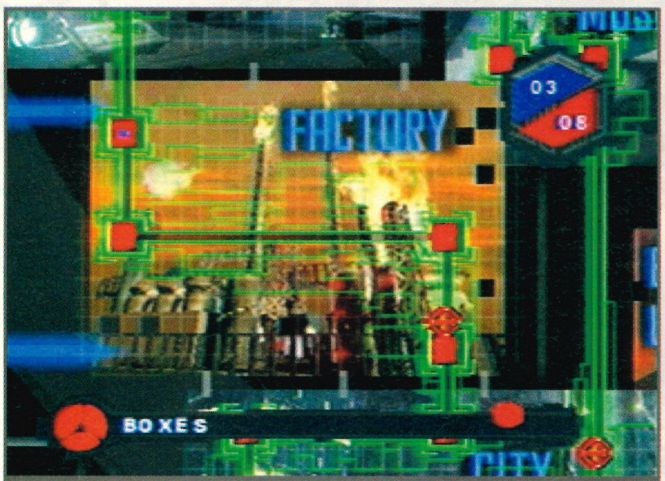


Use the Mechmines to surprise those awful arthropods that try to get the upper hand by attacking from behind. Once they've chewed on a Mechmine they are unlikely to bother you again.





[Above] When struck with your sharp-tipped Slash leg, these nasty spiders bunch up in a protective ball shape. Hit them again.



[Above] After the lab, it's on to the industrial factory to continue your quest. Using this map you can revisit old levels to get important power-ups.

making the main character a spider, as nearly all of the actions here could be performed by a similarly armed hedgehog or bandicoot.

Biomechanoid

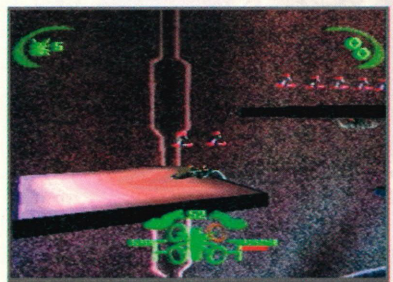
Your weapons come in the form of cybernetic legs that can be found scattered around the building which attach and activate automatically when you touch them. Poison, guided missiles, mines – they can all be yours, and after you have picked up a couple of them you switch between the legs to choose the best method of destruction for the closest furry foe.

After a miserable two hits by any of the winged or eight legged biohazards though, this super advanced, computer enhanced half metal bug of war flips over and dies without any sign of a struggle. At which point you're back at the beginning of the level, without any weapons except the default Slasher – no more than a sharpened prosthetic that Spider dabs around in a camp fashion.

Cybernetics

There just isn't enough going on in *Spider* to involve the player for any length of time, and being rigidly stuck to the line of travel means you don't have the freedom to approach things in a different way. Much had been hoped for this game as it looked so promising in its early stages of development and, on the face of it, is still a good idea for a videogame. We had no way of knowing it was going to be as flat as it turned out, and to be honest this is quite a disappointment. One for starved platform addicts only, but if you liked *Crash Bandicoot*...





[Above] Beware: the bad guys have those insect abilities too you know, so be prepared to find them hiding everywhere...

EEK! FIVE GREAT SPIDER MOMENTS



It's always the way isn't it, you sit down for a nice picnic and all of a sudden 15 meter high spiders emerge from another dimension and suck everybody's spleens out of their bodies. Here are five other nutritional greats...

The Giant Spider Invasion (1975)

Wisconsin is not the place to be as a black hole crash lands and huge mutant spiders begin pouring out and chomping on anything with less legs than them (limb-ists you see).

Tarantulas: The Deadly Cargo (1977)

A made for TV classic in which a container full of bananas gets hijacked by said Tarantulas who then proceed to leap on the faces of people stupid enough to open trapdoors. Also shown in the season: *Snowbeast* and the *Thing from Bogey Creak*.

Earth vs the Spider (1958)

Little is known of this movie except that it exists, it features huge paper maché spiders on very obvious strings who move with all the style and grace of Bagpus, and that the military try all sorts of weapons but ends up getting killed in over-the-top ways.

Kingdom of the Spiders (1977)

Veterinarian Rack Henson (William Shatner – wooden) discovers a deadly plague of Tarantulas are about to overrun his home town after finding farm animals in all sorts of problems. Before you can say "Arrghhh" the place is crawling with 'em.

Arachnophobia (1990)

Ridiculous Hollywood hokum about a new species of spider who can jump and kill in seconds. Jeff Daniels in the unlikely hero and fortunately Julian Sands dies early on. It goes without saying that the nailguns shown prominently earlier play a big part in the finale.



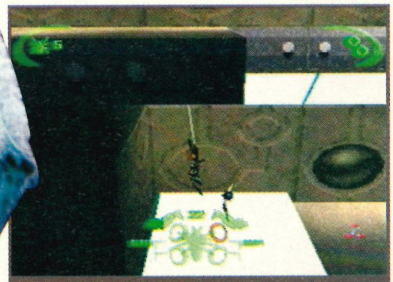
[Above] A Pyrex beaker on the head can play havoc with a spider's complexion, so don't hesitate as you run past.



[Above] The explosions are smooth and professional, but after the thousandth time they don't seem so amazing.



[Above] Clambering over a computer keyboard you used only moments ago as a human shows just how small you've become.

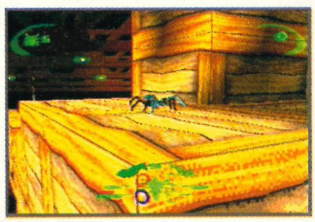


[Above] You can hang from horizontal surfaces to reach sneakily placed items or to swing across to another platform.

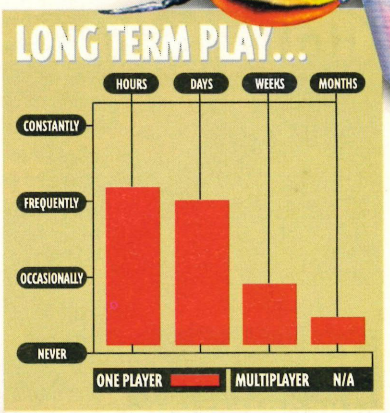


"*Spider* is played entirely on rails..."



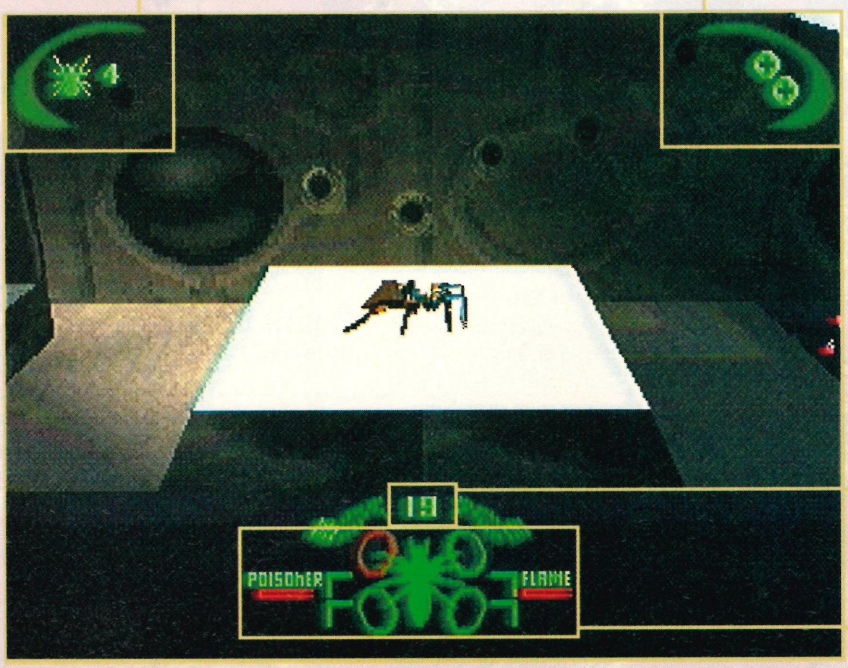






Number of lives remaining. Occasionally you will find small blue spider icons that give you an extra life

Your health. Each green icon represents the amount of hits you can take before dying. Collecting the floating red spheres replenishes your health



Shows the number of DNA strands collected so far. Get 100 for an extra life

Shows which weapons are assigned to each side of Spider on the front and back



Looks	●●●●●●●○○
Sounds	●●●○○○○○○
Gameplay	●●●●●○○○○
Value	●●●○○○○○○
Freaks	●●●●●●●●○

PLAYED 75%

Itsy bitsy... freedom – doh!

ALTERNATIVELY:
PANDEMONIUM (90%)
CRASH BANDICOOT (84%)

SPOT GOES TO

DELAYED BEYOND BELIEF, FINALLY THE INFAMOUS RED DOT IS BACK, AND HE'S IN A SPOT OF BOTHER. HAS IT BEEN WORTH THE WAIT THOUGH?



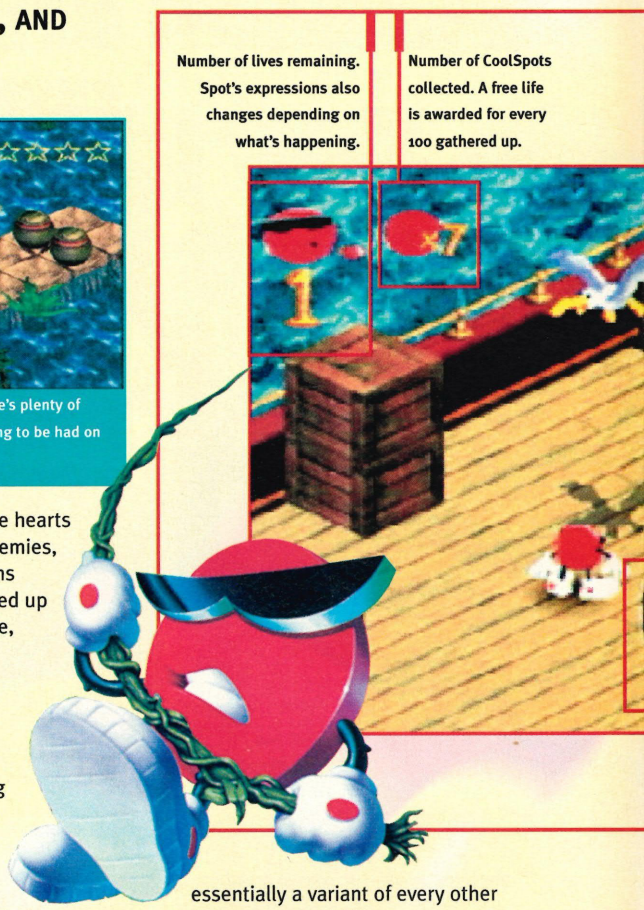
[ABOVE] At the start of every level, our diminutive hero rides a reel of film to the new themed world. It's a nice touch, and happens prior to bonus worlds too. Spot certainly looks good on celluloid.



[ABOVE] Just when you think you're in the clear, you get crabs... to deal with! The blighters scuttle around very quickly, but you can shoot them.



[ABOVE] If you like water sports there's plenty of edge-of-the-seat leaping and dodging to be had on the Adventure level.



Written By Tom Sargent

Hollywood, Schmollywood. All that glitz and glamour would be far too much for your average red dot to handle, but not Cool Spot, the charismatic full stop based on the successful *7-Up* logo. And after what seems like an eternity Spot has changed perspective (instead of a sideways scroller on the Mega Drive, he has a new isometric view; changing the feel of the game completely).

The game begins with Spot falling from a drinks dispenser where he accidentally gets sucked into and subsequently merged with a film projector. This rockets him into a world comprised entirely of familiar cinematic themes. Spot's only means of returning to, er 'reality' is to complete each of the enormous Hollywood settings, including a pirate ship, Indiana Jones-style temples and a haunted house, to name but a few.

Spot begins his bid for freedom on a pirate galleon, where, as in subsequent levels, he must run, jump and shoot his way through scrolling scenery, collecting small red 'CoolSpots', power-ups and bonuses as he goes. Spot's lifemeter is represented by a line of three hearts and as he takes hits from enemies, they disappear. Energy tokens and extra lives a can be picked up along the way to compensate, though.

ANTARCTIC

Further exploration reveals breakable objects such as barrels and crates containing further power-ups and a few surprises in the form of enemy sprites. Collect 100 CoolSpots and you are rewarded with an extra life. Find all five special stars that are fiendishly hidden throughout every level and you not only gain access to an extended finishing sequence, but also at the end of the current level the player is treated to a bonus world. So far we've found three: The Wild West, Triassic Terror and Science Ficton!

Control over the feisty little fellow is far from easy. You'd have thought that getting to grips with the basics of what is essentially a variant of every other platform game would become second nature after a bit of practice, but hold yer horses – it ain't. After hours of play it remains an awkward and confusing task at best. However, you do have the option to change from the default setting to suit your own taste, but this still doesn't rectify what remains a disorientating control system.

NORTH POLE

Thankfully, the first few levels are fairly

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Virgin Interactive Entertainment
Customer support: 0171 368 2255
Price: £34.99
Release date: Out Now


ONE PLAYER


MEMORY CARD

PICK-UP PALAVER

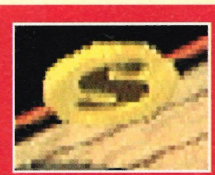
IN THE TIME-HONOURED FASHION OF SCROLLING PLATFORMERS, YOU'RE GUARANTEED TO COME ACROSS ALL MANNER OF COLLECTIBLES. WE'VE LISTED A SMATTERING OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ITEMS THAT YOU'LL ENCOUNTER. THERE ARE OTHERS OF COURSE, BUT WE CAN'T DO ALL THE WORK!


COOLSPOTS ARE THE BREAD AND BUTTER PICK-UPS IN THE GAME. PICK UP 100 AND GAIN AN EXTRA LIFE.



REPLENISHES YOUR ENERGY BAR TO FULL. TAKE THREE HITS AND YOU LOOSE A LIFE, THOUGH.


FIND ALL FIVE ON EACH LEVEL AND YOU ARE REWARDED WITH A BONUS STAGE.

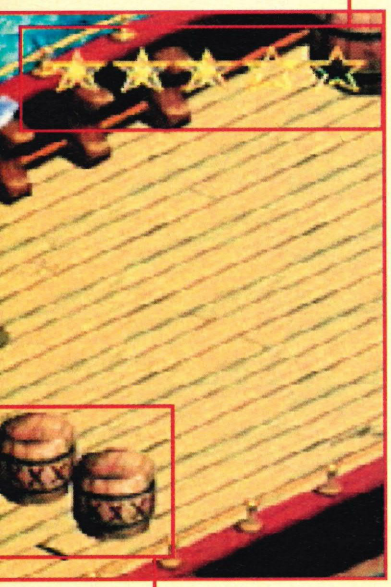


GIVES THE PLAYER A LIMITED BURST OF INVINCIBILITY, BUT IT DOESN'T LAST FOR LONG.



THREE-WAY FIRE. REALLY EFFECTIVE AT CLEARING OUT PERSISTENT BADDIES AND BOSSES.

HOLLYWOOD



Quantity of Stars collected. There are five per level to find.

Destructable objects. Sometimes they reveal a bonus, others an enemy.

SPOT CHECK

SOMEWHAT BIZARRE, THE TINY RED GEEZER REALLY COMES INTO HIS OWN WHEN HE'S BORED. LET HIM STAND FOR JUST TEN SECONDS AND SPOT IMMEDIATELY AMUSES THE PLAYER BY PERFORMING ONE OF FOUR COMIC ROUTINES.



SPOT RUDELY STICKS HIS TONGUE OUT TO GET YOUR ATTENTION. OR IS HE TRYING TO CLEAN THE SCREEN, PERHAPS?



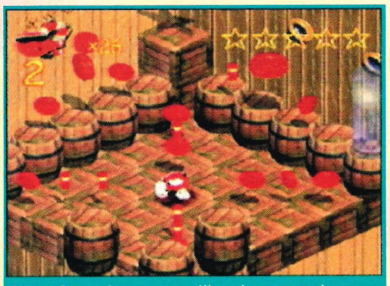
SPOT'S OBVIOUSLY A BUSY DOT AS HE TRIES TO PHONE HIS AGENT. "CAN YOU GET ME INTO A GOOD GAME NEXT TIME."



THIS IS BOUND TO GET YOUR ATTENTION, A QUICK BURST OF THE VOCAL CHORDS WILL KNOCK 'EM DEAD.

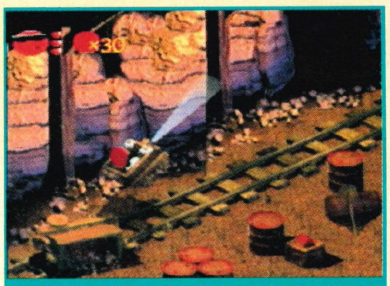


EVENTUALLY, SPOT RESORTS TO TAPPING THE SCREEN WITH ONE OF HIS TINY DIGITS. HELLO? ANYBODY THERE?



[ABOVE] Jump into a vortex-like teleporter and you get whisked away to bonus rooms. There's usually an element of risk in getting to one, though.

"One of Virgin's more costly mistakes..."



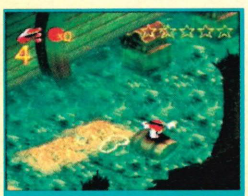
[ABOVE] In a nod to *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, you can ride along the mine shafts on little car.

rudimentary; consisting of sumptuous and colourful backgrounds affording the player a gentle learning curve, before things become inevitably more frantic.

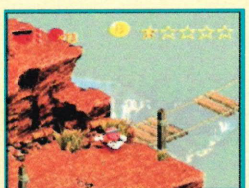
Unfortunately, you never quite get to grips with the control of Spot and as the gameplay doesn't waver from the formulaic 'run left to right' pattern it soon becomes quite amazingly repetitive and dull. Reaching the end of level bosses becomes more a test of patience than skill and that can't be right.

Ultimately, *Spot Goes to Hollywood* provides an adequate challenge over its 40 levels, but the distinct lack of imagination leaves a nasty taste in the mouth. It's also showing its age. Originally slated for release in late '94, Spot's antics now resemble little more than an updated relic of a genre that belongs in the golden era of 16-bit gaming, and as such, should, sadly, be put out to pasture. Granted, the scenery is pretty in places, and the enemy sprites are reasonably well animated, but the gameplay is unforgivably flawed due to its repetitious nature. Given the stupidly long development time, this looks to be one of Virgin's more costly mistakes. It could be good for young children who will be too enamoured by the character to notice the game's many flaws. Not a great step forward though.





[ABOVE] Although the action is primarily from left to right, at least Spot gets to travel to his goal in a variety of ways. Barrel racing anyone?



[ABOVE] The Adventure level sees Spot negotiating rickety old bridges. A few well-timed jumps should see him safely across.

PLAY

LOOKS	7
SOUNDS	8
GAMEPLAY	5
VALUE	6
CHILLED OUT	6

PLAYED 72%

Spot on graphically, but a little dated

ALTERNATIVELY:
RAYMAN (87%)
PANDEMONIUM (90%)

100% PlayStation 0% fair

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WALL OF GAME

SOUL EDGE



Another stunning part of our completely comprehensive guide to the character moves and tricks in Sony's *Soul Edge* (Officially called *Soul Blade*). This month, apart from full moves lists for Li Long, Rock Adams and Sophitia, we also have the strategy for getting the final weapon for all characters (see right), so please no more phone calls about this matter. *Soul Blade* is now due to come out on 9 May and by that time (unless there are further delays) you should have a full moves list!

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

⇩, ⇩ – Move towards the camera
⇩, ⇧ – Move away from the camera

Ground Attacks

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

Replay

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

Cheats



Changing The Endings

Soul Edge in both arcade and on PlayStation has real time endings. You can change these endings while they are actually running by tapping directions and buttons rapidly. For example, Li Long will live, Mitsurugi will kill Tanegashima, Voldo will caress the Soul Edge so much it shatters, and so on. Please note that you can only change the endings when the picture goes full-screen; if it is letter-boxed then you're out of luck buddy!

Killing Tanegashima

To kill the mysterious archer in Mitsurugi's ending, you must push Left, run Forward, and then slash him when you're in close.

Edge Master Mode

This is an additional option whereby your fighter embarks on a quest to gain more weapons. The weapons you collect can be saved to memory card and used in the normal arcade mode. You usually collect a new weapon after each bout. But getting the final weapon is slightly trickier. The way we found of accessing it is as follows:

1. Save the game after defeating Soul Edge in Edge Master Mode.
2. Travel to Italy. Fight a game and lose on purpose.
3. If your map screen character does their time-over loss animation, you know you're on the right track. If they don't, reset and try again.
4. Travel one space in any direction, but don't go back to Spain.
5. Fight and win. If you get the final weapon, great, but if you don't, reset and try again.



PLAY Information

Publisher: Sony
Customer Support: 0881 505505
Price: £55-70 (import)
TBA (£34.99)
Release date: Out now (import)
9 May (official)

WALL OF GAME

NUMBER 20

SOULEDGE



ROCK ADAMS

General moves

Slash – ■ (⇖)
Double Slash – ■, ■ (⇖ ⇖)
Cut-To-Pieces – ■, ■, ■ (⇖⇖⇖)
Brutal Slash – ■, ▲ (⇖ ⇖ ⇩)
Bear Hunt – ■, ● (⇖ ⇖)
Axe Gripper – ⇨ + ■ (⇖)
Axe Swings Down – ⇨ + ■, ■ (⇖ ⇖)
Tidal Wave – ⇨ + ■, ■, ■ (⇖⇖⇘)
Demolition Strike – ⇨ + ■, ■, ▲ (⇖ ⇖ ⇩)
Discus Thrower – ⇙ + ■ (⇘)
Spinning Gut Strike – ⇘ + ■ (⇩)
Low Swing – ⇩ + ■ (⇘)
Lumberjack – ⇨, ⇨+ ■ (⇩)
Tornado – ⇨, ⇨+ ■, ▲ (⇩ ⇩)
Spinning Gut Strike – ◁▷ + ■ (⇩)
Smash – ▲ (⇩)
Rock Raver – ▲, ▲ (⇩ ⇩)
Down Kneel Kick (strikes downed opponent) – ⇧ + ●
Unblockable – ⇨ (quickly) + ▲ + ●
Critical Edge + Devastator – ■ + ● + ●, ⇦ + ■ + ✕
Critical Edge + Rising Uppercut – ■ + ▲ + ●, ⇦ + ▲ + ✕

Edge Master Quest

EPISODE 1: VOLDO
Conditions: Beat him.
Weapon Received: Stone Club
Episode 2: Mitsurugi, Taki
Conditions: Beat them.
Weapon Received: Crescent Axe
EPISODE 3: SEUNG MINA, HWANG
Conditions: Beat them with throws.

LI LONG

General moves

Art Of Snake – ■ (⇖)
Twin Snakes – ■, ■ (⇖ ⇖)
Thunderstorm – ■, ■, ■ (⇖ ⇖ ⇖)
Whipping – ■, ■, ⇩ + ■ (⇖ ⇖ ⇘)
Whiplash Kick – ■, ■, ● (⇖ ⇖ ⇩)
Whiplash Low Kick – ■, ■, ⇩ + ● (⇖ ⇖ ⇘)
Whiplash Pain – ■, ■, ⇩ + ●, ▲ (⇖ ⇖ ⇘ ⇩)
Hard Swipe – ⇨+ ■ (⇖)
Windstorm – ⇨+ ■, ■ (⇖ ⇖)
Hurricane – ⇨+ ■, ■, ■ (⇖ ⇖ ⇖)
Viperlash Pain – ⇨+ ■, ■, ⇩ + ●, ▲ (⇖ ⇖ ⇘ ⇩)
Viperslash Swipe – ⇨+ ■, ■, ⇩ + ■ (⇖ ⇖ ⇘)
Victim Of Snake – ■, ▲ (⇖ ⇩)
Dragon's Beat – ■, ▲, ●
Dragon's Elbow – ⇩ ⇙ ⇦, ▲ (⇩)
Dragon's Knuckle – ⇩ ⇙ ⇦, ▲, ⇦ + ▲ (⇩ ⇖)
Dragon Venom – ◁▷ + ■ (⇩)
Hard Rising Stab – ◁▷ + ▲ (⇩)
Quick Uppercut – ⇘ + ▲ (⇩)
Flipkick – ◁▷ + ● (⇩)
Roundhouse Kick – ⇨ + ● (⇘)
Crab's Claw – Dash + ● (⇘)
Crazy Windmill/Flash Destruction – ■ + ▲ (⇩ ⇩)
Dangerous Driver – ■ + ✕ (Throw)
Hell's Throat – ▲ + ✕ (Throw)
Dragon's Revenge – ⇦, ■ + ✕ (Counter)
Stamping (only hits downed opponent) – ⇘, ●

SOPHITIA ALEXANDRA

General moves

First Strike – ■ (⇖)
Second Strike – ■, ■ (⇖ ⇖)
Final Strike – ■, ■, ■ (⇖ ⇖ ⇖)
Silent Shadow – ■, ■, ⇩ + ■ (⇖ ⇖ ⇘)
Silent Dancer – ■, ■, ■, ● (⇖ ⇖ ⇖ ⇩)
Silent Screamer – ■, ■, ▲ (⇖ ⇖ ⇖ ⇩)
Angel's Punishment – ■, ■, ● (⇖ ⇖ ⇩)
Silent Rage – ■, ■, ⇩ + ● (⇖ ⇖ ⇘)
Low Swipe – ⇩ + ■ (⇘)
Rising Gut Slash (stuns) – ◁▷ + ■ (⇩)
Slasher – ▲ (⇩)
V-Slasher – ▲, ▲ (⇩ ⇩)
The Conductor – ▲, ▲, ▲ (⇩ ⇩ ⇩)
Justice Of The Peace – ▲, ▲, ■ (⇩ ⇩ ⇖)
✕ (Counter)
Nightmare Stab (hits downed opponent) – ⇘, ▲, ▲, ▲, ▲

Unblockable – ▲, ▲, ▲ + ■ – ▲ (■ to ▲ quickly!)
Critical Edge + Soul Asylum – ■ + ▲ + ●, ⇩ ⇘ ⇨ + ■ + ✕

Edge Master Quest

EPISODE 1: ILLUSION SOPHITIA
Conditions: Beat Her.
Weapon Received: None
EPISODE 2: ROCK
Conditions: Ring Rock out.
Weapon Received: Gaia Sword. This refills life
EPISODE 3: VOLDO
Conditions: Defeat him quickly, his life recovers steadily.
Weapon Received: Sword Breaker

Piston Attack – ▲, ▲, ▲ (⇩ ⇩ ⇩)
Fly Swatter – ▲, ■ (⇩ ⇖)
Elephant Trunk – ⇘ + ▲ (⇩)
Quakemaker – ⇩ + ▲ (⇩)
Headbutt – ⇦ + ▲ (⇩)
Axe Ram – ⇨ + ▲ (⇩)
Battle Axe – ⇨, ⇨+ ▲ (⇩)
Rising Stab – ◁▷ + ▲ (⇩)
High Kick – ● (⇖)
Rock Climber – ⇨ + ● (⇖)
Low Kick – ⇩ + ● (⇘)
Middle Kick – ⇘ + ● (⇩)
Wild Slash – ⇘ + ●, ■ (⇩ ⇘)
Horizontal Sweep Kick – ⇙ + ● (⇘)
Wild Charge – ⇨, ⇨+ ⇘ (⇩)
Thunder Clap – ◁▷ + ● (⇩)
Sliding Kick – Dash + ● (⇘)
Great Sky Splitter – ⇩ + ■, ▲ (⇘ ⇩)
Pouncer – ⇦ + ■ + ▲ (⇩)

Rock Thrower – ■ + ✕ (Throw)
The Conqueror – ▲ + ✕ (Throw)
Falling Rock – ⇩ ⇙ ⇦ + ▲ + ✕ (Throw)
The Annihilator – ⇘ + ■ + ✕ (Throw)

Weapon Received: War Hammer

Episode 4: Colosseum
Conditions: Beat everyone.
Weapon Received: Twin Axe

Episode 5: Siegfried, Li Long
Conditions: Beat them in time.
Weapon Received: Cross Axe

Episode 6: Taki
Conditions: Entering her shrine, your life has been drained by the numerous spirits of the bamboo forest. Defeat her with your small amount of life.
Weapon Received: Double Tomahawk

Episode 7: Cervantes/Soul Edge
Conditions: Beat them.
Weapon Received: None
Final Weapon: Great Axe. This weapon refills your life.



Vipersnake – ⇨ + ■, ▲ (⇖ ⇩)
Dragon's Pain – ⇨ + ■, ▲, ● (⇖ ⇩ ⇖)
Low Spinning Swipe – ⇩ + ■ (⇘)
Reverse Gut-Stab – ⇘ + ■ (⇩)
Rope Attacher – ▲ + ■ (⇩)
Rope Skipper – ⇙ + ■ (⇘)
Double Stab – ⇩ + ■, ⇧ + ▲ (⇘ ⇩)
Backhand Swipe – ◁▷ + ■ (⇩)
Art Of Dragon – ▲ (⇩)
Twin Dragons – ▲, ▲ (⇩ ⇩)
Hailstorm – ▲, ▲, ▲ (⇩ ⇩ ⇩)
Sadistic Cross – ▲, ■ (⇩ ⇖)
Drum Beat – ▲, ● (⇩ ⇩)
Aiming Snake – ⇨ + ▲ (⇖)
Snake Venom – ⇨ + ▲, ▲ (⇖ ⇩)
Low Overhead Swipe – ⇩ + ▲ (⇩)
Drum Solo – ⇦ + ▲ (⇩)
Drum Roll – ⇦ + ▲, ▲ (⇩ ⇩)
Drum Fire – ⇦ + ▲, ▲, ▲ (⇩ ⇩ ⇩)
Dragon Attack – ⇙ + ▲ (⇩)
Air Splitter – ⇙ + ▲, ■ (⇩ - ⇘)
Punisher Whip – ⇨, ⇨+ ▲ (⇩)
High Kick – ● (⇖)
Twin Harpoon – ●, ● (⇖ ⇩)
Harpoon Driller – ●, ⇩ + ● (⇖ ⇘)
Rising Dragon – ●, ⇩ + ■ (⇖ ⇘)
Striking Pose – ⇘ + ● (⇩)
Rising Kick – ⇨, ⇨ + ● (⇖)
Monkey Magic – ⇩ ⇘ ⇨ + ▲ (⇩ ⇩)
Turn Around – ⇩ ⇙ ⇦

Critical Edge + Fire & Brimstone – ■ + ▲ + ●, ⇨, ⇨ + ■ + ▲

Edge Master Quest

Episode 1: Rock
Conditions: Beat him.
Weapon Received: Jafu

EPISODE 2: SIEGFRIED
Conditions: Defeat him before the time runs out.
Weapon Received: Rakan

Episode 3: Sophitia, Seung Mina, Taki
Conditions: Defeat them.
Weapon Received: Suzaku

Episode 4: Hwang
Conditions: Defeat him with juggle combos.
Weapon Received: Tetsuryu

Episode 5: Colosseum
Conditions: Defeat everyone.
Weapon Received: Byakko

Episode 6: Voldo
Conditions: Beat him.
Weapon Received: Shura

Episode 7: Cervantes/Soul Edge
Conditions: Defeat them.
Weapon Received: None
Final Weapon: Sorai



Holy Slash – ▲, ▲, ⇧ + ■ (⇩ ⇩ ⇘)
Holy Comet – ▲, ▲, ⇩ + ● (⇩ ⇩ ⇘)
Holy Strike – ▲, ▲, ■, ▲ (⇩ ⇩ ⇘ ⇩)
Maiden Strike – ⇨ + ▲ (⇩)
Angel Uppercut – ⇘ + ▲ (⇩)
Angel Arrow – ⇨ + ■ (⇖)
Angel Hunt – ⇘ + ■ (⇩)
Moon Eclipse – ⇦ + ▲ (⇩)
Sunrise Slice – ⇩ + ▲ (⇩)
Blade Uppercut – ◁▷ + ▲ (⇩)
High Kick – ● (⇖)
Holy Horns – ●, ● (⇖ ⇩)
Kaleidoscope Kick – ●, ●, ⇩ + ● (⇖ ⇩ ⇘)
Paradise Kick – ●, ●, ⇩ + ●, ⇨ + ● (⇖ ⇩ ⇘ ⇩)
Holy Kick – ⇨ + ● (⇖)
Moon Flip – ⇙ + ● (⇘)
Low Kick – ⇩ + ● (⇘)
White Flash – ⇧ + ● (⇩)
Angel's Spiral – ⇙ + ●, ■ (⇩ ⇘)
Angel's Dive – ⇙ + ●, ▲ (⇩ ⇩)
Angel's Flip – ⇙ + ●, ● (⇩ ⇩)
Silent Step – ⇩ ⇘ ⇨
Angel Strike – ⇩ ⇘ ⇨ + ▲ (⇩)
Holy Step – ⇨ ⇩ ⇘
Athens Upper – ⇨ ⇩ ⇘ + ▲ (⇩)
Heaven's Calling – ⇨ ⇩ ⇘ + ■ (⇩)
Holy Arrow (crouching Forward) – ⇘, ■ (⇘)
Shield Of Justice (crouching Forward) – ⇘, ▲ (⇘)
Sliding Kick – Dash + ● (⇘)
Overhead Flip-Kick – ◁▷ + ● (⇩)
Sunshine Flip – ■ + ● (⇖)

Widow Maker – ■ + ✕ (Throw)
Angel's Heaven – ▲ + ✕ (Throw)
Heaven To Hell – ▲ + ✕, ⇩, ■ + ▲ + ● (Throw)
Returning Madness – ▲, ■

Episode 4: Seung Mina
Conditions: Be alive when the time runs out.
Weapon Received: None

Episode 5: Taki
Conditions: Beat her with your tiny amount of life.
Weapon Received: Flame Sword. This weapon drains your life with its heat, but is very powerful.

Episode 6: Colosseum
Conditions: Beat everyone.
Weapon Received: Blue Crystal Rod. This refills life. (Note: Namco made a game called Tower Of Druaga 2: The Blue Crystal Rod in the mid '80s!)

Episode 7: Taki
Conditions: You are poisoned, defeat Taki before you die.
Weapon Received: Rapier. This sword has 1.4 times the reach of your normal sword.

Episode 8: Siegfried
Conditions: Defeat him with throws.
Weapon Received: Apollo Sword. This weapon recovers life.

Episode 9: Cervantes/Soul Edge
Conditions: Beat them.
Weapon Received: None
Final Weapon: Valkyrie. This weapon refills your weapon/Critical Edge gauge (Note: This is the sword and shield of Namco's '80s heroine Walkure!)



PLAY CLASSIC



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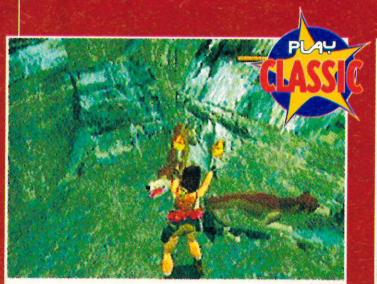
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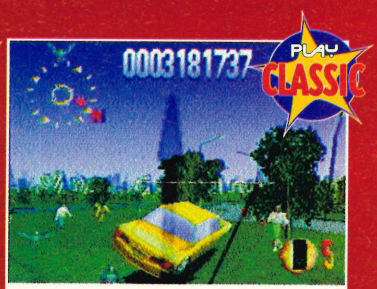
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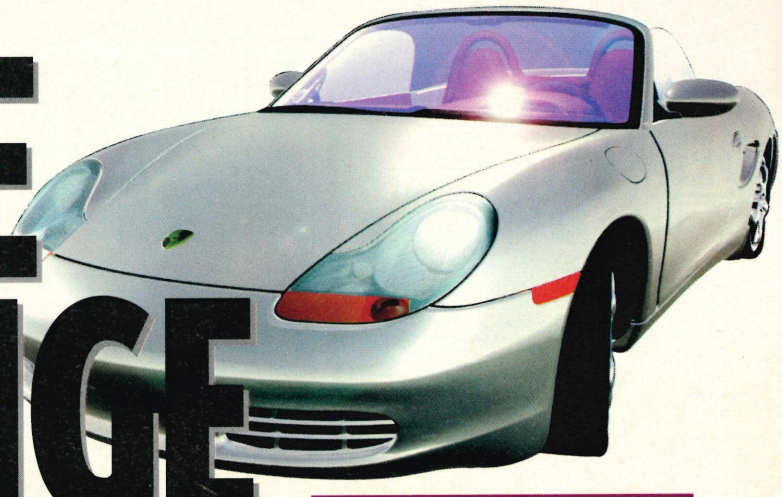
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PORSCHE CHALLENGE



PORSCHE CHALLENGE SHOULD BE OUT BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS AND THE BIG QUESTION IS WHETHER SONY HAS TAKEN RAGE RACER'S CROWN?

Written By Damian Butt

No-one's looking.

Slip down a gear. Engage clutch. Drop right foot and you're away as the revs sour into the red zone and that long straight suddenly feels like a country lane. The needle nudges triple figures and... FLASH! Count Gatso claims another victim and the police's cynical money making scheme rolls on. Bitter, moi?

Up until now that's what Porsche owners had to look forward to. A brief moment of exhilaration and acceleration when a rare patch of empty road beckons and then its over in one sickening Polaroid.

But not any more, because Sony has got together with those efficient Germans to create a virtual Porsche experience. Who cares that you've lost your licence for the fifth time? Now you needn't risk your no-claims bonus, just slap *Porsche Challenge* into your PlayStation, turn up the volume on your surround sound system and thrash someone else's car for a change!

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Sony
Customer Support: 0881 505505
Price: £34.99
Release Date: 11 April '97



RAGE ROAD

Like *Rage Racer*, *Porsche* opens with an impressive rendered introduction sequence depicting the game's star, the Porsche Boxster, being put through its paces. It is here you also meet the six characters who each drive a different coloured and slightly altered Boxster. Cars come in automatic and manual tiptronic (steering wheel mounted) gear change systems, and six colours: blue, green, red, pink, yellow and silver, plus there's the ultra cool black test model if you complete all the tracks in many different permutations.

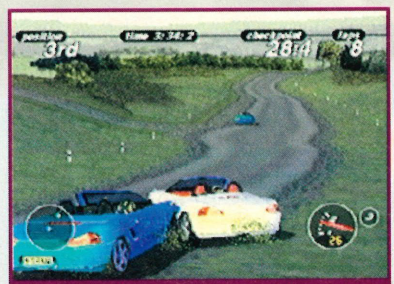
Ah yes, the tracks. *Porsche Challenge* lays claim to just four, which is disappointing until you realise that although *Rage Racer* has the same number, it is merely one big track with different off-shoots, whereas those in *Porsche Challenge* are completely different. Sadly though, they are all circuits and not winding roads as in *The Need for Speed*.

First off is the Stuttgart test circuit which is used to test the real cars, and has plenty of long fast curves, tight hairpins and a couple of decent straights to reach the Boxster's top speed of 148mph. The game also includes an American track (Los Vegas style casinos, suburban streets, trams and dock area), one in Japan (neon, gongs being thrashed), and most spectacular of all, an alpine level, which features slush a-plenty and tons of stupid skiddy bits.

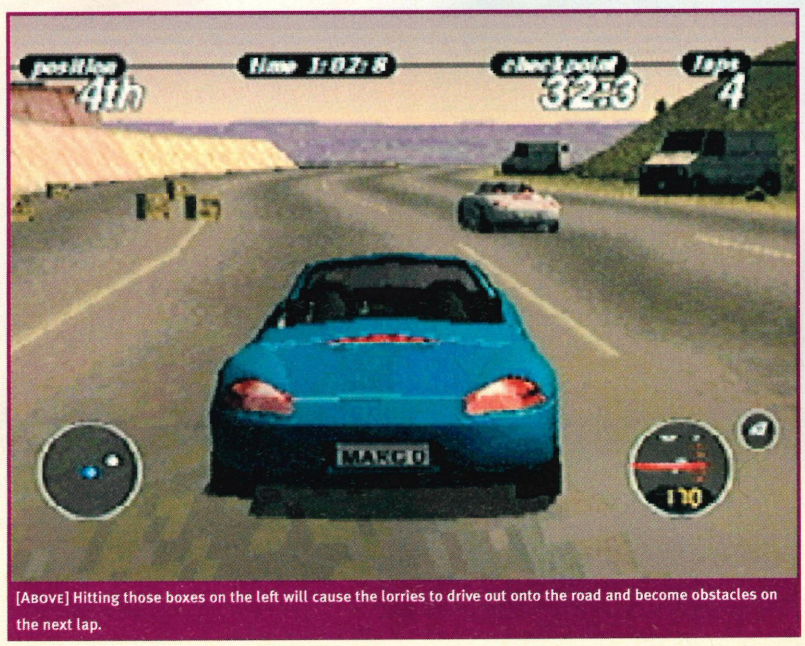
Each circuit has three variations: long, interactive and mirror. The mirror mode occurs when you complete the championship and it simply allows you to race around them backwards. The Long



[ABOVE] Not only have you now got the secret black test driver Boxtser, but you're also going through the storm drain secret route in the USA level.



[ABOVE] The collisions in this game aren't that convincing, but you do get a lovely grass effect when you stray off the track.



[ABOVE] Hitting those boxes on the left will cause the lorries to drive out onto the road and become obstacles on the next lap.



mode adds a section of hidden track which was otherwise blocked off. And most interestingly, the Interactive mode opens up various bits of track depending on whether certain cones have been run over.

On the alpine level for example this manifests itself as a JCB digger which clears the road through a town for you to take as a shortcut. And a storm drain becomes a new route in America. This certainly extends the long term challenge of *Porsche*, and you also get three difficulty levels: easy, medium and evil. Naturally these new tracks can be saved to the memory card and also used in the two player mode.

PERFECT PORKER

Graphically, *Porsche Challenge* is stunning. There are so many colours and subtle textures that it puts the likes of *Rage Racer*, *NFS* and *Speedster* to shame, and the dynamic lighting and Gouraud shading on all the cars is gorgeous. As you round a bend into bright sunlight, the shadows move accordingly, and as you pass under the street lamps in Tokyo, your car is lit up for an instant. Squint and *Porsche Challenge* could be the real thing.

The motion captured drivers are also excellent, even more detailed than those in *Peak Performance*, but it's a shame you don't see them more. But for the opening close-up, the cars might as well be driving themselves.

You can tell that the developers lavished attention on the car itself, because there are so many cool features. The three brake lights glow rather than simply turn red, it heaves on its chassis when you corner sharply, but best of all are the alloy wheels, which blur and spin exactly as the real

"Squint and *Porsche Challenge* could be the real thing..."







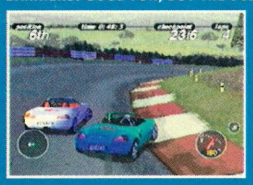


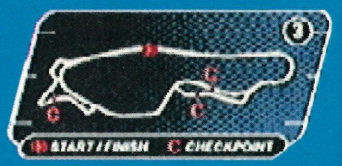
TESTING CONDITIONS

Instead of one big track with different routes around it (stand up *Rage Racer*), *Porsche Challenge* contains four varied courses which each have three different layouts, and then there's the mirror mode which lets you race around each one backwards. That's 24 different permutations.

Stuttgart

Modelled on the actual circuit used by Porsche to test their cars, this is a decent enough track with plenty of bends and surprises, but there's very little interactive about it apart from alternate routes revealed by raising barriers. Good fun, but the scenery's a bit sparse.

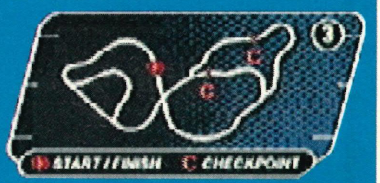




USA

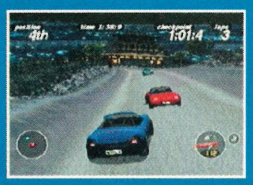
A mixture of Las Vegas and Los Angeles, this colourful track takes you from the slot machines up to the hills and then back down to the docks. As an interactive mode bonus you also get to drive down a storm drain, and one section even goes through a quiet neighbourhood.

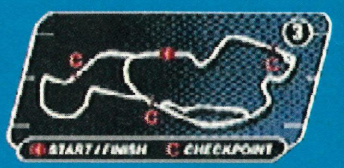




Japan

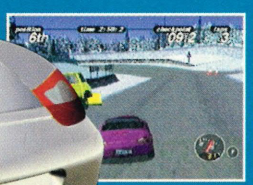
Amidst the neon and mindless cyber-chatter, the Japanese course merges the old with the new. One minute you're flying through an ancient temple (complete with baskets that you can knock over) and the next it's right to the heart of Tokyo itself. A dark track though.

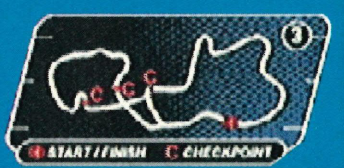




Alpine

The most picturesque circuit without a doubt, this takes you through snowy mountain roads, across level crossings with real trains, past a church and even through a small village in the interactive mode, but only if you clear away the snow first. Definitely the most challenging.





A REAL PORSCHE DRIVER WRITES...

WHO BETTER TO TELL YOU HOW *PORSCHE CHALLENGE* FEELS WHEN COMPARED TO THE REAL THING THAN SOMEONE WHO HAS A PORSCHE HIMSELF. BIG BOSS RICHARD MONTEIRO TELLS IT LIKE IT IS...

"IT'S NEXT TO IMPOSSIBLE TO GET A REALISTIC FEEL FOR THE THRILL OF HIGH SPEED DRIVING ALONG DEMANDING STRETCHES OF TWISTING ROADS USING A STANDARD JOYPAD, BUT PLUG IN AN ANALOGUE STEERING WHEEL AND THE GAME COMES ALIVE. THE BOXSTER ISN'T THE FASTEST OF PORSCHES, AND THE GAME REFLECTS THAT FACT. HOWEVER, THE ILLUSION OF SPEED IS MYSTERIOUSLY AMPLIFIED ONCE JOYPAD IS SWAPPED FOR STEERING WHEEL. SADLY IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO PULL OFF SPECTACULAR-LOOKING (BUT ULTIMATELY SPEED-DRAINING) POWER SLIDES – EVEN SKID PULL-AWAYS AREN'T ALLOWED. WHILE THE BREAKING SYSTEM ON A REAL PORSCHE IS ARGUABLY THE BEST OF ANY ROAD CAR, THE IN-GAME BREAKING SYSTEM IS THE UNDISPUTED KING AS IT CAN TAKE YOU FROM TOP SPEED TO A SKID-FREE STOP IN METERS REGARDLESS OF THE ROAD CONDITIONS.

PORSCHE CHALLENGE IS REALISTIC WHEN DRIVING NORMALLY, BUT YOU DON'T GET THE EXPECTED REACTION WHEN YOU TRY THE UNUSUAL. GREAT FUN, BUT I STILL PREFER THE REAL THING!"

ones do. Graphically you cannot fault *Porsche Challenge*, but then if it looked shabby, Porsche wouldn't want anything to do with it, would they?

BUT...

Yes it all looks rosy for *Porsche Challenge* – the official licence of a seriously sexy motor car, the proven talents of the SCEE team, and visuals to die for. Future of unbridled harmony then? Er, no, unfortunately, because Porsche is guilty of that most heinous crime in racing games – no real sensation of speed. And they were so close...

You simply cannot imagine the disappointment in the PLAY offices when we began our rigorous long term test. Nice meaty engine noise. Terrific looking car. Smooth animation. And yet when you reach top whack – an indicated 148mph – it feels like you're only doing 40! This is elementary stuff, made even more unbelievable by the fact that *Porsche Challenge* was made here in the UK. This is no import game suffering the PAL transition blues, it is simply slow because it has been programmed that way – argghhhhh!

And there are other niggles as well. It is far too easy to reach the top speed of your Boxster and when you do, it makes an intensely irritating whine for the duration of your land speed record. You cannot max out a Boxtser this easily and it would certainly not sit happily at seven thousand revs for so long without exploding. Yes I know that Porsche wouldn't allow any of the cars to come to any harm, but what's the point of having a simulation mode as well as arcade, if it is blatantly not?



[ABOVE] You can't help to be impressed by the fantastic visuals in this game. See how the black Boxster leans on its suspension in this tight corner.

The handling of the *Porsche* is also a little suspect. It is nigh on impossible to provoke a skid of any kind, certainly not one that spins the car through 360° without using the handbrake. And in the rare instances where you actually become airborne, the car seems to go through a standard piece of animation rather than reacting in real time. It is certainly not as realistic as the aerial antics in *NFS*, and the resultant crash land is also unconvincing and wooden. And what about the fact that you only get rolling starts in this game because you couldn't have all six cars on-screen at once. Bogus!

CARRERA

One of the saving graces is the split screen two player mode which adds considerably to the appeal and it is well implemented. The open topped Boxsters make way for the hard top versions to keep the frame rate up, and it is great fun battling each other to the finish line.

Porsche Challenge is certainly no old banger, it's just that instead of the thoroughbred PSX racer we were expecting (and deserve), what we have



[ABOVE] Unlike the *Need for Speed*, the police in *Porsche Challenge* are merely there for decoration. They do not chase you.



[ABOVE] "Yes you too can win this lovely Porsche Boxster at Suspiciously Friendly Joe's casino. No purchase necessary..."



[ABOVE] A three car pile-up in Japan and you are suddenly forced off the road and into the vast neon signs which litter this track.

"*Porsche* is guilty of that most heinous crime – no real sensation of speed!"



[ABOVE] A snow machine will clear the way through this tiny hamlet on the alpine course – a handy short cut if you can make the first tight bend.



[ABOVE] Always a classic, yes *Porsche Challenge* does feature a train which follows the alpine track for a while.

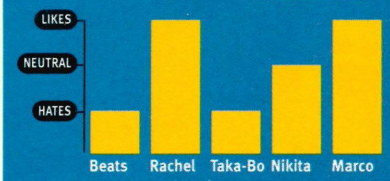
RACING RIVALRY

A GREAT TOUCH IN *PORSCHE* IS THE WAY THAT OTHER DRIVERS REACT TO YOU DIFFERENTLY DEPENDING ON THE CAR YOU ARE DRIVING. SOME OF THE GUYS FOR EXAMPLE FANCY THE GIRLS AND SO WILL NOT TRY TO RAM THEM OFF THE ROAD. BUT FIERCE RIVALRY EXISTS BETWEEN MANY OF THE DRIVERS AND THIS ADDS AN EXTRA DIMENSION TO THE GAMEPLAY.

DAN

DAN IS AN AMERICAN KICK BOXER WHO RACES ON THE WEEKENDS. HIS DRIVING STYLE IS VERY RELAXED.

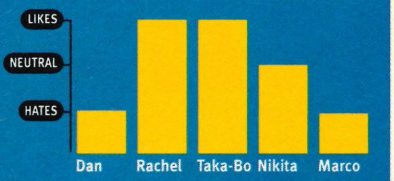




BEATS

A DJ BY DAY, BEATS IS ENGLISH AND DRIVES FOR PLEASURE ONLY. HANDBRAKE TURNS ARE HIS SPECIALITY.





TAKA-BO

A BIT OF A STEREO-TYPE THIS ONE. TAKA-BO IS JAPANESE AND A HACKER BY TRADE. HE IS COOL WHEN IT COMES TO DRIVING.

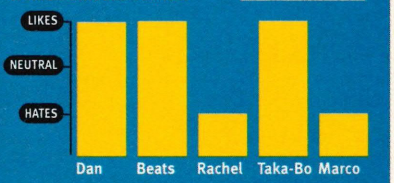




NIKITA

THIS FRENCH BEAUTY IS A 26 YEAR OLD JOURNALIST AND IS ONE OF THE MOST WILD DRIVERS OUT THERE. NO JOKES ABOUT WOMEN DRIVERS PLEASE.

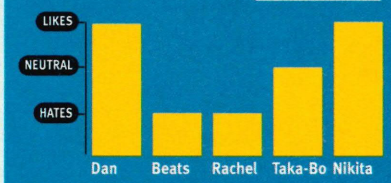




MARCO

MARCO IS A VERY TECHNICAL DRIVER BECAUSE HE'S A MECHANIC AND HE KNOWS HOW MUCH MISTAKES COST.





RACHEL

ALTHOUGH A PETITE SWEDISH MODEL, RACHEL IS NOT TO BE MESSED WITH AND SHE WILL RAM YOU OFF THE ROAD!

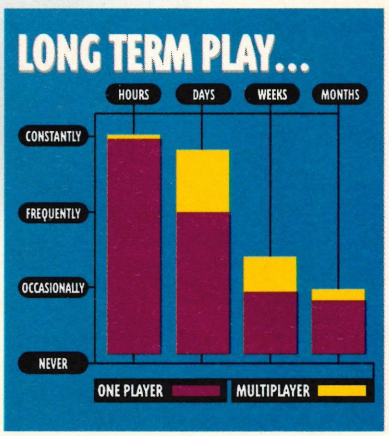




TEST DRIVER

IF YOU COMPLETE ALL 24 TRACKS YOU WIN THE CHANCE TO DRIVE AS THE TEST DRIVER, A COOL DUDE WITH A JET BLACK PORSCHE AND A CRASH HELMET SO NO-ONE EVER SEES HIS FACE – HEY IT'S JUST LIKE FRANKENSTEIN IN *DEATH RACE 2000!*

here is a great looking car with a distinctly average racing engine. Although the screenshots and in-store displays will put up a pretty good case for you parting with your £35, you've got to ask yourself a question. How many racing games do I need? On its own *Porsche Challenge* is certainly worth the money (especially if you have a steering wheel), but you've got to consider that *Rage Racer* is just around the corner, as is the *Need for Speed 2*, *Peak Performance* (now *Powerslide*), and *Speedster*. Out of the two official Sony games, it's got to be *Rage Racer*. Accept no substitute...



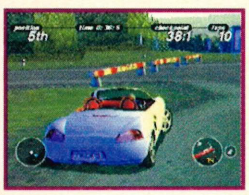


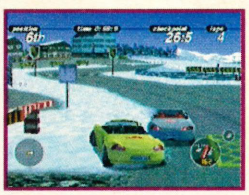
[ABOVE] The two player split screen mode gives you hardtop Porsches to lower the number of polygons the PlayStation has to shift around. It's good fun though.

Boxster



[ABOVE] It's good to see some additional driving hazards in this game. Here you come across a tram in the USA track and if it hits you, you can be dragged right down the street. Very embarrassing.







PLAY

LOOKS	●●●●●●●●●○
SOUNDS	●●●●●○○○○○
GAMEPLAY	●●●●●●●○○○
VALUE	●●●●●●●●○○
TOP GEAR	●●●●●●●○○○

PLAYED **82%**

Prime porker, but you need a steering wheel

ALTERNATIVELY:
RAGE RACER (94%)
THE NEED FOR SPEED (94%)

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: BMG Interactive
Phone for info: 0171 973 0011
Price: £39.99
Release date: Out Now

ONE PLAYER MEMORY CARD

EXHU

GRAB YOUR BELONGINGS, AN IMPROBABLY-LARGE ARSENAL OF WEAPONS, AND A COMPASS. WE'RE GOING TO EGYPT AND BMG ARE PAYING!

Doomed, doomed, we're all doomed. Or should that be exhumed, perhaps? You see, BMG's latest contribution to the world of PlayStation bears more than just a passing resemblance to Id's seminal splatter-thon. It doesn't try to fool you with a 'novel twist to the genre' smokescreen that so many pretenders to the first person shoot-'em-up genre claim. No, this game stands up on a table, sticks its chest out and proclaims "I am a *Doom* clone, and I'm proud!" Fortunately, this *Exhumed's* a bit of a corker.

EXCAVATE

Exhumed was first featured in issue eight of PLAY. So why the prolonged delay? To cut a long and tedious story short, the PlayStation version could not be released until the sad old Saturn version reared its weary head, for contractual reasons. Digressions aside, *Exhumed* takes place amongst the scenic resplendence and majesty of the Egyptian Pyramids. If the truth be known, it's really the land of mangy camels foaming at the mouth and toothless locals, er, foaming at the mouth; selling you 'lucky' charms and threatening your entire family with a curse if you don't pay them off. You get the picture.

The first person perspective action begins in the city of Karnak, where a disgusting race of aliens, known as the Kilmaat are up to no good. Not content

MED

"Watch your aggressors flee screaming in agony!"

MONSTER MASH

As *Exhumed* contains a large array of weapons, it's safe to say that there is an equally large quantity of alien and hybrid monsters eagerly awaiting a swift demise. There are over 25 drooling denizens inhabiting the 29 levels. Here's a brief taster...



Hot monster Dragon
Just one of the evil alien denizens waiting to tear your heart out.



Scorpion Women
She's a bit of a looker, whose hobbies include going to the Opera and collecting stuffed animals.



Piranha.
Snapping, evil little swimmy things, who enjoy nothing better than pulling the meat off your bones in under 20 seconds.



Mummies.
Exhumed wouldn't be complete without a showing from our bandaged old mates.



Alien Beast.
You don't argue with an alien who has two mouths. This cuddly fella appears much later in the game.



[Above] On the Nile Gorge level, you're set-upon by some pretty vicious piranha-type fish. Watch those hands. Notice the air-bubble in the top right corner. This indicates that you can breath under water.



[Above] You can breath underwater using the Sobek Mask. This is indicated by the bubble in the top right-hand corner. You can use all your weapons here too.



[Above] Burn baby burn. The flame-thrower brings out that primeval killing instinct in you. There's simply no better feeling than watching an enemy become engulfed in flames, then disintegrate.

with devouring all the women and children and enslaving all the men, they've had the audacity to dig-up good old King Ramses himself along with six artefacts, which empower any person fortunate enough to discover their whereabouts with astonishing new abilities, such as breathing underwater, floating on the air, and extended jumping.

Exploding Guts

You begin the game not a stone's throw from the Tomb of Ramses and after a brief skirmish with a group of agitated scorpions and a jackal-headed human guard, happen across his guiding spirit (not unlike Michael Jackson's 'friendly' shooting star in the film *MoonWalker*). Ramses informs you of the perils that lie ahead

ARTEFACTS – THE FACTS

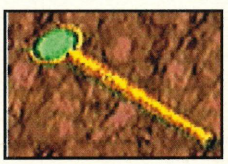
To aid you in your quest to defeat the aliens, various artefacts can be found hidden away in the small, most inaccessible places. Expect to find the following goodies:



Sobek Mask
Allows breathing under water.



Horus Feather
Press and hold jump button when falling to levitate.



Kilmaat Sceptre
Nullifies force field barriers.



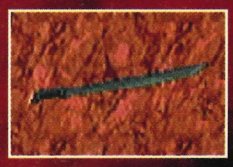
Sandals of Ikumptet
Increases jumping ability.



Shawl of Isis
Press and hold jump button when falling and float down.



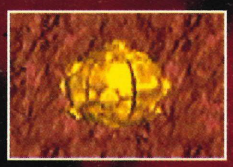
Protective Anklets
Partial protection from poison swamp and lava.



MACHETÉ
DEFAULT BLADE THAT NEVER RUNS OUT OR NEEDS SHARPENING. HANDY AT CLOSE RANGE AND MAKES A REAL MESS.



PISTOL.
SINGLE SHOT SHOOTER. TAKES OUT WEAKER FOES AT DISTANCE WELL ENOUGH.



AMUN BOMB.
EXCELLENT GRENADE, HOLD DOWN THE FIRE BUTTON TO INCREASE THE THROWING DISTANCE.



RING OF RA.
THUNDER AND LIGHTNING BLAZE FROM YOUR FINGERTIPS. DEADLY.



MANACLE.
A DEVASTATING BOLT OF LIGHTNING THAT RIPS THROUGH ENEMIES. HOLD DOWN FIRE BUTTON TO INCREASE THE POWER.

and that the land must be returned to its former self, by vanquishing the evil aliens.

Control of your character is as natural as breathing and done via the D-pad. You can walk, jump, strafe, look up and down and even activate some alternative manoeuvres when you discover each of the six hidden artefacts. The swimming sections in particular are superbly realised and very reminiscent of those in *Tomb Raider*.

The task during the game is to collect all the missing pieces of your transmitter along with the four symbols of Time, Power, War and Earth. Once these are found you can return to previously inaccessible areas on earlier levels, which adds to the overall intrigue and longevity of the game.

"Bodies burst open wherever you turn..."

UNDEAD

In typical *Doom/Dark Forces* tradition however, the wise words of the deceased king are soon replaced by the reassuring lock 'n' load of your trusty stash of weapons. You start with a gleaming machete and before long a pistol, but rest assured the others that follow may have strange and mystical names, but all of them are familiar. The real torso-shredding beauties can be found after a fair bit of nosing around the numerous tombs and temples and they eviscerate enemies with frightening efficiency.

Unlike *Doom*, you are given the full 360° of freedom, where looking up and down serves a specific purpose, as opposed to merely impressing the player from a technical standpoint.

Enemies come in 25 various shapes and sizes; many of them rush around on the ground, but some assail you from the skies when you least expect it. Carving your way through each of the 29 levels is incredibly good fun. Bodies burst open wherever you turn, showering your immediate surroundings in glistening viscera. The urge to find the next, even more destructive tool of destruction is always prominent in your mind. And then there's the flame-thrower – joy of joys! Point this baby in the desired direction and watch your aggressors flee in screaming agony as you rhythmically cover your tracks. Gaming moments such as this have to be cherished, but gaining mastery of your entire arsenal is great fun too.



[ABOVE] Elaborate decorations really add to the overall atmosphere of the game.

STARGATE

Graphically ornate in many places, Exhumed provides the player with an authentic Egyptian atmosphere, although it has to be said, the warping and pixelation of walls is cruelly evident. A year ago it would have been something ahead of its time, but due to its late entrance, it's starting to look a bit antiquated.

If you're prepared to accept that *Exhumed* is little more than a thoroughly enjoyable giblet-spilling, entrail-roasting slug-fest, unfettered by any moral pretensions but littered with simplistic, yet fiendishly-designed traps and switches to frustrate and hinder, then you're in for a real treat. That's right, this is another trip down memory lane, but with a few next generation trimmings to give this tired old formula added impetus. Good fun.



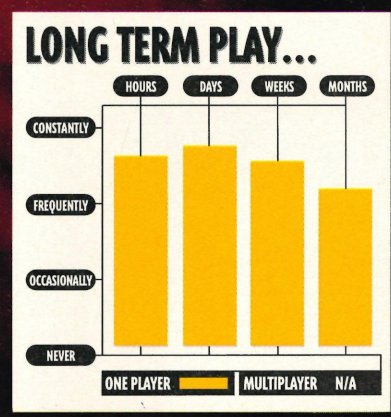
[ABOVE] Ahhh. Look at the giblets flying all over the shop! Excellent stuff. Tomato soup anyone?



[ABOVE] A stunning sunset over the Pyramids sets the scene before each level has loaded.



[ABOVE] Carving up the scorpions is great fun with the machete. They're tenacious little beggars though. They make a gore-tastic squelching noise too.





FLAME-THROWER.
A FANTASTICALLY FUN WEAPON, WHICH TOASTS ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING IN SIGHT.



M-60.
STANDARD 'UZI-PEPPER' WEAPON, WHICH LIBERALLY SPRAYS BULLETS EVERYWHERE.



COBRA STAFF.
FIRE THIS AND LITTLE GREEN COBRAS HOME-IN ON ANY TARGET. VERY USEFUL FOR THOSE HARD-TO-REACH FOES.

SHOOT FROM THE HIP

AS WITH EVERY DOOM CLONE, THERE'S A PLETHORA OF INCREASINGLY POWERFUL KILLING INSTRUMENTS. SOME CREATURES ARE DISPATCHED QUICKER WITH SPECIFIC WEAPONS.

PLAY.

LOOKS	9
SOUNDS	10
GAMEPLAY	8
VALUE	8
MUSTY	9

PLAYED 84%

ENORMOUS ANCIENT EGYPTIAN FUN!

ALTERNATIVELY:
DARK FORCES (75%)
ALIEN TRILOGY (91%)

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SPEEDSTER

CAR NUTS WERE LEFT GAGGING FOR MORE AFTER OUR DETAILED PREVIEW, AND NOW THE FINISHED VERSION IS HERE. CAN *SPEEDSTER* OUT-ACCELERATE THE COMPETITION?

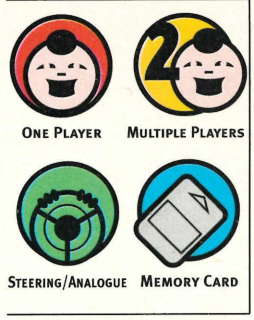
Written By Graeme Nicholson

To say we had some high hopes for *Speedster* would be misleading. Basically, looking at *Speedster*'s separate components there is more than enough to get excited about if you're a racing fan, and phrases like "it'll be like *Micro Machines V3* but with real cars," or "it will be *Need for Speed*, only with little baby Supras and Ferraris," were filling the office long before we even saw the thing.

You might think it was unfair to expect so much from a group of people who only have *3-D Lemmings* on their CV, and you'd be right, but the race to be the best new PlayStation driving game is well and truly under way, and everyone is anxious to see who will be the winner.

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Psygnosis
Customer support: 0151 282 3000
Price: £34.99
Release date: 25 April '97



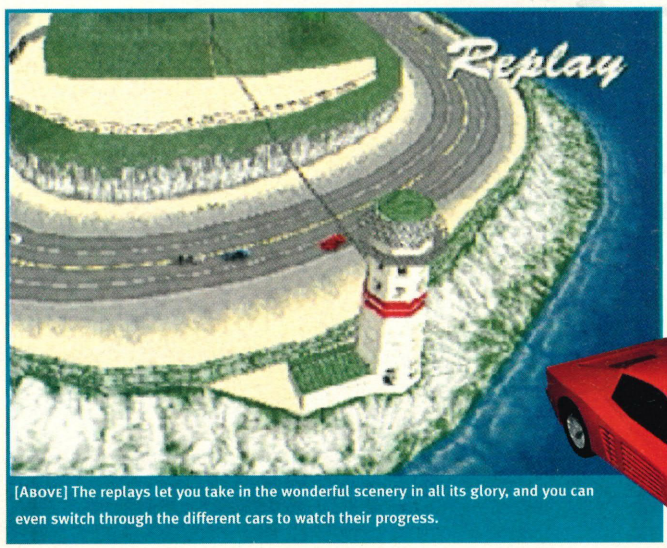


[ABOVE] One badly timed over-taking move can end up with you getting jostled around in a pack of maniacs who simply want you out of the way.

TROOPER

Something which *Speedster* has to distinguish it from the other racers on PlayStation, both old and new, is its perspective. The tracking camera that chases your car hovers very high in the air, even at its closest setting, and points very much directly down on top of the car. The closest view is the default, but it can be zoomed in or out in a beautifully smooth manner at any time during a race. While this means there is never any unsightly pop-up because the horizon is hidden, it can make judging corners a bit of a nightmare and so there are small road signs that appear to indicate the severity of an oncoming turn. These can be switched off once you know the tracks by heart.

The aim is to compete in the championship mode, racing against seven other petrolheads who drive vehicles of the same class as your own on each track. You must take first place in order to move onto the next course. There are two vehicle classes: High Performance and Heavy Metal. High Performance contains all those sleek, curvy, gleaming status symbol cars, as well as a curiously out-of-place Volvo. The Heavy Metal class houses the rougher, off-road vehicles. Winning all eight races in the championship is rewarded with one hidden car for each car you complete it with, so you'll eventually have 16 miniature motors to chuck around in any way you see fit.

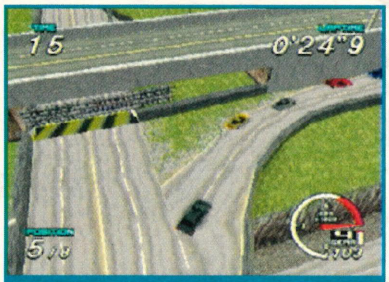


[ABOVE] The replays let you take in the wonderful scenery in all its glory, and you can even switch through the different cars to watch their progress.

RANGER

You might think that combining the top-down retro appeal of classics like *SuperCars 2* with mathematically detailed models of real, existing cars, *Speedster* already held promise. But add to this the developer's claims that "All crashes are mathematically calculated making the vehicles act correctly during collisions" and every effort had been made "to make *Speedster* as realistic to watch as possible" and it all adds up to one outrageously sexy sounding car game.

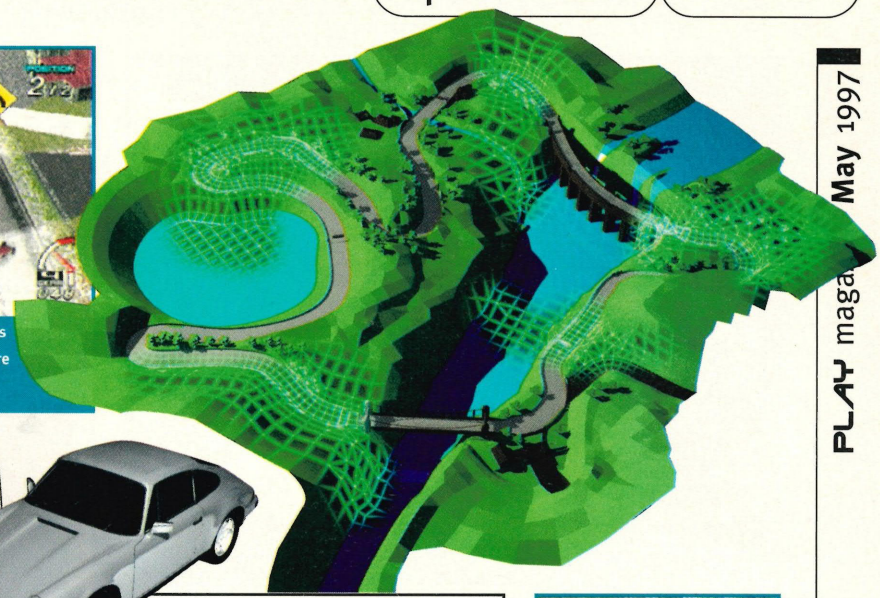
Perhaps it should be pointed out to Clockwork Games that for vehicles to "act correctly during collisions" they would have to lift off the ground once in a while and maybe even flip over onto their roofs.

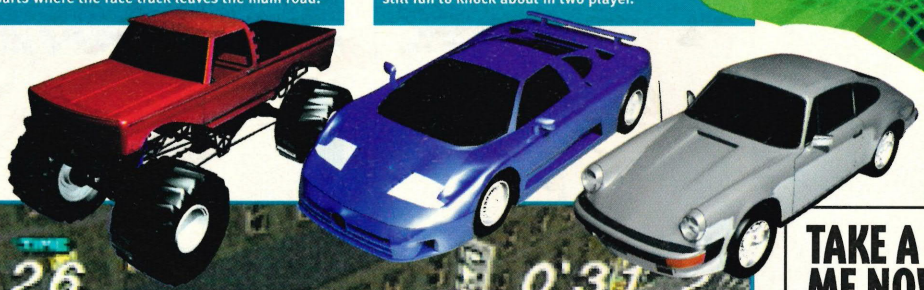


[Above] As many of the courses are set on sections of closed civilian roads, you have to look out for blocked off parts where the race track leaves the main road.



[Above] The cars in the Heavy Metal class may be slower than the others, but they're still fun to knock about in two player.



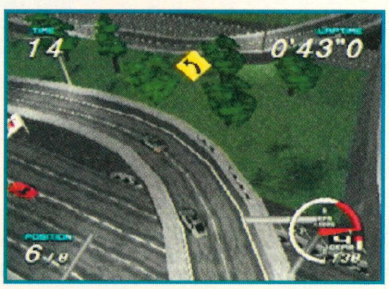




[Above] Driving at night on the Downtown track lets you see the light sourcing effects well, with each electric light illuminating the cars properly and casting shadows.

There is none of this realism involved in *Speedster*'s crashes though, so you wonder where all that advanced technical calculation of movement went – surely they don't mean the way the cars push each other around like every other car game since *Out Run*?

Smacking your finely tuned cars against your competitors or careering into a wall makes you accumulate damage, shown on a small level indicator in the corner of the screen, and the wall crashes are blessed with a particularly splendid 'whacking' sound followed by the tinkling of glass, signifying you have smashed your headlights. As they get progressively damaged, black clouds of smoke begin to billow from the car until you bash it for the last time and, with the controls not responding, the race is over.



JEEPSTER

Although the car graphics are fairly simple, they're not bad, and the tracks themselves look

"The two player mode provides some laughs if both of you are quite evenly matched..."

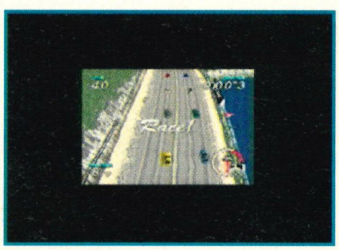
TAKE A LOOK AT ME NOW

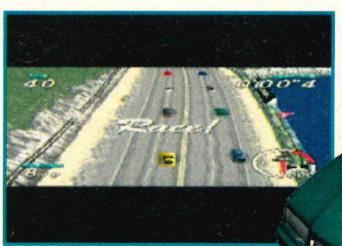
ENTER *SPEEDSTER'S* VISUAL OPTIONS MENU FROM THE MAIN OPTIONS SCREEN AND YOU'LL SEE THAT IT OFFERS THREE SCREEN MODES: NORMAL, HI RES AND WIDESCREEN. UNFORTUNATELY THE ONE THAT IS MOST DESIRABLE, THE HI RES MODE, REDUCES THE SIZE OF THE GAME SCREEN DRAMATICALLY AND SO ISN'T THAT MUCH USE UNLESS YOU HAVE A TV OF ILLEGAL PROPORTIONS TO PLAY IT ON. BUT AT LEAST THEY GIVE YOU THE OPTION AND IT DOES LOOK VERY GOOD. THE WIDESCREEN MODE IS A COMPROMISE BETWEEN NORMAL AND HI RES, GIVING SHARP GRAPHICS BUT AT THE EXPENSE OF LARGE BORDERS AND A KIND OF SQUASHED APPEARANCE.

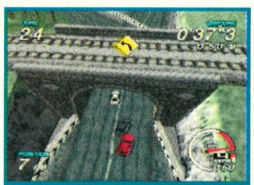


[Above] The HGV can take a lot of abuse before it ceases to operate, and its weight helps push smaller cars off the track easier. Drives like a mule though.

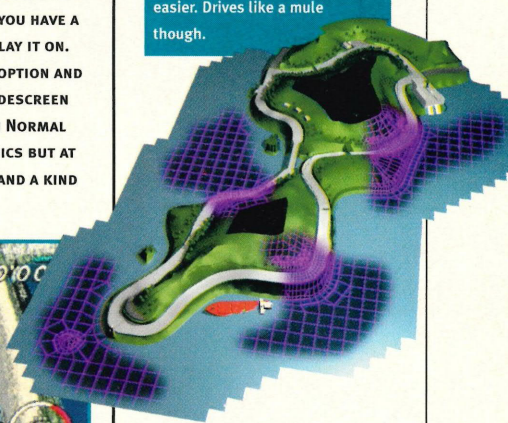


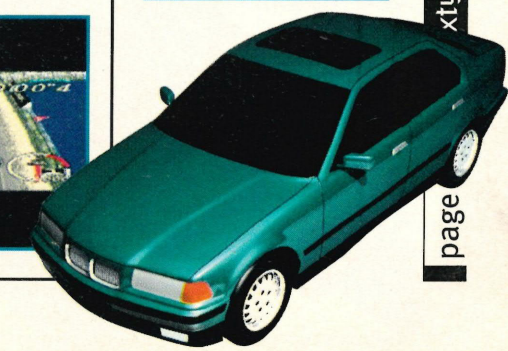






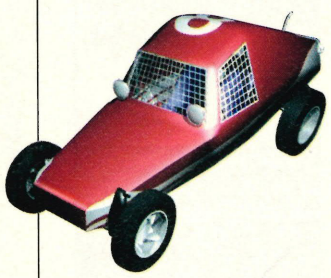
[Above] There are bits of railway in many areas near the road in *Speedster*, but sadly no moving trains. A working railway crossing would have been good.







[Above] Both players in a two player race still have independent control over their cameras. Here one driver has zoomed all the way out and the other is using the closest view.



gorgeous, with great sweeping areas of scenery and all kinds of brilliant detail, like the lighthouse or the half-sunken ferry that are there for no other reason than they look good.

Playing the split-screen two player mode provides some laughs if both of you are quite evenly matched; constantly trying to spin each other or grind past on the inside of a corner. But there is no option to switch off the utterly blatant catch-up that gives the losing player roughly 10 MPH more than the leader using the same car.

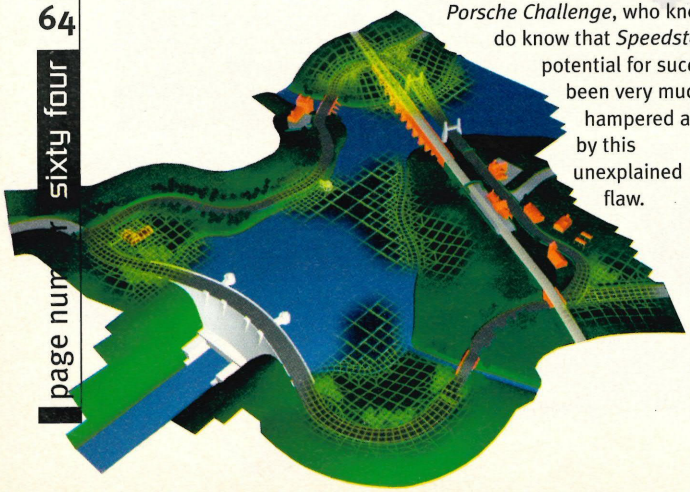
Ironically for a game named *Speedster*, it is the infuriating lack of speed that destroys any chance this game had of standing out from all the other racers currently being released, and it has to be said that this is a missed opportunity.

"Great idea, but the cars run on Novocaine!"



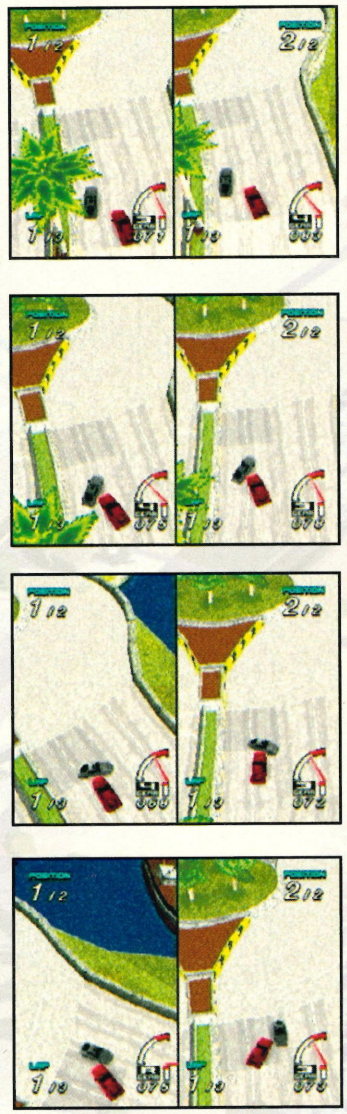
The way the cars drive when you get the right steering speed (there is Slow, Normal and Fast to choose from – we prefer Fast) is nice, especially when you learn the art of power-sliding, but it could have been so much more fun if the cars travelled at two or three times their current pace.

It is unbelievable that some playtester who gets paid real money didn't put his hand up and say "Er, hang on, this looks nice and stuff, but it makes my gran's StairMaster look fast!" Perhaps it was playtested by the same guy who did *Porsche Challenge*, who knows? We do know that *Speedster*'s potential for success has been very much hampered already by this unexplained flaw.



CHEATSTER

IF YOU'RE GOING TO PLAY A TWO PLAYER GAME OF *SPEEDSTER* IT IS VITAL THAT YOU LEARN THE MOST ANGERING TECHNIQUE POSSIBLE AND USE IT TO WIN THE RACE. THIS IS A TECHNIQUE KNOWN AS "FISH-TAILING," WHERE THE CAR BEHIND PUSHES THE BACK END OF THE WINNING CAR TO ONE SIDE; CAUSING IT TO SKID THROUGH 180° AND IS LEFT FACING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION. REMEMBER KIDS – WIN AT ANY COST!

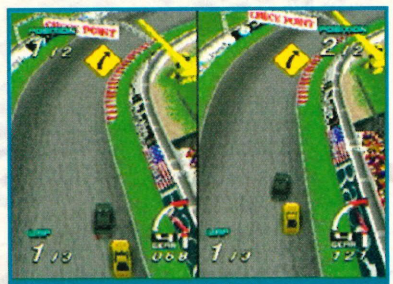




[Above] Sliding your way round the inside of the corners is the best method of stealing a position or two, but it takes some practice.

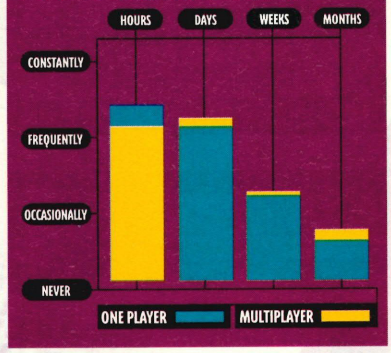


[Above] The dangerous horsepower of the blue Bugatti is likely to get you to first place quickly, but you only get it when you win the Championship with the Volvo.



[Above] To really settle who is the best driver, there's nothing like a few laps on the CWG Raceway to separate the men from the boys. It's perfect surface makes it the fastest track in the game.

LONG TERM PLAY...



PLAY

LOOKS	8
SOUNDS	7
GAMEPLAY	5
VALUE	6
FISH-TAILING	8

PLAYED 80%

Great idea but the cars run on Novocaine!

ALTERNATIVELY:
MICRO MACHINES V3 (92%)
SUPERSONIC RACERS (91%)

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TOKYO HIGHWAY BATTLE

ALTHOUGH IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE IT WAS RELEASED IN JAPAN THAT YOU'VE PROBABLY FORGOTTEN ABOUT IT, THE FULL PAL VERSION OF *TOKYO HIGHWAY BATTLE* IS FINALLY HERE.

Written By Graeme Nicholson

Allegedly, *Tokyo*

Highway Battle is based on a real life "sport" that our Japanese friends take part in, that of challenging somebody with a powerful car to race you through the busy Tokyo streets on a bet. It's all severely illegal of course, but we are told that it goes on all the same.

"Its biggest problem is the upsetting lack of speed!"

The main game consists of taking a very modest and basic car out in the Scenario mode and racing against six other drivers to win cash that you can use to modify and enhance your automobile with. The customisation aspect is essentially what *Tokyo Highway Battle* is all about, with a suffocating amount of bits and pieces being available to stick onto your car, each one affecting the handling in its own way.

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: THQ
Customer support: 01372 745222
Price: £44.99
Release date: April '97


ONE PLAYER


MEMORY CARD

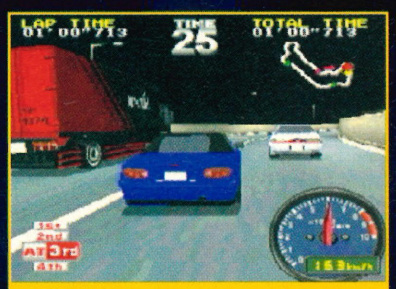
YOSHIAKI KANAZAWA

The races are indeed played on roads with plenty of regular cars and buses plodding along, religiously adhering to the speed limit, and both drivers must weave in and out of this traffic to stay at full speed. As you race more and more advanced drivers their intelligence increases accordingly so that after a couple of races you'll notice the other guy trying to push you into the civilian vehicles!

In theory *THB* sounds great, but its biggest problem is the upsetting lack of speed that keeps the cars from being much more fun to drive. Although the performance improves a fair bit as you win races and get some seriously powerful hardware on-board, even the fastest car with everything but the cigarette lighter modified is too slow next to *Rage Racer* and others like it.



[Above] Once again Toyota's beloved Supra makes an appearance in a video game. This seems to handle better than most of the other cars.



[Above] There is plenty of traffic around, but it's unfortunate that there is never any oncoming cars because you are driving on a highway.

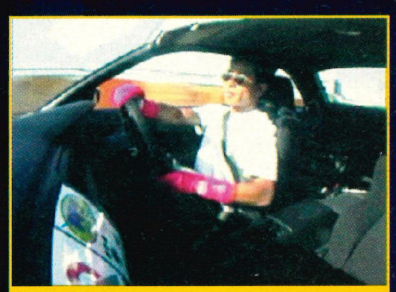


[Above] The car graphics are okay, but they don't change physically when you customise them except for paint colour.

KEIICHI TSUCHIYA

What's frustrating is that the frame rate is perfectly adequate and isn't the reason why the cars just won't shift enough, meaning that at some point it was a conscious decision by developer BPS to give it such a drowsy pace. BPS is no more guilty than the developers of *Porsche Challenge* for following this unsettling trend of making a fair racing game and hampering it with low speed though, but *Tokyo Highway Battle* doesn't have particularly detailed cars or the vital split-screen two player mode. Worth a look for the car enthusiasts who will be eager to play with all the mechanical add-ons, but not one for the average racing fan.




[Above] The long intro has no real "Highway Battling" because it's against the law, and instead shows this bloke putting a car through some abuse on a test circuit.



[Above] Don't mess with the vehicles much larger than your own. They are almost impossible to prise from their path and can send you bouncing into the sides.

PLAY

LOOKS	●●●●●●○○○○
SOUNDS	●●●●●●○○○○
GAMEPLAY	●●●○○○○○○○
VALUE	●●●○○○○○○○
TOP SPEED	●●○○○○○○○○

PLAYED 73%

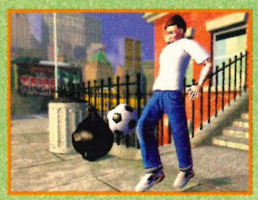
Sloth is a deadly sin for a reason

ALTERNATIVELY:
RAGE RACER (94%)
POWERSLIDE (JUNE '97)

SOCCER 97

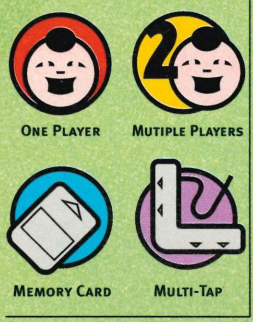
FEELING DEFLATED? NEED A FOOTY FIX? LOOK NO FURTHER THAN EIDOS' SPRIGHTLY FOLLOW UP TO *OLYMPIC SOCCER*.

Written By Tom Sargent



PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Eidos Interactive
Customer support: 0181 780 2222
Price: £39.99
Release date: April '97



Garbage in, garbage out. Footy games come and go and most of them are average at best. Over the last couple of years we've been treated to some dazzling displays of graphical excellence, but at the end of the day the gameplay has been either sub-standard or bug-ridden. However, where others had failed, Eidos excelled with *Olympic Soccer*. Eidos provided a supremely playable game, that was easy to pick up, hard to put down and full of those subtle little touches that can only be mastered with repeated play.

Soccer '97 incorporates the same graphical engine as its predecessor, but that's where any similarities end. This time around, there are a whole host of new features which have attempted to iron-out the little niggles that were highlighted by fans of the original. These included the dodgy 'keepers and the 'guaranteed to score every time' angles of approach, which spoiled the fun somewhat after the controls were mastered.

DRIBBLE

New features include enhanced AI with automatic player selection, although scoring from the halfway line still seems to bemuse the goalie, but on the whole in other areas he has been vastly improved, such as when an opposing player rushes in on goal diagonally. Along with the old passes and kicks, a new 'chest-down' feature has been added, which works a treat, you can either set yourself up for a volley, or lay it off for a team-mate.

Radio 5 Live's Alan Green and his wild eccentricities make a welcome return, adding to the proceedings immeasurably, and you'll be pleased to hear that every Premiere League and First Division team are included thanks to the PFA licence. Up to four players can makes use of a comprehensive selection of options, ranging from Exhibition, Arcade, Tournament and League, but an option to compete in domestic and European cups would have been cool.

Soccer '97 is a joy to play and hard to put down. There have been various improvements which address most of the original criticisms, but a graphical overhaul would have spiced things up no end. If you have the original, then you would be well advised to steer clear unless you really want Premiership teams and not much else. At the end of the day, it's hot, but by no means a Vindaloo.



[ABOVE] The QPR striker 'rises like a salmon' to header down into the corner. It's all about timing at the end of the day.



[ABOVE] The cat-like 'keeper performs another miracle in the 30 degree camera angle.



[ABOVE] There are a total of 18 different camera angles. That's six different elevations of view shown at either sideways, up or forced perspectives.





"*Soccer '97* is a joy to play and hard to put down..."



PLAY

LOOKS	●●●●●●●●○○
SOUNDS	●●●●●●●●○○
GAMEPLAY	●●●●●●●●○○
VALUE	●●●●●●●●○○
BEARDSLEY	●●●●●●●●○○

PLAYED 82%

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ALTERNATIVELY:
OLYMPIC SOCCER (84%)
INT SUPERSTAR SOCCER DELUXE (83%)

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Roller Blade
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Snowboard
▲■×●

Mountain Bike
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×●■▲



COOL BOARDERS

EXTRA BOARDS

When you win the three ranking tournaments, you can gain access to the special boards. There are three special boards in each easy, medium and hard level. Additionally, when you manage to get three special boards, you can play a special course. Finally when you win the three hardest ranking courses, you can race as 'Snow Man' by selecting the special board of alpine with the up+▲+● buttons.



CHANGE DJS VOICE

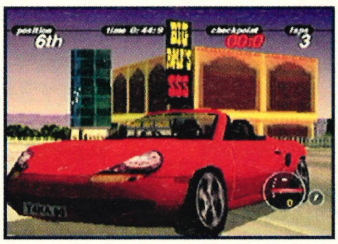
In the Option mode, push the Select button 55 times and the DJs voice will change.

PORSCHE CHALLENGE

ACTIVATE CHEAT MENU

By Jingo, we've been quick off the mark with this little beauty. Typing the following not only gives you the cheat menu, but allows cars to jump too. On the main menu, type:
■,●, ■

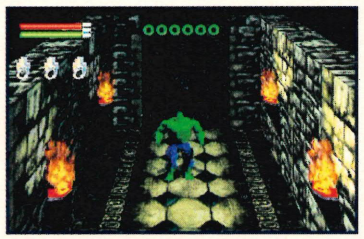


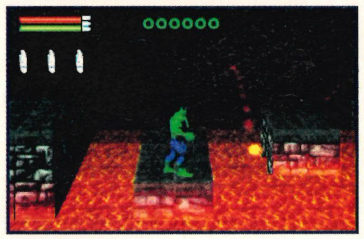


INCREDIBLE HULK – THE PANTHEON SAGA

LEVEL CODES

For those of you struggling to make progress through Eidos' forgettable platformer cum beat-'em-up. Try out these codes:
Level 1 – 10C80B7C7C
Level 2 – 10C82E5E54
Level 3 – 80D82E206E
Level 4 – 00D02702BA

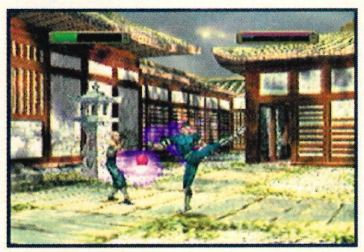




PERFECT WEAPON

FINAL LEVEL

To access to final level of this enjoyable, if flawed adventure-cum-beat-'em-up, try out the following on the title screen:
■,▲,●,×,■,▲,●,×

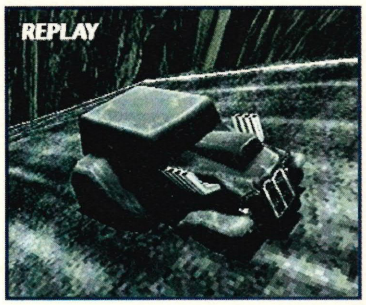


NHL FACEOFF '97

SUPER PLAYERS

Before you start the game, go into the Create Player Mode and enter these names: Chris Whaley, Peter Dille, Craig Ostrander, Craig Broadbooks, Raja Altenhoff, Tom Braski, Josh Hassin, Tawn Kramer, Jody Kelsey, Alan Scales, Kelly Ryan. Take note, all these players must be #1, their position must be F, and they must weigh 150. After entering this, exit this mode and go to the Free Agent Mode. You will notice that they have a 99 in every area, you may now go back and change everything except for their position.

RAGE RACER



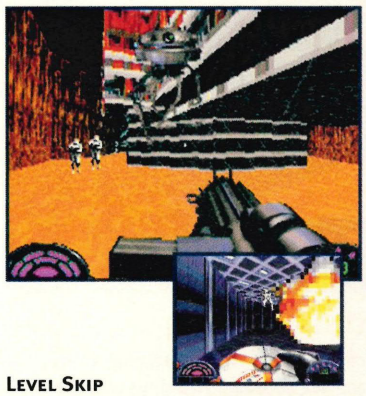
Turn off Rear-View Mirror
Pause while playing, then press and hold ▲ and press L1 or R1 to toggle mirror on or off.

Access 'Mirrored' Tracks
After selecting Race Start – press and hold L1+R1+Select+Start until the race begins and the track will become 'mirrored.'

Access Advanced Colour Palettes and Rotate Logo Option
Select Customise/ Select Design/ Select any logo or create your own... Then select Paint.
Press to move the painting cursor off the painting area and onto the colour palette, then press L1+L2+R1+R2+Select button.
If you've done it correctly, additional boxes labelled R/ G/ B will appear on the right side of the painting area. The numbers represent the amount of that hue for that specific palette that the cursor is resting on. Using the controller left or right, or R1+Up or down will change the figures in the boxes. Next, move the cursor onto the painting areas and press L1+L2+R1+R2+Select and you'll see a targeting crosshair appear in the smaller picture view area. Keep the cursor in the painting area and press L1+R1+any direction on the controller and watch your logo or custom artwork rotate/ flip/ move.

DARK FORCES

Out this month, this *Star-Wars* blast-erama is bound to create more than a little interest. So feast your eyes on this lot.



Level Select
Select 'Restore Game' and enter the following code. Then select 'Start Game' and you'll have a choice of all 14 levels.
P3NDLDQNY2

Cheat Menu
To access the cheat menu, just press the following during play:
Left, ●,×,Right,●,×,Down,●,×
If entered correctly a cheat menu will appear. The options are:
Invincible – Can't be killed (deflects weapon attacks).
Coords – Provides position coordinates
Superman – Fills in HUD map completely
Pogo – Propels you to normally inaccessibly high places
Pal Mode – Changes Video Mode (Note: not recommended).
Max Out – Provides you with maximum weapons & equipment
Game Won – see 'Level Skip' cheat below

Level Skip
When in the cheat menu (as mentioned above), toggle the 'Game Won' option to on (green). Now exit the menu and pause the game. Another menu will appear with the following options:

Game Paused
Return to Game
Next Mission
Abort Mission

Choose 'Next Mission' to skip to the next level.

Passcodes
2. Talay: Tak Base – Y7B5T7S183
3. Anoat City – !VHDBMBMXZ
4. Research Facility – 9WJHBLCNoo
5. Gromas Mines – 8XKGBKDPZ1
6. Detention Centre – 7YBKBJFL22
7. Ramsees Hed – Y7C4L7Q193
8. Robotics Facility – X8D3L6R2C4
9. Nar Shaddaa – W9F635SZB5
10. Jabba's Ship – V!Q534ToF6
11. Imperial City – NVHL4LFQ1R
12. Fuel Station – MYGM!KBR2S
13. The Executor – LXFN4JCSZT
14. The Arc Hammer – 205F6HJToV

TEN PIN ALLEY

If you want to taunt and insult your fellow contestants during their approach, simply press L1/L2/R1/R2 at the same time, then:
▲ – "Choke!" ■ – "Loser!"
● – "Miss!" × – "You suck!"

PLAY Q&A

Go on, ask us anything. We'll endeavour to run to the ends of the earth to bring you, the beloved readers of the best PlayStatation magazine around, the choicest cuts of information and help in our Q&A section. Write to *Q&A, Play Magazine, Paragon House, St Peter's Road, Bournemouth, BH1 2JS* for instant enlightenment.

Dear Play
I am currently having some trouble with *Tomb Raider*. On level 13 (Natla's Mines) I can only find two fuses to lower the cabin. One is on the conveyor belt and the other is the floor by the annoying Cowboy Shooter. Could you please help me to find the third one as this is the only part of the game that I cannot complete.
Mark Monk, Telford

After you've dropped back down and run forward through the tunnel into a cave with lava pits and grabbed the second fuse, don't venture any further yet, or you'll be attacked – instead return all the way to the room containing the two cabins. Enter the doorway to the left of the left cabin and follow the tunnel until you reach a fork. Jump over the left side and go through the door to find a switch: use it to start the conveyor belt which dumps the third fuse by the fork. Hope that's of some use to you Mark. We're too kind.

Dear Play
I recently bought *Resident Evil* and I can finish it as Jill, but could you tell me where and how to get the flame-thrower or a cheat for full weapons and unlimited ammo.
Alan Hincks, Galway

Well Alan, we're a little bit baffled as to your request for acquiring the flame thrower, as apparently there isn't one. But we can help you to find the Rocket Launcher with unlimited ammo. Simply, finish the game (with Jill, in your case) in under three hours and this massively destructive weapon will be yours with infinite ammo. When, or rather, if you manage to pull this off, you'll be able to save the rocket launcher to your inventory and start the game virtually indestructible.

Dear Play
I have just purchased *International Superstar Soccer Deluxe* and think that it's excellent fun, but could you tell me if there are any cheats or codes for hidden teams or other enhancements? I would be extremely grateful for any help.
Colin Robinson, Durham

Believe it or not Col, there is a cheat, but it must rank as one of the strangest ever. To activate it, enter the following code on the title screen: Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, ×+●. If the cheat has been activated, you should here a bark. Now when you play game, the ref and linesmen will have turned into dogs! The normal rules still apply though, but getting a red card from a dog has got to be a first in our books.

Dear Play
I've had *Twisted Metal 2* for quite a while now, but I can't beat Darktooth no matter how much I try. This is driving me bananas, so please help out!
Will Orchard, Easby

Okay Will, The best way to beat Darktooth is to wait at a corner with the special attack bar full and when he comes freeze him. Next fire napalm at the head and shot two Power Missiles quickly. Freeze him again and fire napalm. Finally, go into reverse and fire homing missiles at him. Bob's yer Uncle. We hope this helps you out.

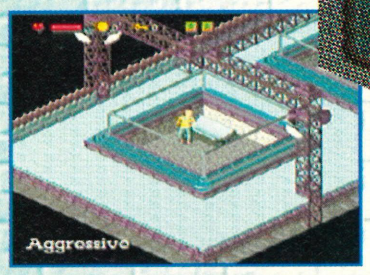
LITTLE BIG ADV

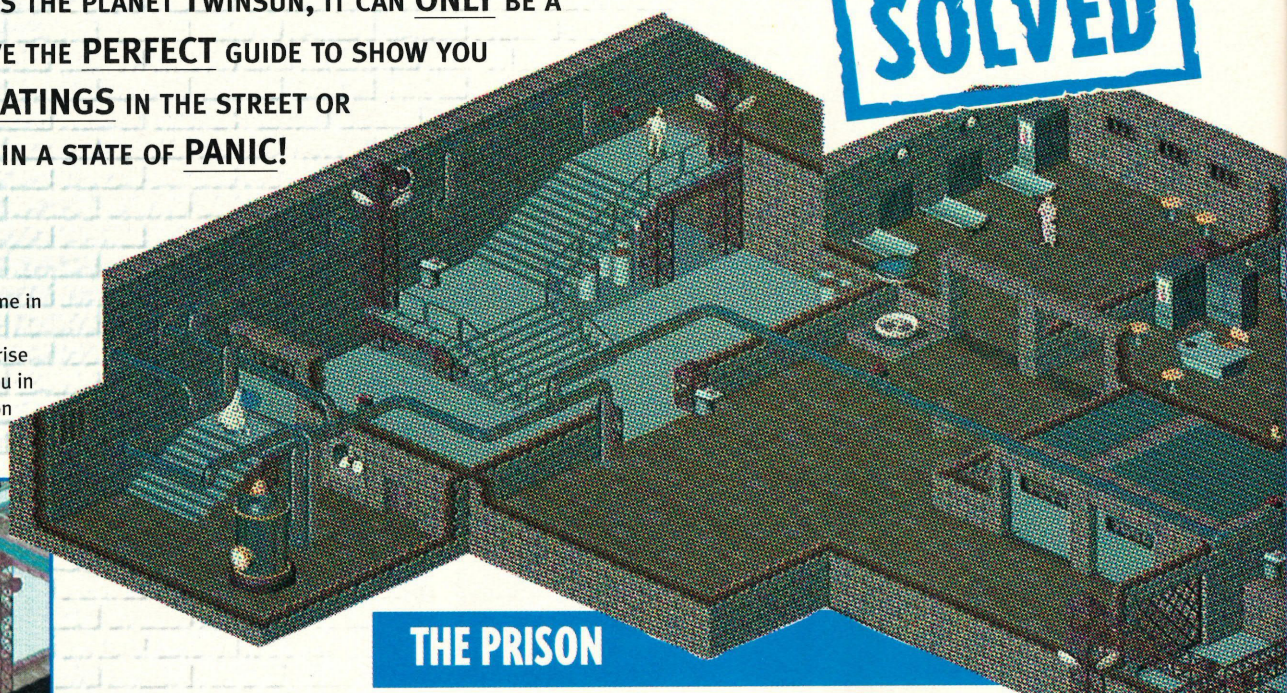
SOLVED

IN A WORLD AS ODD AS THE PLANET TWINSUN, IT CAN ONLY BE A GOOD THING TO HAVE THE PERFECT GUIDE TO SHOW YOU THE WAY. NO MORE BEATINGS IN THE STREET OR WANDERING ROUND IN A STATE OF PANIC!

CITADEL ISLAND, THE PRISON

When you start out for the first time in *LBA* you will be locked inside an isolated prison cell. Try to familiarise yourself with what buttons put you in each mode, a split second decision could be critical later on.





THE PRISON

1. Attract the nurse's attention by entering Aggressive mode, and when he arrives in your cell kill him quickly. He may leave behind a gold coin, pick it up.

2. Step onto the platform which the nurse used to get into the cell and switch to Athletic mode while it takes you across the asylum.



3. When the platform stops at the top of the stairs, run off towards the nurse on the left and enter Aggressive mode as you reach him. Kill him immediately, otherwise he'll raise the alarm. Get over to the other nurse and dish out some similar treatment. He will leave a key for you.

4. Get down the steps and head through the door at the left of the screen. Engage Discreet mode as soon as you step through the doorway. Stay close to the wall and creep round the corner, taking care not to draw the attention of the patrolling nurse.

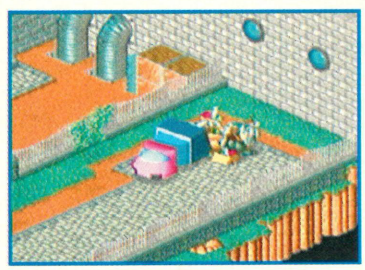
5. Head straight for the room on the right, and walk behind the dressing screen in the corner where Twinsen will change into the white coveralls. It is safe to use the other modes inside this room, so switch to Normal or Athletic and search every locker you can see.

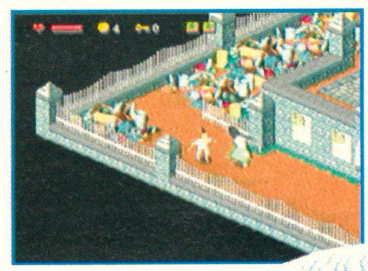
6. Now carrying your ID card and Holomap, walk out into the courtyard area and kill the nurse there. He won't try to hit the alarm button because your disguise fools him into thinking you're a nurse.

7. Now go into the left room and kill the guy in there too. Search the locker at the back for Kashes and health.

8. Exit the room and go up the large staircase, Athletic mode is best just to save time, and continue directly into the control room. Without wasting a second, activate your Aggressive mode and kill the nurse closest to the door before he hits the switch. Now run over and beat the other nurse until he pops out of existence. Take the key he leaves and get out of the building via the iron double doors.

9. Select Discreet mode and sneak behind the armed guard, and go down the back street on the right until you reach the pile of rubbish.





10. Press ■ while still in Discreet mode and Twinsen will crouch in the trash. When the garbage truck comes it will pick you up and drive you all the way to the rubbish tip, outside the grounds of the asylum.

VENTURE

CITADEL ISLAND PART 1



CITADEL ISLAND, THE TOWN

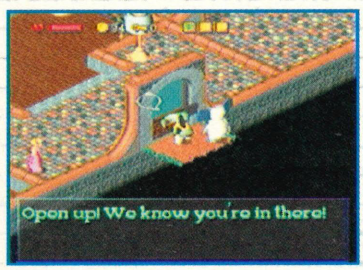
1. In the street that leads off from the dump, there is a door that you can walk through just past the two posters. Go inside and talk to the Rabbibunny. When he's done talking search the chest and then leave his house to travel south (down left diagonally in *LBA*) which will take you to the main part of the town.

2. Wander this part of the island as much as you like, remembering to search everything, and keep away from any guards or clones. When you've seen enough, go south twice and you will find your house.



3. Your girlfriend, Zoe, will be standing outside in her signature pink dress. An emotional reunion follows, after which both of you will go inside the house.

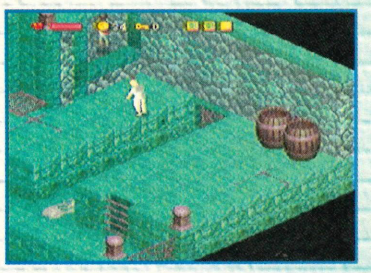
4. You won't be in the house long before two Groboclones appear at the door. One arrests Zoe while the feared white clone fires a homing stun bomb at you. You wake up back in the prison cell, so escape using the steps above. When you get to the first locker room, the locker that had your ID card and Holomap in it will have all your possessions inside.



5. This time, when you escape to the back street next to the rubbish dump, walk to the main road and south into the next screen. Just inside this screen there is a metal grating off to the right that leads into the sewers if you stand on it and press ■ in Normal mode.

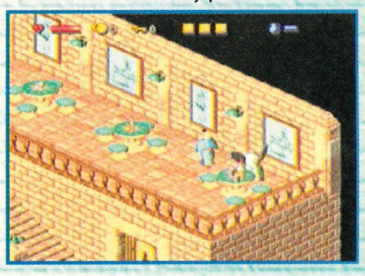
6. Collect the empty clover-leaf box which lets you store an extra clover, then pick up all the mushrooms to get the health from inside them. Exit the sewer when you have taken everything, and start walking around the town.

7. Talk to the people you see (● button) for any advice they might have about the your loved one's whereabouts.



Almost everyone will tell you to check out the Tavern, a bar near the ocean at the right edge of Citadel Island, so head in that direction when you have done enough searching for Kashes.

8. Once inside the Tavern, go upstairs and turn right at the top of the stairs to find the lone Grobo sitting at a table. When you talk to him he says he'll tell you about Zoe if you buy him a drink, so talk to the Rabbibunny that is running around and pay him for a drink. When the Grobo gets his drink he tells you Zoe was taken to the ferry port.



CITADEL ISLAND, TWINSEN'S HOUSE

1. Head back to the house, where you will see that the door has been bricked up and a Groboclone is guarding the area. Keep out of sight and go right to your neighbour's house. Talk to him to find out about another way into your house – the chimney!

2. To get to the chimney you have to jump (press ■ in Athletic mode) up the many levels of your garden by the side of your house and off to the back. It is quite a distance from the front of the house and when you reach it you'll be very high up.

3. Drop down the chimney and into your fireplace, and begin a major search of the house, looking absolutely everywhere. Before long you will find a room containing an artist's easel. Search the wardrobe in this room to get your magic tunic and magic ball. Search the house again and you will find a few of the little blue bottles that give you magical power.

4. Get back up the chimney and start making your way back down to the ground in front of the house. Dr FunFrock has deployed a few clones outside while you've been searching the house. You can't take them all, so just destroy the closest Rabbiclone with a couple of hits from the magic ball by pressing X. Head north into the middle part of town.



CITADEL ISLAND PART 2

PART 2 NEXT MONTH

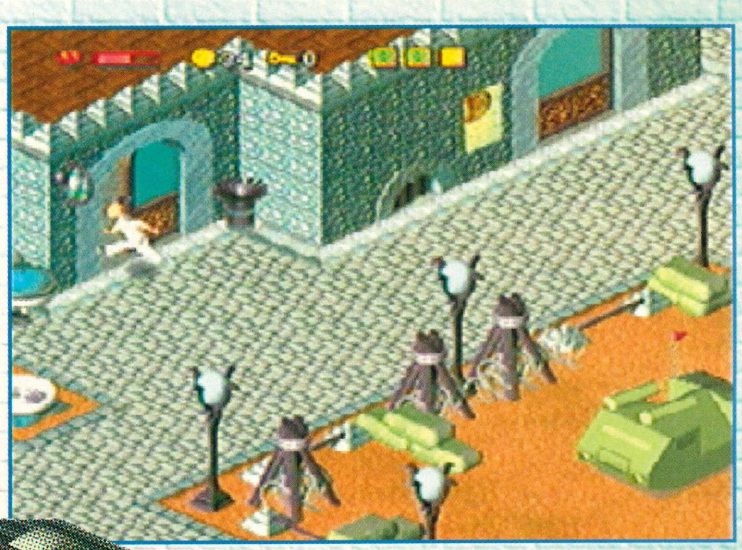
CITADEL ISLAND, THE PHARMACY

1. Most of the city's buildings will be closed, but luckily for you the pharmacy decided to stay open today. Before you go off in search of Zoe on the ferry, there is one last thing you must pick up – a bottle of syrup. The pharmacy is located just left of the middle of town.

2. As you enter the store, the pharmacist will raise the alarm, but here's a good way to avoid any trouble. Run up to him and kill him as fast as you can, even though he will start the alarm before you get him.

3. Run around the clone that appears and get outside. When you go back in, the clone is gone and you are free to search for the syrup at your own pace. It's in an oddly coloured bottle at the right.

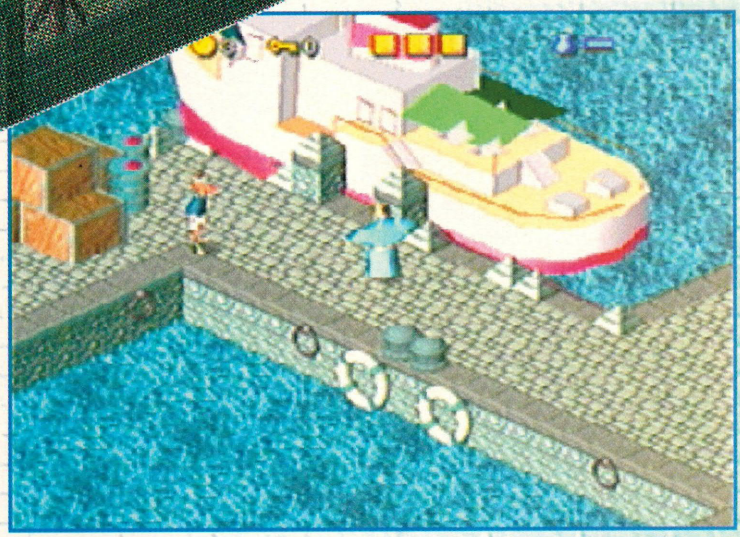
4. Relieve the cash register of it's Kashes too while you're here alone. Leave for the port by going under the bridge that is on the same side as the door of the pharmacy.





FERRY DOCK







CITADEL ISLAND, FERRY DOCK

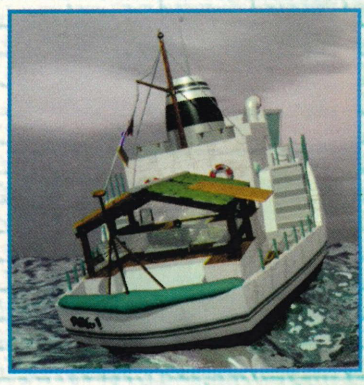
1. Walking round the fences to buy a ticket in the normal way results in the ticket man recognising you and letting a Groboclone out to hurt you, so knock out the clone with the magic ball and then move on to the clone who guards the gate. When you knock him out he will drop a key, which you use to open the gate.

2. Talk to the Grobo sitting in the corner who you see after going through the gate. He will tell you that he will give a ferry ticket to anyone who can arrange the crates in the room next to him.

3. Walk in through the doorway next to him and have a go at the simple puzzle, attempting to push all the crates onto the crosses on the floor. If you mess it up, just leave the room and go back in to find the crates back in their starting positions each time.

4. When you complete the puzzle (all it takes is some simple logic) go out and talk to the Grobo to get your promised ticket.

5. Walk over to the ferry captain standing at the dock and talk to him before getting on the boat. You are on your way to Principal Island.



RALLY CROSS

SOLVED

IF YOU'RE TIRED OF BEING SMASHED INTO THE SCENERY, OR SIMPLY WANT TO TAKE SOME OF THOSE SHINY HIDDEN CARS OUT FOR A SPIN, YOU'LL FIND WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR IN OUR INVALUABLE GUIDE.

THE TRACKS



Oasis

Don't be fooled into thinking that just because Oasis is the first track in a season that it's the easiest. The sand surface and the huge dunes at the sides make it difficult for the beginner, and there are some tricky turns too. The most important thing is to make use of the shortcut on every lap as its rocky surface gives you increased grip and speed. However, if you miss the turn-off for the shortcut don't waste time trying to reverse and skid around to line up ith the entrance.



Alpine

The snow covered road of the Alpine course calls for some fairly big changes in your driving style, as it severely affects the handling. The best method is to use powerslides earlier than normal on the corners and to brake well early too. On the sections where you come across a frozen stream covering the road, brake and get to the inside of the corner before you make contact with the ice, this way when you slide you should just miss the cliff face and stay ahead of the pack.



Islands

There are two places where people often lose control on this course stuck in the middle of the jungle. One is the first left turn you have to make, a sudden 90° manoeuvre that can cause you to roll the car with infuriating frequency. To remedy this, take advantage of the wide track at this point and sail round the very outside of the corner, braking a little. The other problem zone is the turn inside the tunnel. The only way to make this safely is to brake enough before you even enter the turn.



Gardens

Gardens has all the influences of England except the speed limit, with the characteristic red post boxes and phones, as well as a typical suburban street and some castle-like structures. Being entirely covered in tarmac, this is your first chance to really get some speed out of the cars due to the extra traction, so keep that boosted performance in mind when tackling the corners. The leafy section is the hardest part, but all it takes is some common sense instead of trying to fly down there at full speed.



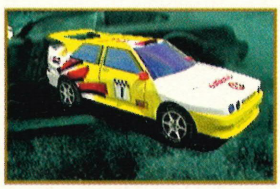
Lost Mines

The simplicity of this figure-of-eight track is welcomed after trying to memorise the twists and turns of the last two, but it still has its bad spots. When you drive through the tunnel you have to take care not to touch the wooden rafters at the sides or you could end up spinning to directly face the wall. When you exit the tunnel, resist the temptation to go wide up the embankment as you're likely to end up on your roof.



Stadium

The Stadium is an entirely mad scramble round a muddy, rectangular track. To avoid the horrendous crashes that can happen on this course, it is important to master the art of judging what speed to take the humps at. Get the right speed and you'll jump off the front of one hump and land on the back of another with minimum damage. It also pays to keep away from the edges which are more slidey and have oddly-angled bumps.











CHEAT CODES



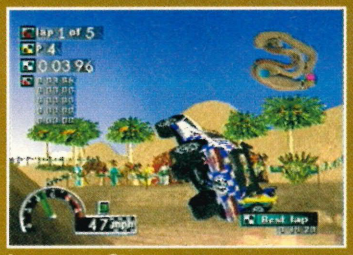
CODES THAT MERELY WIN CERTAIN SEASONS ARE THE LEAST OF THE TRICKS HIDDEN AWAY WITHIN *RALLY CROSS*. BETTER STRAP YOURSELF IN BEFORE TRYING THIS LOT OR THINGS COULD REALLY GET OUT OF HAND. ONLY ONE CHEAT CAN BE ACTIVE AT ONE TIME (USE THE PASSWORD SCREEN).



HEAVY CARS

STONE

THIS ADDS SOME WEIGHT TO YOUR RACE CAR, WHICH IS ACTUALLY QUITE HANDY FOR THE PEOPLE WHO THINK THE CARS ARE TOO EASY TO THROW INTO THE AIR.



LIGHTER CARS

FEATHER

ON THE OTHER HAND IT CAN BE FUN TO TRY MAKING THE CARS A BIT LIGHTER WITH THIS CHEAT, FOR ADDED TIME IN THE AIR WHEN YOU HIT A JUMP.



LOW GRAVITY

FLOAT

THE ALREADY SPRINGY PHYSICS ARE EXAGGERATED TO THE MAXIMUM, SO WHEN YOU BOUNCE SKYWARDS YOU CAN BE THERE FOR SOME TIME! YOU WILL ALSO BE ABLE TO REACH SOME INSANE HEIGHTS.



SHARP TURNING

SPINNER

INCREASES THE SPEED AT WHICH THE FRONT WHEELS TURN WHEN YOU STEER TO GIVE YOU UNREALISTIC BUT SHARP HANDLING. ITS EFFECT IS MOST NOTICABLE ON THE CONCRETE SECTIONS.



FAT TYRES

fat_tires

Gives you those big old fat back tyres that any self respecting boy-racer already has installed on his Astra.



NO WHEELS

NO_WHEELS

TAKES THE WHEELS AND TYRES FROM ALL THE CARS SO THEY APPEAR TO BE HOVERING ROUND THE TRACK. DOESN'T AFFECT THE HANDLING THOUGH.



JUST WHEELS

WHEELS

LETS EVERYONE RACE WITH JUST A SET OF WHEELS AND NO CAR, ALTHOUGH STRANGELY THERE IS STILL A SHADOW AND WHEN YOU ROLL THE CAR, THE WHEELS HANG IN THE AIR. DOESN'T AFFECT THE HANDLING.



NO COLLISIONS

BANZAI

TURNS OFF THE COLLISION DETECTION ON ALL THE CARS, MEANING YOU CAN JUST DRIVE RIGHT THROUGH THEM WITHOUT THE FEAR OF TRASHING YOUR VEHICLE. IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT THIS DOESN'T WORK ON THE M25.

SEASON CODES

IT HAS TO BE SAID, *RALLY CROSS* IS PRETTY TOUGH TO BEAT WITHOUT SOME HEAVY PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE IN DRIVING GAMES, BUT THANKFULLY THERE ARE SOME WAYS AROUND THE HARD WORK. THE FOLLOWING SEASON PASSWORDS WILL PROMOTE YOU THROUGH THE RANKS.

WON ROOKIE SEASON

VET_ME (_ = SPACE)

YOU MIGHT WANT TO TRY THIS PASSWORD WHICH WILL ACT AS IF YOU WON THE ROOKIE SEASON. YOU'LL GET FOUR EXTRA CARS AND ACCESS TO THE ALPINE TRACK.

WON VETERAN SEASON

IM_A_PRO

THIS WINS THE VETERAN SEASON FOR YOU, SO YOU'LL BE GIVEN YET ANOTHER FOUR NEW CARS TO TRY OUT, AS WELL AS THE GARDENS AND STADIUM TRACKS.



WON ALL PRO SEASONS

WEEOO

NOT QUITE AS OBVIOUS AS THE OTHER CODES, THIS IS EQUIVALENT TO WINNING THE NORMAL, HEAD-ON, AND MIXED PRO SEASONS. FINALLY YOU CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON THREE OF THE FOUR PICK-UP TRUCKS!



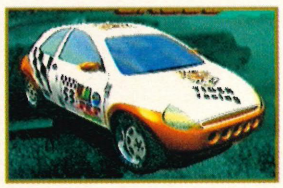












BLOOD OMEN: LEGACY OF KAIN PART 1

SOLVED

KAIN HAS TO BE ONE OF THE COOLEST ANTI-HEROES EVER. HE PROWLS THE LAND SUCKING THE LIFE-BLOOD FROM ALL THE LOCALS, BUT YOU CAN'T HELP ADMIRING HIM AS HE GOES ABOUT HIS BUSINESS. AND WITH THE HELP OF THE VAMPIRE EXPERTS AT PLAY TOWERS YOU'LL BE SLURPING, FLAPPING, HOVERING AND HOWLING YOUR WAY THROUGH THE GAME IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOAL OF RESTORING THE NINE SACRED PILLARS OF NOSGOTH IN PART ONE OF OUR EXHAUSTIVE SOLUTION.



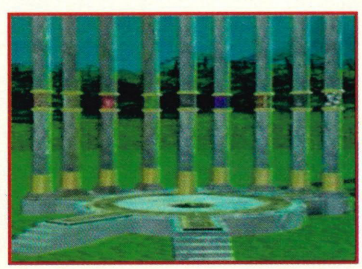
KAIN'S QUEST FOR VENGEANCE

You start the game in the Tavern of Ziegstuhl. After being kicked out at last orders you'll be unceremoniously murdered by peasants. Once you're dead you're offered the chance of a little retribution on your murders by the necromancer Mortanius.

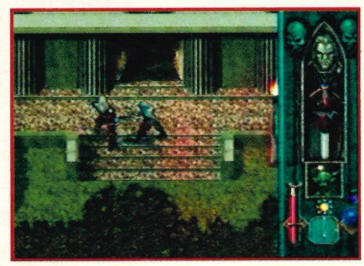
Kain awakens in the mausoleum prepared for his body. Press the switch in the NW corner to open the West door. Walk to the blue picture to get the Sanctuary spell. Head through the northern door and kill the Gravedigger, then continue through the other rooms collecting whatever you can, using switches to open doors as you go. Remember to suck the blood of the prisoners too. Leave the mausoleum.

Head for the first building south, here there's an underground complex. The main enemies here are easy to kill skeletons, but watch out for spiked floors. The red triangle gives a message. Pick up the goodies and head north and press the switch which lowers a section of spikes to the left. Next, press another switch to open the gate to the left. To get past the next set of spikes, set the switches as follows (from left to right): in, in, out. The two Sarcophagi reveal goodies by walking into them. Push aside the boulders to get to the chests. Save and leave.

Forget the other buildings and head north and kill the peasants who murdered you. Mortanius tells you to find the sacred pillars. Head east to Ziegsturchl. Wander around the buildings to the south feeding on the locals, breaking barrels to find Flays, then head east over the bridge and then over another to the north.



Keep going north until you reach the Pillars. These blue octagons are teleporters which link the clearing containing the Pillars with the main map. You can teleport to or from them with each. Here you meet Ariel who explains your new quest, the first of which is killing Nupraptor.



Leave the Pillars by the left teleport and go to the Bat Beacon. Collecting the token allows you to turn into a bat! Step on the brown square in front of the post – it lights and thus consigns it to memory. Head east and enter the first building. Go east and then north through a series of rooms collecting and killing until you find a switch which opens a doorway north in the centre of the room. Use the switches to first go west and then south, picking up Rune Triangles as you go. Exit and head west. Next you'll come across a cave, where you find the wolf shape change.

Go left from the first room and save. Return and press north. Picking up the Wolf Card. Change into the Lupine form and climb up hills and head north. The road splits, head left first. Here you'll come across a cave of spirit forges. By sacrificing some of your blood you'll be given a relic in return. Continue walking

VERE ARE THE VEAPONS?

THE FOLLOWING LIST SHOWS ALL THE WEAPONS, AND THE LOCATION WHERE THEY CAN BE FOUND.

WEAPON	LOCATION
IRON SWORD	START
SPIKED MACE	NUPRAPTOR'S RETREAT
THE AXES	MALEK'S BASTION
FLAME SWORD	FLAME DUNGEON
SOUL REAVER	AVERNUS' CATHEDRAL





and enable the landmark once you reach it. Now head back and take the right path to the Citadel to the NE. Enter.

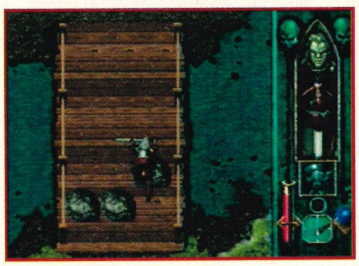


Inside, find a new spell – Energy Bolt. Clean out the following four rooms and then leave.



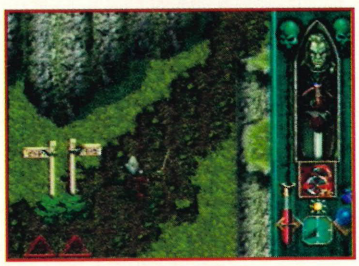
Proceed north to Nachtholm. Three small boulders block your path though, so just transform into the wolf and walk back a little, then jump up onto the hill and enter the cave. Drink from the 'Blood Of The Ages Fountain'. Now go back to the boulders, pushing them easily out of the way.

Explore the town, then head north until you find another blood fountain making you immune to rain. Once again, the road will split into two paths. The left heads to the town of Steinchencröe, the right leads to a cave , a passage (which you can't enter just yet), and a passage to the left which leads to a landmark (both roads come together).



First, go to Steinchencröe, and the drunk in the NE of town will tell you to get a disguise if you want to mingle with people. Take the road up, then right and activate the landmark (second passage to the right). Now head back and go north. On the left you'll notice a secret area, which you can't yet enter, so instead go right to the Gypsy camp. Enter the orange tent to obtain the disguise form.
Go north to Vasserbiinde. You can fly to Nupraptor's retreat from here, but





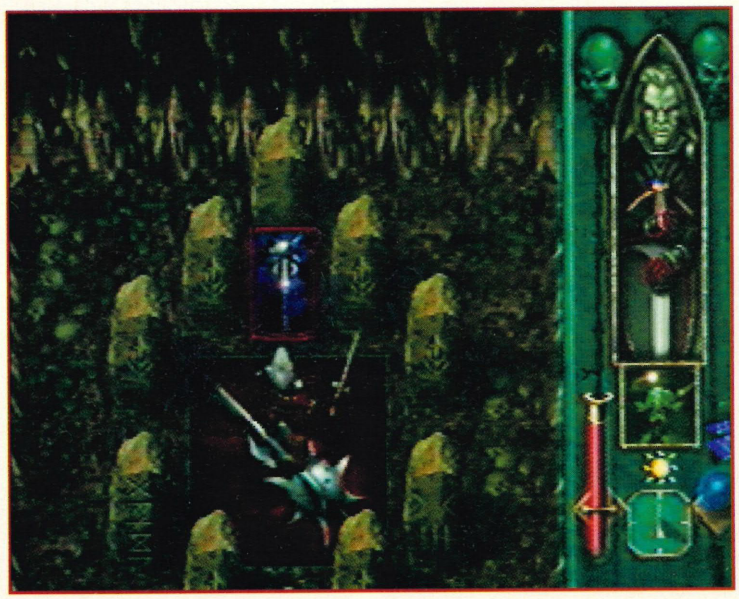
instead head SW and exit left. Go into the house on the right and flick the switch to open the gates. You'll have to fight your way through the two caves. Enter the second cave and you'll find a 'slow time' item. Enter the other cave which leads to Nupraptor.

On reaching the skull, go through four other rooms before you can continue. Go through the lower right passage without the light spell, so that you can see the correct path. Next, pull the three switches, but push the middle switch back.

Defeating Nupraptor

Each row of fireballs consists of green balls and two purple balls. Although the green balls don't disappear, the purple ones do. Just wait until a purple one fades then run through. Do this until you reach him at the top. Give him a few hits, until he teleports to the other side, so just repeat in reverse. Once you've hit him about five times, he'll teleport into the centre of the room. Just hit him once to kill him. Don't forget to watch out for the spikes on the floor. After killing him, take the Spiked Mace. This can access secret areas. You'll automatically fly back to The Pillars for your second quest: killing Malek.

That, my lonely children of the night is all for this month, but fear not, we shall unveil more dark secrets of *Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain* next month.



Blood Omen Cheats

Getting a bit low on the old blood-count? Magic ability waning somewhat? Fangs to our blood-tastic cheats, you can roam the land for even longer than eternity with the following.

Blood Refill

During play press up, right, ■, ●, up, down, right, left to refill your blood.



Full Magic

To refill your magic meter, press right, right, ■, ●, up, down, right, left while playing.



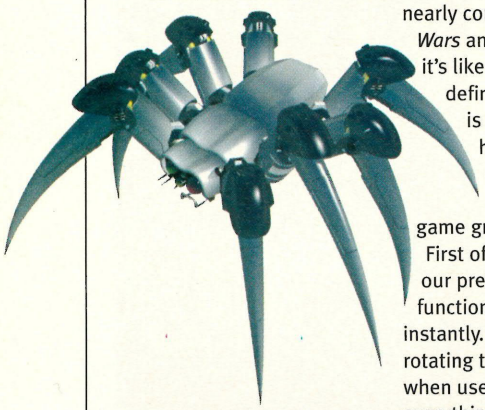
View all FMV

To view all the FMV clips, press left, right, ▲, ⇨, up, down, right, left while playing, then press Select and view the Dark Diary. Now you can enjoy the sumptuous horrors in full.

SINISTER

SYNDICATE WARS

As promised last month we have indeed been playing a nearly complete version of PlayStation *Syndicate Wars* and we just know you want to hear what it's like at long last. Set for a pretty-much-definite release date of mid June, the game is at Alpha stage and most of the features have been implemented, with the exception of the mouse and network play. Both will enhance the finished game greatly.



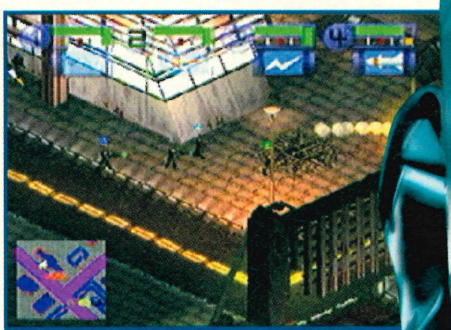
First off the control system is perfect and all our previous worries about putting all those functions on the standard pad were dispelled instantly. The shoulder buttons are used for rotating the view and selecting different agents when used in conjunction with the D-pad and everything else is simple to learn and instinctive after only a few minutes. The mouse will render *SW* even easier to control, as it was with the PC.

PLAY INFORMATION

Name: Syndicate Wars
Publisher: Bullfrog
% Complete: 80%
Release Date: 16 June

DARK

Thankfully the recent furore over gun crimes has not diminished the impact or level of violence in the game, with widespread slaughter, flaming bodies, piles of 'gloop' and sundry limbs scattering to the four winds whenever your cyborgs enter stage left.



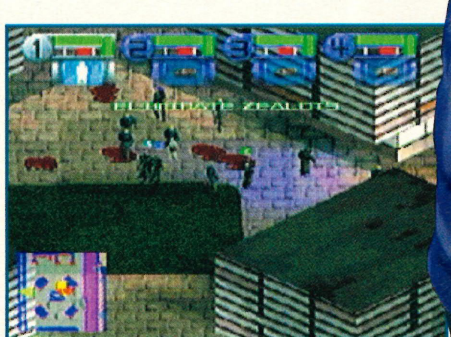
[Above] All four agents can be controlled at once, or independently. You can also have four different people playing with one each. Now that's cool.

Compared to *Syndicate*, the range of weapons is now huge, with flame-throwers, mini-guns (no shotguns though – bah!), razor wire, explosives, missiles, many different lasers, grenades and persuadatrons – all present to up the body count. You even get to designate a target for an orbital cannon, which then vapes the entire area with extreme prejudice. One minute you're looking at a car park, the next it's a crater the size of an editor's wage packet!

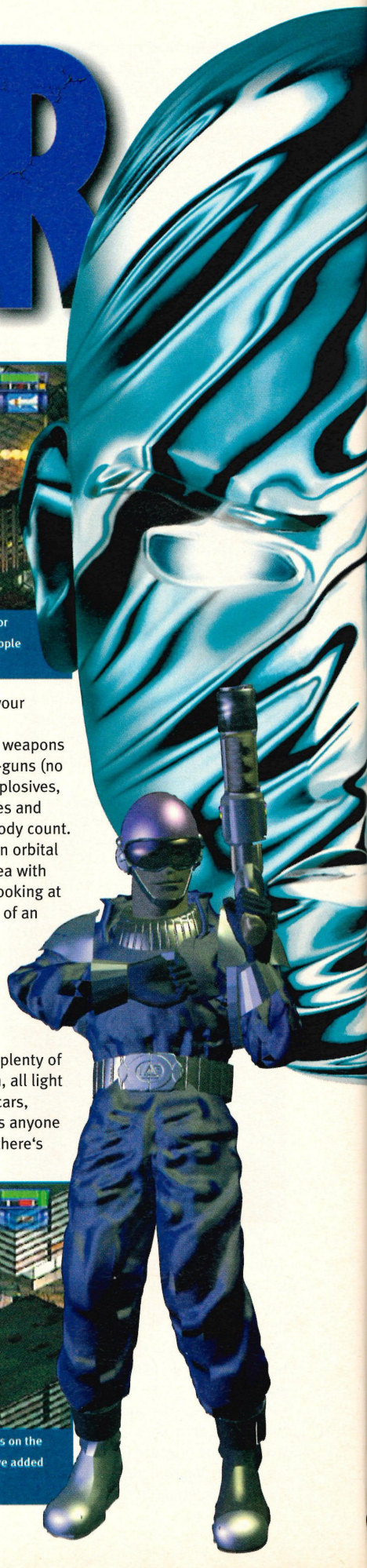
Naturally all the levels are dark, with light neon patches from street lamps and plenty of *Blade Runner*-esque decor, such as huge video screens showing Manga cartoons and towering office blocks. We were also glad to see plenty of vehicles buzzing about the road system, all light sourced, and, in the case of the police cars, featuring flashing lights of their own. As anyone who's played *Syndicate* before knows, there's



[Above] *Syndicate Wars* prides itself on realistic lighting and some sensational pyrotechnic effects. Here a mine as been placed on a busy road – with hilarious results...



[Above] It goes without saying that those red spots on the ground were former residents. Bullfrog should have added bloody footprints for the finishing touch.





[Above] "Now which one should I take? Who cares, they all look like the DeLoreon from *Back to the Future* anyway."



[Above] Oh no it's the fuzz! The police in *SW* are just as fragile and squashy as the civilians. The cars make a bigger bang though.



[Above] "And then I fire my thermo-nuclear device at the library and civilisation as we know it was wiped out. Which was nice..."



[Above] As in the first game on PC and Super NES, you can steal civilian cars while their owners are at the cash-point. You can then joyride around the city performing drive-by shootings.

nothing more satisfying than drive-by shooting, or torching some poor sucker's wheels – the whole team firing in unison. This all remains intact in the PSX version.

The PC version of *Syndicate Wars* has already gone down a storm and this has spurred on the developers of the PSX game to cram in even more new features. The scanner and gun menus are all new and improved to suit the more colourful game graphics, and a host of shading and lighting effects stand out from the moment you load it up. Whereas the PC was all blues and greys, this has patches of vivid colour, even before you start detonating buildings.

Syndicate Wars won our "Readers Most Wanted" award last issue and we can report that it does indeed play well, although more could be done to spruce up the dark levels. It does however offer plenty of futuristic cyborg-nutter action and we think it would be a good idea to bundle the game with a mouse. Expect a full review next issue.

FOREBODING

Another notable difference over the original game is the fact that you have complete control over the rotation of the screen, and to complement this, Bullfrog has made large objects become transparent when the camera passes behind them, very much like *Project Overkill*. PlayStation owners can also expect to see an improved front end, larger sprites and a unique zoom mode which lets you get right in on the action.

Although mooted in our extensive look at the game in issue 14, the eight player mode has failed to materialise, but you still get a one, two, three and four player link-up option, although Bullfrog has yet to decide whether this will involve a multi-tap or four PlayStations(!). We hope for the former. *Syndicate Wars* will also support the NeGcon and steering wheel as well as the Sony mouse, which will be good news for all of you who were dismayed to find *Command & Conquer* mouse-less.



[Above] *Syndicate Wars* now features pull down menus featuring your available weapons. Here you can see missiles, a plasma beam, electro mace, mini gun and Uzi. Each agent can carry well over ten weapons on a single mission.



[Above] Although the explosions in *Syndicate Wars* are not yet finished, they are still impressive because of their size. The whole ground literally shakes...

BARBAROUS

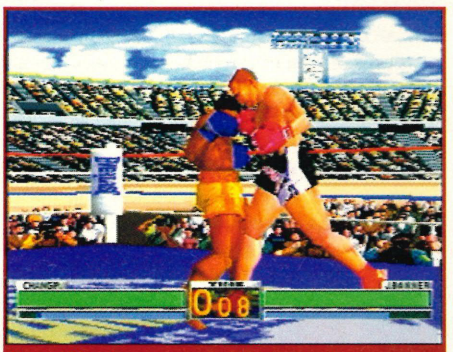
K-1 THE ARENA FIGHTERS



[Above] The vasectomy – Thai kickboxing style. Just one of the many moves in *K1*.

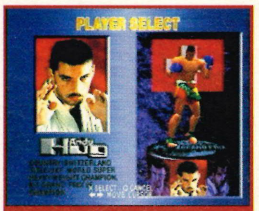


[Above] Vicious kicks are as frequent as the punches. Where has Hug's foot gone though?



[Above] "Over 'ere son on me 'ed." Flying headbutts are highly encouraged.





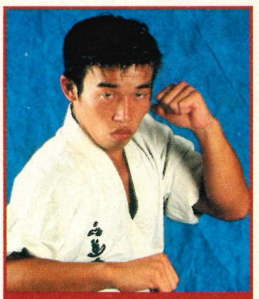
[Above] You'll be able to choose from one of eight opponents. They all eat rusty nails for breakfast.



[Above] The same players can fight each other.



[Above] Each move is an exact copy of how the real fighter performs.



[Above] "Eee, I'm dead 'ard me."

Krrrraaaaaaakkk!

There's something distinctly brutal about kick-boxing. Somehow it looks too gratuitous. It's almost as though certain kicks have been included so that the competitors can inflict unnecessary damage on each other. But that's in the real world. What *K-1 The Arena Fighters* attempts to achieve is a precise simulation of the sport, so you can wave goodbye to any multi-chain combo moves right now. This is serious stuff, undertaken by very serious people. They want to hurt each other... badly.

SNAP

The game pits you against one of eight real fighters in the tournament mode, where you can slug it out over a number of timed bouts. Each character has unique mannerisms and specialist moves, so there should be plenty of variety in the form of attacking and defending. In the Team Battle mode, you'll be able to choose three of your favourite fighters to face off against three opponents.

The most interesting feature has to be the AI Setup in which any one of the eight characters can be customised and trained. The idea being that once he's honed to the desired level, you can then take on a friend's own design or enter him into a tournament.

To keep the authenticity level up, all of the official rules have been adhered to exactly, so don't expect any mercy from the judges if you're receiving a good hiding. Matches are going to be scored on a points basis, but only if you inflict damage; there will be no points for defensive moves.

The time remaining, number of knock-downs, life and stamina gauges are all displayed on-screen to monitor your current status.

From what we've seen of this game in motion, one thing is for certain, the bone-splintering moves have all been replicated accurately. The polygonal figures are huge and nicely texture-mapped. If a few more moves, and dare we say it, a few combos are thrown in, then the signs look promising for *K-1*.

Expect an in-depth review next month.

PLAY INFORMATION

Name: K-1 The Arena Fighters
Publisher: T•HQ Inc
% Complete: 90%
Release Date: April '97

THUNDEROUS

WAR GODS

Blimey, Gt Interactive is a busy bunch these days, what with the likes of *Tiger Shark*, *Duke Nukem*, *Quake*, *Area 51* and *Hexen* all knocking on the PlayStation's front door. It looks like being a busy Spring-time for all PlayStation owners.



War Gods, however is the first of this impressive line-up, and it claims to be the only truly 3-D arcade fighting game, amongst other things. Brave words indeed when you consider the dizzying heights of gameplay and graphical excellence that titles such as *Soul Blade* and *Tekken 2* have reached.

The plot of the game goes something like this. Billions of years ago, a being from a far away galaxy was transporting a precious cargo of life-giving Ore through space. The violent formation of the solar system caused his ship to crash and scattered the Ore over the molten surface of Earth. And blow me down with a feather, after squillions of years, ten humans come into contact with the Ore and are immediately transformed into the War Gods! Who writes this guff?

PLAY INFORMATION

Name: War Gods
Publisher: GT Interactive
% Complete: 85%
Release Date: May '97

Olympus

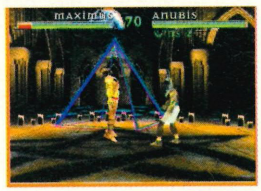
As is customary in the games industry, GT claim to have something special up their collective sleeves for the beat-'em-up-hungry public. Apparently we will be able to indulge in such innovations as 'Digital skin technology,' which allegedly eliminates the polygon appearance of virtually every other fighting game currently doing the rounds. Additional enhancements, other than the totally 3-D environment include reality map surfacing for photo-quality graphics and a 3-D button which allows movement around the entire fighting arenas.



[Above] Kabuki looks like the fifth member of the utterly crud rock band, Kiss. Let's hope his fighting skills are of a higher quality than his song-writing.



[Above] There are ten War Gods to choose from and no doubt some bosses too.





Confrontations will take place in real-time of course, where deadly projectiles can be launched in any direction while circling around the arena. You'll be able to witness some stomach-churning fatalities, multi-level combos, grappling throws and secret moves too, so gore-hounds take note.

We haven't seen the game up and running as yet, but the screenshots certainly look unique and bizarre, to say the very least. We'll reserve judgement until the full version next month, but if GT can accomplish all of their goals, *War Gods* could prove to be a surprise package.



[Above] It wouldn't be a beat-'em-up without the token scantily-clad barbarian vixen. Meet Vallah.

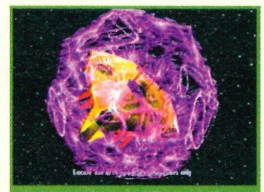


[Above] Expect a dazzling arsenal of magical and projectile weapons says GT. Sounds familiar.

ALIEN

DARKLIGHT CONFLICT



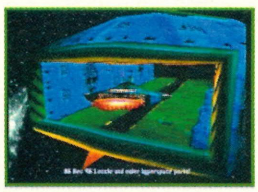


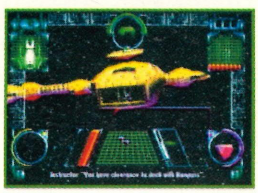
[Above] To help you avoid mid-space collisions, hit the shield button and your ship is enveloped in a crackling purple energy field.



[Above] Check out that magnificent lighting – and it's all dynamic, so that if you look from underneath the hull is bathed in blues and greens. It doesn't get much better.

Some games are so good they force you to stay up into the early hours playing them. Others cover your control pad with a thin film of sweat because they are so gripping. But a few command such respect and awe that you cannot help but stand there, open mouthed, as they unfold in front of you. *Darklight Conflict* from Liverpool-based coders, Rage, is one such game.





Darklight's most impressive feature is unmistakable right from the word go – it looks fantastic, and contains lighting effects the like of which have never been seen before on PlayStation. The moment you emerge from the docking bay of your immense colony ship and watch it tumble into the blackness of space you know that Rage has managed to create a space environment which puts even *Elite* and *Wing Commander* to shame.

The plot of *Darklight* concerns the recent emergence of a new race of beings called the Reptons, and you are selected to merge with their society and hopefully learn their language and customs so that proper intergalactic relations can begin. It goes without saying that you also have the hidden agenda of finding out what the Reptons want and if their intentions are hostile.

SPACE ODDITY

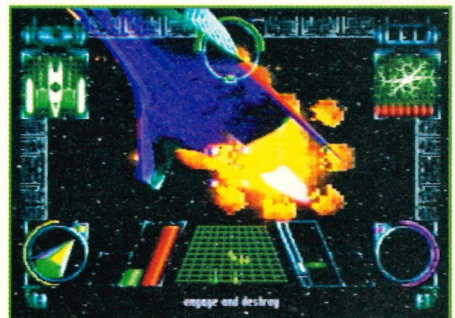
The bulk of the game is set in the frontiers of space, with you battling different Repton clans in a variety of cool looking space ships. The colourful multi function displays (MFDs) alert you to the position of enemy fighters, stargates (portals in space which links different sectors) and any items of special interest, and there's also a central scanner which shows you where everything in range is in relation to your craft. As well as the cockpit, you also have two exterior views, plus a huge arsenal of different weapons. There's even a nifty tractor beam to rescue flailing satellites or marooned allies – in all there are over 50 missions.

But that's all just window dressing because *Darklight* has the smoothest and most convincing 3-D engine we at PLAY have seen, and the atmospheric lighting (laser fire is reflected over the hull of the capital ships, and everything has a neon feel to it) puts even the lens flare meisters at Psygnosis to shame.

Take a look at these screenshots, be amazed that even with such wonders up there on-screen, the frame rate never drops, and then prepare for the review soon. This could be the sleeper hit of the year. Watch this space...



[Above] As well as blasting Repton clans, you must also go on repair missions and use your tractor beam to lure in damaged satellites.



[Above] Well they said engage and destroy, so that's just what I'm doing. You rarely get to see the fighters up this close though.



[Above] Use the stargates to travel to different space sectors and while you're in there, collect the red comets for energy and avoid the blue ones.

PLAY INFORMATION

Name: Darklight Conflict
Publisher: EA
% Complete: 75%
Release Date: 16 May '97

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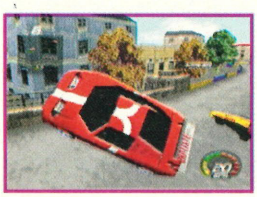
RAPID

TOTAL DRIVIN'





It would appear that newly formed Eutechnics (formerly Merit Studios) really wants to make you happy, as its smooth new racing game has been stuffed to bursting point with the kinds of things we all like to see. We admit to being shocked to find that *Peak Performance* (now *Powerslide*) had 28 selectable cars in total, but when we saw that *Total Drivin'* has an incredible 40 vehicles to drive, we were floored.

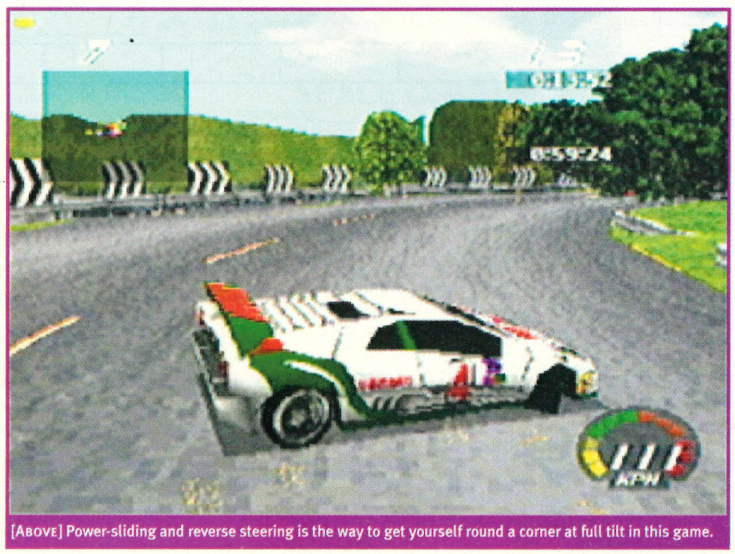


All of these cars will react properly to collisions with other vehicles, meaning they flip over and spin through the air in a bad crash instead of being forced to stay upright like in too many other driving games. At the moment the physics are just a tad over-the-top and need to be toned down a little to keep the realism aspect that will probably be a major selling point.

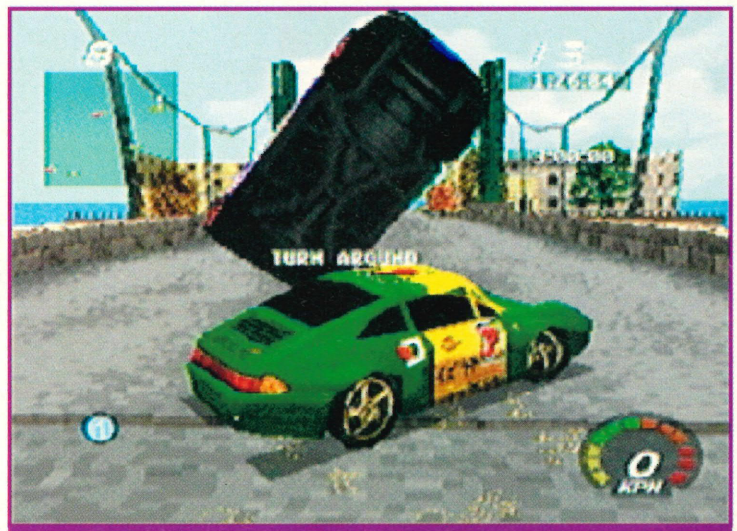
Total Drivin' is also one of the precious few remaining games that supports the link-up option for the best possible way of going head-to-head with a friend. However, there is still the standard split screen option and, for the first time in PlayStation history, you can link two consoles together and use the split screen mode on each for simultaneous four player racing! This isn't just wishful thinking on the part of the programmers – we have played the game using this feature and it works just fine. "This began as an experiment, really. We'd already included a two player split screen and two player link-up option, so we thought we'd combine them and see what happened," said the developers.

PLAY INFORMATION

Name: Total Drivin'
Publisher: Ocean
% Complete: 80%
Release Date: June '97



[Above] Power-sliding and reverse steering is the way to get yourself round a corner at full tilt in this game.



[Above] During this outrageous bridge "accident," one of the other cars disappeared in the confusion. "I think he's gone over the side" said Merit's Kev Shaw.

Long Time Comin'

The cars are split up into five classes: 4x4 Buggies, Dakar Rally Class, Sports Class, Indy Cars, and Rally Class, and each class is suited to a particular kind of terrain. Which is why they've also included an astounding 30 tracks, in settings like Moscow, Hong Kong, and even the Highlands.

The most ambitious innovation is in the way the difficulty curve works, where the scenery itself tests you just as much as the computer controlled cars. As you get better at the game, the courses change to make things more difficult and to stop you getting too complacent. These changes can be anything from a new route becoming open to a bridge collapsing or a volcano erupting! It all looks very exciting, be sure to check out the complete review here in a couple of months.

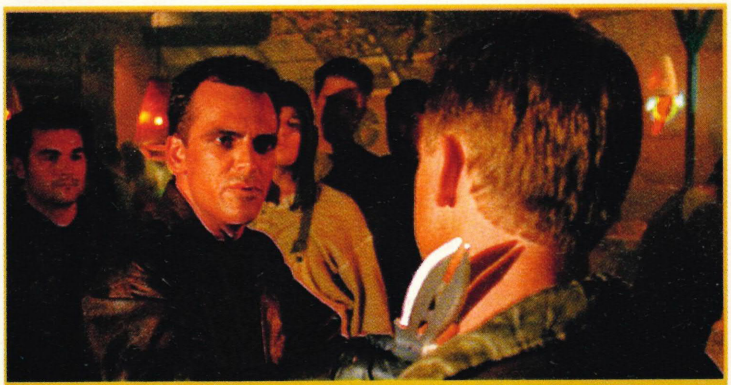


[Above] The cars are all at various stages of completion just now, but the McLaren holds the road well and has the sharpest steering.

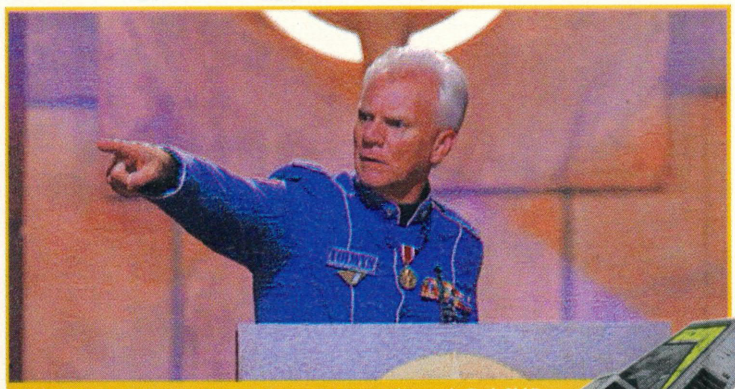


[Above] Four human players. In fast cars. On the snow. It practically spells chaos, and with the handling feeling more like you're on a frozen lake, it was.

BLOCKBUSTER



[Above] The first blade cuts close, the second even closer... The FMV in *Wing IV* is top notch.



[Above] "Guards seize him. That's the man who got me the part in *Tank Girl*."

WING COMMANDER IV

What started out as a little known space saga on the Amiga, became a slowly growing franchise on the PC, had a brief fling with the Super NES, and then a fully fledged love affair with the next generation consoles. It can only mean one thing. *Wing Commander* is back, and this time they've ditched the porn star (Ginger Lyn Allen – squaddies' favourite), swelled to an incredible four CDs, and progressed from dodgy blue screen projections to proper film sets. This is about as far as a computer game can go before it meets the movies, but should we PlayStation owners be gagging or grimacing?

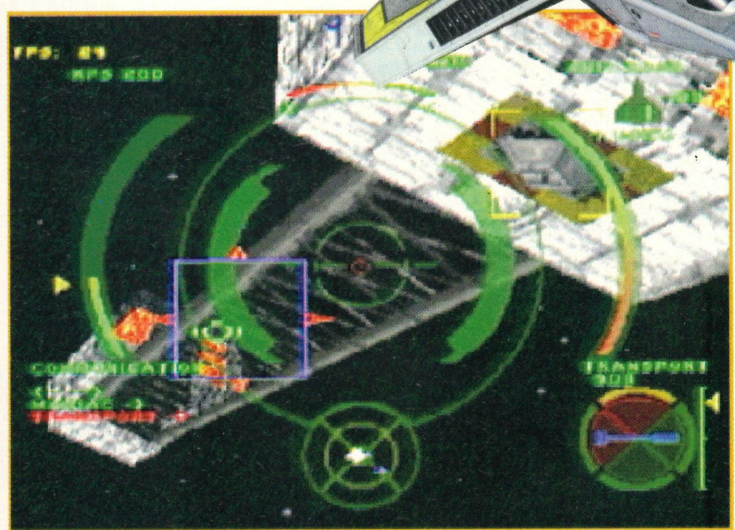


[Above] Strangely, you now don't have the option to manual dock and clearance is given automatically – do they think we're not capable or something?



[Above] As in the third game, when you hit an enemy ship with your lasers, its forcefield lights up to show you're on target.

Wing Commander IV has been a long time coming, but does this mean they've enhanced it? Well from initial glimpses we would have to say no, because it looks to be a direct port from the PC version, with no new film footage, mission catalogue or characters.



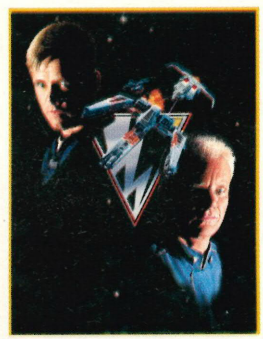
[Above] It's not all blasting anything that moves in *Wing IV*, oh no, you've also got escort and protect duties too. Don't bump into it though – doh!

WING AND A PRAYER

The FMV's still top notch though, and it is amazing how much difference real film sets and a plethora of bit-part actors make. All of a sudden you're watching an episode of *Space: Above and Beyond*, with moody character confrontations blending seamlessly with terrific space battles. *Wing IV* is undoubtedly impressive to watch, and the interactive shoot-'em-up scenes are good too, with more refined cockpit instrumentation, better read-outs, and tons of chatter between co-pilots; something which has always made the *Wing Commander* series unique. You really feel as if it's your buddy's ass on the line.

With the Kilrathi vanquished at the end of the last game (what do you mean you never bothered to complete it?) *Wing IV*'s driving force is the unexpected conflict with the Border Worlds who were traditionally the allies of the Terran government. It doesn't take a genius to realise that something altogether more sinister is behind the slowly escalating war.

Back for another paycheque is Mark "I really need a new agent" Hamill, Malcom "I was in *Tank Girl* y'know" McDowell, and Tim "butt-head" Wilson who all ham it up like good 'uns, but you've got to admit that as a piece of interactive Hollywood 'schlock' it takes some beating. Expect a review next issue because unfortunately it came in too late to be featured this month. To infinity and beyond...



PLAY INFORMATION

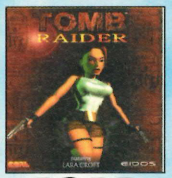
Name: Wing Commander IV
Publisher: EA
% Complete: 95%
Release Date: 25 April '97

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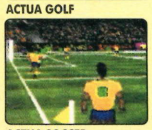
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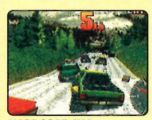


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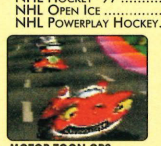
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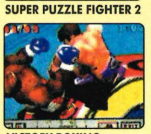
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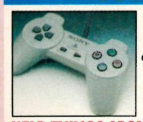
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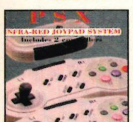
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ATARI GREATEST HITS	EARLY MAY
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BUBBLE BOBBLE 2	MAY
BUBSY 3D	24TH APRIL
CASTLEVANIA	MAY/JUNE
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PERFECT WEAPON	2ND MAY
PFA SOCCER MANAGER	END APRIL
ROAD RAGE	APRIL
SENTIENT	MAY
SOUL BLADE	EARLY MAY
SWAGMAN	MAY
SYNDICATE WARS	MID MAY
TEKKEN 3	SEPTEMBER
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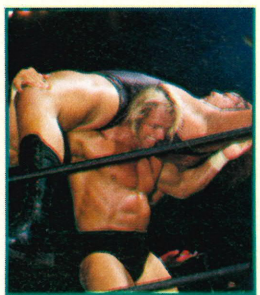
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WRITHING

WCW VS THE WORLD

Welcome grapple fans to *World of Sport*! The prospect of watching grown men sweating profusely whilst grappling with each other's nether regions clad in ridiculous lycra costumes is frankly quite disturbing. And don't you just know it, this, ahem, 'entertaining pastime' is considered essential viewing to the baying crowds in the good old US of A. Yup, in the land of Uncle Sam, drooling fans flock, tongues out, eyes rolling, to watch seriously deranged individuals pretend to kick the bejesus out of each other... and pay for the privilege!

WCW Vs The World offers the player an astonishing 60 wrestlers to choose from. Yes, that's six zero, all from various federations from around the world, including members of the WCW, The Empire Wrestling Federation and Neo-Strong Wrestling. Each federation will be represented by a different colour on the main menu, so you'll know exactly who comes from where.



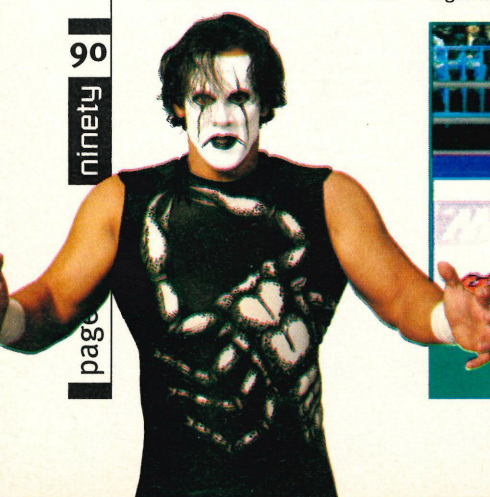
[Above] "Okay, okay, you can wear the brown pants... now put me down."

PLAY Information

Name: WCW Vs The World
Publisher: T•HQ Inc
% Complete: 90%
Release Date: April '97

Dicky Davis

If you're a huge fan of wrestling you'll be twitching with excitement when you consider there are going to be seven separate modes of play. These come in the form of League Challenge, Elimination and Tournament Play, Best of Seven, Exhibition Match, League and Double title Match. Strangely, there's no tag-team option as we write, but with a little persuasion and an electric cattle prod, this may be included in the final version. Typically, the player will find himself wrestling for existing or personally created belts where up to eight competitors will be able to compete.





[Above] You can pick up a stunned opponent and really do some damage.



[Above] Run towards the edge of the ring and rebound off the ropes to build up your speed.



[Above] This particluar move wouln't look out of place in the Karma-Sutra. They're evidently more than just good friends.

First impressions of the game are encouraging in that all of the wrestlers are detailed polygonal clones of their real-life cousins and move pretty smoothly. Every competitor will be able to pull-off holds, blows, downed-opponent moves, counter attacks and special blow attacks unique to that character. In a novel twist to the genre, each player has an on-screen mental state, known as 'Spirit', which increases your physical powers if you taunt the crowd enough.

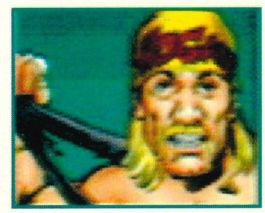
At present, there are about 30 moves (specials included) per player, so although the pace of the game is slower than the likes of *Tekken 2*, it certainly simulates wrestling accurately as a result. Fans of wrestling need only wait one more month for the full review.



[Above] Choose from an astonishing 60 characters. Each colour represents a different wrestling federation of restling from around the world.



[Above] Some fantastic throws will be available in the finished game.



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DEAR PLAY,

Having recently given up my 3DO and changed to the PlayStation, *The Need for Speed 2* is a game I am looking forward to with some interest. In your feature you say that the first PlayStation *NFS* was a considerable improvement over the original 3DO version. However, Paragon's 3DO MAGAZINE was very critical of the PlayStation version, saying that whilst it had a faster frame rate, the car handling was ruined and the graphics were inferior. Having played both I agree with this opinion. The two versions seem almost to be different games. The 3DO version was limited by only having one opponent, but the PlayStation's seem crude by comparison.

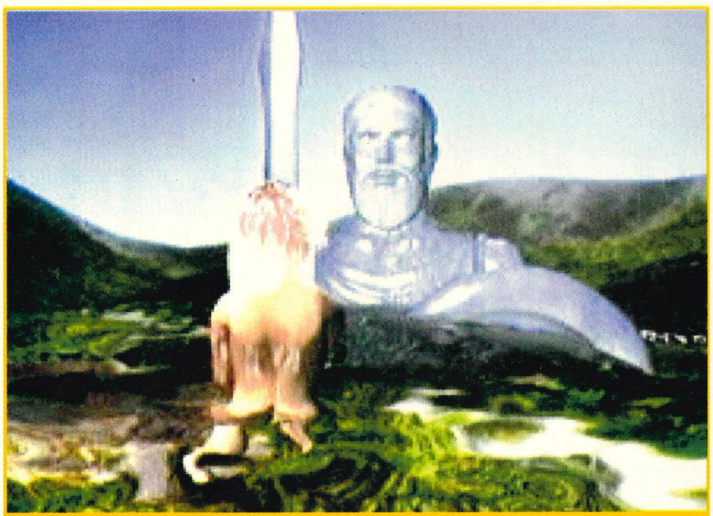
The new version looks stunning and if the car handling and gameplay are as good then it will be great, but I am slightly sceptical that having more opponents, better graphics and split screen means that something has to give – gameplay? The PlayStation does not have that much more power than the 3DO, so how will it be done? I also hope that *NFS2* will include a link mode, as split screen racing games make my head spin and hurt my eyes!

I am also interested in games that use the link-up mode. Which are best, ie *F1* Vs *Mario Andretti*. I have read that the PlayStation struggles in link-up mode and games slow down. Please run a feature on this or direct me to the relevant back issue.

I look forward to your review of *NFS2* (are you telling it as it is?) and whilst the 3DO is dead and buried I am bored with what seems to be biased and sloppy opinions about the machine. The good games were as good and sometimes better than those I have played on other 32-bit consoles. Despite all the complaining I like my PlayStation a lot and there seems to be plenty of interesting games on the way, but I think that rather then claiming the games are better than the 3DO or the Saturn, you should mercilessly point out their flaws so that Sony and third party developers do not get complacent. Finally, I enjoyed the magazine. It had plenty of good features and it was well written.

Marco Houston, London

The 3DO version of *The Need for Speed* was indeed an undisputed classic, and it is true that the handling was simplified for the PlayStation game. Something to do with being made more mass-market. But the PSX conversion also boasts many new features which make it overall a better driving experience.



[Above] Aaron Vallely is deeply worried about the trend where games, most recently *Soul Blade*, are being censored for the European market. Why is it the Japanese can see Sophitia in the nude from behind and we can't?

I'm talking about the split screen and link-up modes and the improved speed and smoothness of animation. Hopefully *NFS 2* will contain even more gob-stopping moments, but to be honest, until the review copy arrives, we don't know what to expect. Yes the dials in the 3DO game were clearer, but which would you rather have: aesthetic changes or a two player mode? Exactly.

We have already produced a small article on link-up games in issue 17, Marco, with so many new ones on the way – *Syndicate Wars, Rally Cross, Quake* – it is a feature we will no doubt run again. And if Sony wants to phase out the link-up mode by selling consoles with no serial connection at the back, then I'd have to say "Oi, Sony – NO!"

DEAR PLAY,

This is the first time I have written to a magazine. I was wondering if any of your other readers have had the quirks that I have with demo disks

supplied by Sony. On my first demo disk I could not get the full intro to *Krazy Ivan* to work. You know the part where the man and the woman are talking in the carrier. I didn't even know it was there until the disk was damaged, and then I got the full intro, but it only played during the *Air Combat* demo. Also, recently I got another demo disk, the one with *Power Soccer, Tekken 2* and *Wipeout 2097*, but while my friend's disk seems identical to mine, he got *Die Hard Trilogy* and I did not. Is this a fault on mine or just how the disks were made; some with *Die Hard* and some without?

Now to the serious business. Congratulations on a brilliant magazine, keep up the good work. Now can you please tell me whether there is a chance of *Settlers* coming to the PlayStation? If not, is this because no-one has got the rights or is it a memory problem?

Shaun Leslie France, Barnsley

We have not heard of any widespread problems with the Official Sony demo disks sent to registered owners. The condition of your PlayStation may be a factor, but if you do experience problems, Sony will gladly replace it for you anyway. As for the *Die Hard* demo, you friend obviously has a different demo disk entirely, or perhaps an American one. Finally, as far as we know, Shaun, Settlers is not coming to the PlayStation.

Dear Play,

As *Time Crisis* and the GunCon are being released later this year, I was wondering if *Point Blank* will be getting a release, as you use the gun to play that game in the arcades? Also, in issue 18 you said that you had a copy of *Independence Day* sitting on your desk, but it says that it is only 50% complete. I don't get it.

Jamie Read, Hanworth



[Above] Oops! Peter Waite from Nottingham spotted that the score for *Super Puzzle Fighter II: Turbo* was different in the review and the subscriptions page – there's a perfectly logical explanation. Honest.

Yes indeed, Jamie, *Point Blank* is being converted by Namco as you read this and it was part of the list of new games mentioned in the news section last issue. We've never played it though, so perhaps you could give us some comments on how you think it will work on the PlayStation?

If you read the sentence about *Independence Day* carefully, you will notice that it says "here on our desk, courtesy of Electronic Arts, is an early alpha copy of *Independence Day*." Basically what this means is that the software companies often send out or bring down personally, very early versions of games for us to get a 'feel' of what they will be like when they're finished. This is what "alpha" means. All games go through an alpha and beta stage before being submitted to Sony for approval.

Also, the percentage given for how complete a game is can mean different things. On a strategy or adventure game for example, a 65% game will still be in pieces and may not work in some places. But on a game like *Independence Day*, where you have a clearly defined game engine, in this case a flight simulation, that engine takes up all of the early development and it is only right at the end when the bells and whistles are added. Even though *ID4* was only 50% complete when shown, we could still play it and give you a fair assessment.

Dear Play,

Firstly, thumbs up for a truly excellent magazine. I don't expect to be published but it would help if you could answer my questions.

1. Are there going to be any decent football manager games on the PSX?
2. Is *Sensible Soccer* ever going to come out on the PlayStation?
3. Which of the following games should I choose: *The Need for Speed 2, Speedster* or *Peak Performance?*
4. Is *Total NBA '97* going to be released, if so when?
5. Is *Crash Bandicoot* worth getting?
6. Are the any good beat-'em-ups coming out?

Birju Vaja, Leicester

1. At present there is only *Player Manager* from Anco (Play issue 14, 74%), and possibly *On-side Soccer* (not reviewed) on the shelves, but you can look forward to *Premier Manager* from Gremlin in April.
2. We can but dream...
3. We haven't reviewed any of them yet, Birju, but *Peak Performance* is our favourite test drive so far.
4. It's out now and reviewed in this very issue.
5. No. We all thought it was vastly overrated and it only received low Eighties in Play. There is yet to be a definitive platform game, if you don't count *Tomb Raider*.
6. Er, where have you been – Mars? Haven't you ever heard of *Soul Blade, Fighter's Impact, Street Fighter Ex* or *Tekken 3*. Beat-'em-ups are coming out of our ears on the PlayStation!



[Above] Does the Nintendo 64 pose a threat to the PlayStation? Many of you think not, but let's have some more input on this.

Dear Play,

Firstly, I am a recent convert to the PlayStation and I have just bought my first copy of Play (issue 18). I would like to point out one glaring anomaly.

On pages 46 and 47 you review a game called *Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo* and give the overall rating of 90%, but on pages 52 and 53 the same review can be seen in miniature, but the rating is only 89%. Obviously the review was submitted with the 89% score (at which time the image was take for the subscriptions page), but the score was tweaked to push it into the Play Classic bracket some time later.

While I accept that the adjustment was only one percent and the ratings are only a rough guide, buyers like me need to identify a reliable source of opinion to back up the decision to part with hard earned cash. Can I really rely on a magazine that might adjust the scores just because there is no other "Classic" game in that issue?

Peter Waite, Nottingham

Well at least you read every single square inch of Play, Peter, otherwise you would not have seen my little faux pas. Yes the scores are different, but the reason is not as sinister as you might think. Quite simply the standard score left in the template of all reviews in Play before the new words and pictures are added is 89%, and someone just forgot to update it before the subscriptions picture was taken. *SPFIIT* is most definitely a Classic game it's just that by the time the error was spotted, it was too late to recall the pages and we honestly didn't think anyone would notice (damn, damn). Hope that allays your fears, Peter, and I think you'll find that Play is one of the only magazines you can trust (and I'll say no more about that).

Dear Play,

Congratulations on making such a great magazine, the best on the shelf and well worth £2.95. I have the following questions which I hope you can answer.

1. Will Sony be releasing a 64-bit console to match the Nintendo 64?
2. When does *Rage Racer* get released in this country and how much will it cost?
3. I heard Sony will be releasing budget games, what are these and how much will they cost?
4. When are Sony releasing the analogue control pad?
5. Is *Killing Zone* any good?

Kristopher Bauer, Alness

1. Unlikely. Sony will persevere with the PlayStation for a few years yet, and when they do release a new machine, it will be vastly more powerful than puny 64-bit. By the end of the century we're going to be

looking at 128-bit, 256-bit – Giga-bits even. Console technology is increasing at such a dizzying pace that a new technology doesn't have long to wait before it looks dated. And as we've said before, it's the quality of the software, not the hardware that's important. If you don't have high quality games, what's the point?
2. *Rage Racer* will arrive next month (May) because it has been delayed so that Sony's very own, *Porsche Challenge* can have a clear month. We have not yet seen a PAL copy, but there will be a full update in PLAY when it arrives (*Soul Blade* faces the same treatment in the news section this month, starting on page 6).
3. The Platinum range is already out on the streets and apart from being old games, they have striking silver packaging to distinguish them from the ordinary releases. Each game sells for £19.99. Go on, I'm robbin' myself etc.
4. It was meant to be released in January, but we now see a Summer release as likely.
5. Nope.

DEAR PLAY,

I am writing to you because I am stuck on buying a game. I like strategy/adventure games very much and I have already got *Resident Evil* and *Tomb Raider*. I have just read your April issue and there are two games that interest me: *Little Big Adventure* and *City of Lost Children*. Which should I buy?
Lee Gray, Exeter

Out of the two we'd have to say *LBA* because it's incredibly slick and full of innovative ideas. *Lost Children* is also an involving game, but not as finely polished.

DEAR PLAY,

I am writing to you because I am deeply concerned about what you said about *Soul Blade* in issue 18. You stated that *Soul Blade* is being cut or toned down for its UK release. This makes me bloody mad, so mad in fact that I am thinking of buying it on import. I have never done this before, so I was hoping you could help me by answering these questions.
1. Where is the best place (most reliable, cheapest) to buy import games?
2. How do you get them to work? Will this method damage my eight month old PlayStation?
3. Will it have to be a Japanese version to have all the proper stuff in it and will it run on a PAL TV?
Aaron Vallely, Ballygally

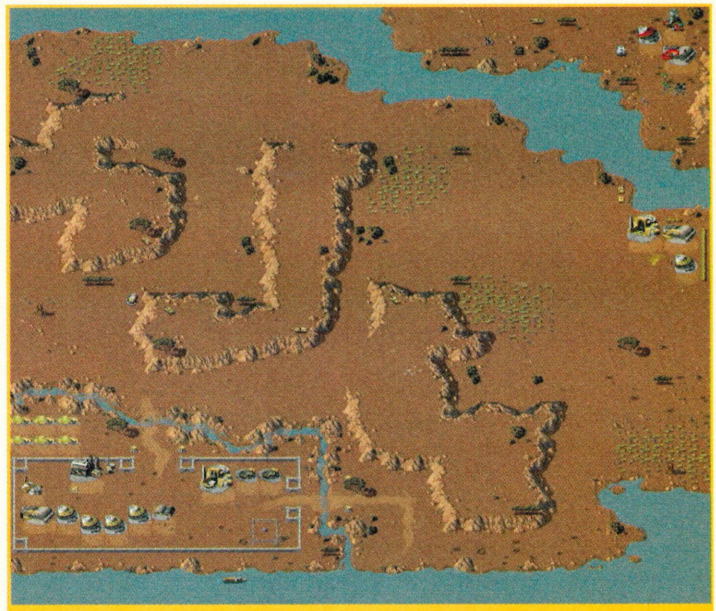
Yes indeed there have been some subtle changes made by Namco to *Soul Blade* and they are fully explained in this month's news section. Basically it involves getting rid of Li Long's nunchakkas because such weapons are still banned by the BBFC since the days of Bruce Lee, and it was deemed too dangerous to include them in a game which people might imitate. Apparently it's easier to manufacture two bits of wood held together by a chain than it is to pick up a butcher's knife. Namco has also covered up Sophitia in the intro sequence, who was seen naked from behind and now wears a bathing costume. Censorship – don't you just hate it?
1. There are so many places that it's difficult to recommend someone close to you, Aaron, but we use both the Skill Academy (0181) 567 9174 and the Video Game Centre (01202) 527314 because they support PLAY magazine. We have found both to be reliable and honest.
2. If your PlayStation is only eight months old then it will be very difficult to get import software to run using the tried and tested methods. These only worked for the very first machines into the country. There are other methods but they involve soldering your PlayStation and so it's up to you if you want *Soul Edge* that bad.
3. If you can run imported software then you will need a SCART lead and a multi-standard TV (most new ones are already multi-standard).

Hope that helps, but I have to say that the changes in *Soul Blade* are not that radical and do not detract from the gameplay at all.

DEAR PLAY,

To coincide with subscribing to your magazine I decided to write you a letter. First of all, there seems to be no-one who will have a bad word said about the N64, but these are my opinions. This machine has had a serious hype fight, more so than Bruno and Tyson. I think that Nintendo must be secretly taking anti-depressants, if not now, then soon. I am lucky enough to be in the position where I could go out and buy an N64 tomorrow, but I won't because I am perfectly happy with my PlayStation. Let's face it, it's not hard to shift 20,000 units if there is enough hype – even the Atari could have done it with the Jaguar if they had the same hype campaign as Nintendo. We are all hearing the good points about the N64, but here are some bad ones.
1. The N64 is twice the price of the PlayStation.
2. The games are almost twice the price too. And I bet Nintendo games will go up to about £100 due to the cost of the carts.
3. FMV – will we ever see it on the Nintendo? No.
4. Speech – will we ever hear it on the Nintendo? No.
5. The games are twice the price but are they twice as good? No.
Sheridan Smyth, Telford

The Nintendo 64 is a new machine, it's got some nice hardware tricks, but it's like any new system – there's not enough software and it's too expensive for most people to own and run. You can't blame the public for being excited about a new machine – it's only natural. The real test is whether the N64 has the stamina to keep up with the mighty PlayStation?



[Above] Our Fully mapped *Command & Conquer* solution went down well with Mr P Modjarrad – no other magazine even bothered. Tch.

DEAR PLAY,

I love the mag. It smashes all the competition. I used to get confused when deciding on a PlayStation mag. But once I got yours there was no turning back. Anyway to the point of the letter. I have two things to say, one a statement, one a question. Firstly a pat on the back for your brilliant *Command & Conquer* guide.

While rival magazines crammed in all of the GDI missions in one issue with no detail at all apart from cheesy little statements, your guide is going to be spread out over (I assume) three issues. This is great as each mission gets a lot more of the detail required to complete many of the missions. Well done!

My second point is I'm looking for a quality footy game. Of paramount importance to me (as well as graphics and gameplay) is the games' use of real names of players. I know it's odd but I hate *ISSD* because of it's made up names. I believe *Actua Soccer* and *Olympic Soccer* are the best around but do they use real player names?
P Modjarrad, Kent

Thanks very much for your comment, Mr Modjarrad, we thought that *C&C* was the perfect game to map because you cannot see the landscape until you uncover it – a major reason for some major reconnaissance. The best football game at the moment is the newly released *Soccer '97* from Eidos, which features the same proven engine as *Olympic Soccer*, but features real Premiership teams and players. Top.

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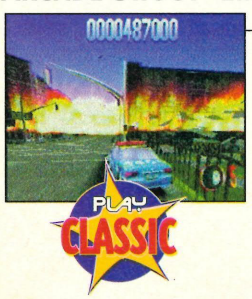
GAME	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	REVIEW DATE	REVIEW SCORE
1. Soul Edge (import)	Namco	Sony	March '97	96%
2. Tekken 2	Namco	Sony	May '96	95%
3. Street Fighter Zero 2 (import)	Capcom	Capcom	Oct '96	94%
4. Tobal No.1 (import)	SquareSoft	Sony	Oct '96	94%
5. Mortal Kombat Trilogy	Williams	GT Interactive	Dec '96	92%
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



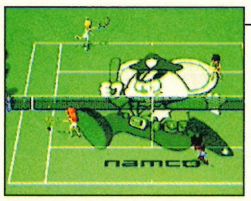
1. Mechwarrior 2	Activision	Activision	Easter '97	91%
2. Doom	id Softwave	GT Interactive	Jan '96	93%
3. Lifeforce Tenka	Psygnosis	Psygnosis	May '97	86%
4. Exhumed	Lobotomy	BMG	May '97	84%
5. Alien Trilogy	Probe	Acclaim	Easter '96	91%
6. Disruptor	Universal Interactive	Interplay	Dec '96	87%
7. Magic Carpet	Krisalis/Bullfrog	Bullfrog/EA	Apr '96	90%
8. Tunnel B1	Neon	Ocean	Aug '96	87%
9. Descent	Interplay	Interplay	Apr '96	85%
10. PO'ed	Studio3Do	Warner Interactive	May '96	87%

ARCADE SHOOT-'EM-UPS



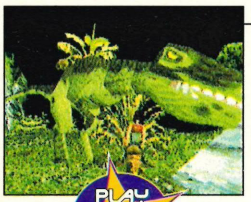
1. Die Hard Trilogy	Probe	Fox Interactive	Aug '96	93%
2. Twisted Metal 2	Single Trac	Sony	Feb '97	88%
3. Soviet Strike	EA	EA	Dec '96	83%
4. Tempest X3	Interplay	Interplay	Feb '97	86%
5. X2	Team 17	Team 17	Jan '97	77%
6. Crusader	EA	EA	Apr '97	80%
7. Project Overkill	KCEC	Konami	Nov '96	89%
8. Gunship	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 '97	Sony	Sony	May'97	92%
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



	Game	Developer	Publisher	Review Date	Review Score
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



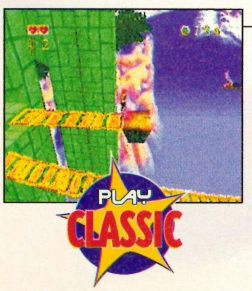
	Game	Developer	Publisher	Review Date	Review Score
1.	Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo	Capcom	Capcom (import)	Apr '97	90%
2.	Bust-A-Move 2	Taito	Acclaim	Jun '96	888%
3.	Bubble Bobble	Probe	Acclaim	Sep '96	85%
4.	Pro Pinball	Empire	Empire	Aug '96	90%
5.	Worms	Team 17/Ocean	Team 17/Ocean	Nov '95	92%
6.	Namco Museum Vol 3	Namco	Sony	Nov '96	73%
7.	Hebereke's Popitto	Sunsoft	Marubeni	Dec '95	43%

Racing Games



	Game	Developer	Publisher	Review Date	Review Score
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.	Porsche Challenge	Sony	Sony	May '97	82%
9.	Ridge Racer Revolution	Namco	Sony	May '96	90%
10.	Destruction Derby 2	Psygnosis	Psygnosis	Dec '96	82%

Platformers



	Game	Developer	Publisher	Review Date	Review Score
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%

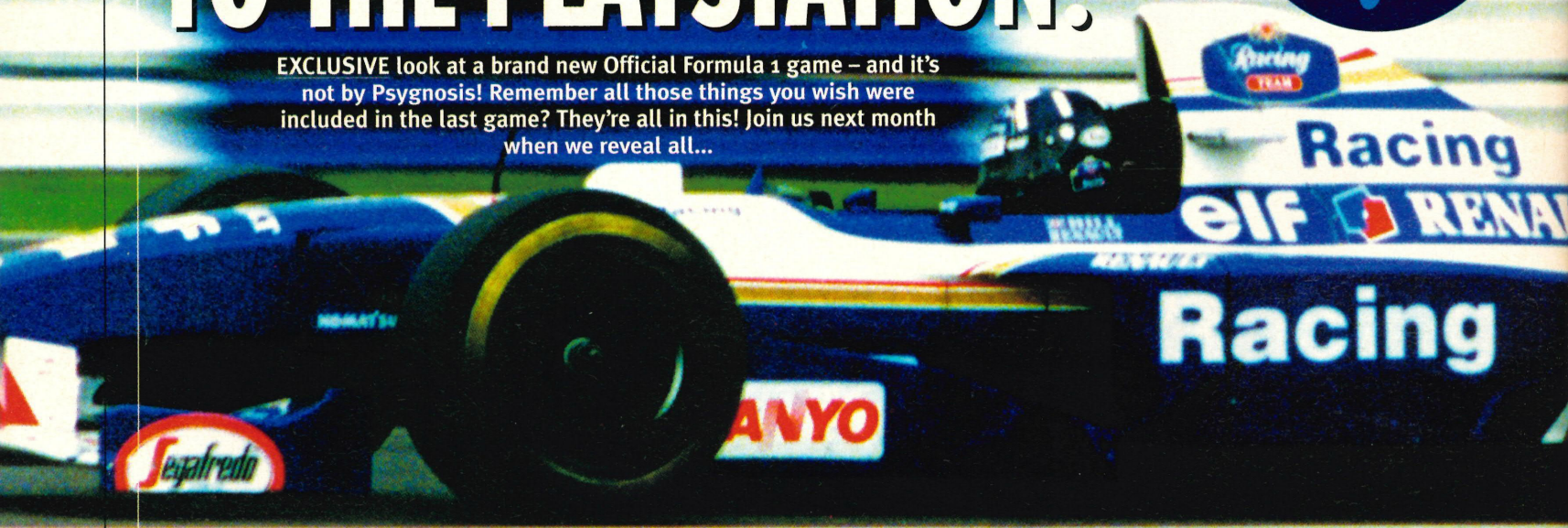
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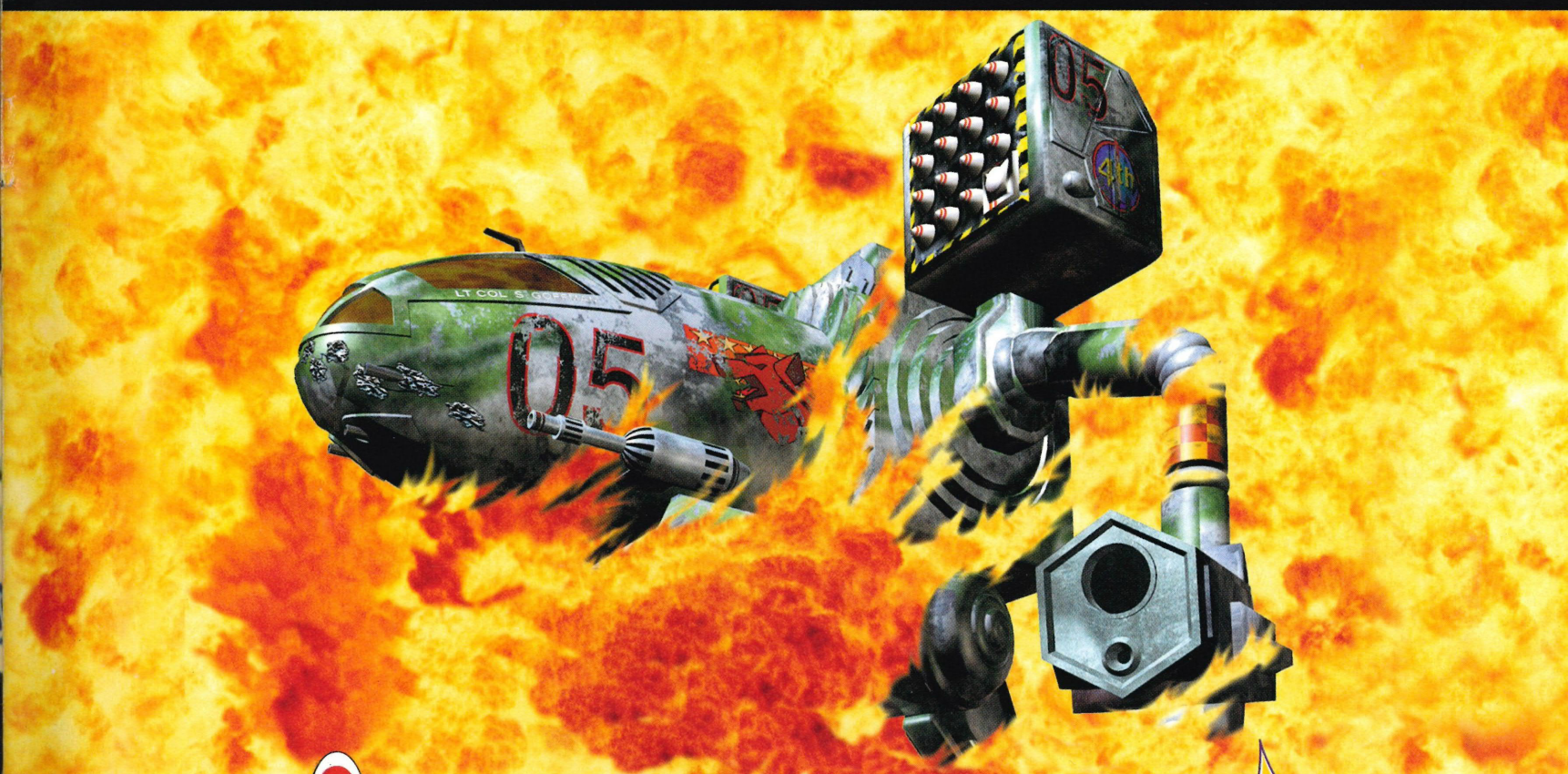
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