

FREE DOUBLE SIDED PULL-OUT LARA CROFT POSTER!

issue twenty five October '97

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PLAY

The UK's Best Unofficial PLAYSTATION Magazine!

TOMB RAIDER 2

FIRST UK PREVIEW

What it's got, what it hasn't, and why it will be the biggest game of the year!

EVERYTHING you always wanted to know about Lara Croft (but were afraid to ask...)

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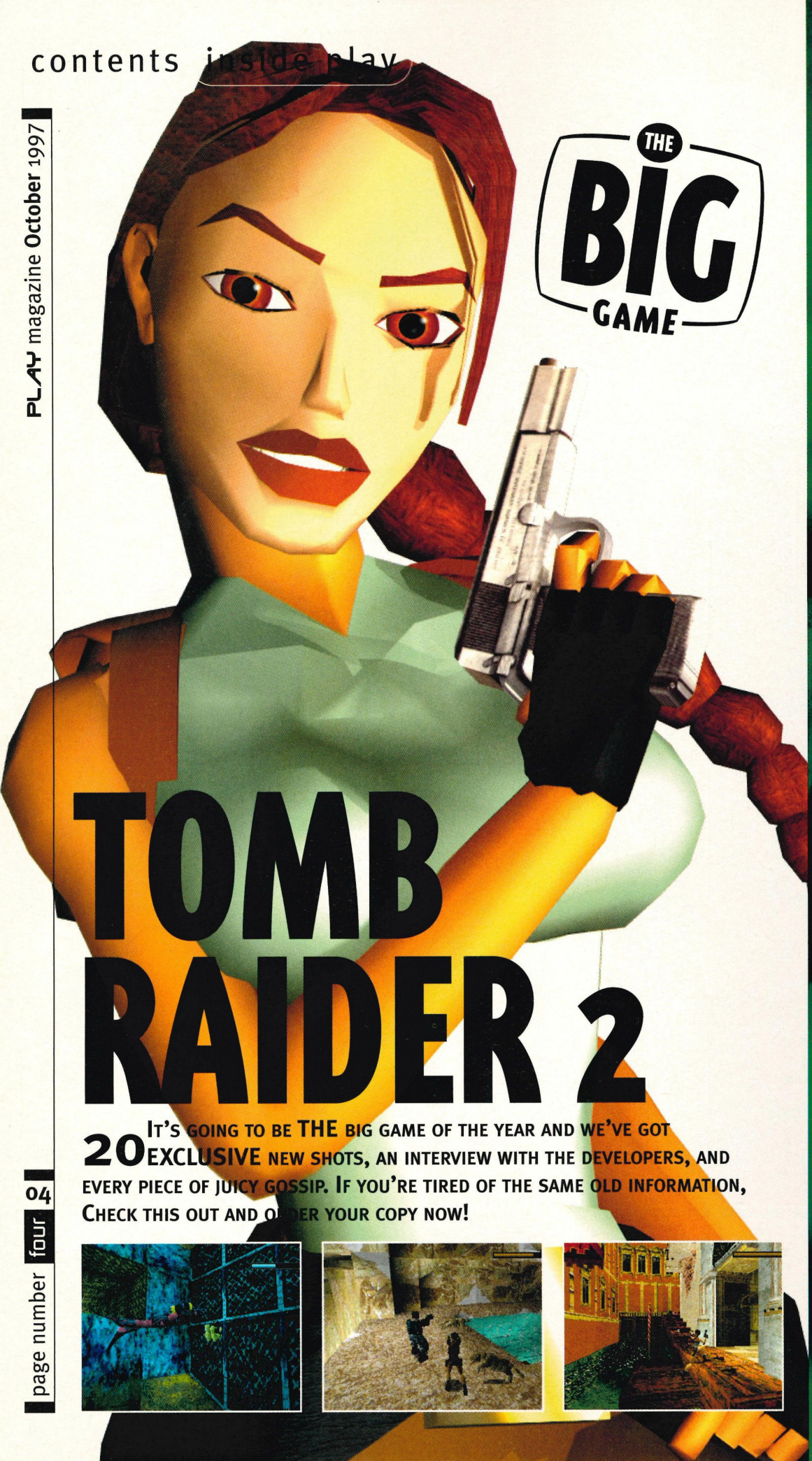


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91%
"The one and only great wrestling game. Period."
Total PlayStation
88%
"Finally somebody has released a wrestling game worth playing. Brilliant, just brilliant."
PlayStation Plus



THE BIG GAME

TOMB RAIDER 2

IT'S GOING TO BE THE BIG GAME OF THE YEAR AND WE'VE GOT 20 EXCLUSIVE NEW SHOTS, AN INTERVIEW WITH THE DEVELOPERS, AND EVERY PIECE OF JUICY GOSSIP. IF YOU'RE TIRED OF THE SAME OLD INFORMATION, CHECK THIS OUT AND ORDER YOUR COPY NOW!

5 WAYS TO CONTACT PLAY!

Fax us on: (01202) 299955
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E-mail: play@paragon.co.uk
Home page: http://www.paragon.co.uk/play/
Tel: (01202)200228
(5-6pm weekdays only!)

THE REGULARS...

[PLAYSTATION WIRED]
06 The very latest news from Planet PlayStation – first looks at brand new games, exclusive screenshots, wry articles on the games scene, and of course our definitive top fives!

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

[LARA CROFT POSTER!]
49 A FREE double sided Lara Croft poster EXCLUSIVE to PLAY readers! You won't see this anywhere else. Of course you're not sad for adoring a rendered woman, especially when she looks like this! Pammy eat your heart out!

[STATION MASTER]
70 The very best solutions every month. Maps, cheats, tips and your gaming queries answered.
WARCRAFT 2 GUIDE 72
TIME CRISIS SOLUTION 74

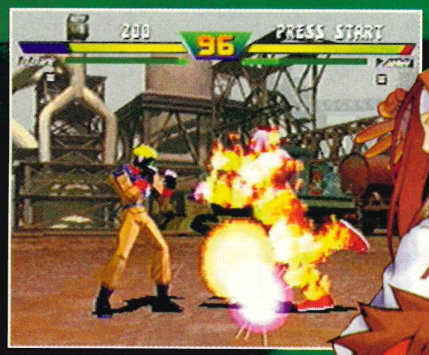
[ARENA]
88 This is where you really get a chance to talk to the members of the PLAY team and air your views to the entire PLAY readership. We want your opinions on the mag and the industry as a whole – get writing now!

[THE PLAYLIST]
92 A completely new section with reviews of every PlayStation game every covered in PLAY, plus our Playback recommended games, long term tests and any other cool features we can stick in to make this the ultimate buyers' guide!

inside PLAY
issue twenty five
The UK's Best Unofficial PLAYSTATION Magazine!

STREET FIGHTER EX PLUS

40 The FULL IMPORT REVIEW of Capcom's 3-D fighting frenzy. How does it fare in a fist-fight against *Tekken 2*, *Tobal 2* and *Toshinden 3*?





COMPLETE A-Z
92 of PlayStation games, plus long term tests and top fives!

RAPID RACER

36 It's *Wipeout* on water! Will Sony rule the waves with its latest racer?



NUCLEAR STRIKE

28 You now have only two months to reach minimum safe distance...

LOST WORLD

60 MONSTER official review of Dreamworks' first PSX game. Raptor or Compy?



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!

Tomb Raider 2	20
Nuclear Strike	28
Metal Gear Solid	30
Test Drive 4	32
Warhammer 2: Dark Omen	34
Rapid Racer	36

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.

Rosco McQueen	80
Colony Wars	82
Fighting Force	84
The Note	86

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.

Street Fighter EX Plus (PLAY CLASSIC)	40
Explosive Racing	44
Kick Off '97	54
Sangoku musou	56
Salamander	58
The Lost World	60
Hard Boiled (PLAY PUTRID)	64
Toshinden 3	66
Herc's Adventures	68
Battle Stations	69





WHAT'S GOING TO BE the Xmas number one? I know, I know it's far too early, but we journos are even now asking that question.

This month we've got five contenders, with more on the horizon. Remember though, last year we predicted it would be *Tomb Raider* (and rightfully so), but at the last minute EA stormed in with *FIFA '97*. And how many of you regretted buying that little 'gem?'

First up is our EXCLUSIVE preview of *Tomb Raider 2* – a game that will sell hundreds of thousands of copies and will prove once and for all that the PlayStation is THE dominant format. We've got 50 new screenshots that you will not find elsewhere, plus information about every new feature, costume enemy and level.

To celebrate the forthcoming release of *TR2* we've also dedicated the front and back covers, and even given you a FREE double sided poster in the middle pages of the magazine. Value for money or what?

And you will have also noticed that we have produced a complete solution to the first *Tomb Raider* game, so that if you're a new owner who has not yet experienced the Lara Croft effect, you can complete the game before number two arrives.

Nuclear Strike from EA is another winner in the making, and shaping up to be ten times better than *Soviet Strike*, especially as you can control multiple vehicles instead of just one helicopter.

And then there's Sony's great looking *Rapid Racer*, Capcom's superb *Street Fighter EX Plus* and Psygnosis' *Colony Wars*, which we featured heavily last month and now have a more complete version (which looks fantastic!).

This will be my last issue of PLAY, but rest assured the magazine will go from strength to strength as I concentrate on the bigger picture.

Damian Butt
Managing editor

PLAYSTAT wire

SONY US STUDIO DEVELOPS FOR PC!

REVEALED this month is that Sony US's development studio, SISA (Sony Interactive Studios America) has moved away from the core business of the PlayStation and begun to convert PSX games for the PC.

The first games to be converted are *Twisted Metal 2: World Tour* (600,00 sold), *Jet Moto* (500,000 sold) and *Warhawk* (250,000 sold) – all developed by highly respected coders Single Trac (recently bought by GT Interactive).

At the time of going to print however, SISA had no PC publisher confirmed, as both Sony US and Sony Europe did not want to deviate from the PlayStation.

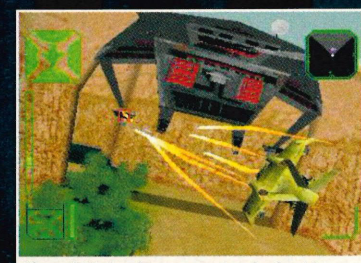
SISA also has two brand new games: *Tanarus* and *EverQuest* on the boil – both are PC network games, so hopes are high that dabbling in this area will mean more multi-player opportunities for the existing PlayStation or PlayStation II.

This is certainly a very interesting move because not only does it show that SISA has great confidence in Single Trac's early releases, but also that it wants to get into multi-format development, perhaps as a means of funding further development.

Of course this is not the first time that PlayStation games have been converted to the PC, as Psygnosis produced both *Wipeout 2097* and *Formula 1*.

Like the Liverpool based developer, SISA has autonomy from Sony and is free to do what it wants as long as the PlayStation hits keep coming in.

Certainly this is no blow for Sony because it just establishes the brand even further, and means SISA can gradually expand even further using only tried and tested games for conversion. It remains to be seen whether PC owners really want old PlayStation games though.



[ABOVE] ***Warhawk*** **was a great early shoot-'em-up on the PSX – now coming to the PC!**



[ABOVE] ***Twisted Metal 2*** **– soon to be on a PC near you and even though it's now getting on a bit, it's still a superbly playable multi-player game.**

aystation

ion

appenings

INTERNATIONAL PLAY BOYS

WHO TO CONTACT AT PLAY MAGAZINE...



DAMIAN BUTT

It started out as a harmless visit to Mindscape, but then escalated into a drunken binge on the rollercoasters and whirly up and down thing on Brighton pier. **play@paragon.co.uk.**



GRAEME NICHOLSON

It started with an innocent comment about Graeme's Beloved wanting a new car, and then escalated into an extended Arthur Daley session What's wrong with a 7 litre Pontiac anyway? **silencio@paragon.co.uk**



TOM SARGENT

It started out with a lunch with the new guy from JVC, but then escalated into a 'standing around in McDonalds reaching for his own change' scenario. Doh! **tomsargent@paragon.co.uk**

NOZIN' AROUND

NOZIN' AROUND

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

Psygnosis has confirmed that *F1 '97* will in fact remain the name for the UK version of the game, and not *Formula 1: World Championship*, which is for the US version only. Many thanks to Psygnosis for informing us.

Hudsonsoft's first PlayStation game will be called *Bloody Roar: Hyper Beast*, and it is a beat-'em-up featuring morphing animal characters.

TOMB RAIDER FOR PLATINUM?

NEW PLATINUM games have just hit the streets, and Sony has also announced that the criteria for games which are eligable to enter the scheme have changed too; opening the way for more recent titles.

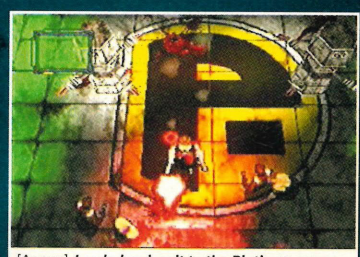
Loaded and *Actua Soccer* are the latest games to be sold at the £19.99 price point and will no doubt sell thousands of copies, especially as *Re-Loaded* turned out to be such a disappointment.

Currently there are 15 Platinum games and all have stormed the PlayStation charts upon release, as more and more new owners make the most of budget prices for games which they've never seen before.

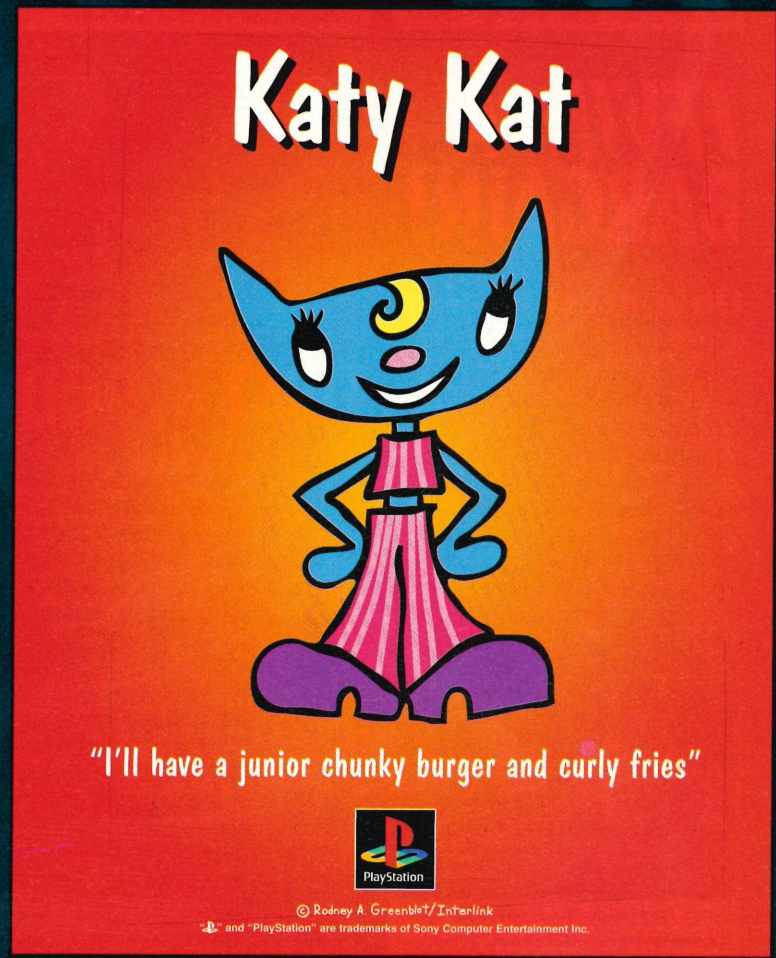
Sony has revealed that the Platinum range now accounts for a third of all PSX software sales and it is set to receive even more of a boost now that the time bewteen full release and qualification for the Platinum range has been lowered from 12 to nine months.

This means *Tomb Raider*, for example, could now be a Platinum game just before the second instalment arrives, and we believe this would be a good move by Eidos. After all, as stated in this month's free *Tomb Raider* solution book, you don't want to play *TR2* until you've completed the first game, and many people would resent paying the full price for a game that is about to be replaced.

To ensure the high quality of the range, Sony has also increased the number of sales needed to secure a Platinum place, from 100,000 to 250,000. Who would like to start betting on some new Platinum games for Christmas then? Do we have 4:3 for *Resident Evil*, 4:1 on *Soviet Strike*, and 2:1 on *Crash Bandicoot? Loaded* and *Actua Soccer* are out now, but stay tuned to our Pound Stretcher section (page 96) for even more bargains!



[ABOVE] *Loaded* makes it to the Platinum range, but how many more for Christmas?



PSYGNOSIS: GUILTY OF PIRACY

AMONG the landslide of summer and Autumn releases by Psygnosis comes the light-hearted *Overboard*, a sea-based pirate arcade puzzle game with its tongue stuck firmly in its cheek.

You control a pirate galleon on a quest for treasure and to rid the sea of the scurvy-ridden pirate, Blowfleet. On your travels you'll come across enemy strongholds, ports and shipyards – all shown in a top-down forced perspective 3-D.

Overboard is set across five specially themed regions with three levels per region, where you can expect to plunder the likes of the Caribbean, Arctic and Middle East.

The game's forté is the multi-player mode, which pits two people on the same stretch of sea (the view pans out when you are far apart) and the idea is to pick up weapon barrels and blow the crap out each other as quickly as possible. This is extremely good fun and Psygnosis could have a hit on its hands come November. Expect a more detailed report soon.



[ABOVE] **Check out those background graphics with their excellent attention to detail. Hmm.**



[ABOVE] **Expect to see huge end-of-level boss in *Overboard*. Better stock up on ammo matey!**



[ABOVE] **As you can see, the competition for supremacy on the high seas is fierce.**



[ABOVE] **Oh, you have a woman's legs m'lord. I'll bet they've never been sliced clean off etc.**



[ABOVE] **You'll come across many natural hazards, such as this whirlwind.**

TOP FIVE...

GAMES YOU CAN NOW BUY FOR NEXT TO NOWT!



BUDGET games, they're a wonderful thing, aren't they? And now the Platinum range is in full swing, the chances of you coming across a few PSX bargains is very high. And it's not just mangy old wrestling or platform games either – try this little lot for starters...

1. Alien Trilogy (£19.99)
2. Fade to Black (£19.99)
3. Tekken (£19.99)
4. Need for Speed (£20-25)
5. Street Fighter Alpha 2 (£25)

FFVII – A BARGAIN!

ON A RECENT visit to PLAY magazine, Sony let it be known that although a final release date for Square's *Final Fantasy VII* is not yet confirmed due to a lengthy translation process, the price has now been fixed.

The massive RPG, which we firmly believe will rank as one of the PlayStation's best games comes on three CDs and will retail over here for just £44.99. We have also heard that official *Time Crisis* with its own light gun the Guncon, will be £59.99.



[ABOVE] ***Final Fantasy VII* will only be 345 when it arrives here in November. Oh yes.**



FIRST BLOOD

GT'S LATEST game to be announced is *Young Blood* which has been developed by Extreme Studios in the States. Based on a comic by fledging company Image, *Young Blood* is an isometric shoot-'em-up similar in appearence to *Project Overkill*, only with more lush colours.

The game uses the characters from the comic and as you complete levels, each one becomes more experienced and can develop special powers. *Young Blood* has a four player mode which should be excellent fun, as there isn't a decent multi-player *Commando*-style shoot-'em-up on the PSX (apart from *Contra* – Ed). *Young Blood* will be out in the USA in November. Expect a UK release for Christmas or early 1998.

CHARTS

In association with ChartTrack

POS	GAME	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	PLAY SCORE
1.	V-RALLY	INFOGRAMES	OCEAN	87%
2.	ISS PRO	KONAMI	KONAMI	84%
3.	POWER SOURCE	VARIOUS	SONY	NR
4.	WORMS	OCEAN/TEAM 17	OCEAN	92%
5.	ALIEN TRILOGY	PROBE	PLATINUM	91% (OLD)
6.	SYNDICATE WARS	BULLFROG	BULLFROG/EA	85%
7.	TOMB RAIDER	CORE DESIGN	EIDOS INT	94%
8.	RALLY CROSS	SONY US	SONY	89%
9.	FADE TO BLACK	DELPHINE	PLATINUM	90% (OLD)
10.	RAGE RACER	NAMCO	SONY	94%

READERS' MOST WANTED

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

POS	GAME	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER
1.	RAPID RACER	SONY	SONY
2.	PARASITE EVE	SQUARE	SONY
3.	FINAL FANTASY VII	SQUARE	SONY
4.	BUSHIDO BLADE	SQUARE	SONY
5.	STREET FIGHTER EX	CAPCOM	VIE

DREDD-FUL NEWS

1979 WAS the year Judge Dredd was introduced to the adolescent population of the UK. For us it was a momentous occasion because at last there was a comic (2000AD) and a character with which we could identify. Dredd's "f*ck you" style was unlike anything seen in boys' comics before, and he literally changed the whole scene forever.

One dodgy film and a spin-off magazine later, and Gremlin announces that it has the official Judge Dredd videogame licence. The game was on-show at E3, but only now have we had the chance to play it in any kind of depth.

Basically, *Judge Dredd* is a light gun shoot-'em-up which uses lush rendered backgrounds rather than FMV, although the only things we found to shoot were robots – bogus! We want perps, jaywalkers, judge killers and skysurfers to blast, not relatives of Metal Micky!

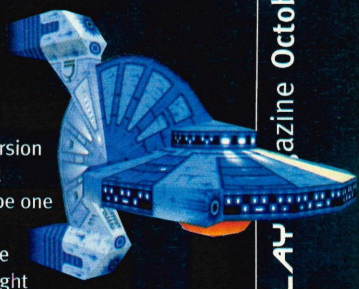
There are 17 levels of action, and the aim is to take down the renegade judge Royston Bean (tough name) before he reduces the city to anarchy. *Dredd* looks fun, but there are hardly any visual clues that this is a game based on Judge Dredd at all. Could it be that Gremlin has slapped the Dredd licence onto an already developed shoot-'em-up? Surely not.





[ABOVE] ***Judge Dredd*** **from Gremlin is a light gun shoot-'em-up which uses polygon characters and rendered backgrouunds.**

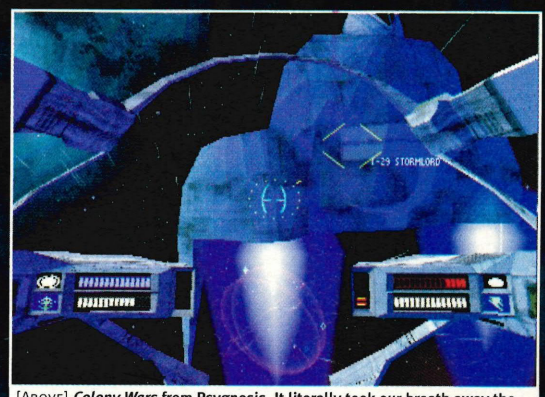
COLONY WARS – BRILLIANT!



JUST AS PLAY was going to print a more recent version of Psygnosis' space shoot-'em-up arrived and the general conclusion after only a few minutes' play was that it will be one of the games of the year. Words can barely describe the sumptuous colours and subtle shading on the many space cruisers. And as this is a Psygnosis game, the quality of light sourcing and effects is unbelievable.

There will be over 70 missions in the final game, and the presentation throughout is very *Wipeout 2097* – cool and futuristic.

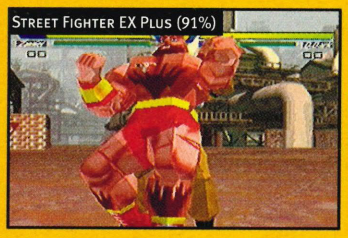
Expect a review of this game soon, but we can already tell that it is going to be huge. There will also be a review of *F1 '97* in issue 26. Cor.



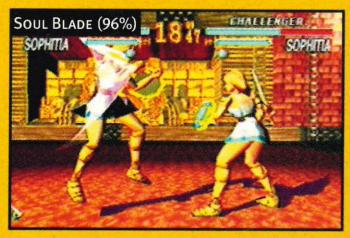
[ABOVE] ***Colony Wars*** **from Psygnosis. It literally took our breath away the first time we saw it. Get saving those pennies folks.**

PLAY RECOMMENDS...

STREET FIGHTER EX PLUS (91%)



SOUL BLADE (96%)



RAGE RACER (94%)



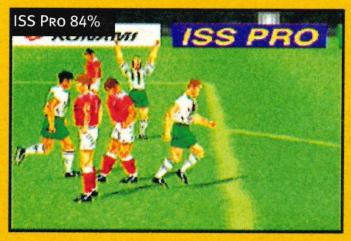
TIME CRISIS (90%)



SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER II TURBO (90%)



ISS PRO 84%



Sunny Funny



"I'll have a ginger soda"

PlayStation

© Rodney A. Greenblat/Interlink
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WE DO A LOT OF WORK FOR CHARIDY ACTUALLY

PRINCE'S TRUST CD COMPILATION HITS THE STREETS!



SONY'S LATEST inspired marketing concept is the Power Source demo CD. This is a collection of the PlayStation's best demos, plus some news about Yaroze and the first Yaroze demo – all yours for a deep sea diver (that's a fiver to all you non-cockneys).

But this is no cash-hungry mega-giant snaffling your hard earned for itself, because the proceeds of the Power Source CD are all going to the Prince's Trust charity. Sony hopes to raise £250,000 for the Trust, which aims to help young people, and with so much on offer for only £4.99, every self-respecting PlayStation owner should add it to his/her collection.

The game demos contained on the disk are explained below, but what's admirable is the sheer value for money factor. Admittedly, the Yaroze demo is very basic, but considering it was not created by an established software company, you can begin to see how home development for the PlayStation will grow as more and more people adopt it.

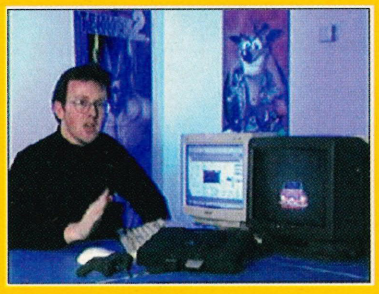
You also get a sneak preview of some of Sony's up-and-coming releases, which goes to show what a great idea a regular £5 demo disk from Sony would be. How about it?

NOT JUST GAMES!

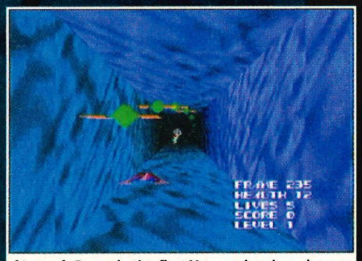
TO GIVE ADDED value to the Power Source CD you also get an interview with the guy at Sony who deals with the Yaroze system, in which he explains exactly what you need to set up the system and how much it will cost.

There's also a long video preview of some of Sony's new games in the pipeline; full of fast cuts and a thumping music soundtrack.

And finally, the Prince's Trust sub-menu also gives you some information about the Trust itself and the good work it does, plus a once-in-a-lifetime competition to have your own game idea made into a proper PlayStation release, and win a load of Sony hardware!



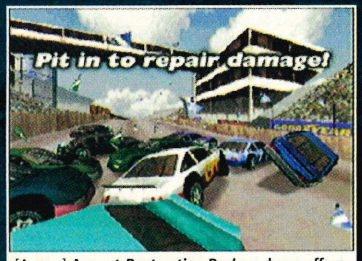




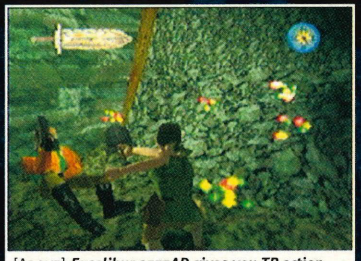
[ABOVE] ***Snave*** **is the first Yaroze-developed game demo. It is very basic and not much fun.**



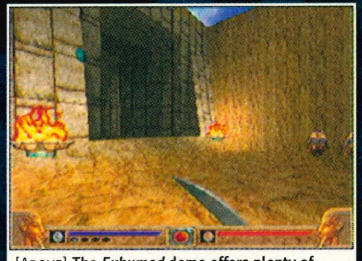
[ABOVE] **Apparently, this** ***Tomb Raider*** **demo has never been seen before. It's from the first level.**



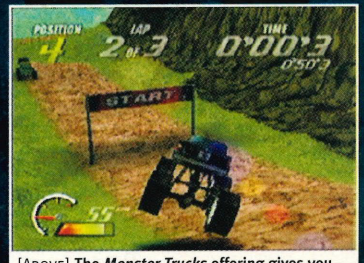
[ABOVE] **A great** ***Destruction Derby 2*** **demo offers unlimited car carnage on a single circuit.**



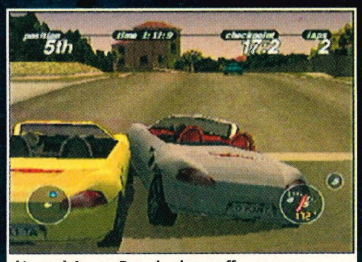
[ABOVE] ***Excalibur 2555AD*** **gives you** ***TR*** **action with more brain taxing problems. Not bad demo.**



[ABOVE] **The** ***Exhumed*** **demo offers plenty of maiming. Worth a look.**



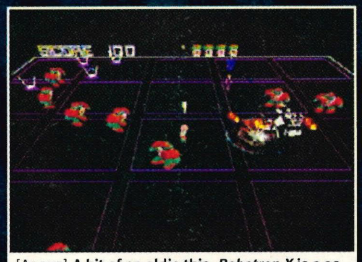
[ABOVE] **The** ***Monster Trucks*** **offering gives you plenty of chances to crush your suspension.**



[ABOVE] **A new** ***Porsche*** **demo offers some driving thrills, but it's still too slow though.**



[ABOVE] ***Riot*** **is the futuristic sports game by Psygnosis. The demo is at least playable.**



[ABOVE] **A bit of an oldie this.** ***Robotron X*** **is a 32-bit version of the classic coin-op. Good fun.**



[ABOVE] ***Spider*** **creaped onto the UK market with minimum fuss. Try this to see how limiting it is.**

BUGGY BOYS!

GREMLIN'S Winter push begins with news of *Buggy*, a radio controlled car racing game which can be best described as *Micro Machines V3* viewed from slightly behind the cars.

These little mental four-wheeled speedsters are perfect for the 16 miniature courses – from beach to castle – and the bouncy gameplay is very reminiscent of the coin-op classic *Buggy Boy*.

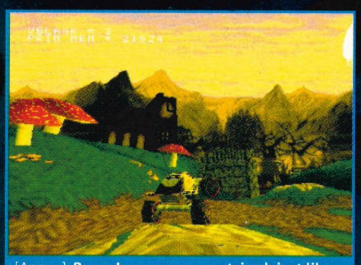
Obviously you can stray off the tracks a little, and this means there's plenty of scope for hair-raising jumps and sideways skidding action. Each of the six buggys on offer sit on huge chunky wheels (remember the buggy mode in *Formula 1*?) and they all have different strengths/weaknesses which make them ideal for certain courses.

It goes without saying that because of the real world physics, you can hurl these things around and they will react just like the real thing (no news on any radio controlled sponsorship or endorsement though) and there is also a wicked two player split screen mode which is top fun.

Like *Micro Machines V3*, the more races you win, the more secret cars become available, and we've heard the likes of dragsters, and a plum red car allegedly made by Satan's little helpers.

Buggy is scheduled for a release at the end of the year and we think it looks jolly good fun.





[ABOVE] ***Buggy's*** **courses are outsized, just like the ones in *MMV3*. Which is no bad thing.**



[ABOVE] **The split screen two player mode offers fun a-plenty, but where's the link-up?**

THOSE RELEASE DATES IN FULL

AUGUST/SEPT

4-4-2 (VIE)
All-Star Soccer (Eidos)
Battlesport (Acclaim)
Bubsy 3D (Telstar)
Hard Boiled (EA)
Lost World (EA)
Mass Destruction (BMGie)
Monster Trucks (Psygnosis)
Road Rage (Konami)
Tiger Shark (GT)
Transport Tycoon (Ocean)
VR Baseball (Interplay)
War Craft 2 (EA)
War Gods (GT)

AND THE SLIPPERS...

GAME (PUBLISHER)	WAS	NOW
PaRappa the Rapper	September	October

THE ROAD IS LONG...

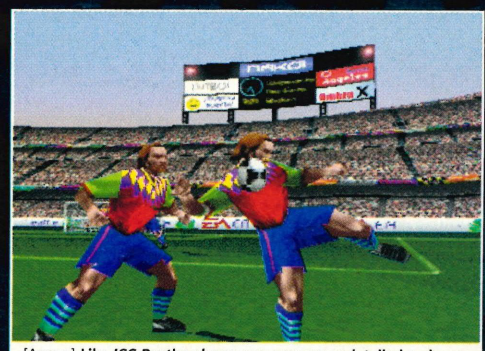
FIFA HAS HAD a good run with Electronic Arts. We've had the original *FIFA Soccer* and *FIFA '97* on the PlayStation, and before that countless other FIFA games on everything from the Mega Drive to the 3DO.

But just lately the franchise has suffered at the hands of brand new signings *Soccer '97* and *ISS Pro*, and let's face it, *FIFA '97* stank because although it looked great, the playability had somehow disappeared.

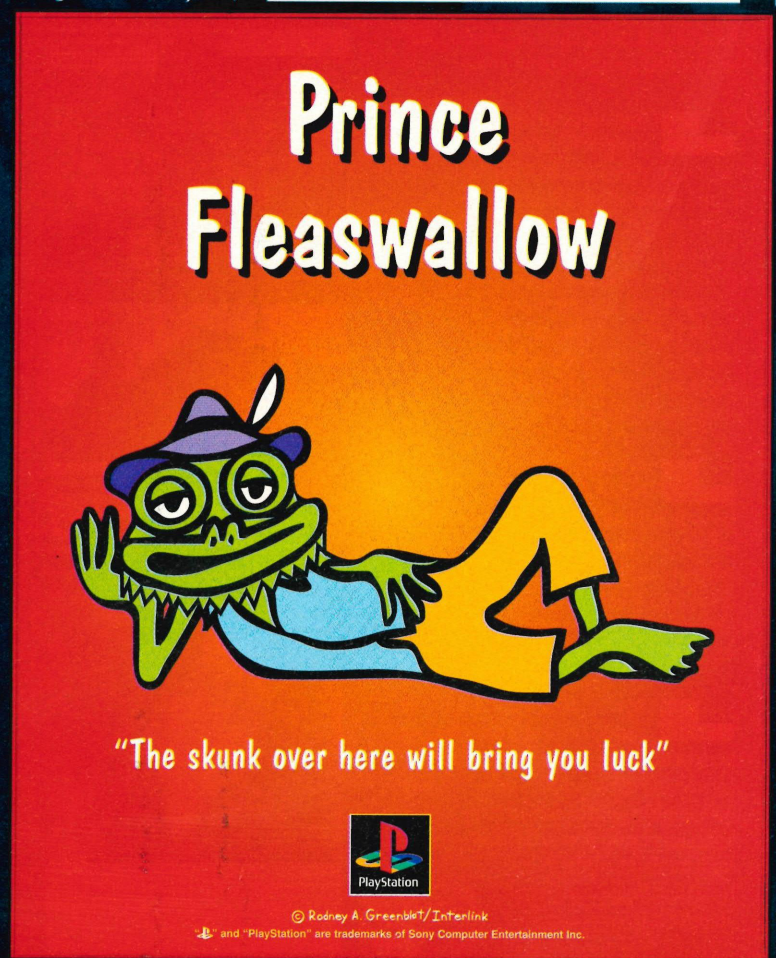
Enter *FIFA: Road to World Cup '98* and the hype begins again, only this time the FIFA team in Canada has taken on some Brits who know a thing or two about the Beautiful Game and so this latest game promises to be the definitive footy sim on PSX.

FIFA: Road to World Cup '98 features 172 teams and the chance to qualify for one of the 32 positions in the World Cup in France. As you can see, the graphics have been beefed up to *ISS Pro* proportions and good old Des Lynam, Andy Gray and Motty return for commentary duty. We'll have more on this game soon. Let's hope it plays as good as it looks this time.





[ABOVE] **Like *ISS Pro* the players are now super-detailed and you get 16 International stadiums to play in.**



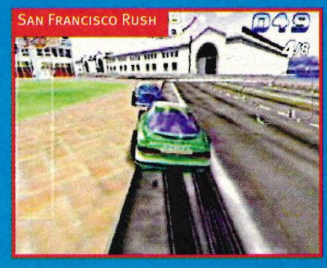
USA ENTERTAINMENT

ENTERTAINMENT USA



CAT BUCANNON brings you all the news on what's hot in the land of Christian Slater and New York game launches.

Currently the US gamesplaying public are gagging for a conversion of Midway's *San Francisco Rush* after having seen the N64 version at the E3 show. The game will definitely be coming to the PlayStation, but it is now thought that it will be the start of 1998 for the PSX game, as opposed to November for N64. *SF Rush* is basically an arcade racer, much like *Burning Road*, and you can even smash up the cars so that they are complete wrecks by the time you cross the finish line. The PSX game will feature a two player split screen mode (which the coin-op didn't have) and it looks stunning, but do we really need another racing game?



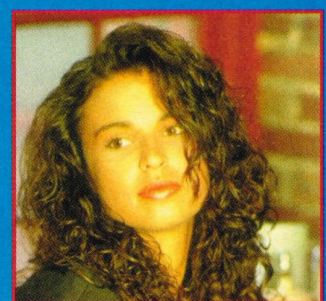
Gamblers no longer have to get their fix from a seedy backstreet casino because *Caesar's Palace* is coming to the PlayStation, although we haven't heard of a UK publisher as yet (it's Interplay over here). Hustlers can expect to find Roulette, Blackjack, Craps, Baccarat and slot machines – all given the 32-bit makeover. *Caesar's Palace* also includes speech and each game is a digitised photo of the real thing, rather than a polygon environment.



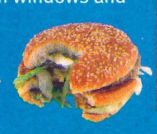
Activision's *Apocalypse*, starring Bruce Willis (as if you didn't know that!) has apparently been delayed until Xmas. We had thought it was going to arrive a couple of months earlier. The delay is said to be because of gameplay difficulties – or perhaps they have seen ASC's *ONE* which looks far better.



Konami has just released the *Lethal Enforcers* double pack here in the States. And yes it's a direct conversion of the 16-bit Super NES games using light guns to pick off jerky digitised opponents who pop up from windows and from behind barrels. Yawn. Now that *Time Crisis* is out, all this stuff looks appaling.



[Above] Cat Bucannon – approaches the new buffet with a very large plate.



STOP

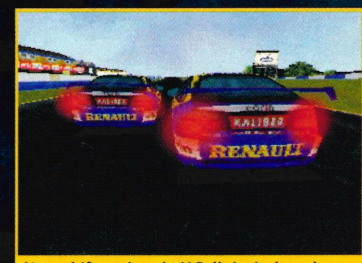
CODEMASTERS GO ON TOUR!

BUMPER to bumper racing and constant spins, crashes and breath-taking overtaking manoeuvres are what makes BTCC Touring Car racing far more appealing than Formula 1 to the average man on the street.

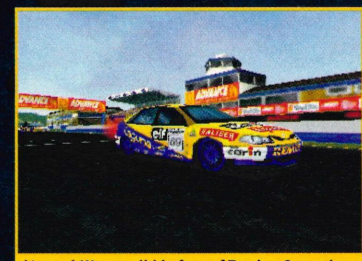
For a start the cars being raced are variations on the ones you might have in your own drive, and not some million pound single seater. And don't forget that Murray Walker does the commentary, so he's obviously tired of F1 too.

Luckily for us PlayStation owners, Codemasters has acquired the licence to produce an official Touring Car game right from under the noses of the mega-corps, and so we're in for a treat as far as gameplay concerns. As you can see from these exclusive PSX shots, the graphics are *V-Rally* quality, with glowing brake lights, all the right team sponsors, and quite the most realistic looking cars since, well the last time.

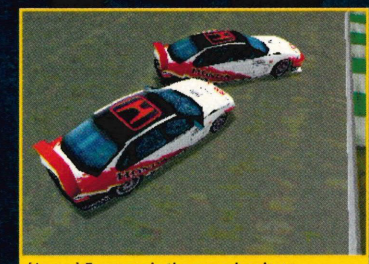
You get the choice of joining such teams as Audi, Peugeot, Renault, Nissan, Ford and Honda, and naturally they all perform and look exactly like the real thing. All UK tracks are also perfectly modelled making the game entirely realistic. So far we know there will be many different camera views including in-car, but no news on whether the cars will break apart when they crash. A Workstation soon.



[Above] If you thought *V-Rally* looked good, check out this from Codemasters.



[Above] We are all big fans of Touring Car racing at Play, and this is one of our must-haves.



[Above] Every car in the game has been accurately modelled on the real thing.



[Above] The official licence means proper sponsorship stickers, real cars, real drivers, and every UK track has been included in the Codemasters game. We will have a Workstation soon.

ARE YOU CONNECTED?

INTERNET ACCESS GIVES YOU PLAY ON-LINE AND MUCH MORE!

IF YOU'RE SERIOUS about your PlayStation gaming, in fact gaming in general, then you are probably one of the large percentage of PLAY readers who also has a PC.

Not only does this give you another games medium, but you can also hook it up to the Internet and discover a whole new world of information, reviews and tips. PLAY is of course already on-line, and if you direct your web browser at http://www.paragon.co.uk/play, then you will find an A-Z of every review we've ever done, plus tips, features and even up-to-date information before it gets printed in the magazine. You can even subscribe that way!

But that's just the beginning because there is a wealth of PlayStation-related sites all over the world; many in the USA and Japan, who cover new games and news stories before you will ever see them printed. Need a solution to *Broken Sword*, but you've got no joy from the Sony Powerline? Well, just go to one of the hundreds of PSX tips pages and you're sure to find it in minutes. And don't forget you can even order games over the Internet. The list of possibilities for a keen PlayStation owner is endless.

We at PLAY use the Internet for checking on release dates, downloading information from company web sites instead of having things posted, and of course seeing what's happening across the pond in all major PSX territories. If you're connected to e-mail, you can also contact PLAY magazine direct and ask questions.

Remember the *Bushido Blade* instructions offer? Well, there will be more of those, and e-mail users get everything much faster without the worry of things getting lost in the post.

If you're not yet on-line, but want to be, then why not call (0800) 243 777. This is the Surflink freephone number – a company that supplies PLAY with home services and one that we would recommend.

As a special offer to PLAY readers, Surflink is offering a FREE one month trial of its service (which would normally cost you £75) and this gives you access to the Internet, 2MB of web space free, no set-up charges and ISDN at no extra cost. You will also be able to get a speedy modem from Surflink to complete the package. What are you waiting for?



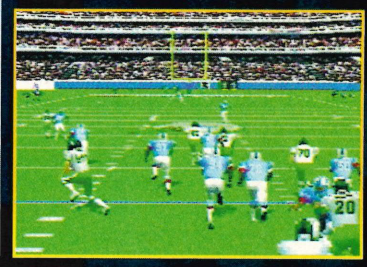
[ABOVE] **The PLAY web site offers tips, reviews and so much more! Join us.**

GOING FOR A JIMMY...

INTERPLAY'S VR sports label has been a bit quiet since *VR Pool*, but the latest game has been announced as being *Jimmy Johnson's VR Football '98*.

This is an American Football simulator which hopes to beat Electronic Arts' mighty *Madden '98* at its own game, and it is set for a release in November. Not only does the game feature 30 current NFL teams, but also the greatest teams of the Sixities, Seventies and Eighties, and there are even 30 virtual stadiums to visit too.

Jimmy Johnson's features 125 video clips to guide you through the tactics of the sport, and there will be hundreds of different plays, with the option of creating your own. Full review soon.

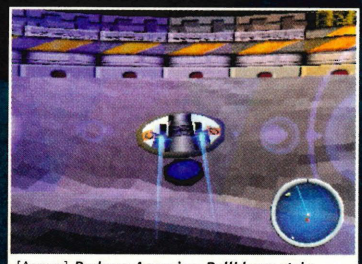


IT'S A SIGN!

NEW FROM Take Two Interactive (who has just bought Gametek UK) are two PlayStation titles all due for release soon.

First up is *Dodgem Arena*, a futuristic sports game in a similar vein to *Colliderz* and *Ballblazer Champions*. This plays a lot like ice hockey, only you are controlling floating ships, and there are power-ups to collect which give you a temporary advantage over your opponent. *Dodgem Arena* is set for release at the end of the year.

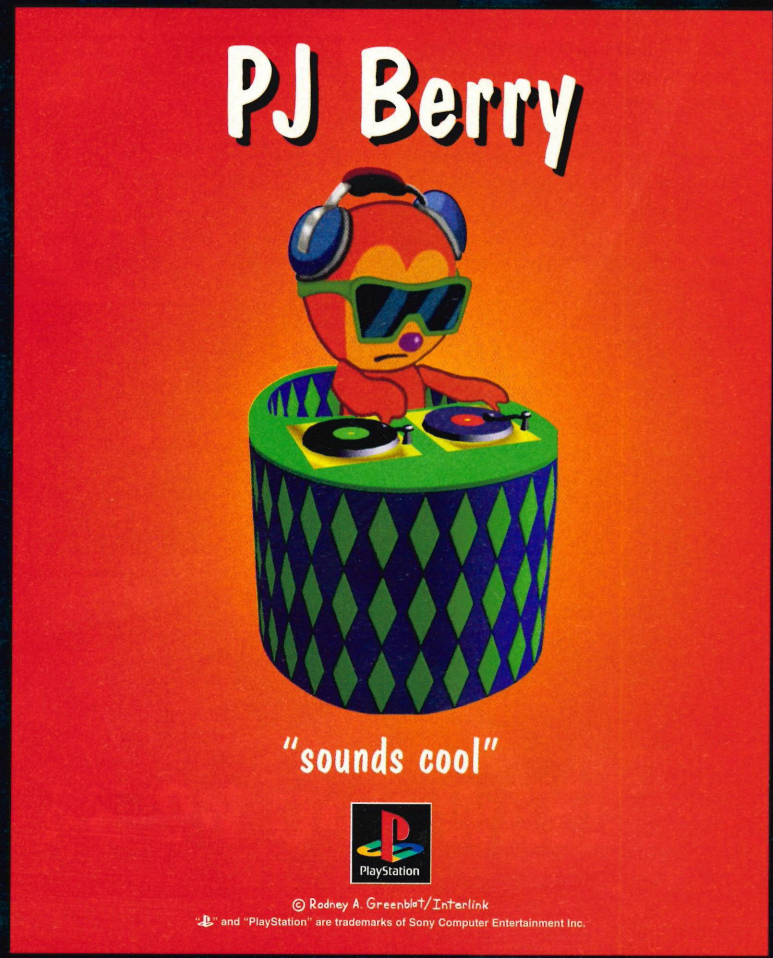
Sign of the Sun looks to be a point 'n' click adventure (just like *Broken Sword*) where you play astronaut James Mariner, who has been teleport into the sun and trapped by the evil Firons while they prepare to destroy Earth. The developers claim the game will feature three hours of speech and it looks promising. An October release is planned. Both games will be £39.99.



[ABOVE] ***Dodgem Arena*** **is a *Ballblazer*-style futuristic sports game. How original.**



[ABOVE] **Like *Broken Sword* by Sony, *Sign of the Sun* is a point 'n' click adventure. Looks decent.**



JAPS EYE

ALL THE LATEST GAMING NEWS FROM JAPAN – THE HOME OF THE SONY PLAYSTATION!

Biggest news this month (apart from the release of *Street Fighter EX Plus* which everyone is going crazy for!) is *Marvel Super Heroes*, also from Capcom. Although this is a 2-D fighting game, the size of the characters is incredible, with some taking up half the screen! It's pretty standard beat-'em-up fare though, with you controlling the likes of Captain America, The Hulk, Iron Man, Spider-Man and Wolverine. You also get X-Men villains such as Dr Strange, Ghost rider, Juggernaut and Magneto. Each character has a strong of special moves, but in an original twist, many are only accessible once you pick up an Infinity Gem. This adds an interesting random factor which means a player who is almost beaten, can suddenly acquire a host of new powers which enable him to turn the fight around. *Marvel Super Heroes* looks like being a perfect coin-op translation, but only a full review copy will confirm whether or not there is any slowdown due to the large sprite size. Full import review soon.





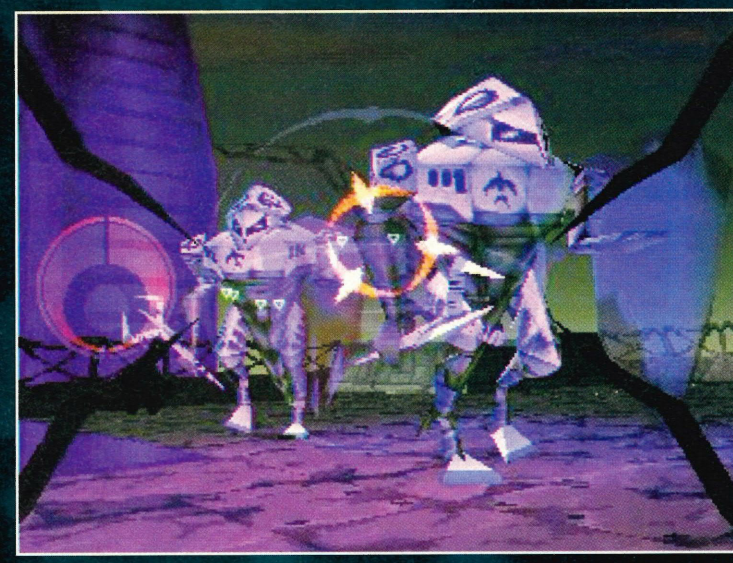


GunBullet is the next game to feature the Namco Guncon, so all you people who have bought, or are thinking of buying, *Time Crisis* can rest assured that Namco does intend to support the light gun. *GunBullet* is an arcade shooting game, very similar to the ones you get at funfairs, where moles pop up and must be shot for points. In fact this game is made up many sub-games to test your marksmanship in different conditions. The idea is that you travel around an island ridding characters of vermin using the Guncon. Hmm, the jury's out on this one so far, but it looks like a laugh...





And finally this month great news for fans of the classic coin-op, *Arkanoid*. Sony Japan together with Taito has just developed *Arkanoid Returns* for the PlayStation, and it looks like the best version ever, with incredible power-ups, and some new scrolling stages.



THE MASTERS OF THE PLAYSTATION?

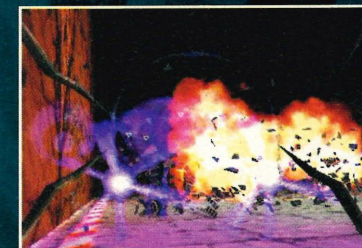
RESEMBLING a stylish cross between *Doom* and *Tunnel B1*, industry magnate, Psygnosis heralds yet another new release in the form of *Shadow Master*. This all-action arcade-style game combines frantic blasting action with a dash of puzzle-solving against seven distinctive worlds.

Aficionados of Rodney Mathews, the renowned artist of countless fantasy paintings, will be pleased to note that entire game is based upon his work and thus throws the player into a weird and wonderful futuristic environment.

Your mission is to protect your planet from the dictatorship that's plundering the resources of all the planets in your system. Along the way, you'll do battle with all kinds of unsavoury creatures including: spiders, triffids and dragons. Initial impressions of the game are promising. The backgrounds are highly detailed, and the accompanying lighting effects look the ticket. Expect tons of monsters to slay and 16 levels to negotiate; until then, we'll keep you posted with news of further developments.



[ABOVE] ***Shadow Master*** **is based on the artwork of Rodney Matthews.**



[ABOVE] **It looks like a cross between *Tunnel B1* and *Disruptor* from Interplay.**

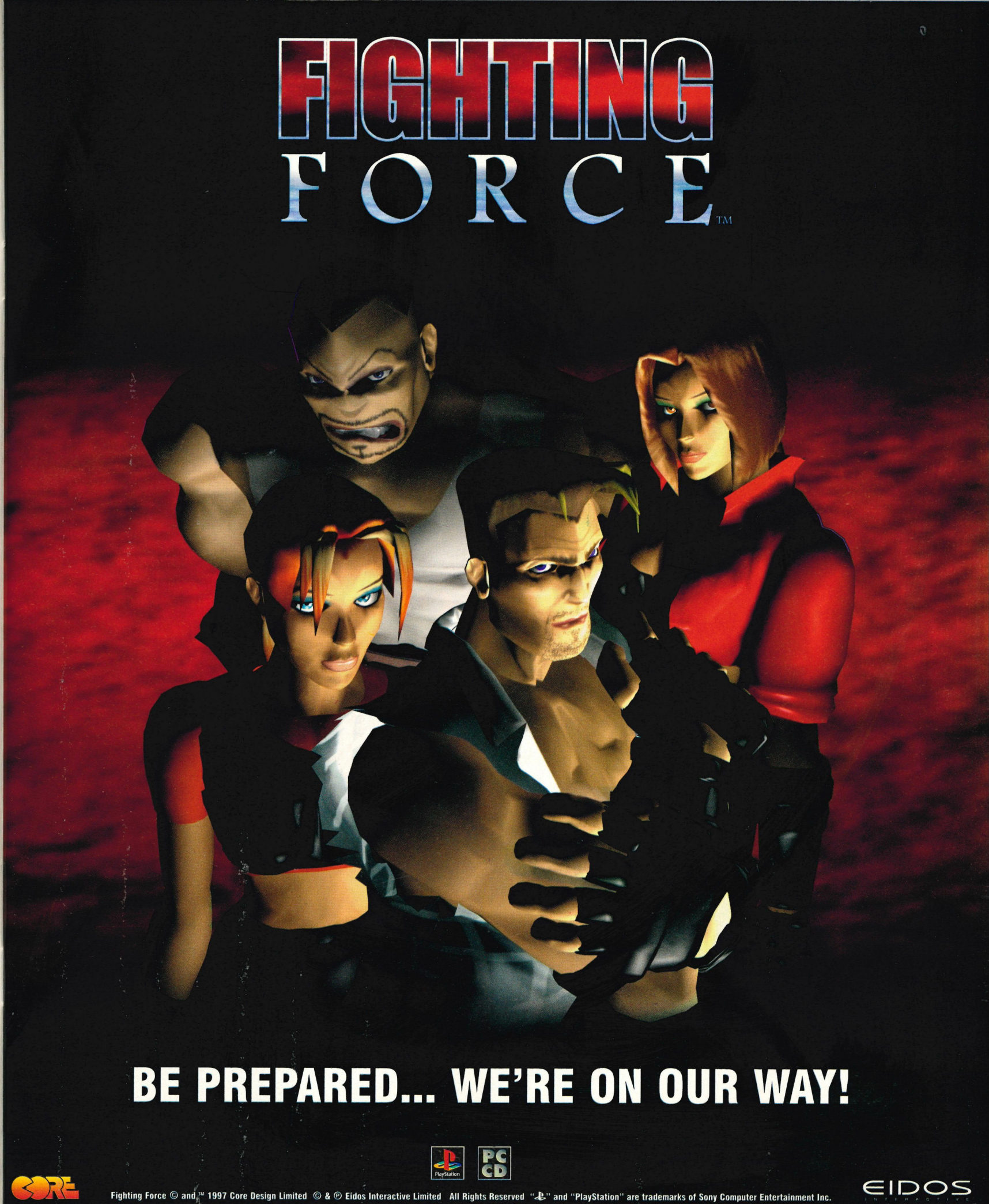


[ABOVE] **You control a heavily armoured buggy in *Shadow Master*, so it's a driving game as well!**



[ABOVE] **Impressive enemies are abudant, and the game plays like a quicker version of *Doom*.**

FIGHTING FORCE™



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PlayStation

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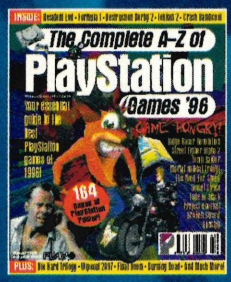
CORE

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EIDOS INTERACTIVE

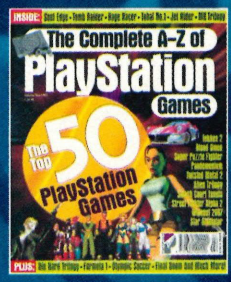
Back ISSUES

MISSED A MAGAZINE OR BOOK? SNAP IT UP NOW BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!



A-Z VOL 1

A huge 162 page A-Z of PlayStation games taken from the pages of PLAY! £5.50



A-Z VOL 2

The top 50 PlayStation games (taken from reviews in PLAY magazine.) £5.50



ISSUE [3]

First review of *Impact Racing* and *Alien Trilogy* FREE pin badge!



ISSUE [4]

Magic Carpet first look, *Resident Evil*, *Ridge Racer Rev*, *Wing IV*!



ISSUE [6]

Viper and *Tunnel B1* exposed, *adidas Soccer* FREE postcards!



ISSUE [13]

Massive review of *Project Overkill*, first look at *Nightmare Creatures!*

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ISSUE [14]

Superb *Syndicate Wars* exposé and a huge review of *Tomb Raider* and *DD2!*



ISSUE [15]

Command & Conquer, *Pandemonium*, *FIFA '97* reviewed!



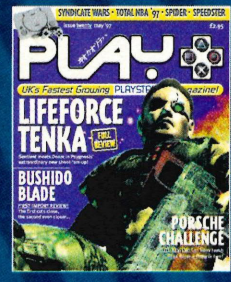
ISSUE [16]

Rage Racer reviewed, *Porsche Challenge* in-depth look, *Tekken 3* news!



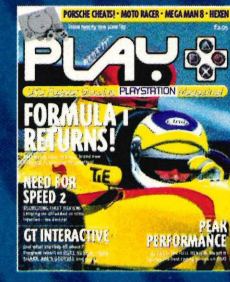
ISSUE [19]

LBA exclusive review, plus *Rally Cross*, and *Micro Machines V3*!



ISSUE [20]

Full review of *Tenka*, massive *Syndicate Wars* preview, plus *Porsche* and *Bushido Blade!*



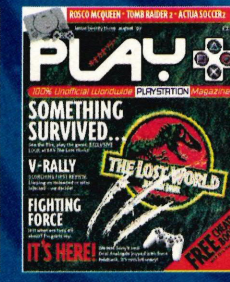
ISSUE [21]

Exclusive look at *Eidos F1*, preview of *Tobal 2*, and hot reviews of *NFS2* and *Peak Performance.*



ISSUE [22]

First import review of *Tobal 2! Syndicate Wars, Actua Soccer 2, Overblood* and *MDK!*



ISSUE [23]

Lost World exclusive, *V-Rally* review, *Rosco McQueen, Fighting Force* and *F1 '97!*

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THE GAM

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



20 Oh yes, it's the biggest game of the year and we've got EXCLUSIVE new shots, information and an interview with the developers. Find out what new costumes Lara slips into, where in the world the new game takes her, and what the quest is all about? And just how different is *Tomb Raider 2* from the first game? Plus we interview the public about the Lara Croft phenomenon. Turn to page 20 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.

36-50 Games that should be avoided by everyone except die-hard fans of the genre and masochists.

0-35 Complete tripe. Avoid at all costs! Duly awarded the PLAY Putrid. Yuk!

PLAY PUTRID

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 only
eg Project Overkill


Multiple Players
eg Tekken 2

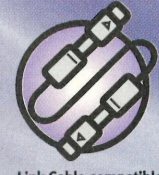

Steering/Analogue
eg NeGcon


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


Dual Analogue

ES

REVIEWS ▸ WORKSTATIONS ▸ WIRED UPS

The GAMES that Time Forgot

You'll see this ominous logo every time a games publisher tries to sneak a game out onto the streets without us seeing it first. This is often a deliberate move and one that often means the game is rushed or of poor quality.

WORKSTATIONS

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

TOMB RAIDER 2	20	TEST DRIVE 4	32
NUCLEAR STRIKE	28	WARHAMMER 2	34
METAL GEAR SOLID	30	RAPID RACER	36



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.

STREET FIGHTER EX PLUS	40
EXPLOSIVE RACING	44
KICK OFF '97	54
DYNASTY WARRIORS	56
SALAMANDER	58
LOST WORLD	60
HARD BOILED	64
TOSHINDEN 3	66
HERC'S ADVENTURES	68
BATTLE STATIONS	69







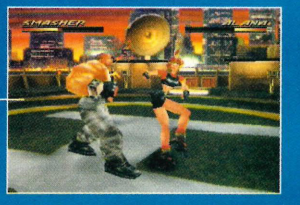


WIRED UP

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

ROSCO MCQUEEN	80
COLONY WARS	82
FIGHTING FORCE	84
THE NOTE	86





PLAY magazine October 1997

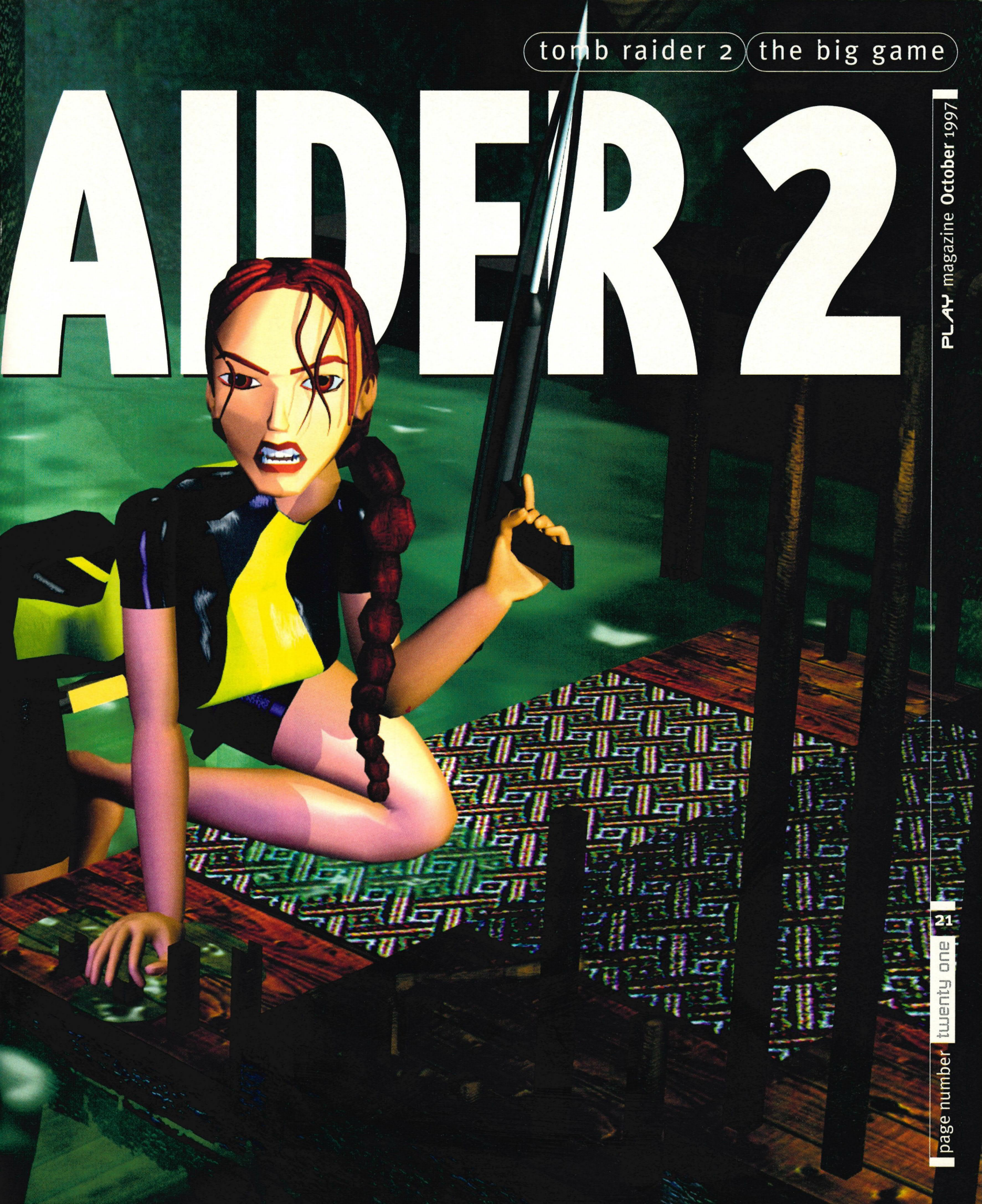
TOMB R

Written By Damian Butt

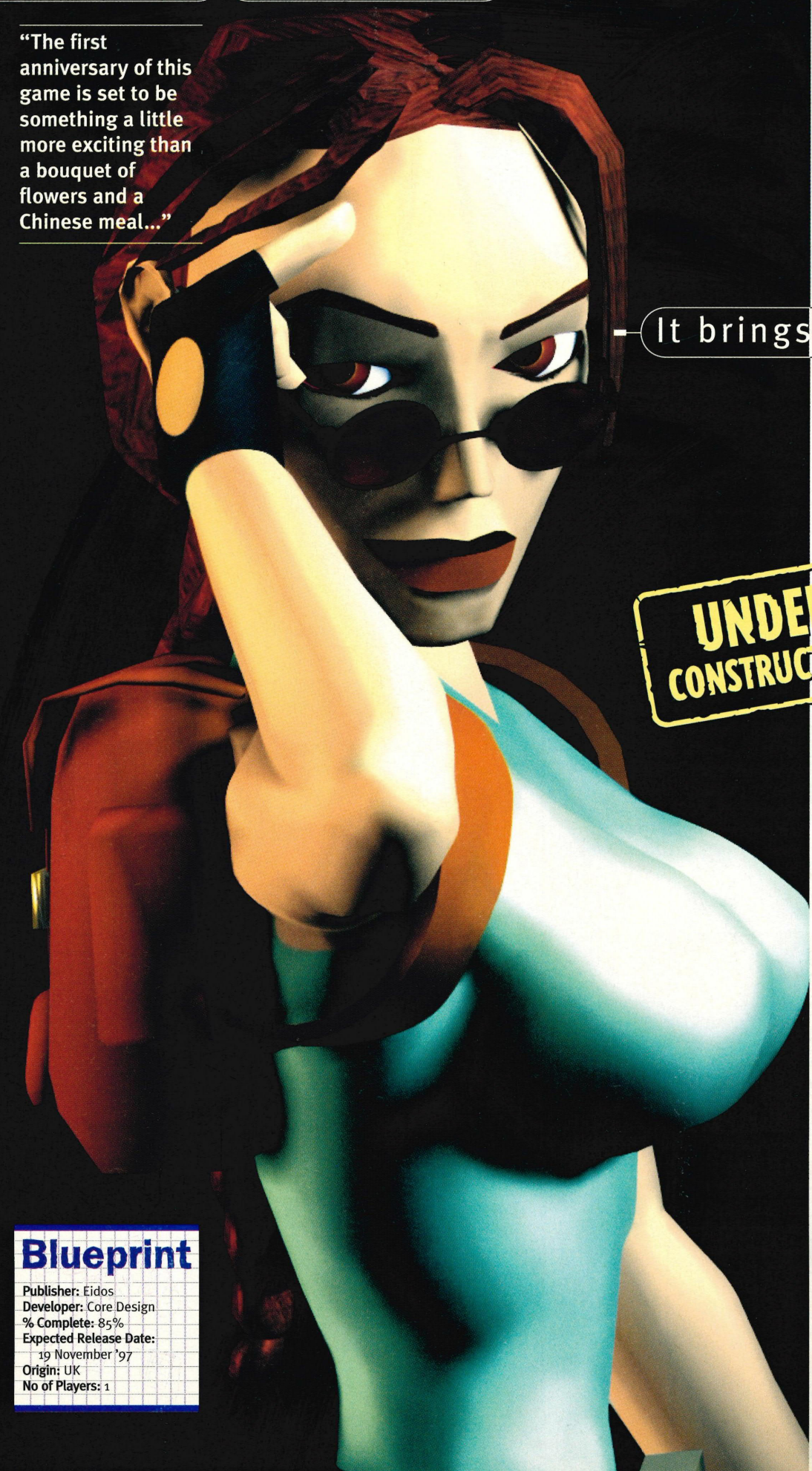
WE KNOW WHAT GAME YOU ARE REALLY WAITING ON. WE KNOW THE OTHERS ARE JUST FILLING TIME UNTIL ITS ARRIVAL. AND WE KNOW ALL OF ITS SECRETS...

THE BIG GAME

AIDER 2



"The first anniversary of this game is set to be something a little more exciting than a bouquet of flowers and a Chinese meal..."



UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Blueprint

Publisher: Eidos
Developer: Core Design
% Complete: 85%
Expected Release Date: 19 November '97
Origin: UK
No of Players: 1

It brings a tear to the eye just to remember the joy of *Tomb Raider*'s release towards the end of last year. For many players it was the strongest title in the PlayStation's history, the final proof that a game *can* look totally exquisite and have heavenly gameplay at the same time. We were beginning to think that wasn't possible.

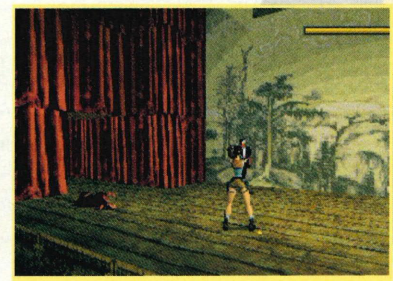
From the totally exceptional level design, to the entire control system and overwhelming ability of the heroine, *Tomb Raider* had 'winner' written all over it. "A true work of genius" exclaimed a thoroughly impressed Damian in issue 14's review, "looks unlike anything that has gone before."

Since then *Tomb Raider* has spent a healthy amount of time atop the software charts, made a publisher rich beyond comprehension, and probably sold a few PlayStations.

Central character Lara Croft has been elevated to stardom, stripped naked on the Internet, featured in big-selling lifestyle magazines, and actress Rhona Mitra has been hired to "be" her. MTV will broadcast a program on the Lara Croft



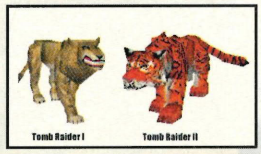
[Above] From a veranda high above the streets of Venice, it's a good time to use the old look around function to spot following enemies.



[Above] Having already seen away a rabid Doberman, you lock the guns onto one of the many new human enemies also searching for the dagger.

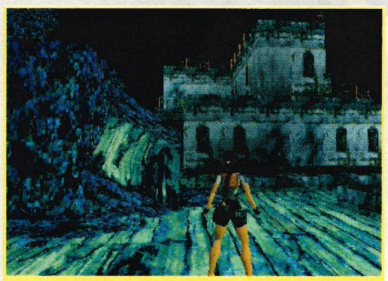
FIERCE CREATURES

LARA FACES MANY NEW ENEMIES IN *TOMB RAIDER 2*, ALL OF WHICH ARE FAR MORE DETAILED THAN THOSE PLAIN OLD NAGS IN THE FIRST GAME.





[Above] Surrounded by muscle men carrying large steel bars with necks wider than their heads, you run clear to get a better shot at them.



[Above] All is not lost any more when you encounter a cliff face. Just look for the little cracks that you can now use to climb up.



[Above] Lara has put her nice warm jacket on to protect her from the biting cold – so why the hell is she still wearing shorts?



phenomenon on 23 September. It seems the first anniversary of this greatly successful game is set to be something a little more exciting than a bouquet of flowers and a Chinese meal.

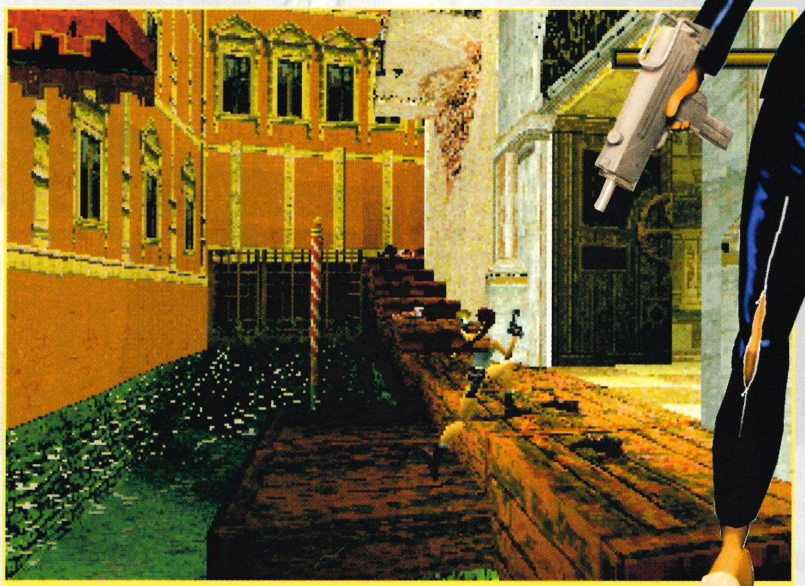
On 19 November 1997, Lara Croft will return in an adventure so vast and incredible that it is almost unimaginable. And we know more about it than anyone else on the planet! Well, with the exception of one or two pasty-skinned coders at Core perhaps.

AFTER THE ARTEFACT

If you were a fan of *Tomb Raider*, and let's face it everyone was, you might be getting bored with the same surroundings by now, grand as they were. Well, Lara's newest archaeological target for retrieval is the Dagger of Xian, which she believes is housed in an emperor's palace inside the Great Wall of China. When she travels there and gets into the chambers of the wall, it becomes obvious that uncovering the dagger isn't going to be as simple as dropping by and picking up the laundry – she'll have to make her way all over the world to piece together the elaborate pattern of clues that will earn her the coveted artefact.

Picturesque locations such as Venice and Tibet will play host to the large-scale puzzles, traps and furious gun battles of *Tomb Raider 2*, and apparently Lara really enjoys a bit of action outdoors. We asked Adrian Smith, Operations Director at Core who is heavily involved with the *TR2* project, what would be different about these new, external levels?

"Lara will have a lot more freedom to explore. For example, in the Venice level she'll be able to climb out of the windows and onto the



[Above] The level of detail in *TR2*'s scenery is amazing, and every inch of it is realistically light sourced. This is the Venice level, from which most of the early screenshots have come.

"Costume changes take place between levels rather than during and no, you will not see her make the change!"



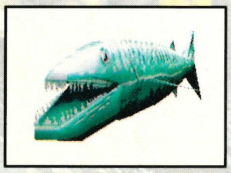
[Above] The rather erratic movement of the cameras in *Tomb Raider* have been reprogrammed to be smoother and truly intelligent.



[Above] A bare-footed Lara lays into an approaching engineer goon with a flurry of fire from her two magnums.



[Above] Clearly Lara didn't believe the sign that said "Quiet Please" in this ancient building applied to a star like herself.



THE WATER-BASED BARRACUDA IS A BIT NASTY.



OOH, WE'RE SO SCARED – IT'S A CROW. SHOT ON SIGHT!



LARA ENCOUNTERS A SINISTER CULT LATER IN THE GAME...



DOBERMAN PINSCHERS ARE SET UPON YOU IN VENICE.



GOLDEN EAGLES – SURELY YOU CAN'T SHOOT THESE GUYS?



MORE HUMAN ENEMIES IN *TR2* MEANS MORE GOONS.

"Discharging the firearms in dimly lit rooms will result in a flash that lights the room for a split second..."

balconies, and she'll even be able to get onto the roofs of many of the buildings to have a better look around."

Climb? Hang on. We remember that from the first game. She can only heave herself up onto nearby platforms and shimmy along sideways, can't she?

"Now she can climb hand-over-hand as well as side-to-side. So instead of looking for ledges to jump up to and making a bee-line for those, she'll have to be looking for hand-holds in the side of cliffs or other objects that look as if they can be scaled. Once she starts to climb up the walls she can move across to the left or to the right to access further areas of the map."

TEN COOL THINGS ABOUT *TR2*

1. She changes costumes.
2. The harpoon. Pointy, pointy.
3. Body animation is much smoother.
4. Realistic lighting conditions.
5. Shark attacks.
6. Light sourced flares.
7. New cliff climbing move.
8. Swinging on chandaliers.
9. Rounded bodily protrusions.
10. Lara is real!

VENOMOUS VIXEN

The possibility of climbing sheer surfaces certainly opens things up plenty, but it isn't the only new move Lara has learned while she's been away. Perhaps the best new feature is the harpoon she now packs on the underwater levels, like the rather breath-taking submerged shipwreck.

It always seemed a bit out of place that, on dry land, Lara was an agile, deadly force that took on opponents of any size with a violent spray of gunfire. But when confronted in the water she could, well, swim off quickly. Now she's a force to be reckoned with in any surroundings, which is probably just as well with some sizeable woman-eating sharks patrolling the dingy depths of the ocean.



[Above] With danger waiting around every corner, it's a good thing you have that sleek new harpoon!

Another new toy that will affect gameplay somewhat is the hand-held flare which will be tucked away in the inventory this time. Because of the new dynamic lighting used on the levels, it will act like a real flare and have several uses.

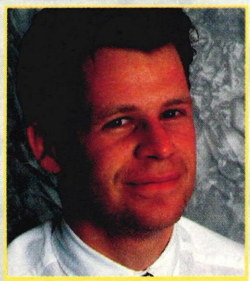
Some levels are even based entirely around the intelligent use of the flares, where you are plunged into total darkness and have to make the best possible use of your existing flares to make it to the end. They burn out before long and you only have a limited supply, so you must use tricks like chucking them into the distance or down into a mysterious hole in the ground to see if it's clear of spikes and ravenous beasts. Thankfully, they work underwater too, so the dangers of the deep aren't quite so terrifying.

CAUTION: WIDE LOAD

An additional product of the game's advanced lighting is what the developers call "real-time lighting." Basically, in the outdoor locations, the sun rises in the morning and sets at night, and you have all the various increments of darkness in between. This means that if you take quite a while to complete a level you might end up in the dark, having to rely on your flares once again even in the streets. So there are benefits to working your way through a level quickly, unlike the original *Tomb Raider* where you could spend any amount of time finding the end.

Discharging the firearms in dimly lit rooms will result in a flash that lights the room for a split second, leading to some very cinematic strobing light and rapid fire situations.

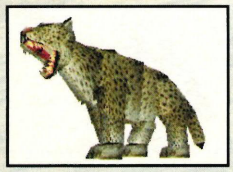
Other changes are smaller, but will be more appreciated the longer you play. Remember when you were being persued by a huge lion that wanted nothing more than to bite your arms off? When you pressed



[Above] Adrian Smith is Operations Director at Core Design.



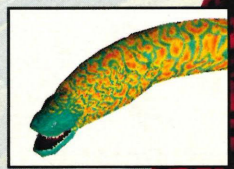
[Above] Some rooms in *TR2* have electric lights that you can toggle with the wall switch, or are lit by fire like this room.



Another endangered species is this leopard. Aw.



As you would expect in Tibet, here's a monk.



This moray eel is a underwater peril.



Rats carry diseases and make irritating squeaking noises.



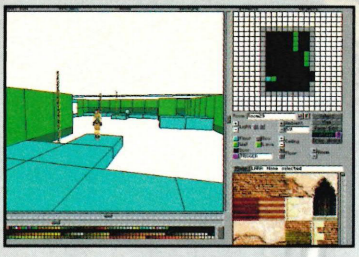
It's the Games Animal, Dave Perry!

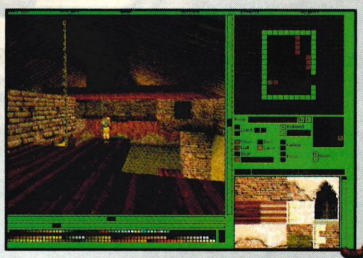


You will get attacked by divers in the shipwreck.

LEVEL 42

THE FACILE LEVEL EDITOR USED TO CONSTRUCT THOSE AMAZING LANDSCAPES IN THE FIRST GAME HAS BEEN IMPROVED AND CAN NOW HANDLE EXTERIOR SCENES WITH EASE. IN THIS COMPARISON, YOU CAN SEE THE SAME SCENE IN WIREFRAME AND THEN RENDERED AS IT WOULD APPEAR IN THE FINAL GAME.

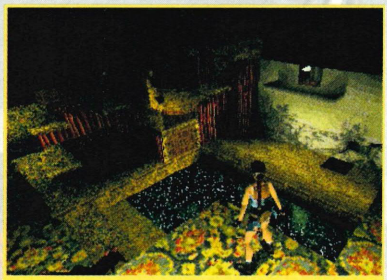




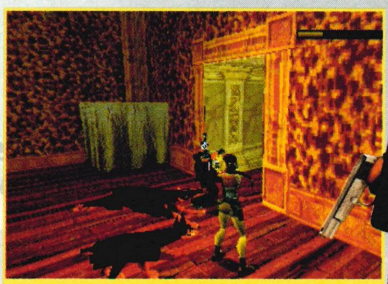




[ABOVE] A rare shot of the Tibetan stage. Is this man actually helping you to kill those oversized cats?



[ABOVE] The graceful diving move still works, but what dangers lurk beneath the surface of the flood?



[ABOVE] Dramatic. When will we see a *Long Kiss Goodnight* game using the *Tomb Raider 2* engine?

the ● button, Lara would roll forward and turn through 180° in one swift movement; letting you destroy the animal with stereo magnum fire. She can now execute this move while soaring through the air, so you can be more evasive of the enemies and catch a few of them by surprise.

It is also now possible to wade through areas of water that are below head height, so you don't automatically have to swim each time you come into contact with water like before. As part of the effort to improve the overall realism of movement, there will be a smoother transition between walking and running too, as she did tend to suddenly bolt like someone had just mentioned her knickers were on fire!

SHE'S A STAR

Of course, to keep in touch with the times, alterations have been made to the physical appearance of the character model, including the first thing that everyone noticed upon seeing the game run – she has a proper pony-tail that swishes around like a real one!

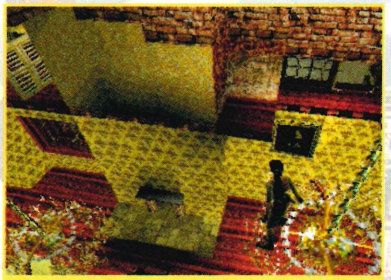
Although it didn't seem like such cause for celebration to us, it does appear to have been the only detail the computer press knew about *Tomb Raider 2* until this article. Anyway, it is a bit nicer than that dirty wad of hair bound in masking tape she used to exhibit.

A couple of alternate costumes have been designed for the extreme nature of some locations in the game. In Venice Lara will be clad in a smoother version of her trademark body and hotpants, but in the sub-zero freeze of Tibet she would seize up and die without her new fur-lined jacket.

For prolonged underwater exploration, not even Lara's fine set of lungs could hold enough air for her to do what she must around the shipwreck, so she will use the wet suit that comes with a large aqualung to survive. We are told that costume changes take place between levels rather than during. And no, you will not see her make the change!



[ABOVE] You light the underwater flare just in time to see a great white swallow your legs! What cheap antique is worth this?

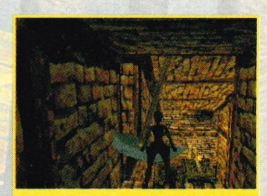


[ABOVE] On an unstable chandelier you have to make the jump before it drops – real action film stuff!

IN THE JUNGLE

THERE'S NO HIDING THE FACT THAT HERE AT PLAY, WE'RE REALLY JUST A BUNCH OF WOOLLY ACTIVISTS. APPALLED AT THE MASS SLAYING OF OUR RAREST ANIMAL BREEDS IN THE ORIGINAL *TOMB RAIDER*, AND THE MESSAGE THIS MUST BE IMPLANTING IN THE FEEBLE MINDS OF OUR YOUNG, WE ASKED CORE: ARE THE MAIN VICTIMS STILL ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS (MONKEYS, LIONS, BEARS ETC)? "UNFORTUNATELY, WE DO APPEAR TO BE USING A COUPLE OF THE ENDANGERED SPECIES, THIS IS MOSTLY BECAUSE WE WANTED TO INCORPORATE ANIMALS THAT ARE EITHER UNUSUAL OR EXTREMELY DANGEROUS. ALTHOUGH YOU'LL BE FIGHTING ANIMALS SUCH AS EAGLES AND TIGERS IN *TR2*, WE'RE ALSO INCORPORATING A WIDE VARIETY OF HUMAN BADDIES THIS TIME." OF COURSE, IN REALITY, WE CAN'T ACTUALLY THINK OF ANYTHING MORE FUN TO DO THAN BLAST A PAIR OF HANDGUNS AT SOMETHING LABELLED "ENDANGERED."

[ABOVE] She sure was a looker last time, but now Core has rounded off all the pointy bits.



[ABOVE] Now this looks familiar! Yes, some of your old favourite and not-so-favourite hazards are back, including the chopper!

"Lara really enjoys a bit of action outdoors!"



DA-DUM. DA-DUM. DUM, DUM, DUM, DUM. IT'S A SHARK, OKAY?



SPIDERS AND OTHER CREEPY CRAWLIES ARE EVERYWHERE!



YOU EVEN GET TO FIGHT TERRORISTS. COOL!



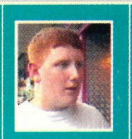
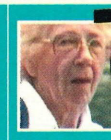
THESE GUYS ALL PACK UZIS, BUT HAVE AWFUL BIG TRAINERS.



THE TIGER IS THE MOST IMPRESSIVE NEW BEAST.



TIBET, SNOW, ADVENTURES, A YETI. OBVIOUS REALLY.

We hit the streets to find out what people think of Lara Croft.										
Q *Do you know who Lara Croft is?*	Nope. Oh, hang on, you mean the cricketer?	Yes, I do	Erm, yes	Yes	Yes!	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No, sorry luv
Q *Do you think she makes a good role model?*	Eh?	Definitely	No. She's too vicious, I think	Yes	Not at all.	I suppose so. And guys find her attractive. You know, perverts	I've never played Tomb Raider!	[Wife] No! They don't look real! Women can't hope to look like that!	Yes	Only for harlots, she's a bit of a hussy, isn't she?
Q *Does she remind you of anyone?*	What?	Yeah, she's got those kind of Madonna boobs, hasn't she?	Not that I can think of really, no	No, actually	Well, she kind of reminded me of Orchid from *Killer Instinct*	Sandra Bullock	Yeah – my Mrs!	Kylie Minogue's character in the *Street Fighter* movie	I can't remember her name – that bird from *Species*	Marlene Dietrich, or Lucy Arnez before she had her roots done



"An adventure so vast and incredible that it is almost unimaginable..."

It would be difficult for Core to make a mistake with *Tomb Raider 2*. Essentially what they are doing is taking a favourite game which everyone accepts as brilliant, adding some fun elements, broadening the gameplay possibilities and polishing up a few small defects from the original.

Core isn't taking anything out that you might want to keep, and the only problem this time could be with controllers. When we asked how Lara would operate with the analogue pad, mentioning that one stick to aim the guns and one to move Lara independently would be great, we were given the rather surprising news that Core couldn't confirm that its game would work with the new controller at all!

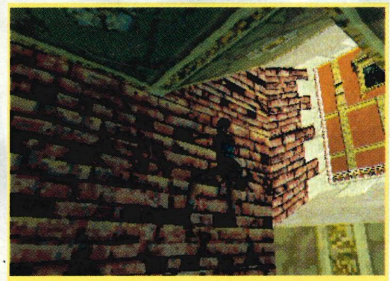
Tomb Raider 2 will be out on the 19 November. Yes, it's fantastic. Yes it's even bigger and better than the original. And yes, you are going to see a huge review in PLAY soon. The game of the year might just have stepped centre stage.



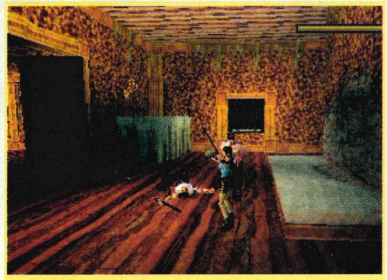
[Above] Some things never change. It's another great big door that you have no idea how to open yet!



[Above] Can you get through this maze quickly enough before Lara takes in a lungful of salt water?



[Above] Wall climbing might not look very feminine, but it's the only way to get through some puzzles in the game.



[Above] With all the punctured bodies lying around it's starting to look like *Tomb Raider 2* might move up a few notches on the ELSPA scale...

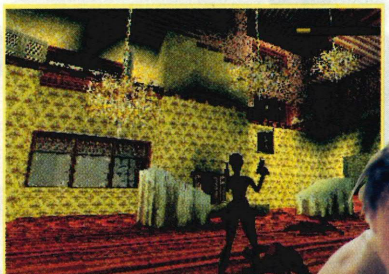


[Above] The clever new climbing move comes in handy to get you onto the rooftops of Venice.



SOFTOGRAPHY

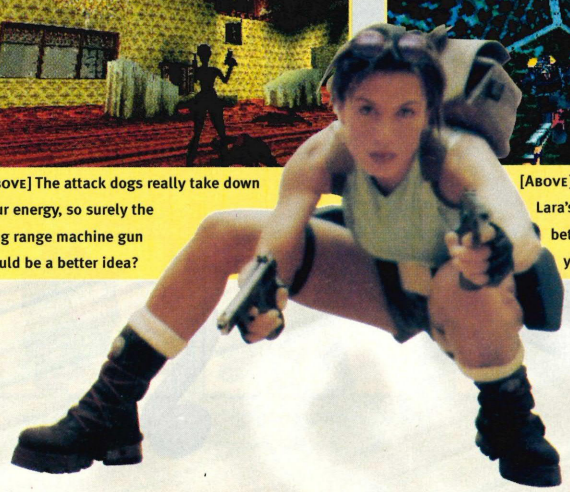
1988 Rick Dangerous (Amiga)
1989 Rick Dangerous 2 (Amiga, ST, PC)
1990 Corporation (Amiga, ST, PC)
1991 Chuck Rock (Amiga, ST)
1991 Heimdall (Amiga, ST, PC)
1992 Jaguar XJ-220 (Amiga
1993 Chuck Rock 2 (Amiga)
1993 Thunderhawk (Mega CD)
1993 Wonder Dog (Amiga)
1994 Bubba 'n' Stix (Amiga, Mega CD)
1994 Soulstar (Mega CD)
1995 Thunderhawk 2 (PSX)
1996 Shellshock (PSX)
1997 Swagman (PSX)



[Above] The attack dogs really take down your energy, so surely the long range machine gun would be a better idea?

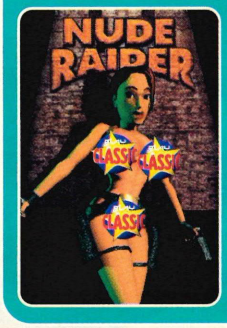


[Above] The camera pulls over Lara's shoulder to give you a better view of the aqualung you can now put on and use.



NUDE RAIDER

After a year of speculation over the alleged nudity cheat in the first game, we thought it best to ask this question right now, before things get out of hand. To save time in the future, can you categorically state that there will not be a cheat in *Tomb Raider 2* that causes Lara to completely remove her clothes? Core's reply was intriguingly ambiguous. "There will be absolutely no cheat of this nature whatsoever!!!" Will that stop people doctoring pictures and then posting them on the Internet? Will it bugger!



'A NEW ERA IN SENSORY CONTROL'*

PlayStation Power



PROVEN **QUALITY**

TOTAL **COMPATIBILITY**

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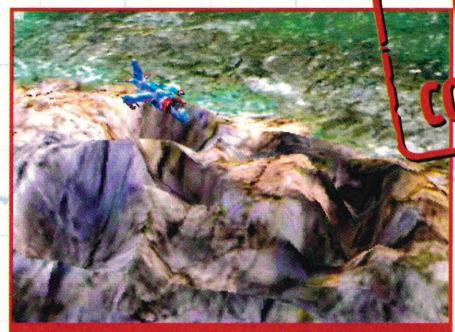
PlayStation

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NUCLEAR

SAVE THE WORLD FROM A STEREOTYPICAL MEGALOMANIAC WITH HIS FINGER ON THE BIG RED NUCLEAR BUTTON, IN THE FIFTH AND POTENTIALLY MOST VIOLENT EPISODE OF THE INFAMOUS STRIKE SERIES.

Written By Tom Sargent



UNDER CONSTRUCTION

[ABOVE] You'll have to negotiate all kinds of terrain, including these jagged mountainous regions.

Chopper mad!

That's what Electronic Arts is. After scouring the dune-filled sands of Iraq in *Desert Strike*, we gobbled-down malaria tablets by the handful for an altogether more humid encounter in *Jungle Strike*. The third episode essentially 'came home' to a more urban environment. And most recently (making its debut on PlayStation), the Russians took a pasting, thanks to some nifty Apache gunship antics in *Soviet Strike*. To find out what EA had up its trigger-happy sleeves this time around, we covertly dropped in on the programmers for a full mission briefing on the eagerly anticipated sequel.



[ABOVE] Take control of this garish-looking Harrier Jump jet and land it safely on the pad to complete the mission.

Enola Gay

Nuclear Strike is a multi-vehicle forced-perspective, all-terrain combat game set in Asia and broken down into individual missions. Fans of the series won't be disappointed to discover that yet another power-hungry madman, this time in the form of Henri Lemonde, is threatening to detonate a recently commandeered tactical nuclear bomb from his Soviet ICBM base, if the rest of the world refuses to accept his warped ambitions.

This frightening scenario is naturally an excuse to showcase an impressive new array of vehicles for the single player to try out over land, sea and air and the programmers are quick to point out what will be at your disposal and how they'll differ.

"We will have over ten new vehicles, including attack helicopters, planes, tanks and boats. The ground vehicles will control very differently from the air vehicles, as well as the sea vehicles. Without going into too much detail and spoiling all the surprises, look for a wide variety of speeds, armour and firepower."

This is encouraging news when you consider half the fun in a new *Strike* game is the fact that you can experiment with new hardware. But will the player be able to put his finger on the big red button and vaporise countless innocents in one big nuclear fry-up?



[ABOVE] Explosions have been given the once over, so prepare yourselves for a real firework display.

"Nukes are for madmen. Nope. We won't allow the player to utilise nuclear devices. We like our mayhem on a more local scale."

Oh go on, just one won't do any harm...

"No!!"

Fat Man

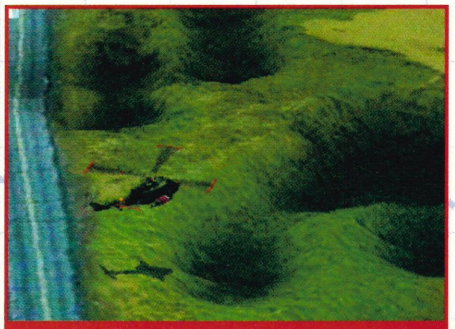
Soviet Strike will retain an enhanced version of the photo-realistic, digitised isometric terrain, but we put it to the team that surely this is what contributed to the slightly annoying slowdown witnessed in the previous game.

"*Nuclear Strike* is not a first person shooter. We kept that particular camera angle because of the gameplay. You need to see what you are winching up. You need to see the immediate area around

Blueprint

Publisher: EA
Developer: In-House
% Complete: 80%
Expected Release Date: 23 September '97
Origin: UK
No of Players: 1

STRIKE



[Above] Expect an enhanced version of the photo-realistic, digitised terrain engine seen in *Soviet Strike*.

TEN COOL THINGS ABOUT NUCLEAR STRIKE

1. Get to machine gun innocent civilians.
2. Ten different vehicles to control.
3. Huge explosions and shockwaves.
4. Slick Strike.net film sequences.
5. Auto-destruct feature for each vehicle.
6. Enhanced weather and lighting effects.
7. It's got the word "Nuclear" in it.
8. Winch allows you to nick equipment.
9. Cars fly up into the air when hit.
10. No Marlon Brando wittering on...

you at all times and the enemy guys running for their lives. It delivers the best 32-bit terrain on any game machine."

The developers of *Nuclear Strike* claim to have improved the engine used in *Soviet Strike*.

"We're using a unique data streaming technology that allows us to 'stream' the ground graphics off the CD during play. The result of this is we've been able to squeeze out even more efficiencies across the board. You'll see and feel the difference."

Little Boy

Players will also notice more user-friendly controls and instruments too. For example, a local radar map of HUD (to spot any that annoying SA-4 that's heading up your tailpipe!) and a new mission waypoint indicator on the compass should kick into touch all of that flicking between map and main playing arena that plagued *Soviet Strike*.

They're also going to include new targeting highlight cursors and... wait for it... more fireworks than a particularly explosion-filled John Woo film.

"All of the explosions have been completely re-done. They are bigger and badder. All of the pyrotechnics have been re-tooled. Just wait 'till you see a T-55 get blown into the air with secondary explosions. Check out the fall-over guard towers and the ground/water shockwave. Every texture and animation has been re-touched, re-drawn or made completely new."

We had an extensive playtest of *Nuclear Strike* at the E3 show in Atlanta and we conclude that it is more user-friendly than the first game. The new vehicles, in particular the tank, add much needed variety, and it means instead of simply flying around at a fixed height, you can bulldoze through all the pretty buildings and crush cars at will. Each new vehicle also has a different control system, and this gives you something new to learn every time you load it up.

If all of the suggestions and ideas that the dedicated EA team from California come to fruition, *Nuclear Strike* should prove to be the definitive product as far as the series is concerned. Check out our review soon.

BIG BAD BUGGIES

There'll be over ten new and exciting vehicles in *Nuclear Strike*. Conquer your enemies over land, sea and air and get to try out three types of helicopter (Super Apache, Super Commanche, Cobra), a Harrier Jump Jet, a tank (Abrams) and a boat (Airboat).



The Harrier jump jet. One of the Navy's best all-rounders with its hovering ability.



The Cobra. Although not as heavily armed as the other choppers, it's extremely fast.



The tank has an independently moving turret and crushes everything in its path.



[Above] Manoeuvre the Harrier and take out the targets with the human outlines on.



"Nukes are for madmen. We like our mayhem on a more local scale."

SOFTOGRAPHY

Soviet Strike

METAL GEAR

MANY IN THE COMPUTER GAMES INDUSTRY HAVE ALREADY ACCEPTED THAT THIS IS GOING TO BE THE BIGGEST AND BEST GAME OF NEXT YEAR, BUT WILL YOU BE SO EASY TO BOWL OVER?

Written By Graeme Nicholson

Has it really been that long? Ten years ago now, the first of two *Metal Gear* games came out for the NES and the peculiar MSX format. The games were different from the usual platform nonsense and so became popular with the hard-core gamers who had seen everything else. The idea was to actually hide from the enemy using strategy and common sense, instead of running around in circles with two flashing AK-47s.



Who would have guessed that the licence, plot and main characters would be dug up from the videogame cemetery and re-animated to appear in a shocking 32-bit action adventure game a decade later? Konami has decided the time is right, and the PlayStation is the machine to bring *Metal Gear* up-to-date!

In *Metal Gear Solid* caused countless hearts to skip a beat at this year's E3 show in Atlanta. You play as weapons and tactics genius Solid Snake once again. This time you are called out to a warehouse and industrial complex in Alaska, where various nuclear weapons are being stored before they are deactivated as part of the 21st century peace process. A group of terrorists has stormed the complex, and on delivering their demands to the government, they indicate that the name of their squad is Foxhound, an ex-military outfit which Solid Snake used to be a member of.



[ABOVE] How do you choose what to use? Long range sniper model, UK paramilitary rifle, mines, pistol, rocket launcher...

ESCAPE FROM ALASKA

New Konami coding group KCEJ is producing this dark thriller, and from what we've seen so far they're doing one helluva job. While the most impressive-looking scenes are the action-packed fights and shooting matches with several on-screen enemies, bear in mind that the original *Metal Gear* idea from all those years ago still stands.

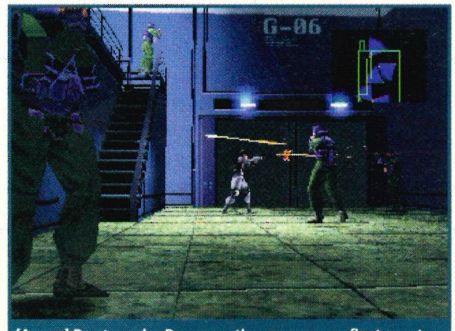


[ABOVE] You have to be brave yet cautious in *Metal Gear Solid*, Liquid Snake has set traps everywhere!

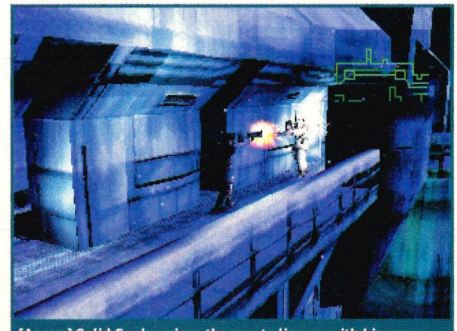
The real gameplay lies in using your surroundings in a clever, strategic manner and stealth just as effectively as the nine millimetre automatic on your hip at times. Tuck yourself under a desk as a guard passes so you don't draw unwanted attention to yourself, or get inside a nearby locker, or the warehouse's ventilation system! If you are discovered, not only will the terrorists hurt you, but they will call for help, leaving only seconds to think before you become inescapably surrounded by armed, angry, meaty blokes.

The viewpoint shifts around radically in *Metal Gear Solid*, with a lot of the basic running from point to point seen from almost directly above, then some *Resident Evil*-style camera direction for building the tension towards a John Woo-

"This could have been *Tomb Raider 2*'s only plausible competition!"



[ABOVE] Due to real 3-D scenery the cameras can float over to the action in a given scene and capture more of the action.



[ABOVE] Solid Snake raises the gun to line up with his eye, looking like a real military professional.



[ABOVE] Tactics are important, but you still amass a frightening array of heavy weaponry, including this bazooka!

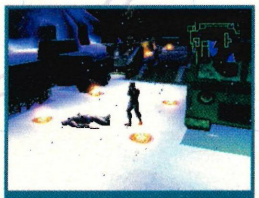
Blueprint

Publisher: Konami
Developer: KCEJ
% Complete: 45%
Expected Release Date: June '98
Origin: Japan
No of Players: 1

SOLID

UNDER CONSTRUCTION





[ABOVE] Outside the warehouse it is difficult not to get caught in the glare of the search lights and be detected.

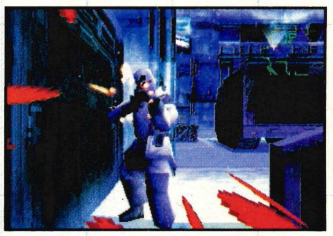


[ABOVE] The slightly angled aerial view lets you check out all the possible escape routes if things turn nasty.

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

AS SOME EARLY FOOTAGE OF THE GAME SHOWED, YOU CAN CONTROL *METAL GEAR SOLID* FROM A FIRST-PERSON-PERSPECTIVE VIEWPOINT, AS SHOWN HERE. WE DON'T YET KNOW IF YOU CAN SWITCH TO THIS MODE AT WILL, OR IF IT ONLY HAPPENS AT KEY AREAS IN GAME, BUT IT DOES GET YOU IN CLOSER TO THE FANTASTIC GRAPHICS AND THAT CAN'T BE A BAD THING!





quality shoot-out. The game is even capable of switching to first person view, which is handy for many things, including the Infra Red goggles required to see where Liquid Snake has set up laser beams in one corridor that trigger a trap. The game is full of these film influences, like when you tune into the terrorist radio communications for a tactical advantage, just like *Die Hard*.

MGS is absolutely gorgeous to watch when it's running, with such smooth action, sharp graphics and realistic light sourcing that this could have been *Tomb Raider 2*'s only plausible competition – if it wasn't due for Japanese release in March of 1998 and British release months later in the summer!

SOFTOGRAPHY

This is the first game KCEJ has worked on.

CONFIDENTIAL

>>The Military X Files<<
The MoD unwittingly admit the whereabouts of UFO files previously listed as missing without trace.

>>The Physics Of A Flying Saucer<<
The science behind the inner workings of anti-gravity powered craft. If we've got the technology, why aren't we using it?

>>The Roswell Debris: A Call To Arms<<
Derrel Sims invites scientists from around the world to join his analyses of alleged Roswell debris. Plus, a guide to the recent Roswell news conference and a proposal for a ufological peer review.

>>Triangular Perceptions>>
Mysterious flying triangles have been sighted for the past thirty years – are they UFOs or secret man-made military prototypes?

>>UFOs Down Under<<
Eyewitness reports of the mass UFO wave reported over Australia this year.

>>The 4D Shift<<
Mediums move from contacting ghosts to channelling the thoughts of aliens from a different dimension.

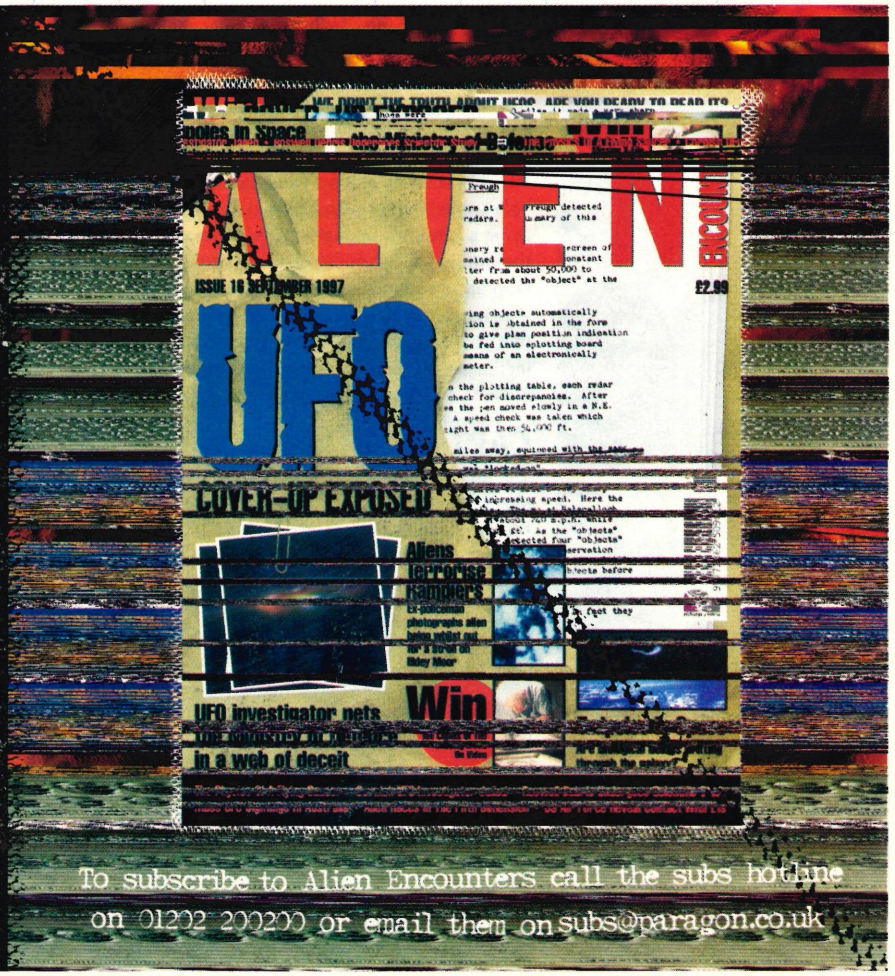
>>Close Encounters Of The Real Kind<<
American Air Force officials show proof of alien existence to UFO investigator Linda Moulton-Howe.

>>A Place Of Horrors<<
Ilkley Moor seems to attract UFOs like bees to a honeypot, with sightings and abduction cases becoming a regular occurrence.

>>Tadpoles In Space<<
A fact-based scenario involving NASA's desire for secrecy and its astronauts' desire to speak out.

>>Miscarriage of Justice<<
A Cornish UFO investigator faces jail on dubious charges.

Issue 16: September 1997 on sale now



TEST DRI

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

YOU'RE ABOUT TO FIND THAT *RAGE RACER* IS NOT THE LAST WORD IN RACING GAMES. GET READY FOR RUSH HOUR...

Written By Graeme Nicholson

Hopefully the screenshots we placed in the news last issue will have got you hot under the collar in anticipation. This is the next chapter in the development of the exceptionally promising *Test Drive 4*, and purely with the intent of giving you the best first-hand information available for the game, we have played the latest version to exhaustion!

Although it's due for release in November, Electronic Arts has classified this version of the game as "pre-alpha", meaning there's a long way to go with the coding before it would even reach preview stage. The best part about this news is that, to look at and play, you would never guess that what you were driving was far off from completion, because it's already so damn fast.

With the gorgeous cars on the road, beautifully intricate scenery around you and a distant, believable horizon with minimal pop-up, *Test Drive 4* is breath-takingly quick. Normally one of the problems that developers run into is trying to step up the speed of the game once everything else has been included, but that just isn't going to be an issue with *Test Drive*, which also increases the likelihood that it will be released close to the scheduled time.





[Above] Scaring the hell out of civilian cars and generally making a nuisance of yourself on public roads is luxury.

CAPTAIN CHAOS

The idea behind *TD4* is to pit the latest spectacular sports cars of modern times against the old classics in an illegal *Cannonball Run*-type contest on public roads (see the boxout for a list



[Above] Very much like the Hillclimb model from *Peak Performance*, only with greatly improved detail, this Dodge Viper is fantastic.

CALL THE COPS

YOU CAN PLAY WITH THEM FOR A WHILE, TRYING TO KNOCK THEM OFF THE ROAD, BUT DON'T LET THE POLICE GET TOO FAR AHEAD OR YOU'LL BE FORCED TO SLOW DOWN AND LOSE TOO MUCH TIME.







[Above] For newcomers a higher view is available to let you see into the distance, but the controls don't feel as responsive.



[Above] A metallic gear gate pops up onto the screen whenever you shift up or down.

"Our new technology is a considerable advancement over the *Destruction Derby* series..."

Blueprint

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Pitbull
% Complete: 50%
Expected Release Date: November '97
Origin: UK
No of Players: 1-2 (link)

VE 4



[Above] The only car in the world worthy of a canary-yellow paint job, the new Corvette is a lively little gas-guzzler.

ANIMAL MAGIC

So intrigued were we by this astonishing new game, we decided to abduct the Pitbull team and transport them to the nearest government facility for interrogation. This is what they had to say...

PLAY: Convince us that the link-up option will not be removed before this game goes on sale.
PB: As far as PITBULL is concerned it will be in the final game (otherwise Jimmy has wasted his time programming it), but the final decision is up to Sony.

PLAY: Can the tracks be raced in reverse too?
PB: All of the tracks can be played in reverse, with the added bonus of being able to play them during the night and during the daytime too.

PLAY: The spontaneous rain on the Lake District is clever and adds a new element. What are the plans for other conditions, and will they affect handling?
PB: Yes, there will be a variety of weather effects to simulate the different driving conditions on each of the individual tracks.

PLAY: Did you replay the old Test Drive games to ensure any kind of continuity with *Test Drive 4*?
PB: Yes we did. Unfortunately they have not aged very well, though we all thought they were pretty good when we were younger!

PLAY: The existing locations in the game, like San Francisco and Washington DC, are they detailed recreations of real roads, or simply courses themed around those areas?
PB: The tracks are modelled using real maps of the cities, so they're as close as we could get in the available time scale.

PLAY: How was working on the *Destruction Derby* games beneficial when it came to constructing a new game?
PB: Working on the *DD* games certainly provided a good learning platform, however our new technology is a considerable advancement over that developed for the *Destruction Derby* series.

PLAY: What is the final decision on including an internal view of the cars, with a dashboard and steering wheel?
PB: Dashboards will be PC only because we're trying to give the PSX version a more arcade feel.

PLAY: Lastly, describe *TD4* in four words.
PB: The ONLY race game.



[Above] Unknown to us last issue, Jaguar's financially disastrous XJ220 makes an appearance in *TD4*.





[Above] A Ford Transit becomes an unforeseen problem after losing the fight against another competitor.

of all the cars from both eras that are signed up already). No split screen mode is planned, but we have been promised by publishers Electronic Arts that there will be a link-up mode. Seven cars were available to play in the current version and we took each one out for a reckless spin.

The vehicle models are quite exquisite, with perfectly smooth, rounded surfaces in the right areas, something best demonstrated on the curvaceous TVR. And a rare level of graphical detail that shows the real cars haven't just been copied – they've been studied. The six current perspectives let you get any angle on your chosen road-hugger as you tear along the country roads, terrorising law abiding traffic on your way to the next checkpoint.

All this dangerous and despicable behaviour doesn't go unnoticed by the authorities, and in each race you'll find marked police cars ambling along, that engage the siren and give chase as you rocket past doing 150mph in your Dodge Viper. The stereo effect is already very good for hearing where behind you the police or other competitors are; enabling you to block them effectively. This comes in especially handy as there is no mirror or "look back" functions yet implemented.

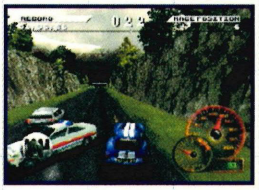
THE BANDIT

It is most certainly not a simulator, with no ability to get the car up onto two wheels or roll it onto its roof, but there are many touches of realism in *TD4* that help it stand taller than the opposition. Brake lights glow warmly. Thick smoking tyre marks paint the road. Sparks jump in the air from cars grinding against each other. Badly damaged vehicles catch fire, and police drivers lose their nerve when they try to follow in high pressure high speed pursuits.

The most surprising thing is that nobody had heard of *Test Drive 4* a short time ago, and out of nowhere comes a stunning early build of the code that makes you stop and think that the well known racing giants could suddenly have a major fight on their hands.



[Above] It is incredible to see that *Test Drive 4* moves at such speed, even when some detailed scenery surrounds the road.



SOFTOGRAPHY

This is the first game Pitbull has made for PlayStation (they are ex-Destruction Derby coders).

WARHAMMER

IF THE THOUGHT OF SCREAMING YOUR HEAD OFF, CHARGING DOWN A HILL BRANDISHING A WHOPPING GREAT SWORD, AND GLEEFULLY HACKING CHUNKS OUT OF AN OPPOSING ARMY SOUNDS APPEALING, THEN THIS IS FOR YOU...

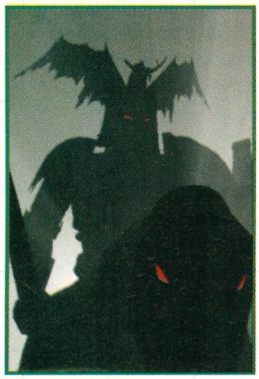
Written By Damian Butt

It's war! Once again

it's time for people with far too much time on their hands to do battle with orcs goblins, and in this PlayStation sequel to *Shadow of the Horned Rat*, the undead. *Warhammer* was a critical success on PSX, and this very magazine gave it a respectable 82% in issue 14. The only problems seemed to be a definite lack of graphical finesse, and an overly complicated control method; created by necessity of using the same functions as the PC version (which of course has many different keys). PlayStation programmer Andy Kerridge explains...

"As many of the original PC features were kept. What we ended up with was a complex system based around the four buttons on the pad. There were lots of layers, which I had a lot of trouble with. I wanted the PSX version to be accessible. In *Dark Omen*, there's never more than two functions on each button, and the X button is always execute."

The enemies in Warhammer 2: Dark Omen have now changed dramatically, and although initially you are fighting the same green warty hordes as in the first game, this soon makes way for an undead army of skeletons, mummies and zombies (who actually climb out of the ground before attacking!). You command a bunch of mercenaries charged with repelling the undead and discovering the source of the evil.





[Above] Before you take on a new mission, you can check out every aspect of your forces in the spells/items book.

ORCS-A-LORDY!

Dark Omen is a PlayStation specific title and not just a PC port. The clumsy control interface from the original has now been replaced with an active cursor which changes depending on the circumstances and which unit you are highlighting, and there's also a neat display panel in the bottom right of the screen which keeps constant tabs on what's happening. It's still not as simple as the point 'n' click action of *C&C*, but it's a step in the right direction, and anyone bogged down with the first game will praise the developers for listening to their comments.



[Above] Archers are essential to success in *Dark Omen* because they can be miles away but still inflict heavy damage.



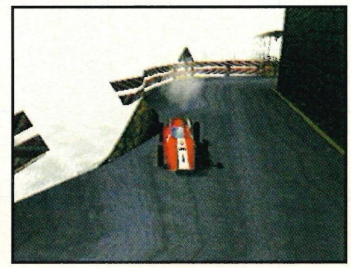
[Above] The new character portraits are rendered in 3-D as opposed to 2-D in the first game. Here some magic is about to be cast.

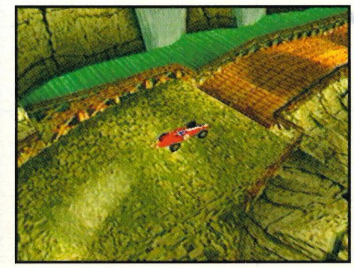
"Great news is that *Dark Omen* will feature a two player link-up mode, which is perfect for this style of game..."

I'M FEELING SUPERSONIC

SUPERSONIC RACERS WAS WARMLY REVIEWED IN PLAY AND EVEN TODAY WE STILL GET TOGETHER FOR A FOUR PLAYER TUSSLE WHEN DEADLINES PERMIT. THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THE WAY THE LITTLE CARTOON BUGGIES SWERVE AND SLIDE AROUND THE TIGHT WINDING COURSES, AND THE VAST OPPORTUNITY TO STUFF YOUR MATES OFF CLIFFS, THAT ALWAYS ENDEARS IT TO A PLAY MULTI-PLAYER SESSION.

IT WAS WITH GREAT INTEREST THEN THAT MINDSCAPE TOLD US OF THE SEQUEL, *SUPERSONIC RACERS 2XS*, ARRIVING IN OCTOBER. THE NEW GAME HAS LESS CARTOONY CARS, BUT THE SAME WACKY COURSES. AND FROM THE VERSION WE PLAYED AT MINDSCAPE, THE DEVELOPERS HAVE ALSO WORKED ON IMPROVING THE SENSE OF DEPTH, SO THAT WHAT WAS ONCE FLAT, NOW TAKES ON THE THRILLS OF A ROLLERCOASTER RIDE. *2XS* CLAIMS TO HAVE 32 TRACKS AND A HOST OF NEW CARS, AND JUDGING BY THE INORDINATE AMOUNT OF TIME WE SPENT PLAYING IT, INSTEAD OF LOOKING AT *DARK OMEN*, THE FOUR PLAYER MODE REMAINS A WINNER. LOOK FOR A REVIEW SOON IN PLAY.





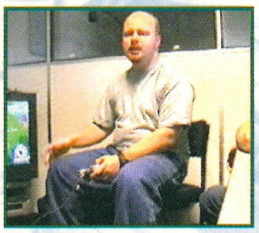
Blueprint

Publisher: Mindscape
Developer: Mindscape
% Complete: 75%
Expected Release Date: November '97
Origin: UK
No of Players: 1-2 (link)

2: DARK OMEN



[Above] The new simplified control interface means you can click on the banner of your unit and instantly take command. Use the cursor as you would in *C&C*.



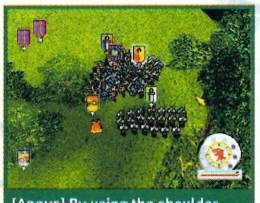
"The control panel gives you all the information you need. The bottom is a muscle bar which allows you to pump up individual units. When fully pumped up they are stronger. The next one above that is the cycle of magic and this shows how many magic points you have and can use per cycle. You can only use certain spells if you have enough magic points."

MONSTER MASH

The first thing to say about the early version we saw at Mindscape's headquarters just outside of Brighton is that the graphics have been improved significantly. Now, you get detailed armies of animated men, lush battlefields of grass, crops and mountains, and proper shading to enable troops to hide from the enemy.

"You can actually see the hills in this version because of the real time shadows, and this helps to enforce the realism. We have also improved the character portraits which come up when you issue a command. In the first game these mini-movies were converted from the PC and were limited by the PCs at the time. The PlayStation ones are 24-bit colour running at 25fps, and they are also in 3-D, which makes them far more lifelike. The characters also now tell you why they cannot do things. Instead of just saying "I cannot," they explain why and this is far more user-friendly."

And it is certainly true that *Dark Omen* is a more accessible game, although we still felt that the control system needed some more playtesting. In particular, the drunken way the camera lurched about if you used the cursor to scroll around the landscape was very off-putting. It is admirable though that so many independently moving sprites can be on-screen at once with no hint of slowdown. That's more than can be said for *C&C*.



[Above] By using the shoulder buttons you can zoom in or rotate around your troops. At the magnified view you can see individual swords clashing.

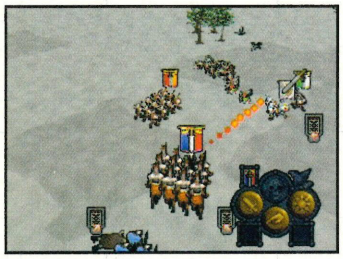
The other great news is that *Dark Omen* will feature a two player link-up mode, which is perfect for this style of game and gives each player a certain number of units according to the amount of cash allocated, from which they can buy any type of unit.

Warhammer 2: Dark Omen still has about two month's work to go before it is ready for release, but already it surpasses the original In every way. Of course now the superior *Warcraft 2* is out in the shops, but is more simplistic, and the developers of *Dark Omen* hope to win console players back into the fold with the game's great depth and heritage. Look for a review in a few months.

YOU DIRTY RAT

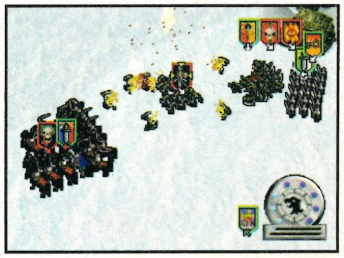
THE DEVELOPERS OF *DARK OMEN* ARE PRETTY DAMN PROUD OF THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE IMPROVED ON THE ORIGINAL GAME AND MADE IT FAR EASIER TO PLAY ON THE CONSOLE. IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT IN THE 11 MONTHS SINCE THE RELEASE OF *SHADOW OF THE HORNED RAT* THEY HAVE COME UP WITH ALL SORTS OF NEW WAYS OF BEEFING UP THE GAME ENGINE, AND FOR THE DEDICATED ENTHUISIAST, HERE'S A LIST OF THE MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO GAMES.

SHADOW OF THE HORNED RAT



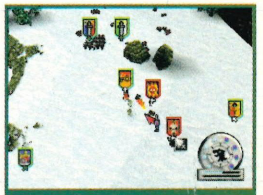
- NO SHADOW EFFECTS
- NO ADDED LIGHTING
- NO PARTICLE LIGHTING SYSTEM
- TERRAIN HAS NO EFFECT ON MEN
- 2-D LINE-OF-SIGHT
- 2-D TARGETING/PROJECTILE SYSTEM
- BATTLES AT 15FPS
- 2-D CHARACTER PORTRAITS
- ANIMATIONS IN 256 COLOURS
- SPEECH IN ENGLISH ONLY
- SINGLE PLAYER ONLY
- NO EXTRA MISSIONS

DARK OMEN

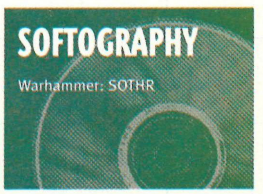


- REALISTIC SHADOW EFFECTS
- REAL TIME 3-D LIGHTING
- NEW PARTICLE LIGHTING
- MANY DIFFERENT TERRAINS HAVE AN EFFECT
- TRUE 3-D LINE-OF-SIGHT
- 3-D TARGETING/ PROJECTILE SYSTEM
- BATTLES AT 30FPS
- 3-D REAL TIME CHARACTERS
- ANIMATIONS IN 16 MILLION COLOURS
- FRENCH, GERMAN, ENGLISH
- TWO PLAYER LINK-UP MODE ADDED
- EXTRA MISSIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE

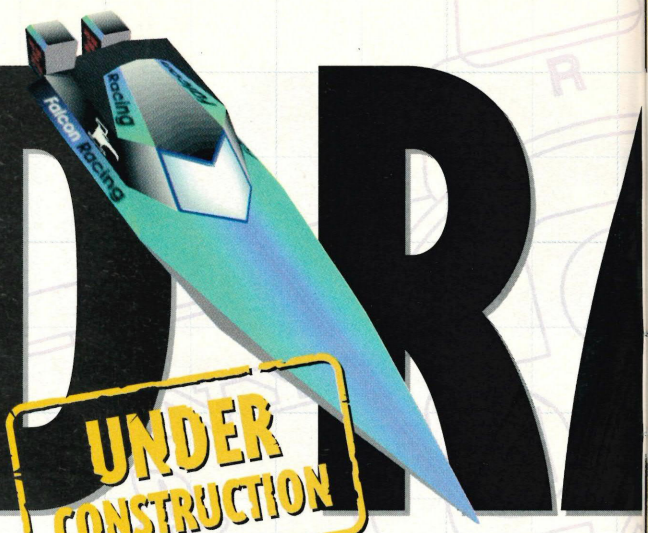




[Above] Projectile weapons are very important in gaining a strategic advantage. You have one big cannon in your arsenal.



RAPID RA



UNDER CONSTRUCTION

FIRST BASKETBALL, THEN PORSCHES, AND NOW BOATS – JUST WHAT SECRETS HAVE SONY'S INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM GOT UP THEIR SLEEVES THIS TIME?

Written By Damian Butt

White water *Wipeout.*

That's the first thing that goes through your mind when you see Sony's *Rapid Racer* running for the first time. It's *Wipeout* with waves, and you even control your powerboat using the shoulder buttons to ease yourself into the corners. The initial similarities with the Psygnosis sci-fi racer are obvious, but then you realise that the SCEE internal team has programmed *Rapid Racer* entirely in the PlayStation's high resolution mode – and it looks fabulous! Suddenly the Nintendo 64 doesn't look quite as advanced.

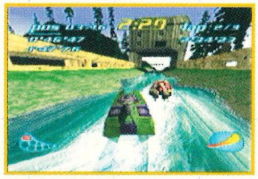
Rapid Racer is the first of the two speedboat games we know about (the other being *Powerboat* from Interplay) and it is also the closest to completion. It was one of the games of the E3 show in Atlanta and since then, Sony has shown us a more complete version which played well and looked even better.

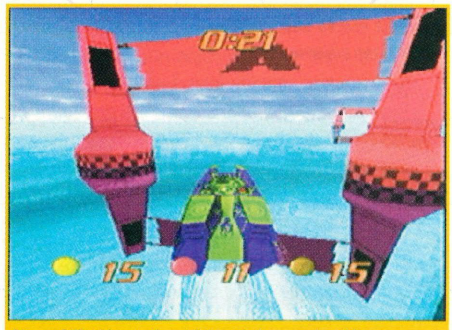
Running at an ultra smooth 50fps on a PAL machine and in high res, *Rapid Racer* hammers across the waves with great aplomb, and although the water effects aren't as impressive as, say *Wave Race* on the N64, later levels introduce ferocious rapids, rocky areas amid raging currents, and even hellish rivers of lava (realism takes a back seat here).



[Above] Two speedboats, one a catamaran, clash with each other approaching a left bend into a tight chicane. This could almost be on an N64.







[Above] The bizarre time trial mode has you bombing through multi-coloured gates in order to earn upgrades.

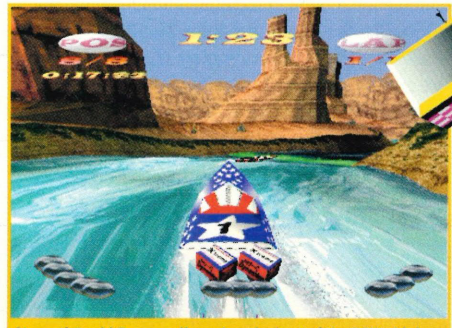
"Suddenly the Nintendo 64 doesn't look quite as advanced!"

TIED IN KNOTS

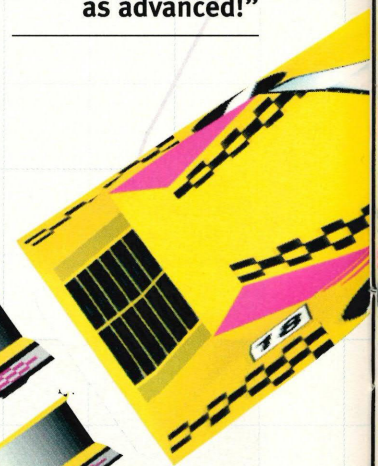
Each of the ten speedboats is a well detailed polygon model, and unlike the team's previous

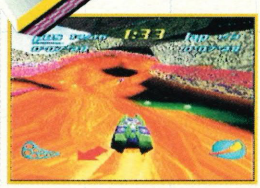


[Above] The detail is magnificent, and here you can see two gorgeous polygon boats clashing on the lava level.



[Above] *Rapid Racer* really makes the best of the PSX's high resolution mode and the level of detail is truly astounding.





Blueprint

Publisher: Sony
Developer: Sony
% Complete: 60%
Expected Release Date: October '97
Origin: UK
No of Players: 1-2 (split)

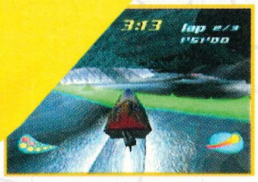
ACER



[Above] Ripping through the lava course, your speedboat is momentarily propelled into the air by an unexpected wave. This is more like it.

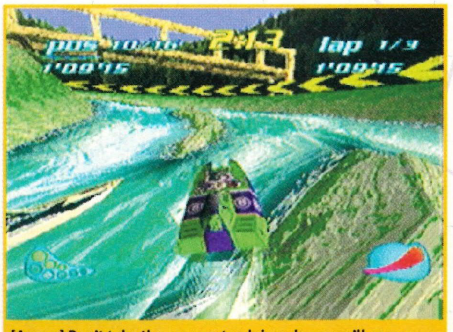
effort, *Porsche Challenge*, they are all different looking, and in some cases even have multiple hulls. The number of courses is set at 18 (which includes night time, mirror and bonus areas), but in a clever twist, the developers have included a random track generator which kicks in once the others have been roundly whipped. This apparently produces up to 256,000 variations of curves, textures and water surfaces, but to be honest – who the hell is going to test that? Surely after the first hundred they are all going to merge into one like the ancient game *Explorer* on the Spectrum 48k, which boasted over a billion levels. It's the quality that counts chaps.

Rapid Racer is a cool idea and a

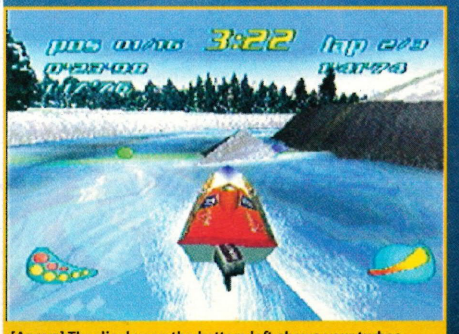








[Above] Don't take the corners too leisurely or you'll come aground and lose precious time.

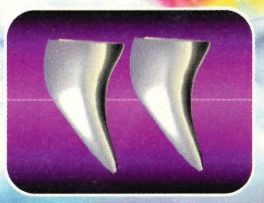


[Above] The display on the bottom left shows your turbos and these can be used to power across the rock on the right.

POINTS MEAN PRIZES

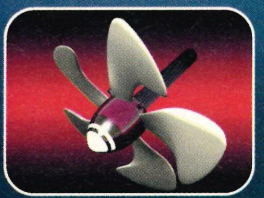
Winning race after race doesn't just bring adulation from your peers, you also get the chance to upgrade your speedboat in many ways. So far we know you can add more beefy engines, propellers and a foil, but there may be more options for the final version. The more powerful your craft, the more chance you have of battling against the stronger currents of the later levels.







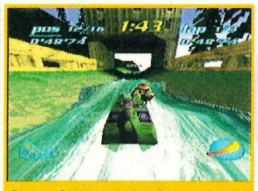






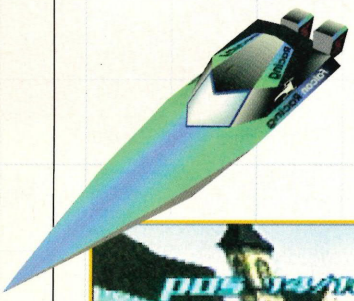
ABSOLUTE POWER

Rapid Racer contains ten powerboats, each with different power and handling settings, and like *Porsche Challenge*, each has its own distinct character which influences their behaviour in the race. There is even talk of being able to save your characters from *Porsche Challenge*, and then load them into *Rapid Racer*.



[Above] You can clearly see the wake of the two racers in this shot and your craft will be buffeted by the extra turbulence if you try to slipstream your opponents.

logical progression after a standard racing game such as *Porsche Challenge*. The water effect is good; comprising of patterns which ooze together in groups creating the illusion of a liquid surface. The only problem is that the waves are not that convincing and although the boats 'bob' on the water, you don't get a feeling of powering through huge waves at 50 knots. The best moments though are when you pitch your craft over the edge of a waterfall and then crash to the torrent below. Hopefully many of the levels will have more of these moments to give the sensation of a non-stop Alton Towers theme park ride!



RIVER WILD

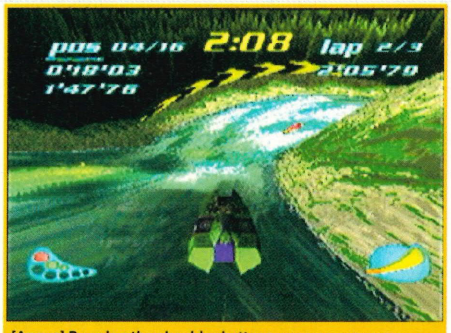
The multi-player mode is split screen only (should have been a link-up) which can be played in either horizontal or vertical modes and it works like a dream. Slowdown is a thing of the past, but it should be noted that if you play the game in the first person mode, you will be sick. I'm not joking.

And what would a racing game be without a thumping soundtrack? *Rapid Racer*'s comes courtesy of Apollo 440 who produced exclusive tracks for the game, all of which fit the mood perfectly. No doubt Sony will be releasing this as a separate music CD, or perhaps you will be able to play them through your PlayStation without loading the game as well?

Rapid Racer will have all of Sony's marketing muscle behind it, and looks to be a challenging game which actually makes use of the currents in the water to give you better racing lines. From a short playtest we give *RR* the thumbs up. But will PlayStation owners thirsting for *Rage Racer 2* or *Wipeout 3097* make do with a slower water-bound alternative? Join us for the full review soon.



[Above] Later levels introduce huge rapids and walls of water that can induce sea sickness if you play *Rapid Racer* in the first person mode.

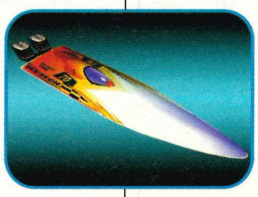


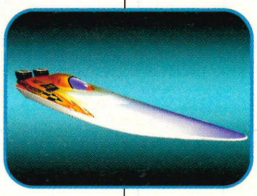
[Above] By using the shoulder buttons, you can ease your boat into the right angle for a swift exit of this sweeping right hander. Just like *Wipeout 2097!*

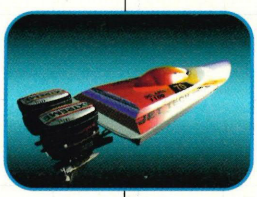


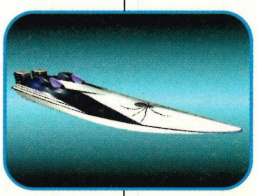
[Above] The vertical split screen mode allows you to see further in the distance, but we prefer the horizontal mode. There is no slowdown in either mode though.

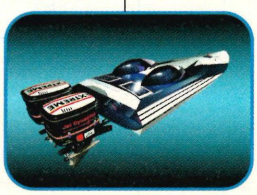












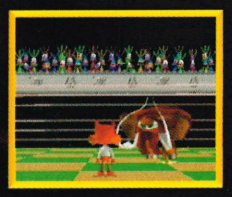
SOFTOGRAPHY

Porsche Challenge
Total NBA
Total NBA '97



"...classic gaming action...an absolute riot!" Total PlayStation





BUBSY 3D





"...a truly inter-dimensional affair"

PLAY MAGAZINE

BUBSY 3D

ACCOLADE

PlayStation

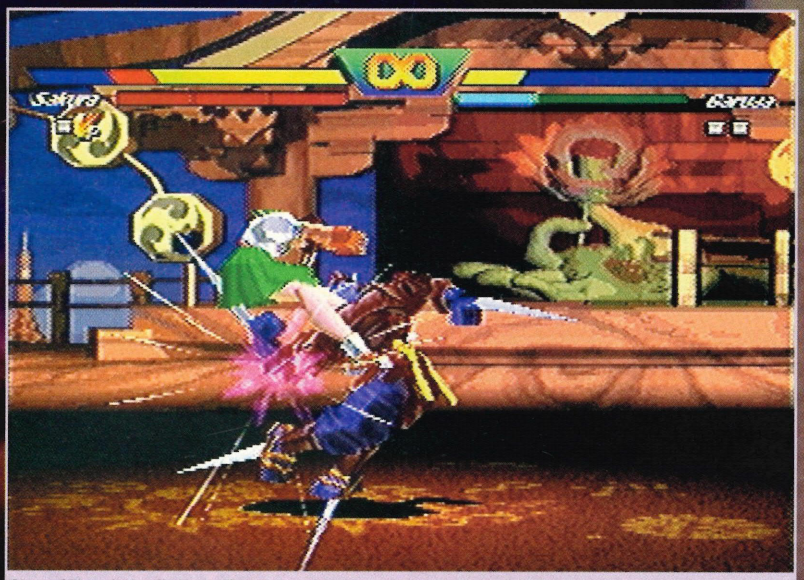
Publisher: Telstar Fun & Games
The Studio, 62-64 Bridge Street, Walton-On-Thames, Surrey KT12 1AP
Tel: 01932 222232 Fax: 01932 252702
Email: telstar@dial.pipex.com

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"*Street Fighter* is back and it's bloody brilliant!"



[Above] Auditions for the Fantastic Four movie were very competitive. Flame on!



[Above] There isn't a limb or orifice that Garuda doesn't have a spike concealed in. Hope he remembers to wipe them after use.

PLAY CLASSIC

STREET FIGHT

WHAT, ANOTHER *STREET FIGHTER* GAME? WE'VE HAD *II*, *TURBO*, *SUPER*, *ZERO*, *ALPHA* AND *III*. SURELY ENOUGH IS ENOUGH? NOPE – YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHING YET!

Written By Loz Cooper

There's a small black spot on my left thumb. A little circle of bruised and probably rotting flesh which is evidence of a recent battering. You know what? I don't care. That circle of necrotic tissue means only one thing. There's a new *Street Fighter* game on the PlayStation, and those raised corners on the D-pad are going to make everyone suffer!

In keeping with the tradition of recent *Street Fighter* games, it's got a stupidly long title – *Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha*. (The 'alpha' part of the title is actually the ancient Greek character, but I couldn't find the 'long dead language' button on my computer). By the time you've read all of the title the game's loaded, and it's instantly recognisable as a *Street Fighter* game.

Ryu and Ken have prime real estate on the character select screen. Vega (Bison in the non-Japanese versions) is still the big bad guy in stupid shoulder pads. Dragon punches and fireballs are flung with the familiar pad movements. And the more recent additions to the game like combos and power attacks all work as expected. The twist? This time, it's in 3-D. Welcome to the 20th century, guys!



[Above] Headmaster Zangief takes Sakura to task for wearing non-regulation knickers under her school uniform.

[Above] The spinning bird kick is just as effective in 3-D as it was in 2-D.

PSYCHO CRUSHER!

Capcom has resisted transforming its flagship franchise into polygons for a long time; spending its time putting more and more detail and frames of 2-D animation into the series instead.

This habit has now reached mad new heights in the *Street Fighter III* arcade machine, where something as simple as a fireball has as many as 20 frames, and this means that all those Nintendo 64 owners begging for even one decent beat-'em-up on their expensive machine just aren't gonna get *SFIII*, 'cause it'll never fit on a cartridge. Sony 1, Nintendo nil!



PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Capcom
Supplier: The Video Game Centre on 01202 527314
Price: £79.99
Release date: Out now (import)
UK release: November/Xmas

ONE PLAYER MULTIPLE PLAYERS

WHO'RE YOU, KEN?

Familiar faces mingle with the new gang in *Street Fighter EX*. Some of them are cool, and some are complete wasters! Who should you be fighting as to avoid social ridicule?



Chun Li

First Appeared: *Street Fighter II*

Speciality: Spinning Bird Kick

An undercover cop seeking to avenge the death of her father. *SF EX* restores her original costume to top effect.



C Jack

First Appeared: *Street Fighter EX*

Speciality: Bat Attack

We don't know what this Clint lookalike's first name is – 'Cactus' has been suggested. But he wields a mean bat and can give you a big hand!



Blair Dame

First Appeared: *Street Fighter EX*

Speciality: Flash Kick

When not grinning like a death mask and doing legal stuff, Tony Blair's wife puts on thigh boots and a leotard and kicks some ass!



D Dark

First Appeared: *Street Fighter EX*

Speciality: Mines

This special forces dude likes to lob explosives at his opponents and lives in a sewer, which probably explains the gasmask. Cowabunga!



Dhalsim

First Appeared: *Street Fighter II*

Speciality: Yoga Flame

Like a handy bendy Gandhi, Dhalsim relies on the relaxing properties of yoga to stretch his limbs by several feet for long range attacks.



Garuda

First Appeared: *Street Fighter EX*

Speciality: Fun With Spikes

We don't know much about this skull-faced bloke, except that he's got a lot of sharp spikes in him that could have someone's eye out (probably Kairi's).



Gouki

First Appeared: *Street Fighter Alpha*

Speciality: Air Fireball

An evil fighter who tried to tempt Ryu to the dark side in *SF Alpha*. Gouki changed his name from Akuma, probably to dodge council tax.



Guile

First Appeared: *Street Fighter II*

Speciality: Sonic Boom

He's been missing in action for the last few games, but now the man who keeps Wella Shockwaves styling gel in business is back!

ER EX PLUS α





[Above] Ms Hammer-trousers treats Dhalsim to a neck massage that even his powers of yoga won't be able to straighten!



[Above] Gasmask fetish boy Dark does something unmentionable to Zangief. No wonder he looks annoyed!

Still, there are limits to how far you can take traditional animation, because somebody's got to sit down and draw the buggers, and all those animators are always whingeing on about needing money for food and stuff. Bring the game into 3-D though, and once you've designed the characters, all you need are a couple of backroom guys who basically get to play with digital Action Men until they've got the perfect psycho crusher animation worked out. Sorted!

The great thing about *SF EX* (cool abbreviation) is that if you're already familiar with any of the series, from the first version of *Street Fighter II* onwards, you can get straight into the new game without needing to learn any new moves.

The old characters (Ryu, Ken, Chun Li, Guile, Zangief and Dhalsim) play pretty much as they always have, with a few minor changes. For instance, Ryu and Ken's hurricane kicks have been toned down a lot, and Chun Li's fireball, which she picked up in *SFII Turbo*, seems to have disappeared (or at least, nobody could pull it off). Apart from that, it's business as usual, so those boring sods who always choose Ken so that they can do non-stop flaming dragon punches are going to get straight into the action.

Sonic Boom!

There are 19 characters who can be selected to start with and another four who are tantalisingly present on the selection screen but can only be chosen once certain conditions are met (the game can be set



[Above] Pullum gets the point...



[Above] Dhalsim's still downing those hot curries!

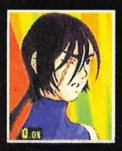


Hokuto

First Appeared: *Street Fighter EX*

Speciality: Neck Breaker

Hokuto likes to dress in bushido style, with big baggy pants that somehow don't slow her down in the slightest!



Kairi

First Appeared: *Street Fighter EX*

Speciality: Dragon Punch

A clone of Ken and Ryu, Kairi has lost an eye in a similar way to old Sagat. Must be an occupational hazard!



Ken

First Appeared: *Street Fighter*

Speciality: Flaming Dragon Punch

Ryu's old friend, sparring partner and rival, Ken lives up his street fighting victories with booze, babes and big cars. Sounds good to us!



Darun Mister

First Appeared: *Street Fighter EX*

Speciality: Hammer Punch

A wrestler like Zangief, Darun's distinguishing feature is a very strange moustache. And his barrel-sized fists.



Pullum Purna

First Appeared: *Street Fighter EX*

Speciality: Spiral Arrow

Full of eastern promise! Pullum must have gone to school with Cammy from *Super Street Fighter*, as many of her moves are the same.



Ryu

First Appeared: *Street Fighter*

Speciality: Fireball

Along with Ken, who shares his fighting style, Ryu is the best all-round fighter. He's also incredibly cool!



Sakura

First Appeared: *Street Fighter Alpha*

Speciality: Dashing Dragon Punch

Sakura is a Japanese schoolgirl who's got a massive crush on Ryu. She wants to prove her love by beating him up!



Skullomania

First Appeared: *Street Fighter EX*

Speciality: Cannonball Attack

Okay, so he looks bloody stupid decked out like that. But he's got some great attacks and can move really quickly!



Allen Snider

First Appeared: *Street Fighter EX*

Speciality: Copying Ryu and Ken

Snider is yet another clone of the original stars of *Street Fighter*, dragon punches and all. Yawn-o!



Vega

First Appeared: *Street Fighter II*

Speciality: Psycho Crusher

Or M Bison in the West. Vega is a psychopathic dictator whose hobbies include crushing all opposition and macrame.



[Above] One of the new fighters added for *Street Fighter EX* is Blair, no relation to Tony. She's a whole lotta woman!



[Above] Power moves, introduced in *Street Fighter Alpha*, are here in *SF EX* as well. Sakura's gonna get hurt...

up so that it automatically saves your status to a memory card).

Two of them are 'evil' versions of regular characters, Ryu and Hokuto, and the others are Cycloid-Beta and Cycloid-Omega, respectively a glowing ghost-like figure and a green wireframe of a human fighter. Their existence isn't a mystery as they're right there on the screen and in the manual, but as nobody can read Japanese we don't know how you access them. (Probably by beating the game on the hardest difficulty level – right, that's easy!)

Apart from the four hidden fighters, ten of the contestants in *SF EX* are totally new, though they often fight like characters from older *Street Fighter* games. Skullomania (who looks bloody stupid but is actually pretty hard) shares a lot of moves with old bogeyman Blanka, and Pullum Purna, who probably tastes great with nan bread, is really Cammy in bigger trousers. Gouki (alias Akuma) and Sakura are the only crossovers from the 2-D Alpha series.

Even though they're now in polygon form, the characters are all instantly recognisable. The look is similar to *Tekken 2*; Capcom sacrificing smoothed-off corners to keep the speed as fast as possible. But the blockiness of the fighters is only noticeable in close-ups, and it's not something you have time to think about during a match anyway.

The backgrounds are a bit disappointing, as they don't have the detail usually found in *Street Fighter* games. Unlike *Fighters Megamix* on the Saturn, at least they rotate around the fighters at the same speed as the ground! They do the job though, and a couple of them have neat lighting effects or, in Dark's sewer stage, water on the ground to splash about in.

Spinning Bird Kick!

So how does *SF EX* play? The answer is... like *Street Fighter*! The *Street Fighter* series has been around for so long because it played so well to begin with, and *SF EX* doesn't muck about with a winning formula. It urinates on *Mortal Kombat* from a great height, and is still a match for games like *Tekken 2* or Sega's *Virtua Fighter* series.

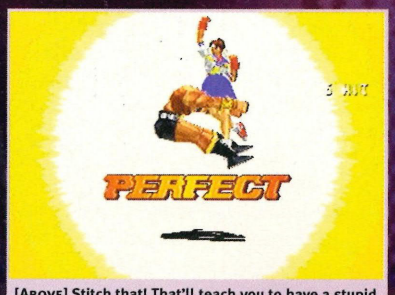
What's missing from *SF EX* is any real use of the third dimension. Apart from when certain moves like throws and piledrivers are used, the camera just tracks from side to side with the fighters.

There aren't any 'dodge' moves, and certainly no *Toshinden*-style rolls. *SF EX* is basically a normal 2-D *Street Fighter* game, only with the fighters made from polygons instead of sprites. This is sort of disappointing, because it would have been cool to have an extra way of dodging attacks, but *Street Fighter* games still play so well it doesn't stop it from being huge fun. All the time the game was up on one of the Play office PlayStations, people couldn't resist having a 'quick go' and leaving 30 minutes later with bleeding thumbs.

Yes, *Street Fighter* is back, and it's still



"Pullum Purna, who probably tastes great with nan bread, is really Cammy in bigger trousers..."



[Above] Stitch that! That'll teach you to have a stupid Salvador Dali moustache.



[Above] Allen is one of the more boring new characters, so he deserves everything he gets.



Zangief

First Appeared: *Street Fighter II*

Speciality: Spinning Piledriver.

If you can master Zangief's piledriver moves, he's lethal. If you can't, he's a lumbering lump with a comedy beard.





ROLL OUT THE BARREL

For total nostalgia, you can call up one of the bonus stages from *Street Fighter II*, only now it's all done with polygons! Highlight the Practice option and press Start, then push Up, Up, Right, Up, Right, Up and Start again. A confirmation message will flash up. Now you can select the Bonus option in Practice mode and test your combat skills against a non-stop stream of barrels!







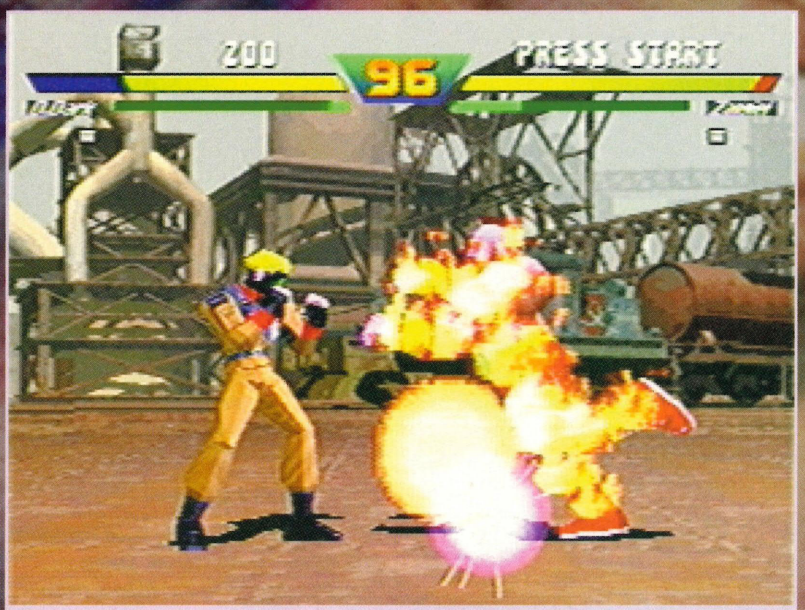
[Above] Finish off an opponent with a power move and you're rewarded with a meteor strike.



[Above] Blanka might not be here, but his moves live on with Skullomania.



[Above] Fireballs now have a cool transparency effect. Sakura gives Garuda a demonstration.



[Above] You cheating git! D Dark can drop mines on the ground, as Zangief has just found out. Whatever happened to the purity of unarmed combat?



[Above] Chun Li faces the man who killed her father. "No, I am your father, Chun Li!"



[Above] Concealed weapons are all the rage with the new characters. Jack whips out his Slugger...



[Above] ...and it's a home run!



[Above] Ken's victory movie proves he's just as smug as he always was!

bloody brilliant! Make the most of it too – *SFIII* dumps almost of all your favourite old fighters in place of a new bunch of lamers, with only Ryu and Ken remaining.

If Capcom has any sense, it'll keep Chun Li, Guile and the rest alive in 3-D on the PlayStation and take advantage of the third dimension in *Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha 2* (if anyone has enough breath in their body to say the name!) This is a top class fighting game. Your move Namco.



[Above] The yogic master's Stretch Armstrong limbs are still as flexible as ever.



[Above] When a fighter throws or grabs an enemy, the camera angle changes so you can see the teeth fly!



PLAY

Looks	●●●●●●●●●●
Sounds	●●●●●●●●●●
Gameplay	●●●●●●●●●●
Value	●●●●●●●●●●
Fireballs	●●●●●●●●●●

PLAYED **91%**

It's absolutely EXcellent!

Alternatively:
Tekken 2 (95%)
Soul Edge (96%)

EXPLOSIVE R

THE ARCADE SPEED BOMB THAT EARNED A PLAY CLASSIC MANY MOONS AGO HAS BEEN UPDATED. WE ASK IF *BURNING ROAD'S* SEQUEL IS TRULY EXPLOSIVE?

Written By Graeme Nicholson

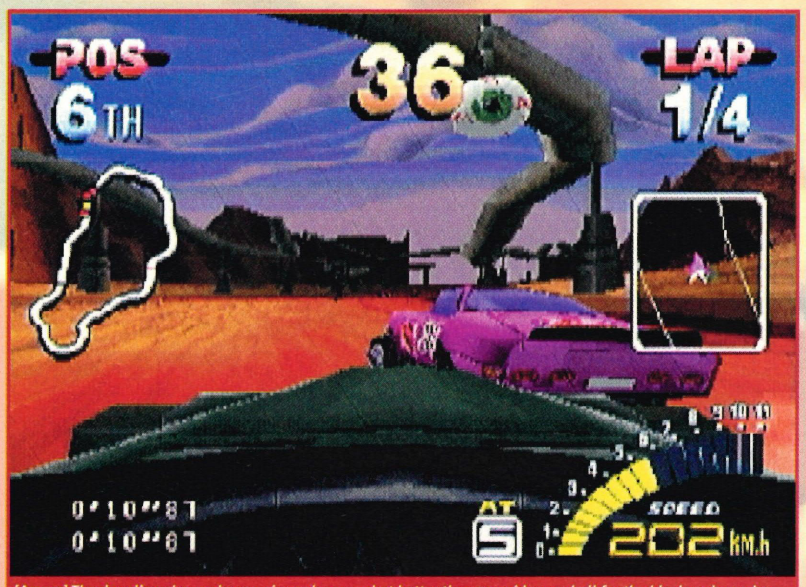
Remember *Burning Road?*

At the time it was noted mainly for its similarity to Sega arcade and home Saturn title, *Daytona*. It was outrageous and flamboyant; sporting some crazy jumps, vivid colours and cars that took a comical amount of damage to the wheels and axles. Well, it's back, in the form of sequel, *Explosive Racing*, and it has a few surprises up its sleeve.

One of the hardest things to master in *Burning Road* was the almost uncontrollable power slides that you entered after a sharp turn. It was all too easy to flick the tail out and carry on for some distance while facing at 90° to the road. Eventually you would damage a back wheel by grinding it along the wall and this would make you slower.

The bad news is that the very same control system has been dragged out of Toka's big drawer of Working Software Routines, dusted off, and hammered firmly into *Explosive Racing*. However, for beginners there is now a rookie control mode, which holds the cars on the road and prevents things from getting out of hand. But it sticks them to the ground like epoxy cement and makes racing so restrictive and uneventful that you are forced to play in old super-slidey mode to retain the element of surprise.

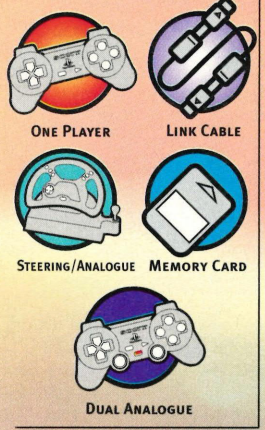


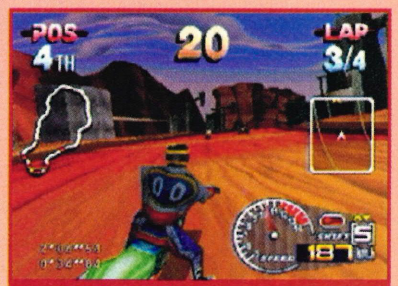


[ABOVE] The dangling charm changes in each car – what better than a squidgy eyeball for the black and spooky Mad Max bonus car?

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: JM Interactive
Customer Support: 01703 650759
Price: £34.99
Release date: 20 September '97





[ABOVE] On the scrambler bike, the rider hangs one foot off the side to steady himself on bends.



[ABOVE] The Chinese track takes you up onto the Great Wall for a quick spin – just like *Moto Racer!*

DYNAMITE

Nobody ever said *Burning Road* was too slow though, and its terrific speed has been successfully recreated here once again. Ever so important for that authentic feeling that makes you believe you are playing on an expensive arcade machine.

The frame rate is high and the movement is smooth. From the familiar, physically accurate charm swinging around inside the car, to the maniac screaming past on his motorbike, *Explosive Racing* has some professional



[ABOVE] Even in the police cruiser the crazy competitors will slam you right into the side. There's no respect for law enforcement these days.

LINK-UP?!

SINCE THE PROBLEMS THAT CROPPED UP WITH *V-RALLY*, AND THE UNSETTLING TREND THAT NEARLY EVERY GAME WHICH INCLUDES A LINK-UP MODE ENDS UP WITHOUT THE FEATURE BEFORE OFFICIAL RELEASE, WE'RE BEING CAREFUL WHAT WE SAY ABOUT GAMES THAT INCLUDE LINK SUPPORT. AT THIS TIME, *EXPLOSIVE RACING* DOES HAVE A LINK MODE, AND JM PUBLISHING SET A COMMENDABLE EXAMPLE BY SENDING US TWO IDENTICAL COPIES TO LET US TEST THIS OUT.

IT WORKS ALMOST AS SMOOTHLY AS THE ONE PLAYER GAME, AND IT'S VERY ENTERTAINING TO SMASH YOUR FRIENDS INTO THE WALLS AND SHOUT EXPLETIVES AT THEM FROM ACROSS THE ROOM, BUT WE SIMPLY CANNOT BE SURE THESE DAYS IF IT WILL BE IN THE FINAL VERSION.



RACING



[Above] It just so happens we have the password that gives you control over a police car... a password that we'll print in next issue's Station Master!

SOMETHING OLD SOMETHING NEW

At a glance, you want to know what *Explosive Racing* has, compared with Burning Road, especially if you already own the first game. Everything in the "OLD" column has been borrowed from Burning Road, everything in the "NEW" column is entirely new to Explosive Racing:

OLD	NEW
90% of the graphics	10% of the graphics
Lightning	Headlights
Rain	Fog
Hard turning	Two more tracks
Wobbly wheels	Six more vehicles
Tacky music	Motorbikes





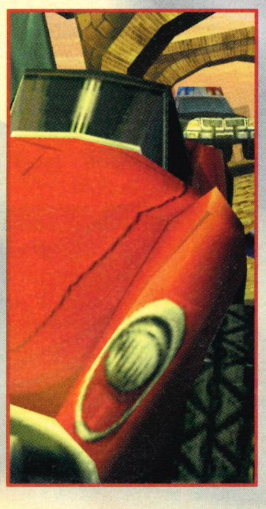
[Above] It's a predefined spin when you smack the edges of the road hard, but it's impressive enough.

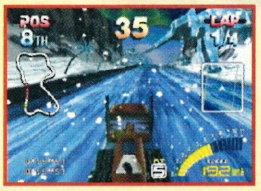


[Above] Here we have the bonus level in which you must get away from a convoy of police cars who try to stop you. Neat idea.



[Above] That annoyingly hard turn in full effect. The back left wheel will now be in a sorry state.





graphics. That said, the vehicle models are a bit too plain for some, with large flat polygons and a brash, chunky design, but this is down to personal taste and they are by no means ugly.

With the same controls and similar cars, you could be forgiven for thinking *Explosive Racing* has severely limited longevity, especially for those who have been through the ride once before with *Burning Road*. But the development team has foreseen this and added a few new toys to play with.

TNT

For a start, you now have six vehicles available from the very beginning, three of which are motorbikes! This compares well with the four cars in *Burning Road*, and there are at least three more you can win and keep. That invigorating cockpit view works with the bikes as well, giving you an individual set of 3-D handle-bars and dials for each one, much like *Moto Racer* which Electronic Arts has yet to release.



[Above] Taking weight and road holding into account, you really don't want to be pitting your little sports car against a truck.

Reaching these speeds on the frail frame of a motorbike is an intense experience, and on the chase views you'll even see the driver bend his knee out on the corners like a pro.

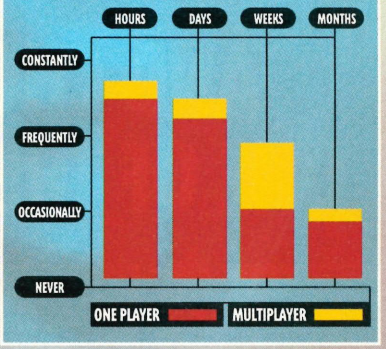
The other most important improvement is the number of tracks, five, which can also be raced in mirror and reverse modes if you keep winning those championships. They are good looking and heavily themed in the most clichéd way. From the huge Loch Ness monster matching your speed at one point on the Scotland track, to a giant snowball rolling through the traffic in Antarctica.

On some of these courses you will notice the daylight turning to darkness as time elapses, and at the prompt of a little icon on the display you can turn on the headlights to illuminate the road ahead! It doesn't really affect the gameplay, but it's fun.

With the new £34.99 price tag, *Explosive Racing* represents value for money if speed is what you're after, but beware – it still plays very like the original *Burning Road* even with all the new bells and whistles.

"Value for money, if speed is what you're after!"

LONG TERM PLAY...



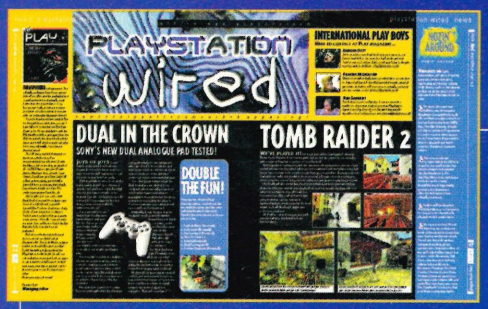
PLAY

Looks	7
Sounds	3
Gameplay	6
Value	7
Castrol	7

PLAYED 82%

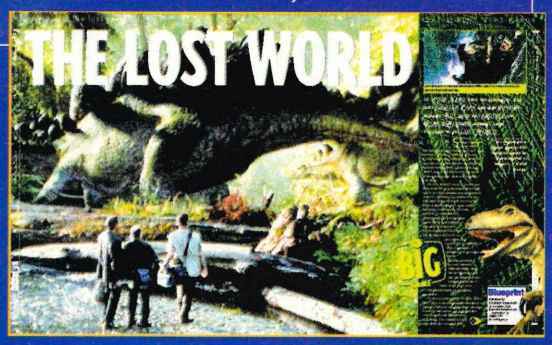
Quick and playable racing, but not all new.

ALTERNATIVELY:
Burning Road (90%)
Peak Performance (85%)



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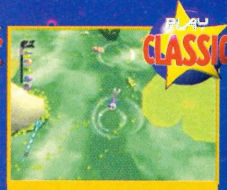


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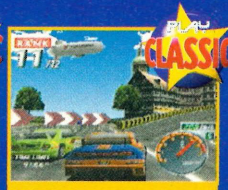
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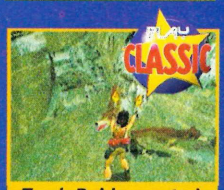
Soul Blade – rated 96% in PLAY!



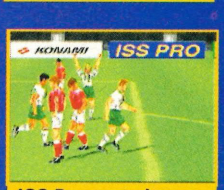
Micro Machines V3 – rated 92% in PLAY!



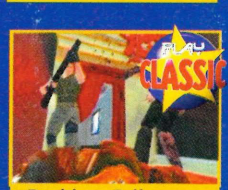
Rage Racer – rated 94% in PLAY!



Tomb Raider – rated 94% in PLAY!



ISS Pro – rated 84% in PLAY!



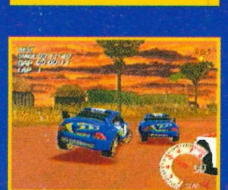
Resident Evil – rated 95% in PLAY!



Super Puzzle Fighter – rated 90% in PLAY!



Syndicate Wars – rated 85% in PLAY!



V-Rally – rated 87% in PLAY!



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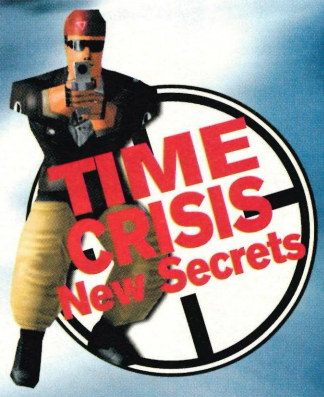
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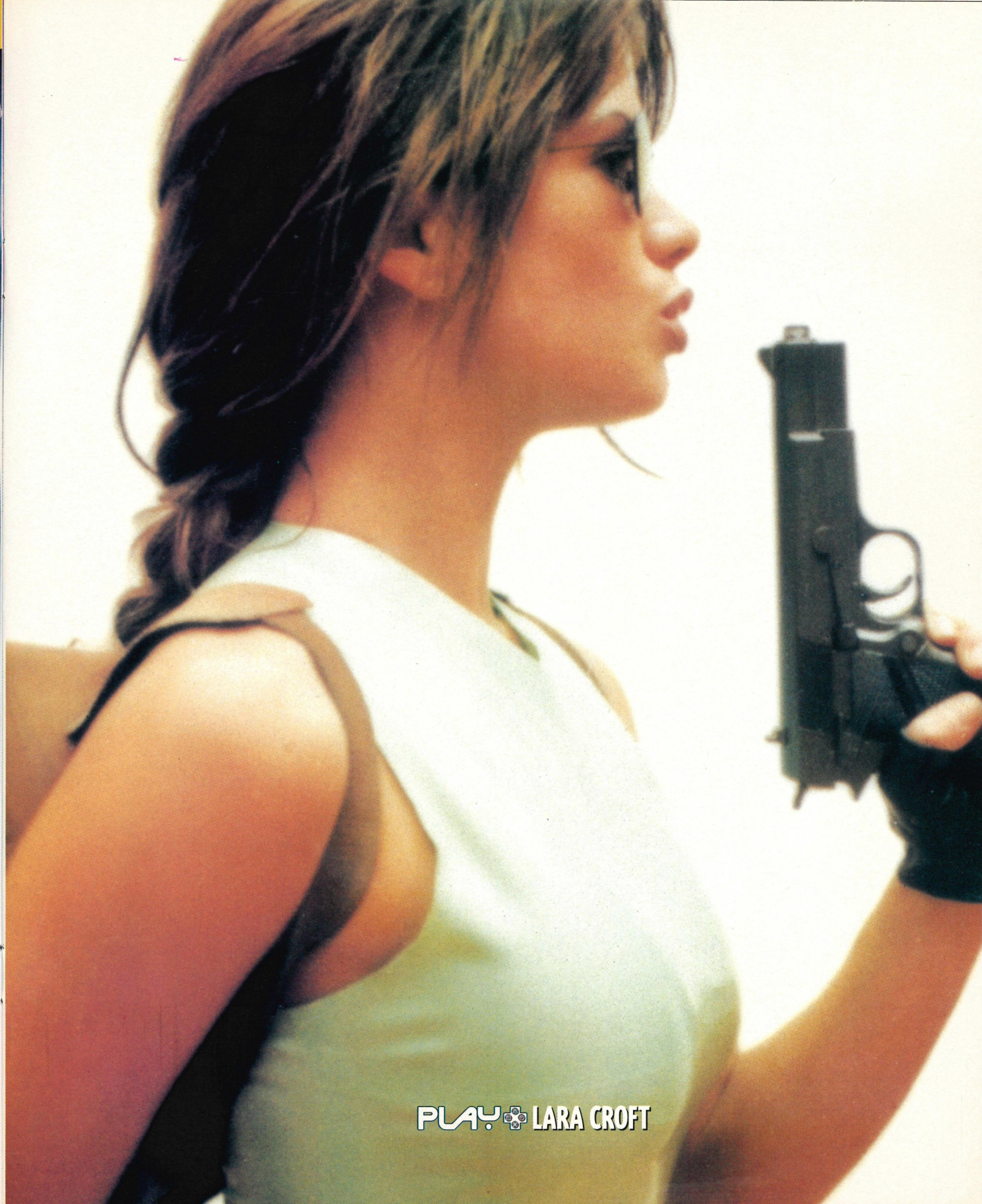
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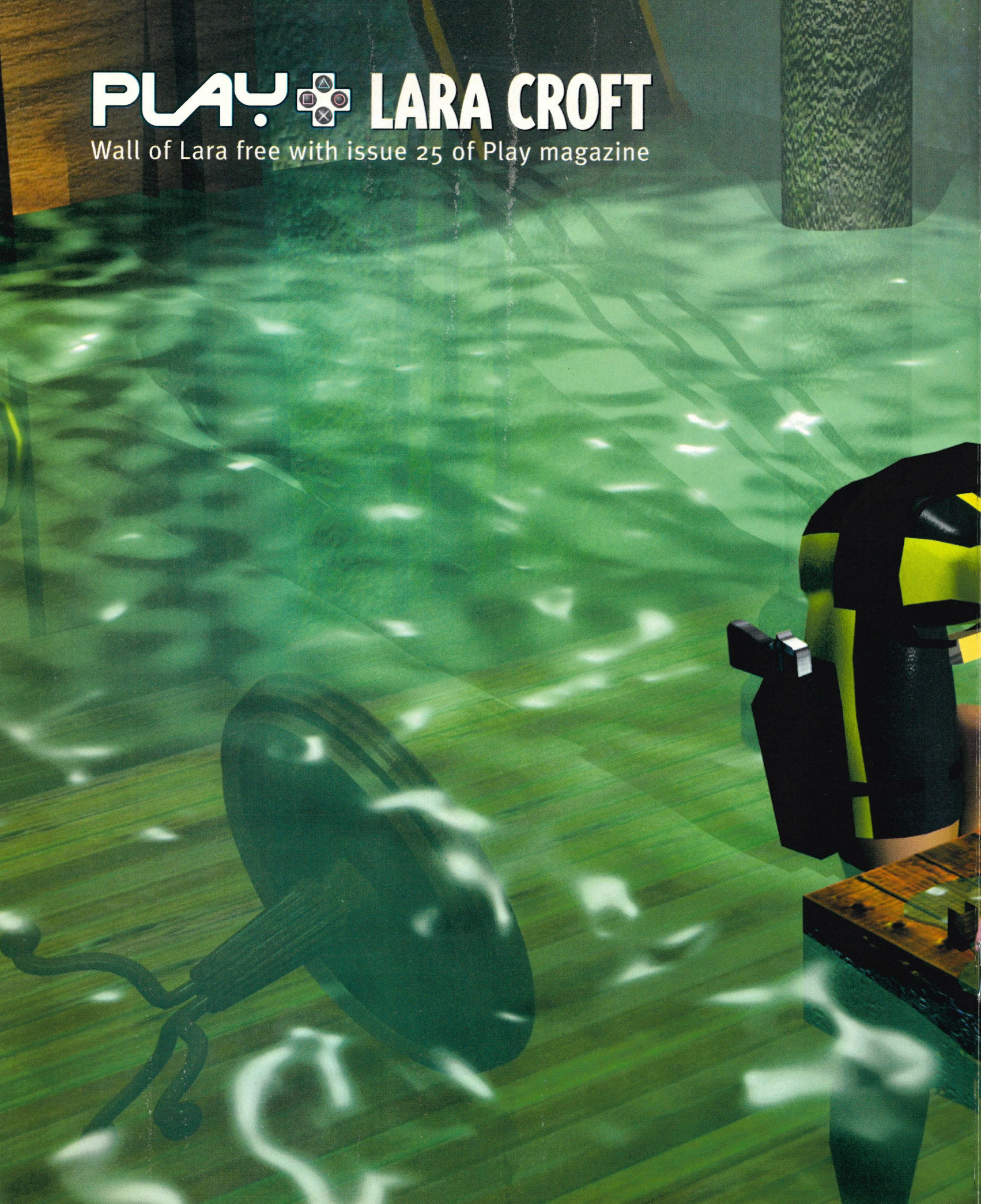
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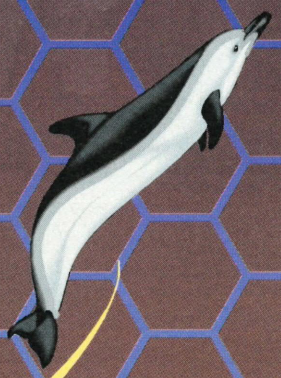

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KICK OFF '97

CAN MAXIS RETAIN THE CLASSIC PLAYABILITY OF THE ORIGINAL KICK OFF, YET GIVE IT ENOUGH GRAPHICAL POLISH TO COMPETE WITH THE CURRENT CROP OF FOOTBALL GAMES?

Written By Tom Sargent

The *Kick Off* name is synonymous with simplistic yet addictive gameplay. The first two games were easy to play, but extremely difficult to master. It took weeks of practice to learn how to get to grips with the control system, mainly because the football wasn't attached to the boot of your player.

It was quite surprising, therefore, to discover that the latest version is another 'sticky-ball' variant and not a particularly good one at that. The tawdry player movement gets your hackles up straight away and during play there are some painfully long pauses while stray players lethargically makes there way into relevant positions.

The moves themselves are pretty good, which makes the sluggish animations all the more annoying. Back-heels, headers, overhead kicks, long lobs and chips are all present and correct, all of which make good use of the facia buttons on the controller.

It's a bit too easy to hack other players down though and if two or three of your players are near the ball when you attempt a slide tackle, all three will tumble over; looking like some kind of orgy, and take an age to get up again



[ABOVE] There are a colossal range of teams to choose from, suffice to say there's over 5200 players stored in there!



[ABOVE] The Argentine striker connects beautifully to the long cross from the winger and bang this in on the volley.



[ABOVE] The options include: Friendly, Cup and League (both customisable), Practice and a Save Game facility.

"Tawdry player animations get your hackles up straight away..."

DUG-OUT

It's not all bad news, however. *Kick Off '97*'s a reasonably fun game if you can forgive the few niggles mentioned above. Neat passes and crosses can easily be pulled-off and the game flows along at a reasonable pace thanks to a sprint option.

A real plus point is the sheer number of domestic and international teams to choose from. There are international or Premiership sides (all with real names and recent signings), 14 European Championships, 15 European Leagues and countless cups and tournaments too.

There's even an option to customise your very own cups and leagues, which certainly adds to the longevity of the game. At the end of the day, and bearing in mind it has been endorsed by three motion-captured Arsenal stars, this is no *Soccer '97*.

Kick Off '97 just isn't polished enough to stand out from the crowd and consequently, we feel that it may well struggle to compete with some of the recent hot-shots. The faults are all points we brought up at preview stage, and sadly very few have been corrected. Very average indeed.

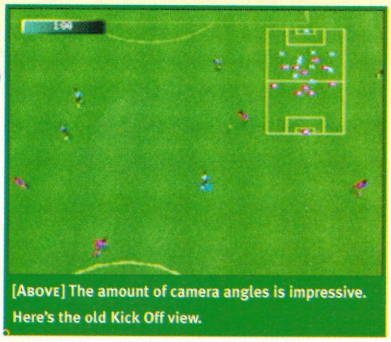


PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Maxis
Customer support: 0171 5051500
Price: £44.99
Release date: 26 September '97

ONE PLAYER MULTIPLE PLAYERS

MEMORY CARD



[ABOVE] The amount of camera angles is impressive. Here's the old Kick Off view.



[ABOVE] In typical relentless fashion, the German striker tests out the Brazilian keeper's reflexes.

PLAY

LOOKS	5
SOUNDS	4
GAMEPLAY	6
VALUE	7
CARDS	5

PLAYED 68%

Doesn't do the name justice!

ALTERNATIVELY:
ISS PRO (84%)
SOCCER '97 (82%)



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Logic 3

SANGOKU MU (DYNASTY WARRIORS)

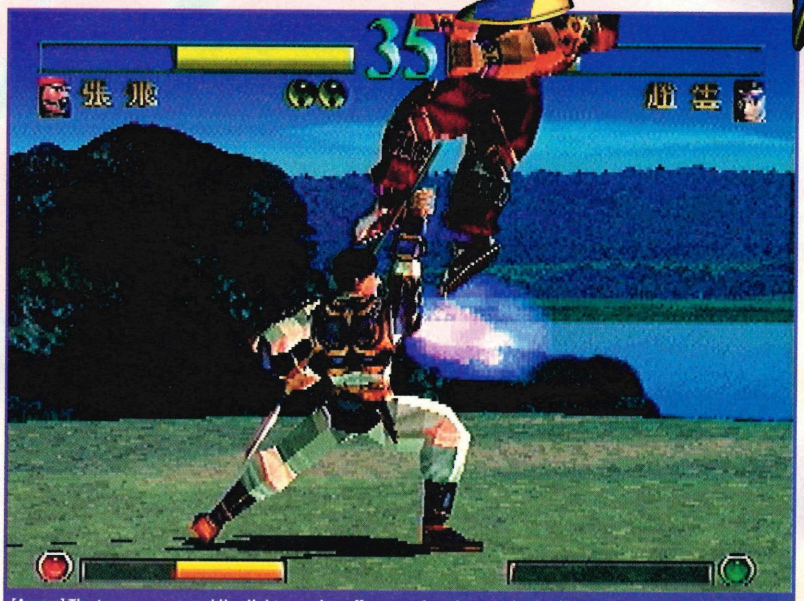
ONE THING WE ARE NEVER SHORT OF WITH THE PLAYSTATION IS FIGHTING GAMES, AND THESE DAYS THE COMPETITION IS TOUGHER THAN EVER. SO HOW WILL THIS BEAT-'EM-UP BABY FARE?

Written By Graeme Nicholson

If someone said you were about to play a game which was a cross between *Tobal 2* and *Soul Blade*, you could be forgiven for getting a little excited, perhaps even letting a small amount of moisture escape from the corner of your mouth. Well, *Dynasty Warriors* is indeed such a game, although whether or not it deserves such an impressive accolade will become clear.

When the programmers behind *Dynasty Warriors* heard that "retro gaming" was coming back, it seems they got the wrong idea. You see, the whole game takes place in third century China, with a plot based on an ancient Chinese legend about a dispute between three colonies. A few members from each colony have gathered to do battle by way of one-on-one combat, and these are your characters.





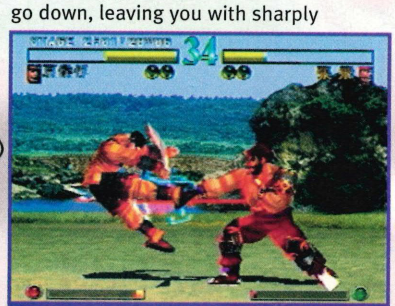
[ABOVE] The transparency and live light sourcing effects can best be seen in the dimmer arenas that are set around dawn or dusk.

WILLPOWER

You get ten theatrically dressed warriors to start out with, and due to the bright, clean high resolution graphics, they look quite stunning. The smallest details on their intricate robes and armour can easily be made out; proving once again the case for more developers to learn this technique and put it into action. The downside of this in *Dynasty Warriors* is that the polygon count has been forced to go down, leaving you with sharply defined texture maps pasted onto rather angular bodies.

In keeping with the third century China yarn, all the weapons you see and use in the game are from that period in history, and they are quite interesting to get to grips with. The style of fighting is also very different from other beat-'em-ups, but the idea is a bit too ambitious. There are only two (two!) attack buttons, with the other two symbol buttons being different types of defensive moves.

The point they are trying to make is that in this type of combat, defence and offence both play an equal part. But what really happens is that you are sadly limited in the amount of moves you can perform or just remember. What length of combo could you recall that uses only two buttons? None of the shoulder buttons are used either, so you can't move in true 3-D like *Tobal 2*, towards or away from the camera. A waste of such visually pleasing surroundings.



[ABOVE] If your opponent pulls a counter move on you by blocking and attacking immediately then your health is really in danger!



[ABOVE] Xu Zhu (don't worry, we have no idea how it's pronounced either) has a devastating hopping attack available when he's angry.

STAMINA

There are three main types of defence. When both players attack at exactly the same time, you get a spark as the weapons clash and recoil from each other. If you block the other player's thrusting move, where they stab forward at you,

PLAY INFORMATION

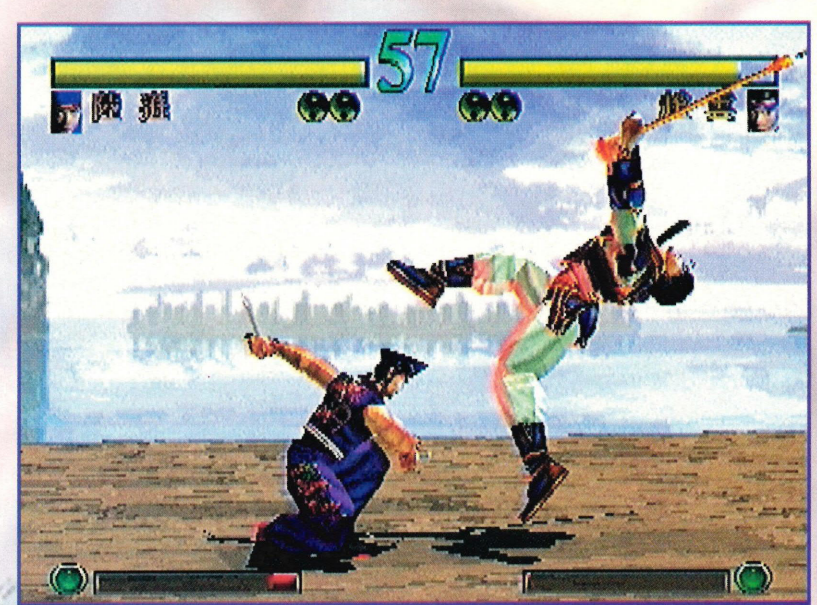
Publisher: KOEI
Supplier: The Video Game Centre on 01202 527314
Price: £59.99
Release date: Out now (import)
UK Release: October '97

ONE PLAYER MULTIPLE PLAYERS MEMORY CARD

SOU



[Above] The first boss of three you encounter in the one player mode can strike from a good distance.



[Above] Blood loss, disorientation and imminent death are certainly concerns, but you can bet Zhao Yun is also thinking how he couldn't be beaten up in a nicer place.

"The best moves are kept from you until your fighter goes haywire!"



[Above] When both players' Chi meters activate, it's safest to just drop the joypad and take cover under something solid.



[Above] A warrior of some repute, Zhang Fei is as hard as they come, but he still knows the true pain of being goaded in the armpit.

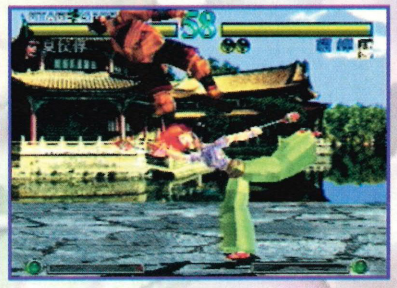






[Above] Here you can see the resultant shower of sparks from a weapon clash.

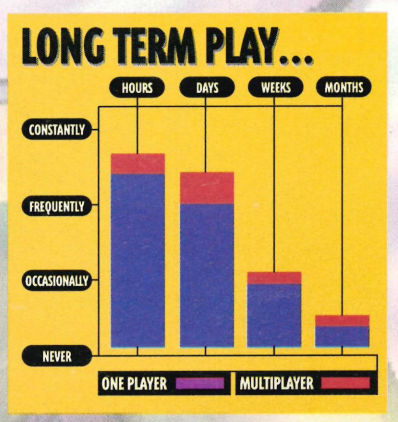




they will stumble past and leave themselves open to attack, and if you block a slashing move then both of you will end up in a parry.

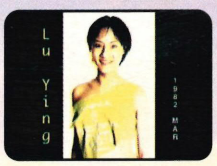
The more spectacular moves and combos are only possible when the "Chi Meter" for your character has reached the top during the beginning of the fight. This signals that he is not at all happy about being constantly smacked around the head. The idea is fine, but the reality is that the best moves are kept from you until your fighter goes haywire and this detracts from the enjoyment of the game somewhat.

Dynasty Warriors is attractive to watch, and its attempt to introduce a new angle to beat-'em-ups is commendable. But sometimes new ideas work and sometimes they don't. *Bushido Blade* is an example of successful design in this area, and unfortunately *Dynasty Warriors* is not. Fun to explore, too weird to love.



RUMMAGING THROUGH THE OPTIONS FROM THE TITLE SCREEN, WE FOUND A PECULIAR FEATURE ON A MENU LISTED ONLY AS "IMAGE SONG." SELECTING THIS STARTS A SICKLY-SWEET JAPANESE POP SONG PLAYING AND DISPLAYS SEVERAL STILL SHOTS OF YOUNG ORIENTAL GIRLS. NO EXPLANATION IS GIVEN, AND TO BE HONEST WE'RE NOT LOOKING FOR ONE!





PLAY

LOOKS	8
SOUNDS	6
GAMEPLAY	4
VALUE	3
ZEN	6

PLAYED 71%

Restrictive and bizarre, but beautiful.

ALTERNATIVELY:
BUSHIDO BLADE (94%)
SOUL EDGE (96%)

SALAMANDER DELUXE PACK PLUS

KONAMI JUMPS ON THE INCREASINGLY POPULAR RETRO GAMING BANDWAGON WITH ITS OWN BRAND OF ARCADE ACTION IN THIS THREE-IN-ONE BUNDLE FROM JAPAN.

Written By Tom Sargent

Salamander rocks!

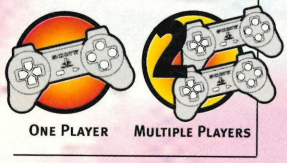
For a couple of hours anyway. At first glance, this compilation seems pretty good value; after all, you're getting three games in the bundle, right? Well no, you're not actually.

What you actually get is the original and still highly playable *Salamander*, first seen in the arcades over 11 years ago, and another, identical variant called *Lifeforce*. The only discernible difference between this and the first game is in the way you manipulate the power-ups. So this doesn't count as another game in our books.

The third, and most visually impressive addition to the series is *Salamander 2*, which is still fresh from the arcades and sports a more garish colour scheme than an Andy Warhol recipe for blamanche!

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Konami
Customer support: 01895 853000
Price: £69.99
Release date: Out now (import)
UK Release: Undecided



ONE PLAYER MULTIPLE PLAYERS

SNAKES

The concept of the whole *Salamander* series is incredibly simple. You start with nothing more than a feeble pea-shooter ship flying along shooting the enemy and hoping to beef up your ship with various weapon and ship enhancing pick-ups, such as Multiples, Ripple Lasers, Lasers, Force Fields and Speed Ups.

Pretty run-of-the-mill by today's standards, but this was radical stuff all those years ago. What put *Salamander* ahead of the pack was the excellent learning curve and sweaty-palmed narrow caverns that had to be negotiated. It's still fun even now; trying to work out exactly where to position your ship as the ceiling and floor ominously close in around you. It epitomises the phrase 'getting out of a tight spot', but sometimes the action can get too claustrophobic – especially in the latest version.

The amount of bits and bobs whizzing around the screen is reasonably impressive for this type of game, but when you add all of the explosions, missiles, lasers, ships and the like, it can become just too congested to enjoy. In fact, if it wasn't for the unlimited continues and manner in which you can adjust the amount of lives, the latest version would be nigh-on impossible to finish – such is the difficulty level.

ADDERS

The best way to enjoy *Salamander* is in the two player mode. Not only do you improve the odds of survival (which are tenuous at best), you can also race for the power-ups and have a no-holds-barred fist fight over why you've managed to amalgamate 20 of them as opposed to your mate's paltry two.

A cool aspect of the gameplay is the way the horizontal blasting action changes to a vertical shoot-'em-up – usually after a fisticuffs with an end of level pulsating 'Mother Brain' or 'Giant Oozing Thingy.' If you've managed to hang



[ABOVE] As you can see, the graphics in the 1996 *Salamander 2* are far superior to the original, but the game is sooo difficult to play unless you keep using the continues.



[ABOVE] The first vertical section in *Salamander*. You can really go to town with the Laser weapon. It makes a great sound too.



[ABOVE] The end of level one Mother Brain. Wait until both of its arms are outstretched before taking out the 'eye' at the front.

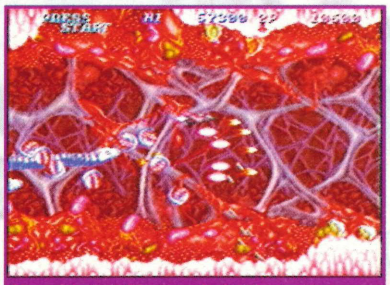


[ABOVE] On the horizontal asteroid-filled level, it's difficult to avoid everything that the alien scum throw at you, as well as blasting them to smithereens.

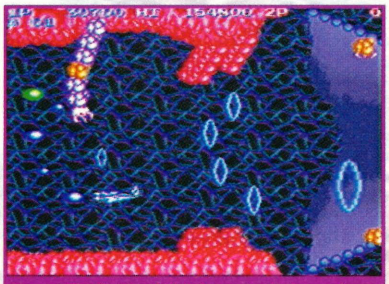


[ABOVE] There are some enormous Motherships to blow to pieces on the vertical levels in *Salamander 2*.

DER



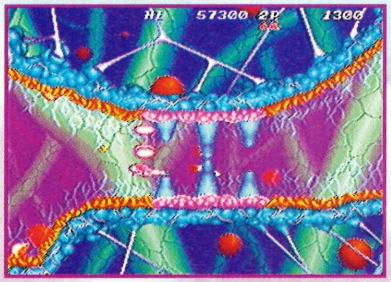
[Above] Look at this stomach-churning 'cow's intestines' level. You can be sure of an organic setting in this type of game.

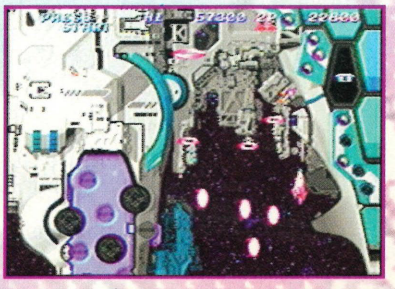


[Above] The first level of *Salamander*. Make good use of the ripple lasers to wipe out everything in your way.

on to the almighty laser weapon, some serious damage can be inflicted on the enemy hoards, which frequent each level and rain down upon your ship without remorse.

When push comes to shove, *Salamander* is nothing more than an enjoyable relic from a bygone era. You'll like it tremendously, especially the original, but you can't help feeling in the pit of your stomach that £64.99 for a game so dated and simple as this is a bit too much to swallow. Konami has doubts over whether this will ever have a UK release, but if it did, then a £29.99 would be appropriate. Think long and hard before opening your wallet.





RASBERRY RIPPLE

THE ORIGINAL *SALAMANDER* GAME WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO INTRODUCE AN UNSUSPECTING PUBLIC TO THE DELIGHTS OF 'BEEFY' ADD-ONS FOR YOUR HUMBLE SHIP. LISTED BELOW IS THE LOW-DOWN ON WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT TO PICK UP.



THE SPEED UP. GETS YOU OUT OF TIGHT SPOTS... QUICKLY.



MISSILE. TAKES OUT ALIENS HUGGING BOTH GROUND AND CEILING.



MULTIPLE. COLLECT UP TO FOUR ORBITING SATELLITES TO INCREASE WEAPON POWER.



LASER. FANTASTICALLY SATISFYING 'KILL THEM ALL' WEAPON. GET IT NOW!



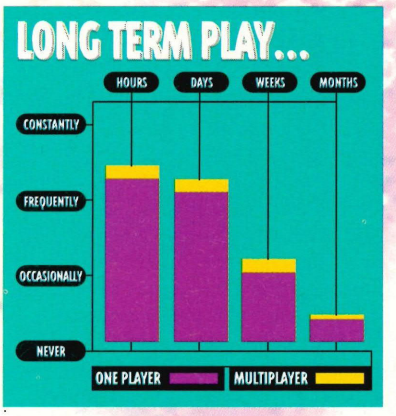
RIPPLE LASER. OR WEAPON THAT FIRES BIG DONUT RINGS. GOOD FOR CLEARING A PATH THROUGH THE SWATHE OF ENEMIES.



FORCE FIELD. PROTECTS THE FRONT OF YOUR SHIP FOR ABOUT FIVE HITS. SHRINKS AS IT TAKES DAMAGE.



[Above] Wow. My favourite level ever on *Salamander*. Make your way through the fiery second level, trying to stay in the only safe pocket as the huge flaming corona surges overhead. A classic moment in gaming history!

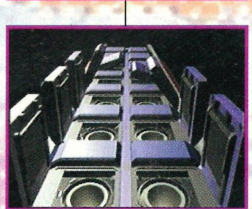


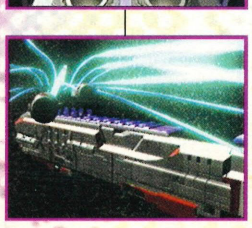




"Sports a more garish colour scheme than an Andy Warhol recipe for blamanche!"







PLAY

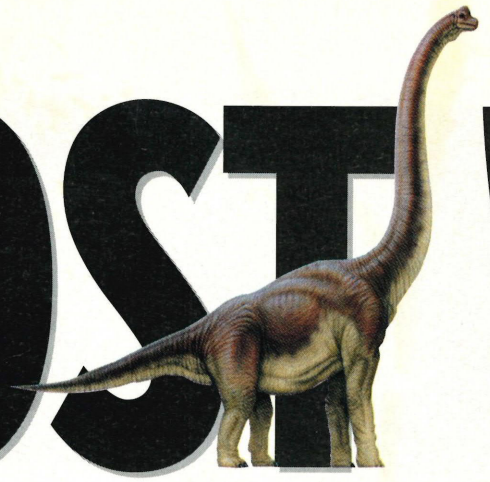
LOOKS	●●●●●●○○○○
SOUNDS	●●●●●●●○○○
GAMEPLAY	●●●●●●●○○○
VALUE	●●●●●●○○○○
PROJECTILES	●●●●●●●○○○

PLAYED **74%**

Aged, but enjoyable Eighties shoot-'em-up.

ALTERNATIVELY:
X2 (77%)
RAY STORM (75%)

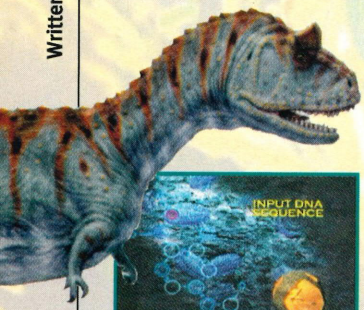
THE LOST W



SPIELBERG'S WONDROUS CREATIONS WOWED AN EXPECTANT AUDIENCE THIS SUMMER, BUT HAS EA CREATED A GAME TO MATCH SPIELBERG'S SEQUEL?

Written By Tom Sargent

Sadly, *The Lost World* was a huge disappointment. The film, that is. The special effects were absolutely stunning; they simply couldn't have looked any better. But the shock effect was missing this time around. Who can forget the audible gasps from audiences as a giant brontosaurus nonchalantly reared up and tore a branch from the top of a tree in the first film. This was truly one of the most memorable moments in cinema history, and something the producers could have never re-captured for a cash-in second outing.





[Above] The intro sequence and presentation in general is superb. Even the password selection section is gorgeous.



[Above] By using the time – delay bombs you can kill these raptors with three shots.

Jurassic Larks

It's with this cunning link that we come to game itself, which produces a similar effect, but to a lesser extent. The first time you see and take control of the mighty T-Rex, the feeling of fear and excitement is quite astonishing. The way this impressive monstrosity lumbers around the screen devouring raptors and humans alike is one of the most satisfying feelings imaginable, second only to scoffing a donner after five pints of lager.

But, unfortunately, it soon becomes apparent that *The Lost World* is nothing more than a glorified platform romp, with the added bonus of controlling a few beautifully rendered dinos. Once you've seen them go through their super-smooth hunting, leaping and attacking animations a few times, the novelty begins to wane somewhat.

Gameplay is generally restricted to running from left to right on a pre-defined route until you reach the exit, and occasionally you come across an alternative path. These usually yield a few bonuses, such as health boosts and weapon upgrades if you're playing as one of the human characters, or Instinct boosts and DNA strands when controlling a dinosaur.

The game is broken down into five enormous stages in which you take control of three dinosaurs and two human characters. The attention to detail in the backgrounds is excellent. Sometimes they can look a little shadowy, but this is due to the fact that a sizeable portion of the action takes place within dank caverns or sparsely-lit mine shafts.

Characters include the tiny scavenging compsognathus, or 'compy' as he's affectionately known, the ferocious veloceraptor (raptor), two types of human (one of them a bonus character) and last, but definitely not least 'Old Rexy' himself. And believe us, when this guy takes the centre stage, the earth moves.

Do You Think He Saurus?

Playing as the diminutive compy on stage one, life can be pretty tough, especially when raptors, baby T-Rexes and poisonous plants see you as nothing more than a quick snack. The best tactic to employ here is one of avoidance, but note that in the top right corner of the screen is an Instinct Indicator, which increases as you eat more prey. Green denotes weak instincts and strong instincts turn the



[Above] "Look, I don't really want to do this, but it's the kids. They're always so hungry and human entrails are their favourite." And so the mighty Rex ate another fleeing hunter... all in a day's work.

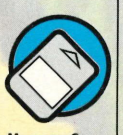
PLAY Information



Publisher: Electronic Arts
Customer support: 01753 549442
Price: £44.99
Release date: 5 September '97



One Player

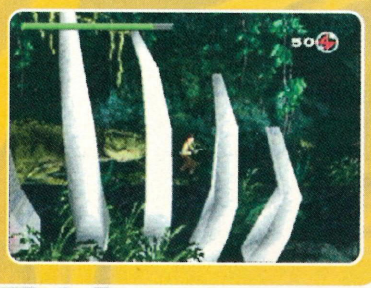


Memory Card

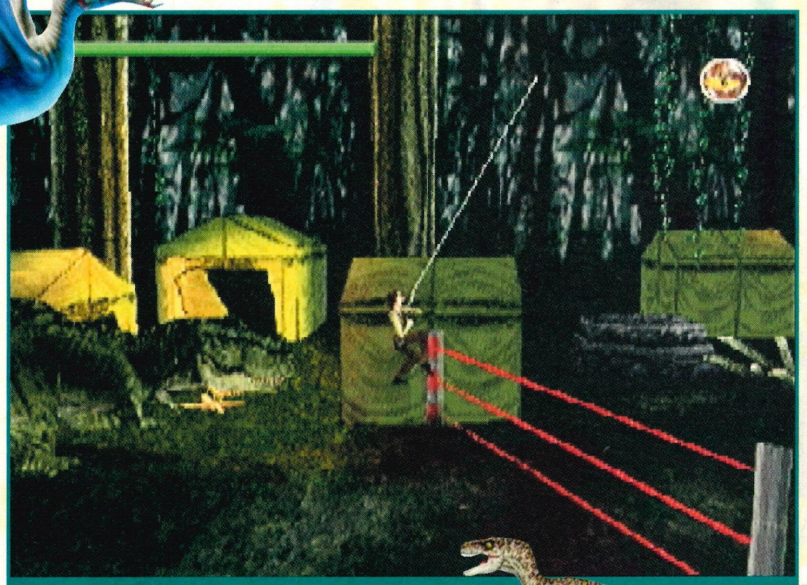
Sarah Way To Kill The Rex?

Sarah Harding, the tenacious girlfriend of Ian Malcolm is the bonus character found after completing the game. The control system is the same as the hunter. There's a classic T-Rex chase here, so it's well worth finding.





ORLD



[Above] This is a bonus level, where you play as Sarah Harding. The controls are same as the human hunter seen earlier in the game.

meter red. Keeping the latter topped up ensures that you inflict more damage in a skirmish and predators can't harm you as much.

Progressing to the raptor atones the compy's rather feeble fighting ability with an incredibly aggressive lunge and bite combination which, when mastered, can be used to devastating effect on all manner of prey. There are three types of gameplay controls: one for the compy and raptor, one for the two human characters and lastly a T-Rex specific.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the human characters look and move rather less convincingly than their dino counterparts. It's blatantly obvious that most of the work has been lavished on their authenticity at the expense of the poor old homo sapiens who move far too slowly.

Leaping Lizards

High praise must be given to the designers and programmers for the uncannily realistic attention to detail heaped upon the dinosaurs. The movement is utterly convincing and to such a degree that you can almost visualise how these beasts must have hunted millions of years ago.



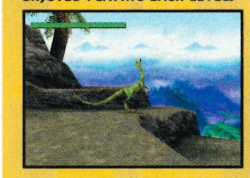
[Above] In order to get through the electrified gate, you must use your head... literally. Kerrunch! There goes the power generator.



[Above] The movement of all dinosaurs is fantastic. Even catching a prehistoric insect is a joy to watch. This goes for all the dino animations.

Level Best

As there are three different types of controls to master, we thought it would be a good idea to rate both the control method and how much we enjoyed playing each level.



The Compy

The Compy is the weediest and most visually unimpressive creature that you start with, but its agility is second to none and good way to learn the basic controls.

Control: 5/5

Level Enjoyment: 3/5



The Raptor

The Raptor is a real nasty piece of work and consequently more fun to play with, although control-wise its ever-so-slightly harder to control.

Control: 4/5

Level Enjoyment: 4/5



The Humans

Controlling the humans is no where near as much fun as the dinosaurs, although some of the weapons that you pick up are excellent.

Control: 2/5

Level Enjoyment: 3/5



The T-Rex

The T-Rex levels are stunning to say the least and the only ones which leave a lasting impression. He's a sluggish old lad, but we love him anyway.

Control: 3/5

Level Enjoyment: 5/5

"Impressive monstrosities lumber around the screen devouring raptors and humans alike..."



[Above] On the level 'Into the Fire' you must negotiate huge flames as well as other fleeing dinosaurs.



DINO DNA

There are more collectibles for the human controlled levels, but even as a half-witted prehistoric protagonists, you've still got a fair few extras to find.

PARTIAL INSTINCT BOOST
Increase your instinct to



improve aggression and defence.

FULL INSTINCT BOOST
The full monty. Fills up



your instinct to the max.

DNA
Collect every DNA key to



decode and play the gallery of images.

HEALTH BOOST
As it says, and you'll need



them all! Find the partial healths too.

TIME-DELAY GRENADE.
Lob one, stand back and



wait. It works as a grenade launcher.

TRANQUILLISER DARTS
Use these against the T- Rex



as he chases close behind you.

RAPID FIRE TRACER AMMO
Improves the speed and



power of your gun.





[Above] Smash through anything in your path when you play as the mighty T-Rex.



[Above] A T-Rex wouldn't be a T-Rex without being able to eat people by the truck-load.

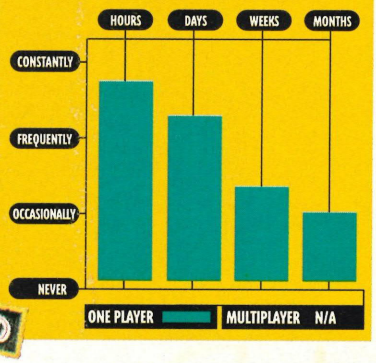
The orchestral soundtrack and effects are superlative as well. Each creature, whether you're controlling it or not, gurgles and hisses in exactly the same way as its silver screen cousin. It's such a shame that such a majestic – looking game offers so little in the gameplay stakes.

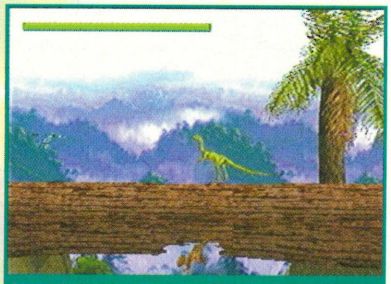
Yes, you will love the triumphant and seriously disturbing reverberation of a rampant (and hungry) Tyrannosaurus Rex, but at the end of the day *The Lost World* is a kind of *Pandemonium* with dinosaurs. The camera pans along the path as you scroll left and right, and every now and again an opponent pops up to block your path (most of the time you can simply leap over them).

Admittedly, the animation, attention to detail, and overall presentation of this game is something to be admired, but the gameplay is sorely lacking, and incredibly simplistic. It's just a platform game underneath all the gloss, and not a very adventurous one at that. Like the film it is very pretty, but leaves you feeling empty and disappointed.

"Doesn't quite cut the mustard where it really matters due to a restrictive playing area..."

LONG TERM PLAY...





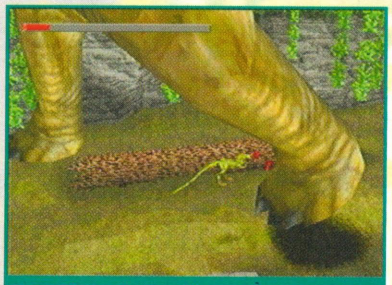
[Above] Every-so-often, you come across an alternative route, which rewards the player with pick-ups and more enemies of course.



[Above] The camera pans around quite a bit to give the feeling of genuine 3-D movement, but it's still usually a case of going from left to right.



[Above] Gain extra energy by feeding on the prey that you have just killed. This increases your Instinct bar too.



[Above] Dodge the feet of the giant brachiosaurs to reach the end of the level.



[Above] Blood spurts everywhere as the tiny Compy sees off a couple of marauding raptors.



[Above] By utilising your surroundings, you can swing your way out of trouble more often than not.



[Above] Your poor character can get attacked by up to three raptors at once.

PLAY

Looks	8
Sounds	9
Gameplay	5
Value	6
Roars	7

PLAYED 79%

Stunning-looking platformer with shallow gameplay.

ALTERNATIVELY:
Pandemonium (90%)
Crash Bandicoot (84%)



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THE PRINCE'S TRUST

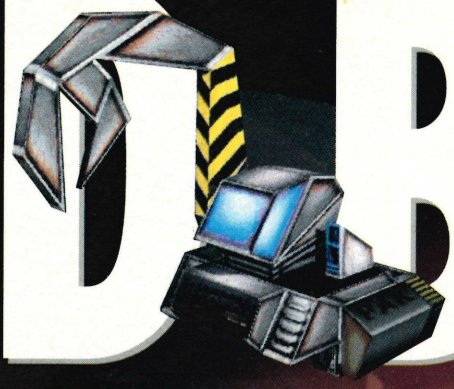
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HARD BOI



AN AWE INSPIRING COMIC SERIES BECOMES A CHEAP SHOOTING GAME. IF FRANK MILLER WAS DEAD, HE'D BE TURNING IN HIS GRAVE!

Written By Graeme Nicholson

If you've read the *Hard Boiled* comic books and you've just bought the licenced PlayStation game of the same name, you're about to have a very bad day. We've read them. After playing through every level of this game, there isn't a single shred of evidence that the programmers have ever laid eyes on a single copy of Frank Miller's shockingly gruesome action thriller.

The game and comics deal with the same central character, but that is about it for authenticity. Nixon is an android who has been fooled into believing that he leads the ordinary life of a happily married tax collector, when he is in fact an assassin for the company who created him, Willeford Home Appliances.

Mr Willeford himself controls Los Angeles in the dark future where *Hard Boiled* is set, and when Nixon becomes enlightened by other run-away robots he decides to make this fat corrupt dictator sorry. Nixon takes off in his Ford Eastwood car on the journey to Willeford head-quarters, but is hampered every step of the way by hundreds of guardian vehicles of all sorts – ground-based and airborne, rocket shooting and flame-spitting.

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Customer Support: 01753 549 442
Price: £39.99
Release date: Out Now

ONE PLAYER | MEMORY CARD



[ABOVE] This is one of those moments when you've just been swung round a corner against your will, and here comes a speed warp. Joy.



[ABOVE] Argh! You really don't want to see the explosions close up. They're big and they're blocky.

NEWTON MELROSE

While the original comic story followed Nixon around the crumbling city as he shot hundreds of people with his two enormous handguns, gradually losing skin in a series of massive explosions, the game is based entirely around flying his car. Alarms bells rang.

Movement is severely limited. For example, you cannot stop or turn to fly in the opposite direction, and an invisible boundary keeps you from gaining anything above 40 feet in height or getting as low to the ground as you would sometimes like.

The path of *Hard Boiled* is painfully rigid too, and with the exception of a few key areas where you get to decide which direction is best, you will be forced around tight bends and pulled left and right like a toddler in the rapids. Imagine this kind of gameplay at an average speed of six or seven miles per hour, until you hit the red speed warps that briefly blast you forward at an uncontrollably high rate.

Your main weapon is a fairly ordinary laser-bolt affair which can be enhanced to shoot in up to four directions at once. The nature of the game with its streams of oncoming enemies and paths cluttered with breakable boxes means you'll want to keep this weapon firing almost all the time, but holding the button down only musters a single shot so you'll have to put up with grinding your thumb cartilage into a



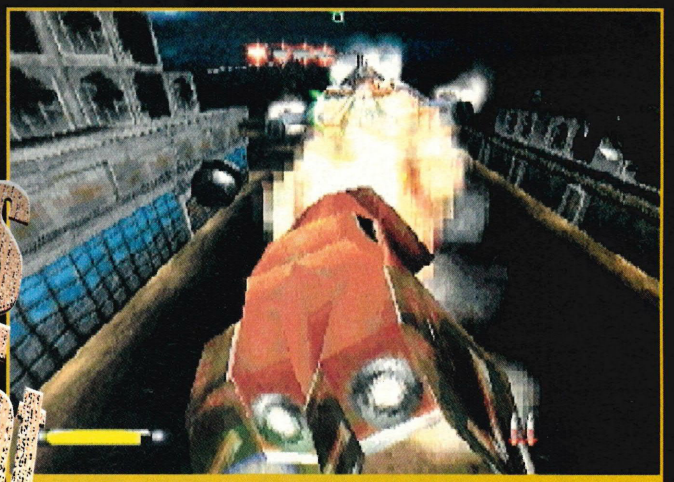
[ABOVE] The last level is a dangerous place to be, with speed warps deviously placed to slam you into the face of danger.



LED

PLAY PUTRID

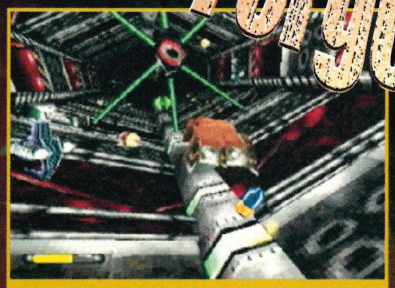
The Games That Time Forgot



[Above] One of the hovering bad guys explodes into a blaze of garish, chunky pixels. Better him than you though.



[Above] These guys dot around in front of you trying to dodge the lasers, but just deploy a few homing missiles and they'll be instantly toasted!



[Above] To keep from being hurt on the forcefield, line up with the big eye in the middle and shoot for all you're worth.

fine powder with the rapid and repetitive button pressing.

NEURO TOWER

There are a few secondary weapons, the most effective of which are the homing blades and missiles that should be kept for bosses or the big mid-level robots that hover around erratically in front of you. There are only two bosses to overcome in the whole game, in differently designed levels where the controls change and you rotate around the mechanical beasts in a circular area.

Two bosses doesn't seem like much until you consider that there are also only five levels in the entire game! They look different enough, but the brain-numbing gameplay remains the same throughout and becomes nothing short of depressing by the time you reach the end. 95% of the time you will be travelling at the standard, almost stationary rate doing nothing more than trying to press the fire button enough times before the next enemy gets up close.

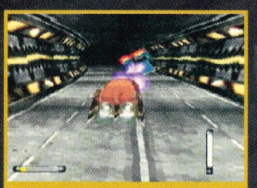
It's dull, terribly predictable, and the wafer-thin link between the adult comic series and this poor children's shoot-'em-up is contemptible.

"Gameplay at an average speed of six or seven miles per hour!"

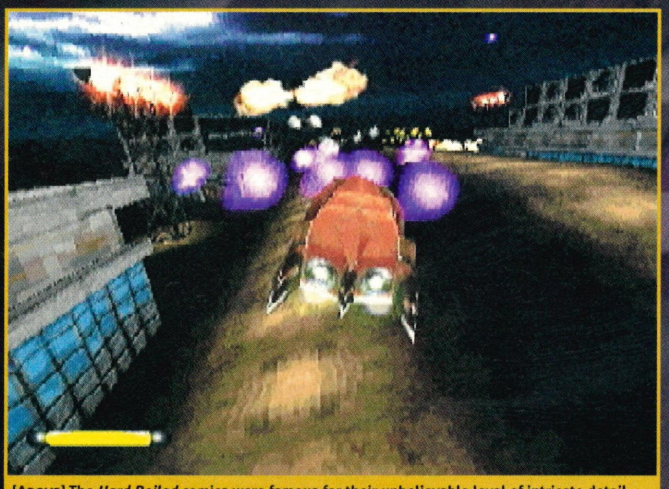




[Above] Why make it hard on yourself when you can ride safely below all these flames?

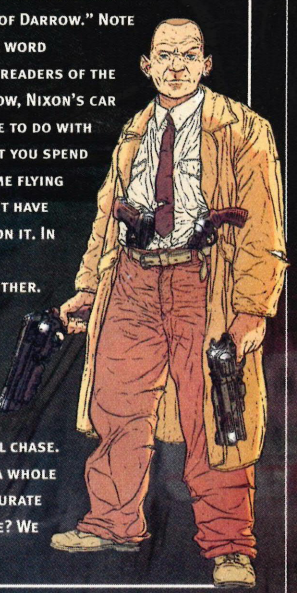


[Above] It doesn't make any sense – ships like this can often just be avoided by flying past!

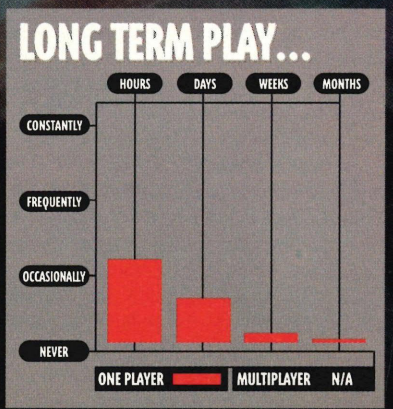


[Above] The *Hard Boiled* comics were famous for their unbelievable level of intricate detail, which you won't find anywhere in the game.

THE DEVELOPER CLAIMS THAT THIS GAME WAS "DIRECTLY INSPIRED BY THE *HARD BOILED* COMIC BOOK FROM FRANK MILLER AND GEOF DARROW." NOTE THE USE OF THE WORD "DIRECTLY." AS READERS OF THE COMIC WILL KNOW, NIXON'S CAR HAS VERY LITTLE TO DO WITH THE SERIES, BUT YOU SPEND THE ENTIRE GAME FLYING IT. AND IT DIDN'T HAVE ANY WEAPONS ON IT. IN ACTUAL FACT, IT COULDN'T FLY EITHER. HE SIMPLY DRIVES IT, ON THE ROAD, TO WORK ONE MORNING AND GETS IN A SMALL CHASE. GROUNDS FOR A WHOLE LICENCED INACCURATE SHOOTING GAME? WE THINK NOT.



LONG TERM PLAY...



PLAY

LOOKS	3
SOUNDS	2
GAMEPLAY	2
VALUE	2
SPEED	2

PLAYED 29%

A disasterously wasted licence...

ALTERNATIVELY:
TUNNEL B1 (87%)
DESCENT 2 (63%)

YOU'RE BARRED!

Thankfully, there is a option to remove this hideous bar at the bottom. Simply pause a fight. Hold ● + ▲ + ■ + × and press Select. This removes the continue, options and reset selections. While continuing to hold the four buttons, press Select again. This removes the Life and Over Drive bars. To return to the display as normal, repeat the code while pressing Select again.





[Above] In the 60fps mode, the characters move very smoothly indeed, but the background detail suffers a severe lack of detail.



[Above] Rungo (one of the original *Toshinden* characters) pounces with his giant club. He's pretty slow, but deadly when he gets a hit in.

BATTLE ARENA

SONY'S *TOSHINDEN* SERIES BURSTS ONTO THE SCENE ONCE MORE FOR A THIRD INSTALMENT, BUT CAN IT OFFER ANYTHING NEW TO AN INCREASINGLY DEMANDING GENRE?

Written By Tom Sargent

Jaws dropped, people had heart attacks and the rest of the PlayStation owning world watched in amazement as perfectly animated polygonal warriors pounced gracefully around a rotating 3-D arena. Performing outlandish acrobatics and graceful roles in and out of the screen. The original *Battle Arena Toshinden* came out a long time ago and since then the standard of beat-'em-ups has reached almost monumental proportions, but the *Toshinden* series has arguably taken a backwards step instead of breaking new gaming ground.





[Above] The graphics are much more colourful than any other game from the series. They look especially good in the 60 fps mode.

The third instalment, although bringing the series up-to-date from a graphical perspective thanks to a new 60fps high resolution mode, still fails to ignite the imagination in the same spectacular fashion that *Tobal 2* or *Soul Edge* did. If anything, the characters are slightly jerkier than the second game, due in part to more detail on the gourad-shaded protagonists.

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: Sony
Customer support: 0881 505505
Price: £34.99
Release date: 7 October '97

ONE PLAYER MULTIPLE PLAYERS

MEMORY CARD

SOUL MAN

Fortunately, *Toshinden 3* harbours a number of new improvements, especially in the control department. Gone are the frankly awkward D-Pad rotating antics in favour of an altogether more palatable button pressing approach for those complicated multi-hit attacks.

Each character has basic *Tekken*-like combos of four or so button presses and by combining them with the D-pad, a plethora of devastating attacks can be unleashed. As in the previous games, when your life gauge is flashing red you can unleash a Desperation Attack and similarly, a special Overdrive Attack when the bar is filled. The Hidden Rage attack has also been retained. For example, doing two dragon punches closely followed by a strong punch allows Eiji to unleash better fireballs.

To add dramatic effect, the background blacks out when any of these moves are performed, but this seems to ruin the continuity somewhat. It would have been more effective to keep the impressive lighting effects more localised within the new enclosed arenas.

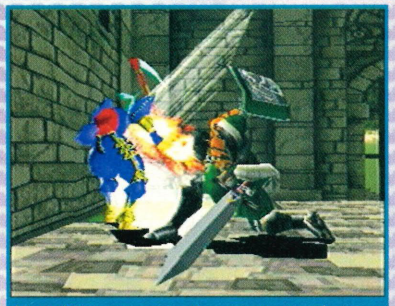
A new edition to fighting comes in the form of the Soul Bomb, where a whirlwind of energy emanates from the player and can only be used twice per round. When kicked or punched towards the edge of the level, the Wall Counter allows the player to land out of harms way or perform a deadly counter attack.

Perhaps the best feature, stolen sneakily from the *Tekken* series is the Chain Combo Attack which encourages more experimentation than a mad scientist. A series of pre-determined combo attacks can be pulled off by hitting various buttons accordingly and there are heaps of variants for every character and pressing any strong attack button at the same time as an opponent activates the

"The Chain Combos encourage more experimentation than a mad scientist..."



[Above] Tracy lets loose an Overdrive attack in the form of a flaming fireball. This can be avoided, but you have to be quick.

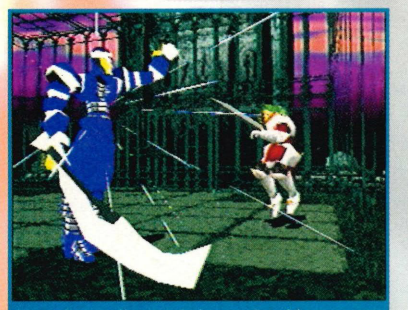


[Above] You can now smash an opponent against a wall or ceiling, but look out for a retaliatory counter move when they come bouncing back.



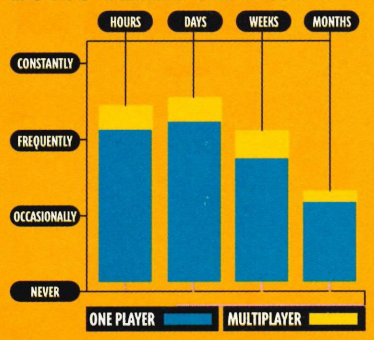


TOSHINDEN 3



[Above] In a split second, the new Overdrive move can be pulled-off seriously damaging an opponent.

LONG TERM PLAY...



ALL NEW TOSHINDEN

There are quite a few areas that have been given a shakedown in the third instalment.



Perhaps the most significant change to the game is the Tekken-inspired multi-chain combo method, plus the fact that the controls have done away with pad rotation for a simpler and more enjoyable button pressing system.



The new Practice mode lets you create your own combos against an opponent who happily stands there. The D-pad direction and button presses are conveniently shown at the bottom of the screen too.



The Time Attack mode sets the clock running, whilst you beat your opponent to a blubbering pulp in the quickest time possible. It's basically a versus mode with the added bonus of being able to save your quickest times.



[Above] Whenever one of the special moves such as a Desperation, Overdrive or Hidden Rage attack is pulled off, the screen blacks out to add dramatic effect.

Reversal attack, which is cool.

Turning Japanese

Interestingly enough, there are two distinctly different modes of play: the highly detailed texture-rich 30fps game and the ultra-smooth 60fps (spartan backgrounds and no surface detail) high resolution mode. Additional options include Practice and Survival modes, besides the usual Vs computer and Vs Human options. Plus a new save game feature, enabling the player to save any hidden or boss characters. There are 32 characters to find in total so the save facility is more than welcome.

At the end of the day, however, and bearing in mind the quite substantial overhaul to the control system, *Toshinden 3* is too little, too late. Other games have simply been quicker off the mark and made use of many of these gameplay-enhancing improvements already. There's a descent long term challenge with all of the diverse characters available, but it's not as good as *Tekken 2*, *Soul Blade*, *Bushido Blade* or *Tobal 2*. Stick with one of those.





PLAY

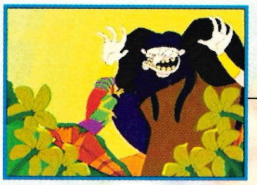
Looks	7
Sounds	7
Gameplay	7
Value	8
Familiarity	7

PLAYED 78%

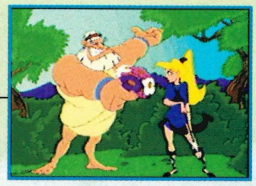
An average beat-'em-up. Nothing more.

Alternatively:
Tekken 2 (95%)
Soul Blade (96%)

HERC'S ADVENTURES







LUCASARTS HAS GONE ALL DISNEY ON US WITH AN ARCADE ADVENTURE BASED ON THE SOON-TO-BE-RELEASED ANIMATED FILM.

"*Herc's Adventures* is a formulaic, albeit colourful adventure..."

Written By Tom Sargent

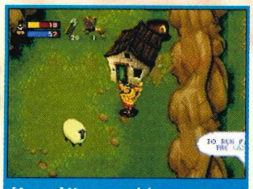
LucasArts knows a thing or two about saving the universe; just look at the *Star Wars* inspired *Dark Forces* and *Rebel Assault 2* for proof. *Herc's Adventures*, however, brings the action back down to terra firma and appears to be a real departure for the American company.

LucasArts is renowned for its exceptionally playable point 'n' click adventures for the PC, so you'd think that this would be food and drink for the master coders. Evidently not, as *Herc's Adventures* is a formulaic, albeit colourful forced-perspective action adventure adding little to a tried and tested recipe.

Players can choose one of three wholesome characters – based loosely on Greek and Roman mythology. First up is Herc himself, who's predictably the strongest (and slowest). Next is the sultry Atlanta (quick of bow, not particularly strong), and finally, Jason (a pretty good all-rounder). To appeal to a younger audience, the storyline has been kept simple. Players must rescue Persephone, 'Goddess of Fertility' from the vile clutches of Hades who's attempting to create an army of undead warriors and rule Greece.



[Above] Choose from Atlanta, Herc, Jason for a one or two player game.



[Above] Herc can pick up absolutely anything that's not bolted down or part of the scenery.

Ye Gads

You can play with either one or two players on-screen at the same time, which makes a change from the lone crusades usually seen in a Disney conversion. The graphics are big, bold and well-animated; many of the adversaries encountered along the way are particularly entertaining too, such as the cyclopes and laser-spitting wild boars.

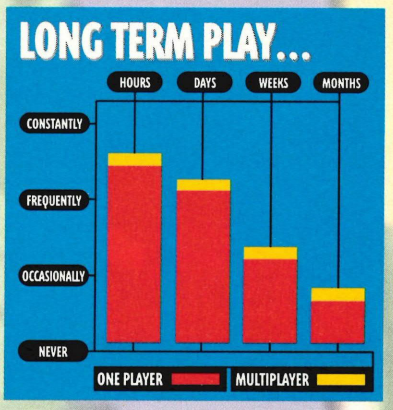
The range of weapons is imaginative. For example, Hercules has a club which can be launched like a boomerang against enemies, and later on he can accumulate other weapons from fallen enemies, such as skeleton bones and a fiery-hot chilli breath! Quite often, you have to interact with the scenery, and trees and buildings can be up-rooted and thrown; revealing hidden bonuses.

The main fault with *Herc's Adventures* is in the repetitive nature of the gameplay. Regardless of the rich diversity in backgrounds, you soon realise that the same tactics can be used regardless of the location. Sometimes, the game surprises you by shooting you into the sky and to a new area via a catapult or cannon, but ultimately there is nothing exciting to draw the player on. Average exploration game aimed at younger players obviously.



[Above] We like games that allow you to throw sheep around. Ahem.







[Above] After a heavy night on the town, Hercules found his chilli-breath quite handy.



[Above] At any time during the game the map screen can be called up to gauge your progress.

PLAY INFORMATION

Publisher: LucasArts
Supplier: The Video Games Centre 01202 527314
Price: £59.99
Release date: Out Now (Import)



ONE PLAYER MULTIPLE PLAYERS



MEMORY CARD

PLAY

LOOKS	7
SOUNDS	7
GAMEPLAY	7
VALUE	7
BOARS	7

PLAYED 70%

Cute-looking, run-of-the-mill overhead adventure.

ALTERNATIVELY:
SWAGMAN (82%)
HERCULES (63%)

BATTLE STATIONS

The GAMES that Time Forgot

IT'S ALL HANDS ON DECK FOR EA'S LIMITED REAL-TIME NAVAL COMBAT SIMULATION.

Written By Tom Sargent

Sound the alarm and brace yourselves for a head-on collision with an extremely vapid sea fairing naval combat simulator. In recent months it's become increasingly apparent that tactical strategy games are on the increase; both *Warcraft II* and *Transport Tycoon* are testimony to this new trend. But Electronic Arts' latest creation fails to deliver in a number of different categories. What it boils down to is a fairly simplistic head-to-head navel combat simulator with a few strategy pretensions thrown in to try and add substance to an otherwise fatuous game.

"Can hardly be described as a genuine strategy game..."

Battle Stations places you in command of a fleet of navel vessels on a 50 level Campaign to defeat either a computer or human opponent. There is also an arcade option included (almost as an afterthought), which allows you to select a ship from the eight available and go one-on-one with an enemy craft. Each chosen mission begins at the Strategic Map, where you can view enemy activity, deploy and mobilise your fleet.

SCUTTLE

Ships under your command include Destroyers, Aircraft Carriers, Submarines, Mine Layers and Patrol Boats, which are represented by tiny icons on the map along with a clearly marked target area. You engage the enemy by running into another boat on the Strategic map, whereupon the view changes to a fly-around 3-D view of the two duelling ships.

This scenario is called Battle mode and quite good fun. Two ships circle each other, off-loading their cargo of death until one of them sinks. It is always a fight to the death, with no option to chicken out halfway through. Even if you sink the opposing ship, you carry the scars of battle (represented by a depleted power bar) with you to the next encounter.

This game can hardly be described as a genuine strategy game, however, as there's no option to form a convoy and take on multiple targets at once. In fact, in some of the earlier levels you can just dodge around the enemy and deliver your troops to the target destination without any fighting at all.

Battle Stations certainly looks promising at a glance, but probe a little deeper and all that you are left with is an extremely limited one-on-one battleship beat-'em-up game that plays better against a human opponent, but only really tests the speed of your trigger finger rather than the old grey matter.



[Above] A crippled Destroyer in its death throws on a one way ticket to the bottom of the ocean.



[Above] You can actually avoid many sea battles by dodging around the ships on the Strategic map and going route one with your troops to the target area.





[Above] Two ships circle each other in the Tactical combat mode. It's basically a rush to sink the enemy.





PLAY INFORMATION



Publisher: EA
Customer support: 01753 549442
Price: £44.99
Release date: Out Now



PLAY

LOOKS	●●●●○○○○○○
SOUNDS	●●●●●○○○○○
GAMEPLAY	●●●●●○○○○○
VALUE	●●●●●●○○○○
TORPEDOES	●●●●●○○○○○

PLAYED **51%**

Flat and unconvincing naval strategy...

ALTERNATIVELY:
SOVIET STRIKE (83%)
ALLIED GENERAL (51%)

STATION M

CHEATS ▸ TIPS ▸ LETTERS

AS SUMMER FINALLY ARRIVES IN HIP 'N' HAPPENIN' BOURNEMOUTH, THE STATION MASTER HAS BEEN SPOTTED BAKING HIMSELF IN THE SUN, BUILDING SAND CASTLES AND PESTERING THE TOURISTS. BUT AS REGULAR AS CLOCKWORK, 'HE WHO KNOWS BEST' HAS MANAGED, ONCE MORE, TO DIG UP ONLY THE CHOICEST TIPS, TACTICS AND CODES BEFORE DISAPPEARING BACK INTO THE SURF. SEND YOUR BEST CHEATS, HINTS AND SUNTAN LOTIONS TO: *STATION MASTER, PLAY MAGAZINE, PARAGON HOUSE, ST. PETER'S ROAD, BOURNEMOUTH, DORSET BH1 2JS*. OR E-MAIL PLAY@PARAGON.CO.UK





TIME CRISIS

EASY STORY MODE

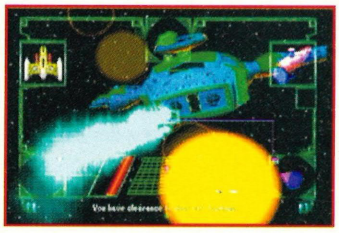
Select the first mission from the Mission Selection screen. Time Attack mode or the Story mode options will now appear. Shoot away from the screen, then shoot the selection box for Story mode. An Easy option will appear on the Story mode box. Easy mode allows five lives and extra time to complete the game.



DARKLIGHT CONFLICT

Passwords 36-50 (the first 35 were printed last month – Ed)).

Mission	Name	Password
36	Ovon Power	HVLLMDDSC
37	Solar Winds	DHHMXBLBW
38	Race Meeting	HKXLWLVVX
39	Rescue The Commander	TMQPXSDSC
40	Farewell Iris III	WPGLLCDWL
41	The Outpost	VWKTGXDMQ
42	The Big Guns	VBKMJJMGJ
43	Trojan Horse	VGVLJDMGJ
44	Long Range Threat	MSQVCCLTM
45	The NET	SQDVQHDJH
46	Bomb The Mothers	HGTJWGDSC
47	Excel	HJPGLKVCK
48	Darklight	DGGPTXVVB
49	The End?	XCWCSDMPD
50	The Escape Home	SDQTBJVQP





ACE COMBAT 2

MUSIC TEST

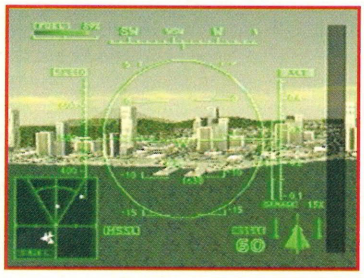
Complete the game with a higher rank than First Lieutenant. Now Music Player mode will appear in the options menu. Any of the 28 music tracks on the game disc can be selected. Press L1 or L2 to jump to the next track, R1 or R2 to jump to the previous track, ● to select a track, Select to toggle the screen, and ■, ▲, or × to quit out.

LOCK REPLAY VIEW

Hold the Map button down during a replay to lock the camera.

ALTERNATE MISSION MAP VIEW

Highlight the 'Mission' option on the Mission Selection screen, and press Select. Three new viewing angles can now be selected.



DISPLAY REAR VIEW OF SONY ANALOGUE CONTROLLER

Press Select at the control configuration screen.

STREET FIGHTER EX PLUS ALPHA

MINI-GAME FROM STREET FIGHTER 2

Highlight the Practice option and press Start. Next, press Up (Twice), Right, Up, Right, Up, Start. A message will appear to confirm correct code entry. Select the Bonus option under Practice mode to play the Bonus Barrel game from *Street Fighter 2*.

SPEEDSTER

REVERSED TRACK

Press Right, ■, Left, ●, Up, × on the track selection screen.

SUPER CHAMPIONSHIP:

Press Right, ■, Left, ●, Up, × on the title screen.

BONUS TRACK

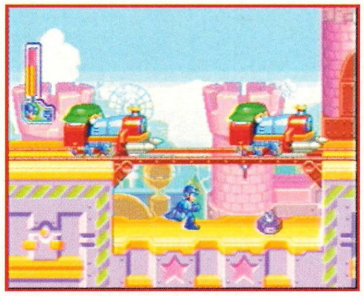
Press ×, Up, ▲, Down, R1, L1 on the title screen.

SUPER CAR

Press Up, Left, Right, ×, ●, ■ on the title screen.

ASTER

MEGA MAN 8



To acquire extra lives, go to the Clown Man's stage and once there, you will see a clown statue with it's open mouth. Use the Mega Ball and kick it in the mouth of the clown. You should here a tone and a 1-UP should appear. You can do this nine times once you retrieve the extra part from the lab (4 bolts) and after you overcome the Clown Man.

DESCENT MAXIMUM (US)

CHEAT MODE

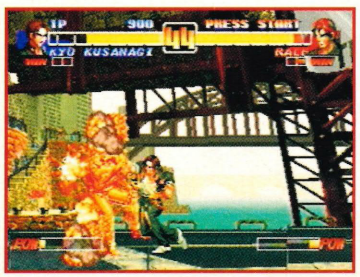
Enter the following information in the keys section to activate the corresponding cheat.

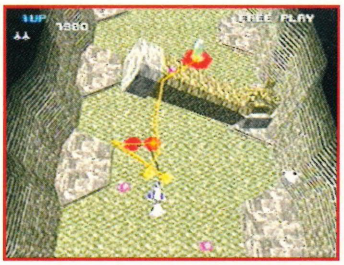
EFFECT	KEYS	NICKNAME
Weapons, energy, shields:	STOSTSXSOTSX	ACE
Weapons, energy, Shields, keys, level select:	TSOXTSTXTSXO	$40
All keys:	STXTOTXTXTSX	MIK
Toggle invincibility:	TXTOXTSXTXOT	DCD
Full shields:	TXOSSXOTSXOS	BUG
Toggle cloak:	XTOSOTSXTXTO	RED
All accessories:	STOXXTSXOSOX	TOY
Turbo:	TSOXSXOSTOXX	SVT
Extra life:	TXSOTXSXOXTO	+1 UP
Toggle "Go Wingnut" mode:	TSOTXSTOSTXO	4AD
Fast robots that fire slowly:	TXSSTOSXOSTO	JAVA
Colours:	TXOTSOXTXTOX	LSD
Acid mode:	STOSTSXTXTOX	ACID
Hello Minnie mode:	XOXOXOXOXOXO	XO

KING OF FIGHTERS '96

FIGHT AS THE BOSSES

Hold Start and press Up + ●, Right + ■, Left + ×, Down + ▲ at the Character Selection screen in any mode. You can select Chizuru Kagura to the right of Clark and Goenitz to the left of Athena.





XEVIOUS 3D/G+

PLAY AS TEKKEN CHARACTERS

Hold Left + × + ● + Start on controller one at the title screen to transmute the ship into Heihachi. Hold Right + × +● + Start on controller two to change the ship into Paul.

PLAY Q&A

Is a game driving you nuts? Has your girlfriend/wife left you, because you simply refuse to leave the screen until you've worked out how to solve what seems like an impossible puzzle or level? Sit back in the luxuriant atmosphere and feed from the fountain of knowledge that is Q&A. Pack up your troubles to the following address: *Q&A, Play Magazine, Paragon House, St Peter's Road, Bournemouth, Dorset BH1 2JS.*

Dear Sir,
I hope you can help me out concerning *Exhumed*. According to Ramses, there's a staff in Karnak Sanctuary after the journey to get the diving mask, which I managed to get, but I'm unable to find the staff which I presume is the Kilmaat Sceptre. I've already got the Amun mines and have got to Set Arena, but I have only two Ankhs with a full health bar and cannot defeat Set without more Ankhs.
Keith Hall, Stafforshire

Assuming you have found the M-60 in Karnak Sanctuary, find Set and exhaust all your M-60's ammunition into him. Switch to the pistol and Amun Bombs. Just move back and forth whilst peppering him with the M-60, then when he jumps, stop firing and move back . When he lands, start shooting again. As soon as he fires those two-legged thingies, keep strafing left/right using the L1 and R1 buttons. Use the Amun Bombs to inflict further damage and the pistol to take out the small homing creatures. You don't need the Kilmaat Sceptre to kill Set.

Dear PLAY,
I need help on *Overblood*, before I end up with no hair, bloody knuckles and a nervous twitch. On the third level (B-2F), I have got the blowtorch, found the underground bit and got stuck when I couldn't open the underground grill with the blowtorch. I have looked everywhere for another tool, hidden room, or anything at all helpful, but I am more stuck than a treacle-coated nun. Please help.
Steven 'Gagster' Dey, Barnsley

What you must do is kneel and inspect the grated floor to see a card beneath it. While still kneeling, use the burner (blowtorch) on the floor to cut a hole. You should now be able to drop into the hole, where the yellow key card can be retrieved.

Dear PLAY,
I've got the game *Broken Sword* and I am stuck in Egypt. I have got the statue with no arms and everything before that. But now I don't know what to do, I've been trying to something for about a month, but instead, I've been working around the square. Please help me, I'm pulling my hair out!
Peter Collins, Exeter

Okay, have you tried using the tissue on the broken statuette? Do this, then talk to Duane (fat American in yellow jacket) and sell him the statuette in exchange for a $50 bill. Now go back to the club and show Ultar the photograph. Talk to Ultar until he offers to take George to the Bull's Head hill, then give him the $50 bill. This should keep you going for the time being, Peter.

Dear PLAY Magazine,
My friends and I swapped a game for *Broken Sword* and I've been stuck in Ireland for weeks. I've followed the instructions up to the point of reaching the castle gate, but now I'm stuck once more. How do you get passed that damned goat? Please, please help me.
N Clampham, Cwmbran

Let's solve this goat problem once and for all. It seems that quite a few readers have had trouble getting passed this little grass muncher. Okay, approach the goat to the right of the trough (by left-clicking on the ladder). As soon as the goat knocks you over; click on the ploughshare on the far left. When the goat is trapped, go to the ladder and enter the excavation.

WARCRAFT II

SOLVED

WARCRAFT 2 IS UNDOUBTEDLY ONE OF THE BEST BATTLEFIELD STRATEGY SIMULATIONS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE ON PLAYSTATION, AND THANKS TO SOME SLEEPLESS NIGHTS BASHING ORCS AND SLAUGHTERING HUMANS, WE'RE ABLE TO BRING YOU A COMPACT RESUME OF TOP TIPS AND STRATEGIES WHICH WILL ENSURE A GLORIOUS VICTORY REGARDLESS OF YOUR ALLEGIANCE.

Units

There are equivalent and identical unit types for either side. Although the orcs have slightly easier weapons upgrades, the humans have more useful spells later on. Note that battle damage is divided into basic and piercing: the former can be blocked or reduced by enemy armour, but the latter is unaffected.

Peon/Peasant

Cost: 400 gold
Build Time: 45
HP: 30
Speed: 10
Damage: 3 basic, 2 piercing
Armour: 0
Your serfs are mainly used to collect gold and lumber. They can also build and repair structures. They're rubbish at fighting, so keep them away from battles.



Grunt/Footman

Cost: 600 gold
Build Time: 60
HP: 60
Speed: 10
Damage: 6 basic, 3 piercing
Armour: 2
The bog-standard foot soldiers must get next to a unit to attack it. However, they can easily kill archers by rushing them.

Axethrower/Archer

Cost: 500 gold, 50 lumber
Build Time: 70
HP: 40
Speed: 10
Range: 4
Damage: 3 basic, 6 piercing
Armour: 0
These can attack enemies from several paces away. However, they're vulnerable to close-range attack, so keep your distance. They can be upgraded to berserkers/rangers via the lumber mill.

Ogre/Knight

Cost: 800 gold, 100 lumber
Build Time: 90
HP: 90
Speed: 13
Damage: 8 basic, 4 piercing
Armour: 4
The fastest and most powerful ground troops, you need an ogre mound/stables to create them. With an altar of storms/church, they can be upgraded to ogre-mages/paladins to use magic spells.

Catapult/Ballista

Cost: 900 gold, 300 lumber
Build Time: 250
HP: 110
Speed: 5
Range: 8
Damage: 80 basic
Armour: 0
These can inflict huge damage on soldiers and buildings. With their superior range, they're great for attacking cannon towers. Keep some troops near them, though, as they're very vulnerable to close-range attack.

Death Knight/Mage

Cost: 1,200 gold
Build Time: 120
HP: 60
Speed: 8

PASSWORDS:

Tides Of Darkness

ORC HORDE MISSIONS

1 Zul'Dare — ZLDR
2 Raid At Hillsbrad — RDTHLL
3 Southshore — RCSTHS
4 Assault On Hillsbrad — SSLTNH
5 Tol Bartad — RCTLBR
6 The Badlands — BDLNDS
7 The Fall Of Stormgarde — FLLFST
8 The Runestone At Caer Darrow — RNSTNT
9 The Razing Of TYRs hand — RZNGFT
10 The destruction Of Stratholme — DSTRCT
11 The Dead Rise As Quel'Thalas Falls — DDRSSQ
12 The Tomb Of Sargeras — TMBFSR
13 The Seige Of Dalaran — SGFDLR
14 The Fall of Lordaeron — FLLFLR

Tides Of Darkness

HUMAN MISSIONS

1 Hillsbrad — HLLBRD
2 Ambush At Tarren Hill — MBSHTM
3 Southshore — HSTHSH
4 Attack on Zul'Dare — TTCKNZ
5 Tol Barad — HTLBRD
6 Dun Algaz — DNLGZ
7 Grim Batol — GRMBTL
8 TYR's Hand — TYRHND
9 The Battle At Darrowmere — BTTLTD
10 The Prisoners — PRSNRS
11 Betrayal And Destruction Of Alterac — BTRYLN
12 The Battle At Crestfall — BTTLTC
13 Assault On Blackrock Spire — SSLTNB
14 The Great Portal — GRTPRT

*Look out for every single password for the Dark Portal levels next month.

Damage: 9 piercing
Armour: 0
Created in the Temple Of The Damned/Mage Tower, these boast a larger and more powerful range of magical spells. The human mage's are slightly better, including flame shield and invisibility.

Sapper/Demolition Squad
Cost: 700 gold, 250 lumber
Build Time: 200
HP: 40
Speed: 11
Damage: 400 explosive
Armour: 0
These kamikaze bombers are best used to blow up enemy buildings or blast through solid rock.

Zeppelin/Flying Machine
Cost: 500 gold, 100 lumber
Build Time: 65
HP: 150
Speed: 17
Armour: 2
Built by an alchemist/inventor, these can zoom all around the map on reconnaissance missions. They can also spot enemy turtles/submarines.

Dragon/Gryphon Rider
Cost: 2,500 gold
Build Time: 250
HP: 100
Speed: 14
Range: 4
Damage: 16 piercing
Armour: 5
The most feared offensive units in the game, these can fly quickly in to attack enemies from distance. And they can only be fired on by axethrowers/archers, death knights/mages, towers, and destroyers.

Oil Tanker
Cost: 400 gold, 200 lumber
Build Time: 50
HP: 90
Speed: 10
Armour: 10
Quickly built, these are used to create platforms on oil fields, then haul the 'black gold' back to base.

Destroyer
Cost: 700 gold, 350 lumber, 700 oil
Build Time: 90
HP: 100
Speed: 10
Range: 4
Damage: 35 basic
Armour: 10
Although swifter than cumbersome juggernaughts/battleships, these only have normal cannon range. They also can't fire at subs unless revealed by another unit, but can target airborne enemies.

Transport
Cost: 600 gold, 200 lumber, 500 oil
Build Time: 70
HP: 150
Speed: 10
Armour: 0
These are what you need to ferry troops over the water. Each one can carry six units. Very vulnerable to enemy shipping, it's best to escort them to their destination.

Juggernaught/Battleship
Cost: 1,000 gold, 500 lumber, 1,000 oil
Build Time: 140
HP: 150
Speed: 6
Range: 6
Damage: 130 basic
Armour: 15
Powerful floating fortresses, these are more useful than the quicker destroyers. Their only disadvantage is not being able to target airborne enemies, but they can fire 'at the ground' to sink unspotted turtles/subs.

Turtle/Submarine
Cost: 800 gold, 150 lumber, 900 oil
Build Time: 100
HP: 60
Speed: 7
Range: 4
Damage: 50 basic
Armour: 0
These stealth sea units are invisible to all but towers and flying machines. They can thus sneak up on enemy ships to unleash fire attacks, but are easily sunk if spotted by the enemy.

GENERAL TIPS

- When building up your workers, use all existing ones to mine gold (rather than chopping) to fund their training.
- Try to keep a clear path between your hall and goldmine, otherwise workers may have to go on a long diversion or even stop completely.
- To speed up delivery, build your lumber mill close to the forest you're chopping.
- As well as providing food, farms can be built to form defensive barriers around your base. Place towers and catapults behind them for extra protection.
- If your base is protected by a line of trees, try not to destroy it when gathering wood – keep an eye on where your workers are chopping.
- It's often worth creating at least one extra barracks to produce much-needed troops quicker.
- Catapults are very vulnerable to close-range attack, so always keep some troops near them.
- The key to land battles is picking off enemy units one by one with a group of soldiers.
- Place your grunts/footmen in the front line, protecting your axe throwers/archers behind.
- Watch out for some of your men chasing retreating enemies and wandering into the range of towers etc. Bring them back into line.
- Use catapults to attack enemy towers from a safe distance, thanks to their superior range.
- Send sappers into large enemy groups to kill several in one blast. But don't send more than one in simultaneously, as the first to detonate will kill the others!
- Get a zeppelin/flying machine to escort your fleet of ships and detect enemy turtles/subs.
- Use a tanker or destroyer to lure enemy catapults/ballistas to the shore, into range of your juggernaughts/battleships.
- To get the first hit on a tower with a ship, order it to move towards it rather than attack. The tower's shot should miss, enabling you to then attack it.
- Keep your ships nearby when landing transports, to support your troops once unloaded.
- One trick is to put a worker in your transport landing party and immediately start building something. Some enemies will attack the structure rather than your men, making the battle easier.



SPELLS

Magic only comes into play on later missions, as you need to build a fortress/castle and altar/church to create spellcasting units. These only start with one spell – others must be researched. Spell points used are in brackets...

Ogre-Mage
Eye Of Kilrogg (70): Move that eye quickly around the map for reconnaissance.
Bloodlust (50): Cast it on your own units just before attack to turn them into raging maniacs.
Runes (200): Laid down like mines, these explode to cause massive damage to anyone stepping on them, so remember where you put them! They can also be placed in water.

Death Knight
Death Coil (100): This drains an enemy's energy and transfers it to the death knight. Thanks.
Haste (50): Cast it on your units to make them move faster – good for catapults.
Raise Dead (50): Reanimates fresh corpses to fight again. Useful when few units are left.
Whirlwind (100): These tornadoes move around randomly, damaging any enemies touched.
Unholy Armour (100): Cast it on your units to make them temporarily invulnerable.
Death & Decay (25 each): Creates dark clouds which rot anything in their path.

Paladin
Holy Vision (70): Enables you to look anywhere on the map for a short time.
Healing (6 per pt): Replenishes HP of units wounded in battle.
Exorcism (4 per pt): Causes damage to either one or a group of undead enemies.

Mage
Fireball (100): Streaks across the battlefield, causing explosive damage. Nice.
Slow (50): Cast it on enemies to slow down both their movement and firing.
Flame Shield (80): Set a unit alight and send it in amongst the enemy to cause much damage (or even cast it on an enemy unit). Don't use it on sappers though.
Invisibility (200): Makes a unit invisible to the enemy, but it wears off once they attack. Can't be used on sappers.
Polymorph (200): Turns enemies into harmless critters. Very useful.
Blizzard (25 per storm): Summons deadly hailstorms to bombard an area, causing heavy damage.

TIME CR

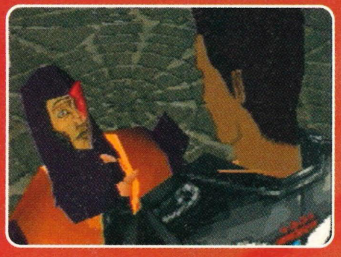


If you like your shoot-'em-ups fast and frantic, then look no further than Namco's brilliant *Time Crisis*. For 80 quid you get an import copy of the game plus the ultra-cool Guncon. Over the next four pages we present a definitive guide to all the tricks, cheats and tactics that will help you rescue the President's daughter.

STAGE ONE BOSS

After battling your way through the three Area levels on Stage one, you'll be confronted by the first Boss. You're trapped inside a room with hordes of claw-wielding ninjas. Your principle aim is to pick-off the orange guys (each one takes two shots), and then scatter your shots over the grey guys that pose a lesser threat. They will constantly keep coming forward at you, so when they do, duck behind the wall to avoid getting scratched. There are three waves to contend with, so pick them off quickly as they drop down and then concentrate on the last orange bloke. Killing him will mark the completion of the level.







General Hints

•Shoot through the doors. It is possible to shoot at doors and picture frames and hit enemies a split-second before they appear-thus saving time. To do this effectively, you need to know exactly when and where the enemies are going to appear.

•Firing two shots at each enemy in quick succession will increase your hit percentage and reduce the chances of missing, thus saving more time.

•Always shoot the red guys first as they are the most dangerous. It's very rare that the blue infantry will kill you, so concentrate on the others first.

•You duck to reload, so make sure that you remember to do so at regular intervals.

Look Out!

There are several points of interest in *Time Crisis*, so take note of the following before you embark on those treacherous missions:

Danger Objects

At various points throughout the game, you'll be warned about upcoming



Danger Objects

objects that will harm you if precautions aren't taken. Whenever one of these objects is coming, you'll be warned well in advance, as the picture clearly shows.

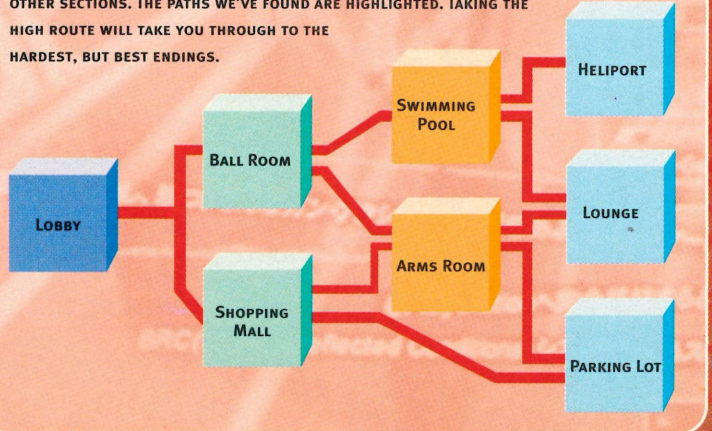
Explosive Objects

Both in Arcade and PlayStation mode there are explosive crates scattered around. If these are hit with a succession of shots, they will explode, wiping out a whole wave of enemies in the process. Cool!

Biting the Bullet

If you don't watch your back, sooner or later you're going to get killed. You begin with three lives, one of which will

The main difference between the Arcade and PlayStation games is that there are multiple routes through the hotel. You stick to the Easy route as standard, but by shooting certain things that act as triggers, you can uncover hidden routes to other sections. The paths we've found are highlighted. Taking the high route will take you through to the hardest, but best endings.



RISIS



disappear the moment you see a bullet hole or some other injury etched into the screen.

Extra Lives

Similarly to the coin-op, the player is awarded an extra life when hitting 40 enemies in a row – that's hitting 40 cronies without missing. If you miss, you'll have to start over again. You can score multiple hits on enemies by unloading a few shots into them before they hit the deck and disappear, but this can be construed as being risky. You can also shoot exploding crates and suchlike as they register as hits, but if you fire at any mechanised vehicles such as tanks and choppers, they don't count as hits. On the whole though, attempting to get extra lives just isn't worth the hassle or heartache!

Alternate Reload

Plug a standard control pad into port 2 of the PlayStation and then during the game you'll be able to press ■, ×, ●, or ▲ to duck down and reload instead of the gun button. You can even place it on the floor and use your foot for added coin-op authenticity!

Easy Arcade mode Cheat

Select the arcade mission from the main selection screen and then, on the next screen that allows you to choose between Time Attack mode or the Story mode, shoot outside of the screen. If the cheat has worked, you'll see the word 'Easy' appear over the Story option. Now select it and start playing and you'll notice that you now have five lives and a lot more time with which to complete the game.

There are two playing modes













STAGE TWO BOSS

In this stage, you are required to pick off troops from a longer range and have many more attacking at once. At the end of this stage you've got the girl with time to spare. However, the white-togged, knife throwing boss, Sherudo Garo stands in your path. He will emerge from behind the plant and bombard you with blades. So take a shot and then duck quickly to avoid loosing a life. After three hits, two cronies will pop up from behind the pillars, so take one out then duck, and then aim your sights at the other for when he re-emerges. After another couple of hits on Garo, they will appear again, so repeat the same process as before. Garo will hobble off behind the pillar, so duck behind the plant and prepare to fend off his blades again. Now he'll be backed up by men in white who will swarm the area. Sharp, precise shooting is required here to pick them all off and don't forget to duck back down after taking one shot for the one nearest yourself. Now you're one-on-one with Garo, so hit him with a few more shots to send him hobbling for cover elsewhere. This time, he'll exit through the door and appear intermittently to throw more knives at you. Shoot him as he appears and then quickly duck for cover. He will be backed up by machine gun-toting men in white – these are easily killed, so concentrate on Garo. If you score another six or so direct hits, he'll die a stumbling Hollywood death.



in *Time Crisis*. The Arcade game and bonus PlayStation game.

The Arcade game

This comprises the main bulk of this package and your aim is to blast your way through three enormous stages against a very strict time limit in order to save the President's daughter from a gruesome execution.

The PlayStation game

Far better than the arcade game, your mission is to infiltrate a multi-storey hotel which is being used as a weapons factory and hunt down the arms supplier, Kantaris, a real nasty bitch whom you'll get to meet at various points.

Secret Elements

The Lobby

Once you're through to the final area in the lobby, where the lifts are situated, the lift closest to where you're standing will gradually descend and open. The idea is to clear the area of enemies before the lift shuts and ascends the building again. To do this you must try and memorise where each wave appears from and then take them out quickly before they take cover. Achieve this and you will take the lift up the Ballroom. Fail and you'll climb the stairs to the Shopping Mall.







Shopping Mall

After the gunfight around the shops, you'll dive through an air duct in the storage area. Once you get to the final section where there is a crane, you must shoot the glass cabin to blow it up. This will cause the crane arm to fall off and smash a hole in the wall that will provide an alternate route to the Arms Factory. If you fail to shoot the crane, you'll merely go on to the Parking Lot, where a poor ending will await you if you complete it.

Ballroom

As you may know, after battling your way through the Ballroom, you will end up facing the Web Spinner Boss. Your aim is to destroy him as quickly as possible – the object being to have about ten seconds left on the clock after he dies and thus time it so that Kantaris is still in the room with you. If you achieve this, Kantaris will get the

It is essential when playing *Time Crisis* that you know exactly who you're up against. That's why we've compiled this handy table to inform you when to cack yer duds!

Name	Colour	Damage needed to lose life
Infantryman	Blue	6-8 shots
Squad Leader	Brown	6 shots
Rifleman	Dark Orange	1 shot
Time Soldier	Orange	n/a
Grenadier	Yellow/Green	1 shot
Marksman	Red	1 shot
Club-Wielder	Yellow/Green	1 hit
Machine-Gunner	Green	2 shots
Clawed Ninjas	Grey/Black	1 slash
Ninja Leader	Orange/Black	1 slash
White-Coats	White	Varies*
Sheru Garo	Boss Bloke	1 hit
Wild Dog	Boss Bloke	2-3 shots

*Depends on what weapon they use. Some use pistols which don't pose much threat, but others may wield clubs or machine-guns which require one or two hits to take a life off you.

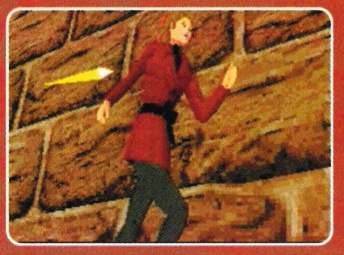


STAGE THREE BOSS

Naturally, the hardest stage and one which we recommend that you practice in Time Attack mode, as it's damned tough to complete. The Final battle takes place on the rooftop. However, the girl takes a bullet in the back... payback time! Wild Dog will appear behind the fountain, so shoot him as he pops up. He will then run off and command his cronies to attack. Watch out for when he lobs grenades at the statues, as segments will break off and start rolling towards you. Finally, Wild Dog will dash off into the tower and start frantically fighting back. A smoke screen will disguise his movements whilst he lunges at you, so keep well hidden and then fight back when you catch a glimpse of him. Now kill him!



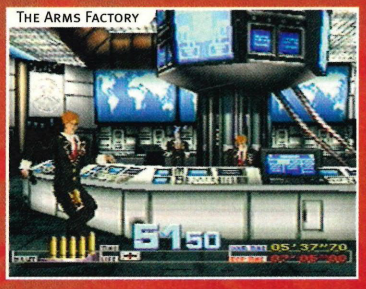


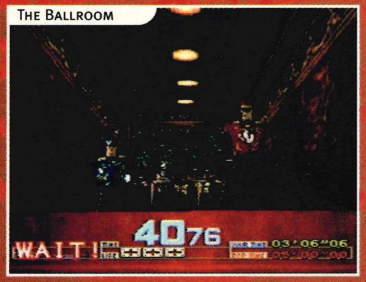


hump and exit to the Swimming Pool via a secret tunnel, closely followed by yourself. If you fail to defeat the boss in time, you'll exit via a hidden tunnel and descend to the Arms Factory.

Arms Factory

When you reach the final area of the Arms Factory, near the three large storage tanks, kill the men without hitting the tanks. Easier said than done! If you manage to do this, you'll exit via the back door and ascend the building to the Lounge. If you fail and hit the tanks, they will explode, killing everything on the screen and you'll find yourself exiting via the emergency lift, which will take you back down to the Parking Lot culminating in the Poor ending.







GAME OVER: THE DOWNFALL OF KANTARIS

There are three final stages in which you must defeat Kantaris to finish the game. Which one you tackle depends entirely on which route you have taken through the game. The Parking Lot is the easiest, the Lounge is medium and the Heliport is the toughest of them all.

Easy (Parking Lot)

When the Tank boss and all the baddies have been shot, you'll see a red car spin around the corner in the background. Pump it full of lead and if you manage to score enough hits before it disappears off the screen, Kantaris will panic and crash it into a wall. If you fail, she'll drive away to safety.





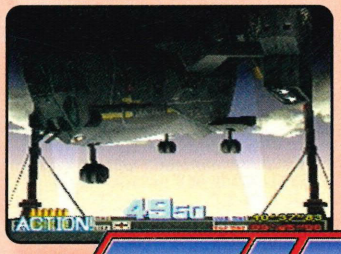
Medium (Lounge)

The idea here is to shoot the three lights in the centre of the robot and do it as quickly as possible. If you are successful, the robot will turn on it's heels and smash through the bullet-proof glass, knocking poor Kantaris out of the window.



Hard (Heliport)

Dispose of the main gunship as quickly as possible, and then Kantaris will mumble something and dash off to An awaiting escape chopper. Fill it with lead as quickly as possible (about three clips worth). If you're successful and don't miss, the helicopter will veer off and explode. Fail and she'll fly away to safety, taunting you.





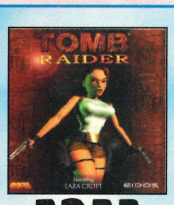


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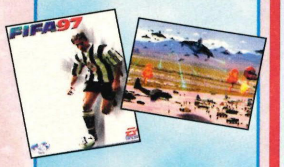
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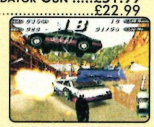
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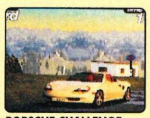
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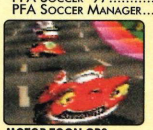


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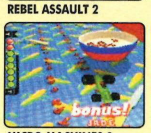
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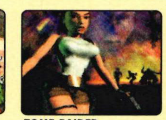


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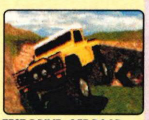


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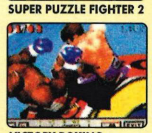
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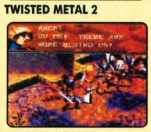
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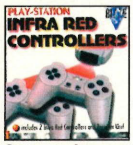
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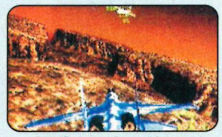
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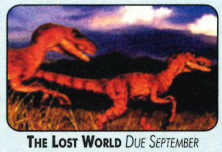
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PL2(10)

CRISPY

ROSCO MCQUEEN

Fire! Well that's the predictable opening out of the way. *Rosco McQueen* is, as you will already know if you read PLAY regularly, Sony's brand new fire-fighting platform game and although we reported on its first public appearance in issue 23, we've now had time to play it for long periods in the comfort of our own living rooms. No Sony reps breathing down our necks and asking our opinion, and most importantly, no developer watching your every facial expression to see if you are in a constant state of bliss. Or not.

The basic idea is that you are the lantern-jawed hero of the title and with the Tower XS building turned into a raging inferno, it's up to you and your floating robot pal, Digit, to douse the flames and rescue any unfortunate civilians trapped in the burning rooms. It goes without saying that if you can save as many valuable boxes of goods as possible you will also get added bonuses.

Rosco McQueen is a *Tomb Raider* style adventure, although it is obviously aimed in the main at younger players – the *Crash Bandicoot* fans. Colours are bright, speech is cute, and the action simplistic, but it's very appealing and instantly pick-up-and-playable.

You basically break into each new room (there are about 10-15 rooms per level) and immediately set upon any robots in the area with your fire axe, because they are the gits who are starting all the fires. Strategy comes into play as you must choose which droids to intercept according to how close they are to the flammable substances.

Inevitably flames begin to lick around the foundations and then it's time to switch to your hose and drench each section until all the flames are extinguished. As each room is cleared you move closer and closer to the top of the Tower and find out who's controlling all the arsonists.

Rosco McQueen plays like *Excalibur 2555AD*, and any delay between rooms is cleverly disguised by you having to enter a short corridor beforehand. The fire effects are quite superb though, and it really gets scary as you realise that suddenly everything is ablaze around you



[ABOVE] If you don't stop these robots from reaching the flammable areas of each room, they will plant incendiaries and the whole place will go up. Slash them with your axe, Rosco!







[ABOVE] The many lockers in each room hold power-ups a-plenty. Here Rosco finds two bottles of water and a box of cereal. Hmm, frosty flakes...



[ABOVE] Touch the survivors and Digit immediately homes in and teleports them away to safety. Well it saves you giving them a fireman's lift.

PLAY INFORMATION

Name: Rosco McQueen
Publisher: Sony
% Complete: 90%
Release Date: September '97





[Above] Douse the flames before the thermometer at the top right blows its top. If you run out of water, break open a locker.



[Above] Rosco's famous last words. "So you must be the one they call Crusher?"



[Above] Where once a tower of flame stood, now there's only a soggy mess thanks to some handy water bombs found in a secret room. The whole place is instantly drenched.



[Above] "Come Digit, we have work to do." All hell breaks loose in the kitchens as multiple arsonist droids turn those carelessly discarded cardboard boxes full of petroleum into blazing infernos.



[Above] On level two Rosco suddenly comes across a robotic nurse maid determined to give him a napalm enema! Digit stands idly by.



[Above] Later on in the game you come across massive fans which, when activated, send you skyward to collect many hidden bonuses.



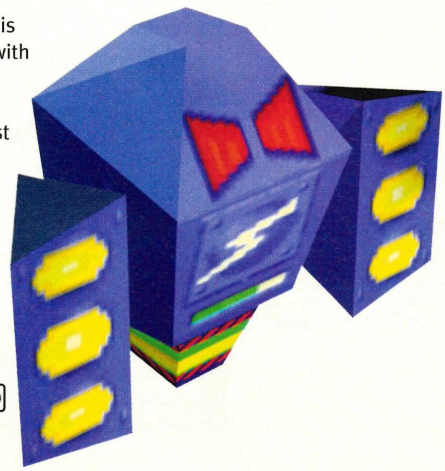




and your exit is cut off. Especially when you run out of water and your hand-held torrent becomes a trickle. Needless to say that instead of cumbersome hoses to transport the good old H2O, you must collect water bottles, and that means every available locker must be pillaged.

So the game looks great, and is crammed with things to do (there's a danger of the same tasks – attack droids, squirt hose – getting repetitive after a while), and to top it all off McQueen himself (a homage to the late Steve surely?) is a humourous Dan Dare-style character with a long list of one liners and all-round appeal. Rosco's certainly an improvement over that damn bandicoot.

Yep, *Rosco McQueen* is shaping up nicely, and with neat touches like Digit, who can teleport survivors instantly whilst giving advice (a bit like Pepo in *Overblood*), it should offer something new for PlayStation gamers. It is also compatible with the analogue joypad, if you've just gone out and bought one. Expect a review very soon.



STARSTRUCK

COLONY WARS

This must actually be better than flying around and blasting things to bits for real. Real life doesn't look as good as this, you see. We've been playing a pre-production version of *Colony Wars*, and the space battle is brought to the screen with some of the best graphics to appear on the PlayStation.

Nearby suns glow with a warm luminescence, massive starships cruise over-head, and enemies burn very nicely indeed.

Those Psygnosis boys have been working hard on this one, and we think it will be incredibly popular, not just with the *Wing Commander/Dark light/Elite* fanatics, but also with normal people. This is no niche game.

You have been called in to help crush a rebel threat from humans who live on various planetary colonies. They have started a war to fight for their independence from Earth, and that kind of thing just won't do – they must die for their unpopular political beliefs! 70 missions of excessive military force against these annoying freedom fighters await you, and although the tasks are quite varied, they will inevitably involve you destroying something in space.

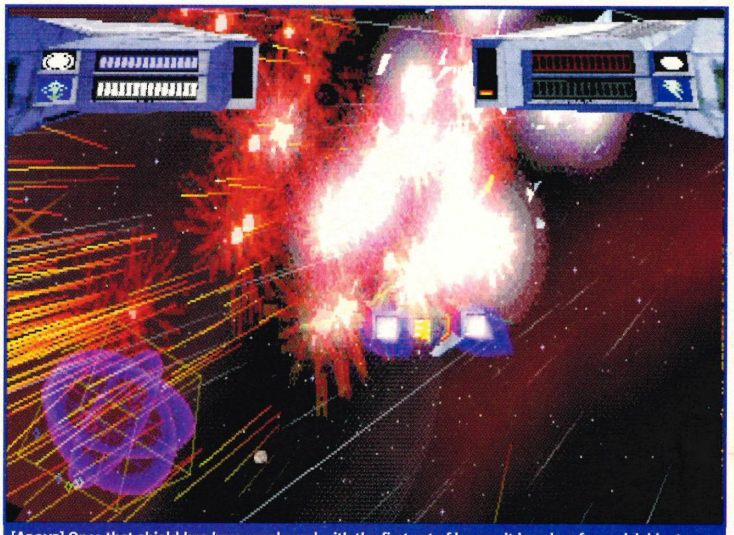






TERRAFORMED

Several ships are available to suit the kind of mission you face, and at the moment there are external, cockpit and nosecone views to play in. We found the nosecone camera to be the easiest to use in this version, because the chase view makes it really hard to tell where your shots are going to end up. Most internal views get in the way of the overlaid crosshair when you're chasing a fleeing bandit over the hull of a friendly ship and one wrong shot could get you in trouble.

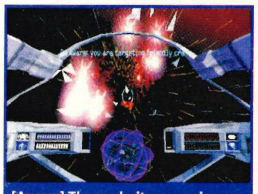


[Above] Once that shield has been weakened with the first set of lasers, it is only a few quick blasts before the ship ignites and explodes.

Some of the things you see in *Colony Wars* are just unbelievably beautiful, with so much attention to detail, from the showering sparks to the huge gelatinous warp hole that there is very little doubt concerning the quality of the finished game, reviewed next issue.



[Above] Buzzing the big ships can be fun, but make sure they're on your side first!



[Above] The cockpits are unique to each of your craft, and they look very good. They just need to shift some bits around to make them more useable.



[Above] If you hold off the guns just as an enemy is about to explode, you'll see them flailing around on fire!



[Above] Turning your attack lasers on a civilian transporter may not be the correct thing to do morally, but it is amusing.

PLAY INFORMATION

Name: Colony Wars
Publisher: Psygnosis
% Complete: 90%
Release Date: October '97

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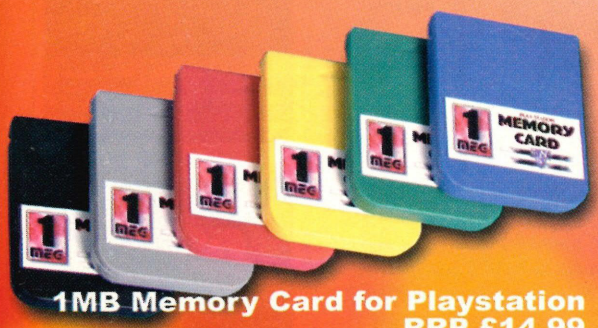
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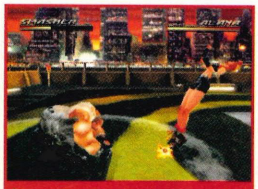
FIGHTING FORCE

It's too good to be true!

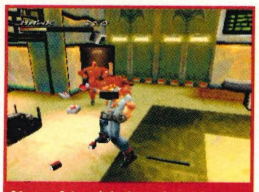
Fighting Force seems to have every essential ingredient for one outrageously playable fighting game. Not only are you given the usual one-on-one arena brawls, but you can choose to stride through an entire town, beating up the morally unguided as you go.

Think of it kind of like the old *Double Dragon* coin-op, but in totally immersive 3-D. Of course, you can take a friend along too for some help with the violence and a rather large (25 stages) arcade experience that sees you travelling through an interesting array of environments. You'll be trashing business offices, trains, gangster-infested back streets and even exploring a few secret islands.

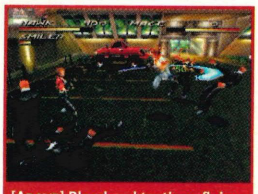
It is the freedom of movement on these detailed stages that causes the jaw to drop of people lucky enough to steal a few moments on the test versions of *Fighting Force*, and the interactivity you have with the set. Simply go anywhere that takes your fancy and kick some texture mapped ass!



[Above] For beat-'em-up fans, the regular fighting mode is provided as well, in a confined ring.



[Above] A quick thwack on the back of the head and the big man's little knees are caving in!



[Above] Blood and teeth go flying with a nice strong head-level sweeping kick from Hawk.

STREET RAT

As if the rapid spinning kicks and huge meaty punches weren't enough, there are potential weapons absolutely everywhere. Break the bar off a steel railing and try that baby out over the head of an approaching grunt. If that's too subtle for your tastes, you can even tear the engine from a deserted car and toss it in the direction of anyone you don't like the look of (providing you are using one of the muscled blokes that has that kind of brute strength).



[Above] Foxy lady Alana has a superb spinning combo kick that can take out several guys in one go.



[Above] This chump thinks he can take on the slender lady who was just walking past – he is in for a surprise!

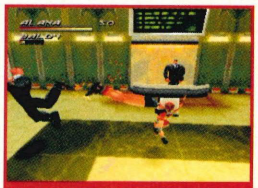
DEMOLITION MAN



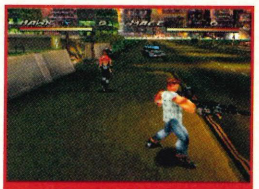
Can you tell what Hawk is thinking as he approaches the car, large wooden stick in one hand?



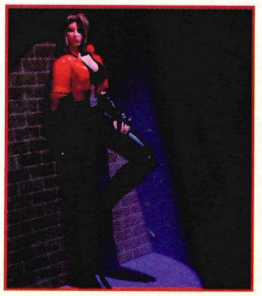
This next picture was taken only a short time after! It looks like somebody had fun.



[Above] Alana's best move is her hugely powerful rolling back-kick. It sends your adversaries for miles.



[Above] Our already powerful hero isn't going to give up that handsome piece of machinery.



Even though everybody is constructed from polygons, you can find yourself being systematically beaten by up to four enemies at any one time without any effect on game speed. Some plain-clothes, harmless-looking bystanders can turn out to hold a grudge that they want to settle as well, so you never know when you're safe and when you're in danger.

As you could tell from our excellent feature in issue 23 where we went to talk to the developers, we think this one is going to be huge! Keep an eye out for the full review next month.

PLAY INFORMATION

Name: Fighting Force
Publisher: Core
% Complete: 95%
Release Date: September '97

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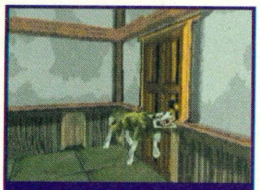
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THE NOTE

The problem with *Resident Evil*? It was played in the third-person perspective, with static rendered scenery. While these techniques helped to give the game an artistic, cinematic look, there is one step further you could go to make it even more frightening for the player. *The Note* is like playing *Resident Evil* through the eyes of one of the characters.





[Above] Bounding rabid dogs are quietly waiting for clumsy detectives to stumble into their path. They take a lot of ammo.

Although the plot is more sinister: instead of a fantasy about monsters running around the place howling, shrieking and trying to look scary, you are in search of a group of school children who, having recently been showing an interest in the occult, have been abducted for an as yet unknown purpose. One day they just disappeared, and the only clue that remains is a vague note about a nearby house.

Two investigators locate the dark imposing building and foolishly begin poking around inside. Unlike *Resident Evil*, you don't have to choose whether to be the male or female lead character – they both join into one for the purposes of moving around easily, just like in many role-playing games, including *Suikoden*.

You can walk, strafe and look all over the place, constantly on the lookout for something else that might lead you to the children. The whole view is seen through a single eye, which actually blinks as you stroll around! While it seems like a weird idea, it turns out quite realistic because the eye closes up as you become tired during the course of a day's snooping; signalling that you need a night's sleep in the local hotel.



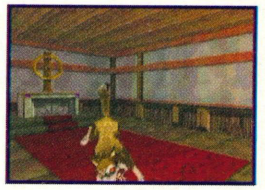
[Above] A mysterious woman who you find in the house says she knows something about the missing children, and asks you to meet her tomorrow...

Bats, rats, apparitions and rabid dogs are just a few of the first things you'll have to exterminate with your shotgun, but there's no searching around in the dark for ammo here when you can simply go to the shop in town and buy some more. Open drawers, cupboards and even curtains to let in more sunlight, and meet with the spooky people who claim to know what has happened to the children.

The Note looks set to make a change from the usual mindless blasting to an involving action-adventure, aimed at a seemingly more adult audience. The graphics are not particularly special, but there's plenty of atmosphere and it is decent fun to play. Full creepy review as soon as we can get our earthy molesting hands on it.

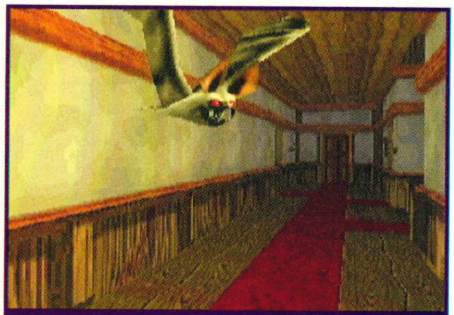


[Above] The eye is closing up because your character has accumulated too much damage. A nice sleep will sort you out.





[Above] The synchronisation of the motions, speech and subtitles is muddled at present, but we trust they'll fix that.



[Above] Bats are a nuisance as they flap around your head, nibbling bits off on their way past.

PLAY INFORMATION

Name: The Note
Publisher: SunSoft
% Complete: 75%
Release Date: November '97

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VIEWS · QUESTIONS · CRITICISMS · IDEAS

THIS IS WHERE YOU, THE PLAY READERS, GET THE CHANCE TO SPILL YOUR BRAINS ONTO THE PAGES OF OUR FINE MAGAZINE (NOT LITERALLY – STUPID). SO COME ON, GET WRITING AND WE PROMISE TO GIVE YOU A FAIR REPLY MOST OF THE TIME. SEND YOUR LETTERS TO: *ARENA, PLAY MAGAZINE, PARAGON HOUSE, ST PETER'S ROAD, BOURNEMOUTH, DORSET BH1 2JS*. OR E-MAIL US AT: PLAY@PARAGON.CO.UK. ALL LETTERS ARE READ AND ONLY THE BEST AND FUNNIEST ARE PRINTED.

DEAR PLAY,

I purchased *V-Rally* last week and enjoyed it thoroughly because it's a fine game both in one and two player modes. But imagine my disappointment when, after arranging to get together with my friend his PlayStation and his copy of *V-Rally*, we loaded the game on both machines and then spent the next five minutes scouring the menus for link options in the hope of some four player argy-bargy instead of the ultra stable kamikaze computer opponents. No link options were to be found.

I contacted the helpline on the number found in the *V-Rally* instruction manual and was told "Sorry the link options were not included in the final release, I know all the magazines said they were going to be there but they're not."

This seems like a strange turnaround, as since the start of the advertising campaign and from the information on the web site it was touted as being a major feature?

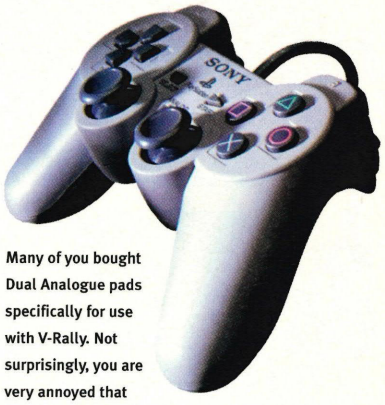
I don't know how many other people will be bothered by this, but it seems a great shame that the four player option was removed and I just felt that other people should be warned before splashing out their cash in the hope of four player rallying. Perhaps it'll be included in the sequel. Thanks for the great magazine and keep up the good work.

Paul Needham, e-mail

It was sad indeed, Paul, that Infogrames decided to remove the link, Dual Analogue support and the track editor. And it was even more infuriating that we were not told about it so that we could warn PLAY readers. Instead, all the PlayStation magazines were allowed to mis-inform the public and bear the brunt of the blame. If you are a regular reader then you will have read Ocean and Infogrames' response in issue 24. Yours is just one of many hundreds of complaints by letter and e-mail and this could all have been avoided if we had been kept in the picture.



Why was *V-Rally* released without key features which were promised? Paul Needham wants an answer.



Many of you bought Dual Analogue pads specifically for use with V-Rally. Not surprisingly, you are very annoyed that Infogrames took this option out.

DEAR PLAY,

I have a friend called Andrew who has a Saturn and was wrongly telling someone that Sega's new system is selling more than PlayStation and that they are the biggest competitor to the N64. He needs re-informing.

I think that PLAY would be better with a demo CD attached to most issues, with demos of the games previewed so that we can find out whether games are worth buying.

Finally, I am thinking about buying a racing game, which one out of these should I get: *Rally Cross*, *V-Rally*, *Total Drivin'* , *Need for Speed 2* or *Rage Racer*? Or should I wait for an F1 game?

Simon and James Fitzpatrick, Rickmansworth

Andrew is completely wrong – the Sega Saturn is doing very badly indeed, with the PlayStation and N64 regularly out-selling it 10:1. Sega needs to work out how it

managed to throw away the 32-bit market when it was in its grasp and come up with a new machine. Not all of those racing games have been reviewed, Simon and James. We would choose *Rally Cross* over *V-Rally*, *Rage Racer* over *NFS2* (unless you want total realism, in which case *NFS2* rules!) and *Total Drivin'* looks like being a must-have too.

Dear Play boys,

I think I read in one of your earlier issues that Sony had a quality test that games had to pass to be released. If it is true, I find it hard to believe, as games like *Crow 2* and *Batman Forever* are being given the right to a life.
Brian Scully, Ireland.

Sony does indeed have an approval process but it is for eradicating bugs and game errors, not for turdy games – that's *our* job. If Acclaim wants to waste a stack of money releasing *Crow 2* which we've said is rubbish right from the start, then that's its privilege. All we can do is offer our opinion as a review and then it's up to the public to decide if they really want the game. You wouldn't believe the number of PlayStation owners who don't read a PSX magazine – it's crazy. It's interesting that both the games you mention are licences of films, because these are traditionally the games which are hurriedly written and hope to sell on the back of the film. Nearly always these games are of poor quality.

Dear Play,

I write to you as a deeply concerned PlayStation owner and Play magazine reader. I am deeply unhappy with the lack of support given to the PlayStation's best feature – the link cable. What is going on with Sony? Has it lost its mind? Is it removing this option altogether? Without the link option the PSX immediately loses its edge over the Saturn and N64 and I'm sure Sony will lose its position as the leading console manufacturer.

I bought my PlayStation for the ability to link machines together, thus increasing the longevity of games ten fold – an essential feature when we are still paying £35-45 for new games. Without the link-up ability, strategy and first person perspective games become bland affairs. Just take *Command & Conquer* for an example. A brilliant game on the PC, but on the PlayStation it's just okay.

The main reason for my writing concerns the number of games that are quoted as having a link option but appear without them! I hear Electronic Arts has just dropped the link option on *Warcraft II*, as have Psygnosis with *Formula 1 '97*. If this is true I might have to reconsider spending £45 on these titles. Other games due to have link-up options include *Overboard*, *Conquest Earth*, *Duke Nukem*, *Quake* and *C&C: Red Alert*. Will these also lose the option? I hope you can relay my fears for the future of the PlayStation. Cheers for listening.
Phil Rose, Oxford.

You are so right, Phil, and many of your concerns mirror our own. *V-Rally* – no link-up. *Mechwarrior 2* – no link-up. *NFS2* – no link-up. *Destruction Derby 2* – no link-up. What the hell is going on? The problem is not hard to understand. Developers spend 18 months working on a new PlayStation game, and yet the link-up option is always the last to be implemented. The deadlines get close, and because it requires some nifty programming to get both machines to work in sync with no slowdown, the option is dropped so that there are no costly delays. Only a tiny fraction of the gamesplaying public actually use this option, according to Sony, and so it is never a high priority. Anyone with half a gamesplaying brain knows that multi-player games are the ultimate. Our colleagues on *Net Gamer* magazine (devoted solely to PC multi-player games) can testify to this, and we regularly play *Formula 1* and *NFS* using two TVs. The message to developers and publishers alike is obvious – more link-up games please!

Dear Play,

What's going on with Nintendo? I used to own a PlayStation last year but had to sell it (cash crisis!). A few weeks ago I thought I would buy myself a new console, so headed into town with the N64 in mind. On arrival at my favourite games shop I was stunned to see the N64's *Killer Instinct* running next to Sony's *Soul Blade*.

I thought this N64 was supposed to be powerful? *Killer Instinct* had the worst animation I've ever seen, and I don't want to play bloody *Mario!* I am now the proud owner of another PlayStation and a copy of *Soul Blade*.
Simon McGuinness, Newcastle.

It's a myth that just because the Nintendo is brand new, all the games are automatically brilliant. The N64 has its fair share of turkeys, just as the PlayStation had in its early days – in fact more so, because there are so few games in general. *Killer Instinct* may be a coin-op perfect conversion, but the game itself was inherently bad.

Dear Play,

Shame on Marcus O'Kane (issue 23) to say that *NFS2* is worse than the original. I own ten racing games and *NFS2* is my favourite. Oh by the way I also think the tips book names were very funny; named after Bruce Lee films no doubt.
John Donaher, Cork.

Never in the field of racing games, has so much been said about one game by so many.

Dear oh dear!

After reading Marcus O'Kane's letter (issue 23) I felt compelled to write to you. It seems that *NFS2* has caused a rift to open up. There are those on one side who consider it fantastic, and some that think it is doggy doo! I have noticed this with my friends who have played it too.

Marcus claims to have liked the original. I did, but did he actually PLAY it, because *NFS* took months to master. As *NFS2* has only been out for a short while it is obvious that Marky boy fits into the category of 'I'll just put this on for five minutes before *Neighbours* starts.' It's annoying to think that developers put so much time and money into a project only to have it thrown back into their face after only a short period of time.

Marcus also claims that the graphics and pop-up are atrocious. Have you noticed the 360° view, the amazing spot effects, wide range of objects and trackside scenery to crash into and use. The speed of the game is superb considering the amount of detail. My advice is if you want a simplistic game, buy *Scalextrix*. If you want a challenging speed-fest, then get *NFS2* – it is worth every penny.
Jim Brooks, Bognor Regis.

Well, there you have it. Like Uma Thurman, some people lust after it, and others think it's an old dog. Personally we love *NFS2* to bits and regularly play it, and *Test Drive 4* looks just as good. Most gamesplayers don't seem to realise that *NFS2* is real!

"Without the link cable, the PSX loses its edge over the N64 and Saturn!"

The mailbag filleth

The majority of letters this month are about:

- *V-Rally*. Many complaints about Dual Analogue compatibility and split screen. Lots of people are unhappy with us for putting it in the review. No-one seems to blame Ocean or Infogrames because they assume it is a factual error. No true.
- *Final Fantasy VII*. Will it cost much more if it is on three disks? No. Worst case scenario – £50. Most likely – £40-45.
- Will there be force feedback for the UK Dual Analogue pad? No. But import games should still feature it for import pads.
- Which is better: *V-Rally* or *Rally Cross*? We had more enjoyment with Rally Cross.
- Exactly how many cover books are you going to produce? As many as possible.



Is the PlayStation link cable being phased out? We hope not because it has given us some of our finest gaming moments.

Hello Play,

In keeping with the rest of the letters you receive, I would like to give you a damn hard pat (Slap or bang, depending on what you prefer!) on the back for producing a top class mag. I would however love to read even more news as I find it very interesting. Thanks mate. Now on to my reason for writing.

I am very excited at the imminent arrival of the Sony Dual Analogue joypad but I am confused as regards a couple of details, so please can you make them clear?

1. Will all PlayStation games work with the joypad or just new games with the appropriate programming. The thought of *Wipeout 2097* with the pad is very nice (Not to mention *DD2*!).
2. In issue 23 you recommended buying an import version of the joypad because of the force feedback, but is it worth it if our PAL games won't be making use of it? And is £40 (Price quoted from issue 23) a tad too expensive when our version of the pad might be available shortly after and maybe for even less dosh?

Well thanks for listening and I hope to be set straight very soon (Issue 24 possibly).

Simon, e-mail

Some incisive points there, Simon. The answer to Dual Analogue game compatibility is not an easy one. Some older games work, some don't. *The Need for Speed 2*, for example, does. Whereas *Rage Racer* does not (probably because Namco wants you to buy the NegCon instead). The best way to check a prospective purchase is to take your pad to the shop and get them to load up the game. Remember to press the middle button for the red light to get the pad working properly. As regards the price of the pad, well £40 might be more than the official price, but that's what you must pay to be the first on the block with it. By all means buy the official UK one, but you won't get any force feedback if you play import games with it. Not at the moment anyway.

Hi there

I thought I would drop you a line, as I haven't for a while. Although I buy mostly import games, I was very impressed with the UK version of *V-Rally*. Full-screen, full-speed and no squashed graphics. This game, like many others now, has the screen-adjust utility for centring the screen which I find very useful as I suffer from an offset picture. Can you tell me if Sony is making this mandatory in all games? I've even found it in Namco's Japanese *Rage Racer* and US *Soul Blade*. Brilliant!

I'd like to thank Psygnosis, as I think they were the first to come up with this excellent utility, obviously someone listened to moans about offset pictures. I thank you. Can you also tell me if the Dual Analogue pad is worth buying for mainly driving games, and does the force feedback work with any game?

Lastly, do you know of any games in development that will utilise software-based interpolation? Ie, smoothing out the pixels for smoother looking graphics. This method is being used for some PC games and because the PSX doesn't have this in-hardware, it would be a good move to keep the console on the cutting edge.

Rascal from Psygnosis might be using this, as reports suggest pixellated-free smooth graphics. I also like the switch to hi-res graphics with high frame rates. *F1' 97*, *Rapid Racer* etc are all using this and it's very welcome!

Rob Donald, Scotland.

"If Namco was to release a memory add-on, it would solve a lot of problems"

We think it was Psygnosis who came up the idea as well, Rob Donald, and if anyone knows better, please tell us. The Dual Analogue is not worth it for driving games at the moment, because the two biggest ones: *Rage Racer* and *V-Rally* are incompatible. Many news ones will be though, so perhaps you should wait a bit, especially if you only have a UK machine, because only *Porsche Challenge* works perfectly.

Interpolation is unlikely on the PlayStation because it would have to be software driven. The N64 has this feature built-in as part of the hardware so it doesn't demand too much from the RAM of the console or the game code itself. Even with its hardware though, the N64 still finds it difficult to use too complex textures. Psygnosis is about the best developer for pushing the boundaries of what is possible on the PlayStaion, and it seems able to create smoother textures which don't distort on closer inspection.



Brian Scully (no relation to Dana) wants to know if Sony has a quality control department because otherwise how do you explain *Crow 2?*

Dear Play magazine,

I recently had the pleasure of playing *Tekken 3* at my local arcade. I spent about £15 in one go playing on it and thought it was worth every penny. I can't wait for its PlayStation release. But it troubles me as to whether it will be as good as the arcade version.

It has been said that Namco will not be able to reproduce the 3-D backgrounds of the arcade due to memory restrictions on the PSX. I know that graphics are a minor consideration compared to gameplay, but the backgrounds do add a lot of atmosphere. There has been talk of an extra memory add-on but after recent speculation it doesn't seem that it is going to happen which I think is a great shame.

If Namco was to release a memory add-on then it would solve a lot of problems. Not only would they be able to convert *Tekken 3* pretty much in all its glory but it would mean that Piracy on the game would be eliminated because you would need the extra memory to be able to run it.

One of the factors that people have been worried about is that it would cost too much, but I'm sure that if they can release *Time Crisis* + Lightgun for £50 (which is how much it is said to cost in this country on release) then they could bundle *Tekken 3* with extra memory for the same price. I think that £50 is a fair price to pay for a game this good and after all we all paid the same price for *Tekken* 1 and 2 when they were first released and nobody really complained back then. It would keep a lot of arcade players happy and ensure a perfect conversion of the best fighting game ever. I hope that Namco do the right thing and release the add-on. What do you think?

Stuart Reynolds, e-mail

To be honest, Stuart we all thought *Tekken 3* looked a bit rough compared to the second game and the backgrounds, although impressive, were ruined by the wobbling texture maps on the floor. *Tekken 3* might play well, but is it really any different to *Tekken 2*? We do not think Namco will need a hardware upgrade for *Tekken 3* as it should be perfectly capable of converting it to the PlayStation.

We reserve the right to edit your letters and regret we cannot reply personally. If you want us to print your e-mail address for further electronic discussion, please give specific permission at the end of your letter. Get those letters in now and you too could be one of the lucky few to get in print.

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5	(-)	Rally Cross	£32.99
6	(6)	Soul Blade	£37.99
7	(-)	Lifeforce Tenka	£38.99
8	(10)	Bust-a-Move 2	£18.99
9	(5)	Wing Commander IV	£38.99
10	(9)	Micro Machines V3	£37.99

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PLAYLIST

THE COMPLETE A-Z OF PLAYSTATION GAMES REVIEWED IN PLAY AND YOUR INVALUABLE GUIDE AS TO WHAT TO BUY AND IF £20 FOR A DUSTY COPY IS REALLY WORTH IT. CARRY A COPY OF PLAY WHEREVER YOU GO, OR ALTERNATIVELY, MAKE A SPECIAL CONTAINER FOR IT. PLEASE NOTE THAT '*' INDICATES AN IMPORT REVIEW.

playback

These are our very own top tens for each genre and do not conform to the rating they were originally given. It's simply what the team feels are the best games on PSX.

BEAT-'EM-UPS



1. Soul Edge	**96%**
2. Tekken 2	95%
3. Bushido Blade	94%
4. Tobal 2	92%
5. SF Zero 2	94%
6. Tobal No.1	94%
7. MK Trilogy	92%
8. Tekken	95%
9. SF Alpha	93%
10. Star Gladiator	88%

FIRST PERSON SHOOT-'EM-UPS



1. Mechwarrior	**91%**
2. Doom/Final	93%
3. Tenka	86%
4. Exhumed	84%
5. Alien Trilogy	91%
6. Disruptor	87%
7. Magic Carpet	90%
8. Tunnel B1	87%
9. Descent	85%
10. PO'ed	87%

GAME								SCORE	WE SAY...
2Xtreme	1-2	●						52%	Tedious multi sports effort – fading fast.
3D Lemmings	1	●				●		69%	Famous puzzle game, now in 3D! Average.
Ace Combat*	1-2	●						81%	Slightly repetitive flight sim.
Ace Combat 2*	1	●						84%	Far better graphically and playability wise.
A-Train*	1	●				●		62%	Complex resource management with trains.
Actua Golf	1-4	●	●					88%	Best golf game on PSX so far (until *Golf2*).
Actua Golf 2	1-4	●						80%	Not as good graphically, but still great fun.
Actua Soccer	1-2	●						94%	Slick looking footy sim, now dated.
Actua Soccer: Club Edition	1-2	●						62%	Cynical re-badged version of above.
Adidas Power Soccer	1-4	●	●					95%	Great then, now failing against the competition.
Addidas Power Soccer '97	1-4	●	●					52%	Same game, but with UK teams. Poor.
Agile Warrior:F111X	1	●						79%	Simple brainless shoot-'em-up from Virgin.
Alien Trilogy	1	●						91%	Deeply scary space shoot-'em-up. Great fun.
Allied General	1-2	●						51%	Hexagonal strategy for bores and generals.
All-Star Soccer	1-8	●	●					80%	Superb comic commentary, not bad footy !
Alone in the Dark 2	1	●						77%	Intruiging French 3-D adventure based on PC.
Andretti Racing '97	1-2	●		●	●		●	74%	Average split screen American racer.
Aquanaut's Holiday	1-2	●						58%	Impenetrable and dull underwater guff.
Area 51	1-2					●		68%	Rough coin-op conversion using light gun.
Assault Rigs	1-2	●		●				81%	*Tron*-like tank blasting game. Good link-up.
Atari Collection, The	1	●						81%	Many classics. Best: *Missile Command, Asteroids.*
Ayrton Senna's Kart Duel	1-2	●		●			●	71%	Ropey racing engine, jerky action.
Ballblazer Champions*	1-2	●			●			69%	Dull as dishwater futuristic sports.
Batman Forever	1-2	●						41%	Bloody awful film licence – avoid!
Bedlam	1	●				●		78%	Muggy and complicated *Syndicate* wannabe.
Big Hurt Baseball*	1-2	●						81%	Moderately successful sports conversion.
Black Dawn	1	●						76%	Average helicopter shoot-'em-up.
BLAM! Machinehead	1	●						79%	Graphical masterpiece, but no depth at all.
Blast Chamber	1-4	●	●					82%	Clever puzzles with rotating rooms.
Blood Omen: LOK	1	●						81%	Be a vampire – top bloody fun.
Broken Helix*	1	●						75%	Absorbing 3-D adventure, but bad graphically.
Broken Sword	1	●				●		84%	Slick point 'n' click adventure.
Bubble Bobble	1-2	●						85%	Arcade fun from the early Eighties.
Bubsy 3D	1-4							82%	Passable 3-D cartoon romp.
Burning Road	1-2	●		●			●	90%	Turbo nutter action with big trucks.
Bushido Blade*	1-2	●		●			●	94%	Stylish and brutal sword-fighting.
Bust-a-Move 2	1-2	●			●			88%	Simple, yet totally addictive puzzler.
Buster Bros Collection*	1-2	●						86%	*Pang* gets the 32-bit treatment.
Carnage Heart	1	●						57%	Dull robot strategy adventure on the moon.
Casper	1	●						65%	Plain and unimaginative film game.
Cheesy	1	●						50%	It certainly is...
Chessmaster 3D	1-2	●						68%	Chess. On PlayStation. Hmm...
Choro Q*	1	●						70%	Quirky but rough cartoon racer.
Choro Q 2*	1-2	●			●		●	85%	More cars, big miniature fun.
Chronicles of the Sword	1	●				●		43%	Tedious adventure – avoid!
City of Lost Children	1	●						78%	Slow moving French 3-D adventure.
Command & Conquer	1							79%	PSX version slow and sorely lacking.
Contra: Legacy of War	1-2	●						62%	Scappy arcade shoot-'em-up from Konami.
Coolboarders	1	●						82%	High speed stunts on a snowboard.
Crash Bandicoot	1	●						84%	Technically brilliant platformer.

GAME									SCORE	WE SAY...
Criticom	1-2	●							87%	Early average beat-'em-up. Now forgotten.
Crow: City of Angels	1	●							21%	Absolute shite!
Crusader: No Remorse	1	●							80%	Decent shoot-'em-up from the PC.
Crypt Killer	1-2							●	38%	Blocky, dreary, shoddy shooter.
Cyberia	1	●							67%	'On rails' FMV shoot-'em-up. Ugh!
Cybersled	1-2	●			●				55%	Vivid colours, but ultimately dull.
CyberSpeed	1	●							65%	Putrid futuristic *Hi-Octane*-style racer
D	1	●							69%	Mediocre 3-D adventure – Slow.
Dark Forces	1								75%	Appalling *Star Wars* conversion.
Darklight Conflict	1								79%	Fantastic looking, but sadly boring.
Darkstalkers*	1-2								88%	Very playable beat-'em-up from a coin-op.
Defcon 5	1	●							88%	Run-of-the-mill space adventure. Slow.
Descent	1-2	●		●					85%	Was good, now utter cack!
Descent 2	1-2	●		●					63%	Almost the same game. Not that fun to play.
Destruction Derby	1-2	●		●					86%	PSX showpiece and good two player.
Destruction Derby 2	1	●							82%	Better, but lacks link-up – bah!
Die Hard Trilogy	1	●				●	●	●	92%	Utterly brilliant three film games in one.
Discworld	1	●				●			74%	Unfunny cartoon adventure.
Disruptor	1	●							87%	Impressive 3-D *Doom* clone.
Doom	1-2			●					93%	Top link-up, but now looking dated.
Dracula X*	1	●							84%	Japanese vampire platformer.
Earthworm Jim 2	1	●							69%	16-bit fun, but joke is wearing thin.
Epidemic*	1	●							71%	Slow and boring disease adventure.
ESPN Extreme Games	1-2	●							73%	Tiresome sports, no fun at all!
Excalibur 2555 AD	1	●							86%	Imaginative and lush RPG.
Exhumed	1	●							84%	Compelling Egyptian 3-D shoot-'em-up.
Extreme Pinball	1-2	●							54%	Miserable pinball sim with bad physics.
Fade To Black	1	●							90%	Gripping sci-fi alien adventure!
FIFA '96	1-4	●	●						81%	Unexceptional footy flannel.
FIFA '97	1-4	●	●						70%	Graphically better, but plays worse
Fighter's Impact*	1-2	●							76%	Dated and blocky 3-D beat-'em-up. Buy *Tekken2*.
Final Doom	1-2			●		●			82%	New levels, but otherwise the same.
Firemen, The*	1	●							78%	16-bit looking fire-fighting action game.
Firestorm: Thunderhawk2	1	●							85%	Playable helicopter blast-'em-up from Core.
Firo & Klawd	1-2								64%	Garish cartoon cop adventure. Dodgy.
Formation Soccer*	1-2	●							58%	Expensive and dated-looking footy guff!
Formula 1	1-2	●		●			●		92%	Exhilerating and glorious F1 sim!
Galaxian 3*	1-4	●	●			●	●		69%	Repetitive and confusing shooter.
Gex	1	●							76%	Wretched 3DO platformer with dumb lizard.
Goal Storm*	1-2	●							69%	Disappointingly slow, fails to score...
Grid Run	1-2	●	●		●				53%	Banal maze game with few rewards.
Gunship	1	●							90%	Has not stood the test of time...
Hardcore 4X4	1-2	●		●			●		81%	Hellish and repetitive off-road action.
Hebereke's Popitto	1-2	●							43%	Why bother with this when *Puzzle Fighter* exists?
Hercules*	1	●							63%	Sweet and innocent, but simple and dull.
Hermie Hopperhead*	1	●							53%	Worthless cartoon platform banality.
Hexen	1	●							35%	One of the PSX's worst ever games!
Hi-Octane	1-2	●			●				80%	Reasonable Bullfrog racer.
Horned Owl*	1-2	●						●	73%	Poor excuse for a light gun game.
Hyper Tennis	1-4	●	●						78%	Utterly pointless tennis sim. There are better.
Impact Racing	1-2	●		●					87%	Good then, now utter tripe!
Incredible Hulk, The	1	●							45%	Nothing 'incredible' about it. Poor.
Independence Day*	1-2	●		●	●				47%	Wretched film-inspired nonsence!
International Moto X*	1-2	●		●					77%	Moderate motorbike racer.
Int Superstar Soccer Deluxe	1-4	●	●						83%	16-bit footy conversion, no frills.
Int Superstar Soccer Pro	1-2	●							84%	One of the best football games on PSX!
Int Track & Field	1-4	●	●						85%	Superb multi-player sports special!
In The Hunt*	1-2	●							69%	Miserable sub shoot-'em-up. Tosh!
Iron & Blood	1-2	●							75%	Passable medieval beat-'em-up.
Iron Man & Manowar	1-2								47%	As much fun as genital surgery!
Jet Rider	1-2	●							85%	Super-fast jetbikes, poor graphics.
J-League: Winning Eleven	1-2	●							73%	Early and now extremely dated 3-D football.
Johnny Bazookatone	1	●							85%	He's supposed to be cool. He's not.
Jonah Lomu Rugby	1-2	●	●						86%	Accurate and enjoyable rugby sim.
Jumping Flash	1	●							87%	Highly imaginative first person platformer.
Jumping Flash 2*	1	●							86%	Psychedelic sequel to above (only better).
Kileak The Blood	1	●							57%	Sparse *Doom* clone that lacks any kind of thrill.
Kileak The Blood 2	1	●							65%	The same only with a '2' at the end.
Killing Zone*	1-2								57%	Contemptible beat-'em-up. Avoid.
King Bowling	1-4	●							37%	Uninspiring cartoon bowling sim. Duff.
King's Field	1	●							61%	Long lasting RPG, looks crap though.

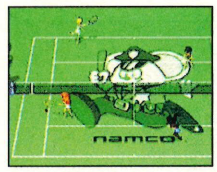
playback

ARCADE-STYLE SHOOT-'EM-UPS



1. Time Crisis 90%
2. Die Hard Trilogy 93%
3. Twisted Metal 2 88%
4. Syndicate Wars 85%
5. Soviet Strike 83%
6. Tempest X3 86%
7. X2 77%
8. Darklight 80%
9. Ace Combat 2 84%
10. Project Overkill 89%

SPORTS SIMS



1. Smash Tennis 86%
2. Total NBA '97 92%
3. Soccer '97 82%
4. ISS Pro 84%
5. Actua Golf 88%
6. Int Track & Field 85%
7. Victory Boxing 90%
8. VR Baseball '97 80%
9. ISS Deluxe 83%
10. Sampras Extreme 90%

STRATEGY & ADVENTURE



1. Tomb Raider 94%
2. Resident Evil 95%
3. Warcraft 2 86%
4. Fade to Black 90%
5. X-Com: TFTD 88%
6. Suikoden 80%
7. LBA 83%
8. Wild Arms 85%
9. Space Hulk 84%
10. Broken Sword 84%

playback

Puzzle & Party Games



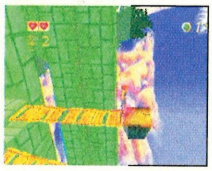
1. Puzzle Fighter 90%
2. Bust-A-Move 2 88%
3. PaRappa the Rapper 82%
3. Bubble Bobble 85%
4. Pro Pinball 90%
5. Worms 92%
6. Atari Collection 81%
7. Supersonic Racers 91%
8. Namco Museum IV 79%
9. Buster Bros 86%

Racing Games



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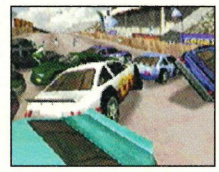


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GAME									SCORE	WE SAY...
King Of Fighters '95*	1-2	●							62%	Utterly pointless 2-D beat-'em-up!
King Of Fighters '96*	1-2	●							59%	Rips off every fighting game. Still crap though.
Krazy Ivan	1	●							90%	Sumptuous visuals hide a real stinker!
Lifeforce Tenka	1	●							86%	Grisly polygonal *Doom* clone – flashy.
Little Big Adventure	1	●							83%	Outstanding graphical adventure!
Loaded	1-2	●							85%	Gutsy and mindless, but repetitive.
Lomax in Lemmingland	1								70%	Dull as dishwater platform game.
Lone Soldier	1	●							92%	Overrated Rambo rubbish!
Lost Vikings 2, The	1-2								72%	Playable platform strategy. Looks old though.
MK Trilogy	1-2								92%	Gory orgy of 16-bit gameplay. Not bad.
Machine Hunter	1-2					●			72%	Decent *Paradroid*-inspired shooter.
Madden '97	1-4	●	●						81%	Solid and playable US football sim.
Magic Carpet	1	●							90%	Magnificent magic carpet ride!
Mechwarrior 2	1	●							91%	Top class big robot shoot-'em-up!
Mega Man 8*	1	●							82%	Playable and colourful, but ultimately shallow.
Mickey's Wild Adventure	1	●							79%	Standard cartoon platformer. Yawn!
Micro Machines V3	1-8	●	●						92%	Blistering racing game. Fantastic!
Monster Trucks	1	●							74%	Competent, but dull off-roader.
Mortal Kombat 3	1-2	●							93%	Don't buy this, get *MK Trilogy* instead.
Motor Toon GP 2*	1-2	●			●			●	79%	Highly playable cartoon racer.
Myst	1	●							68%	Humdrum static screen adventure. Sad.
Namco Museum 1*	1-2	●							70%	Retro collection – best: *Pacman* and *Galaga*.
Namco Museum 2*	1-2	●							70%	Worse than Vol 1 – best: *Xevious*.
Namco Museum 3*	1-2	●							73%	Decent retro fix – best: *Pole Position II*.
Namco Museum 4	1-2	●							79%	Some cool games – best: *Pacland*.
Nanotek Warrior*	1								76%	Tired shoot-'em-up set at molecular level.
Nascar Racing '96	1	●						●	80%	Comprehensive racing simulation – a bit jerky.
NBA In The Zone	1-2	●							79%	Solid sports sim, not as good as *Total NBA*.
NBA Jam Extreme	1-2	●							79%	Over exaggerated arcade port-over. Numb.
NBA Jam:TE	1-4	●	●						90%	Two-on-two multi-player mayhem. Good fun.
NBA Live '96	1-2	●							82%	Stale and lifeless basketball sim. Not much cop.
NBA Live '97	1-2	●	●						89%	All the latest stats and players – better engine.
Need For Speed, The	1-2	●			●	●		●	94%	Classic supercar OTT racing. Superb link-up!
[illegible]	[illegible]	●				●		●	90%	Rough looking, but actually more fun – long term.
[illegible]									73%	American football – who cares?
NHL '97									86%	Intense ice hockey action – smooth and fast.
NHL Face Off									78%	Admirable attempt, but a bit cumbersome.
Novastorm									38%	Contemptable FMV-spooled shoot-'em-up arse!
Off World Interceptor						●			77%	Jerky 3-D buggy battling disgrace. Avoid.
Olympic Games									89%	Utterly fantastic multi-player event.
Olympic Soccer									84%	Highly playable footy game, basic graphics.
Onside Soccer									76%	Uninspiring footy with management aspects.
Overblood									86%	Atmospheric, innovative 3-D space adventure.
Pandemonium									90%	Enjoyable platform game, but too restrictive.
Panzer General							●		73%	Strategy war game for dedicated anoraks.
PaRappa the Rapper									82%	Tap the buttons, sing the rhyme. Brilliant!
Peak Performance*						●		●	85%	Blistering 28-car joyriding – a great laugh!
Perfect Weapon									65%	Slothful 3-D adventure, lacking visual flair.
PGA Tour '96									86%	Well, it's golf innit. Buy the updated version.
PGA Tour '97									81%	Extremely able golfing sim. It's got the lot.
Philosoma									85%	Great looking shoot-'em-up, but badly dated.
Pitball									66%	Rough and confusing futuristic sports.
Player Manager							●		74%	Banal management game. No frills and slow.
PO'ed									87%	Scrappy *Doom* clone, meant to be humerous.
Porsche Challenge						●		●	82%	Superb looking, technically brilliant. Too slow.
Power Instinct 2*									52%	Cheap and nasty beat-'em-up – stay well clear.
Powermove Pro Wrestling									51%	Men, in tights, absolutely awful game.
Powerplay Hockey '97									82%	Yet another hockey game, actually quite good.
Primal Rage									85%	Claymation-based beat-'em-up. Piss poor now.
Prime Goal EX*									62%	Very average sprite based footy. Worse than *FIFA*.
Pro Pinball: The Web									90%	Definitely the best pinball game on the PSX!
Project Overkill									89%	Violent, bloody, but repetitive and no two player!
Psychic Detective									75%	Wholly FMV erotic fantasy. Utter tosh.
Psychic Force									73%	Unusual floating beat-'em-up. Nothing special.
Quarterback Club '96									80%	Yet again, who cares?
Raiden Project, The									68%	Dazzling, but ultimately weak shoot-'em-up.
Rage Racer								●	94%	Super fast, varied, playable racer. Get it now!
Raging Skies					●			●	73%	Adequate flight shoot-'em-up, but linkable!
						●		●	89%	First class off-road antics. Two and four player!
									71%	Cutesy side-on cartoon shoot-'em-up. Dated.
Rayman	1	●							87%	Colourful platform game, now looking tired.

GAME									SCORE	WE SAY...
Ray Storm*	1-2								75%	Overwhelming two player space shoot-'em-up.
Ray Tracers	1	●							74%	Super fast *Chase HQ*-style racer. A bit basic.
Re-Loaded	1-2	●							61%	Actually worse than the original. Sloppy.
Rebel Assault 2*	1	●							60%	*Star Wars* shoot-'em-up. Boring and reptitive.
Resident Evil	1	●							95%	Gothic horror adventure – recommended!
Return Fire	1-2	●			●				84%	Average 3DO split screen army romp.
Revolution X	1-2					●			40%	Dire Aerosmith mouse shoot-'em-up. Bad.
Ridge Racer	1	●					●		93%	Launch game, now looking very sad indeed.
Ridge Racer Revolution	1-2	●		●			●		90%	A better game, with link-up and nicer cars.
Riot	1-2	●							72%	Moribund futuristic sports – like *Rollerball*.
Rise 2: Resurection	1-2	●							88%	Hideous robot beat-'em-up. A bad date.
Road Rage	1-2	●					●		24%	Detestable and trashy shoebox sim. Ugh!
Road Rash	1-2	●							75%	Dodgy visuals, but fast and fun. Now cheap.
Robopit	1-2	●			●				55%	Abominable robot beat-'em-up.
Robotron X	1-2	●							85%	Classic gameplay, very fast, we prefer original.
Rockman Battle & Chase*	1-2	●			●				41%	Basic and unrewarding cartoon racer.
Runabout*	1	●							77%	Highly playable racer, but way too short.
Sampras Extreme	1-4	●	●						90%	One of the best tennis games on PSX. Slick.
Samurai Showdown*	1-2	●							62%	Should be called *Samurai Slowdown!*
Sentient	1	●							84%	Absorbing and intelligent adventure. Bizarre.
Shellshock	1	●							85%	Passable tank game, now looks basic.
ShockWave Assault	1	●							87%	Limited surface-based shoot-'em-up. Dull.
Sim City 2000	1	●				●			75%	A fantastic game. Not suited to the PSX.
Skeleton Warriors*	1								56%	Grotesque import beat-'em-up.
Smash Court Tennis	1-4	●	●						86%	Supremely playable, addictive cartoon tennis.
Soccer '97	1-4	●	●						82%	UK teams version of *Olympic* – very playable!
Soul Edge*	1-2	●							96%	The best weapons-based beat-'em-up on PSX!
Soviet Strike	1	●							83%	Decent helicopter shoot-'em-up, rough looking.
Space Hulk	1	●							84%	Claustrophobic and intense 3DO strategy game.
Space Jam	1-6		●						39%	Pants cartoon basketball game, based on film.
Speedster	1-2	●			●		●		80%	Overhead racer with okay handling, but slow.
Spider*	1	●							75%	'On rails' arachnid platformer. Can get boring.
Spot Goes to Hollywood*	1	●							72%	Uninspiring cartoon platform game. Yawn.
Stahlfeder*	1	●							65%	Old-style vertical shoot-'em-up – too easy.
Star Gladiator	1-2	●							88%	Competent beat-'em-up from Capcom.
Starblade Alpha	1	●							68%	Lots of blasting action, no control at all...
Starfighter 3000	1								85%	A decent stab at a sci-fi shooter/strategy.
Starwinder	1	●							77%	Linear space-based racer. Lacks excitment.
Steel Harbinger	1	●							80%	Controlling a violent nympho isn't much fun.
Street Fighter Alpha	1-2	●							93%	Classic 2-D beat-'em-up, now been replaced.
Street Fighter: The Movie	1-2	●							35%	The original PLAY score was a misprint! Crap!
Street Fighter Zero 2*	1-2	●							94%	Simple, colourful graphics – total gameplay!
Street Racer	1-8	●	●		●				84%	Childish *Mario Kart* wannabe, good multi-player.
Strikepoint*	1-2	●			●				54%	Shoddy and unconvincing helicopter sim.
Striker '96	1-4	●	●						89%	Extremely playable, but now extremely dated.
Suikoden	1	●							80%	Endearing and lasting Manga RPG.
Super Puzzle Fighter 2*	1-2	●							90%	Fan-bloody-tastic Japanese puzzler!
Supersonic Racers	1-8	●	●						91%	Chaotic Wacky Races-style multi-player romp.
Swagman	1	●							82%	Proficient cutesy overhead cartoon adventure.
Syndicate Wars	1-4	●	●			●			85%	I love the smell of napalm in the morning!
Tail Of The Sun*	1	●							84%	Innovative caveman adventure. Badly presented.
Tekken	1-2	●							95%	Was the ultimate 3-D beat-'em-up, still decent.
Tekken 2*	1-2	●							95%	Ultimate 3-D beat-'em-up – essential purchase!
Tempest X3	1-2	●							86%	Ancient coin-op brought up-to-date. Good fun.
Ten Pin Ally	1-6								60%	Dismal and utterly pointless bowling sim.
Test Drive Off-Road	1-2	●			●				35%	A turkey! Tarnishes the Test Drive name.
Theme Park	1	●							86%	Build your own Alton Towers – very in-depth.
Tiger Shark	1								62%	Decent water and aerial shoot-'em-up. Rough.
Time Commando	1								78%	Restrictive, but graphically impressive adventure.
Time Crisis*	1	●						●	90%	Stupendous light gun shooting action. Top.
Tobal No. 1*	1-2	●							94%	Cracking high res beat-'em-up with quest mode.
Tobal 2*	1-2	●					●		92%	Highly advanced sequel. More of everything!
Tokyo Highway Battle	1	●							73%	Great concept, let down by low overall speed.
Tomb Raider	1	●							94%	Superb Indiana Jones-style 3-D adventure.
Top Gun: Fire at Will	1	●							76%	Lack-lustre combat flight sim based on film.
Toshinden	1-2	●							76%	First *Tekken* rival, graphically fantastic. Dated.
Toshinden 2*	1-2	●							74%	Far worse than the original. Avoid like plague.
Total Eclipse Turbo	1	●							69%	Poor third person shoot-'em-up. From 3DO.
Total NBA '96	1-8	●	●						94%	The best basketball game on PSX, until...
Total NBA '97	1-8	●	●						92%	The most advanced basketball game ever!

LONG TERM TEST



NAME: DESTRUCTION DERBY2
LENGTH OF TEST: 9 MONTHS
REPLAY VALUE: 3/5

THE BIGGEST FLAW IN *DD2* IS A DISTINCT ABSENCE OF THE TWO PLAYER LINK-UP OPTION WHICH WAS THE BEST THING ABOUT THE FIRST GAME. BIT OF A SHAME THAT, AS THIS WOULD HAVE NO DOUBT ELEVATED IT TO CLASSIC STATUS WHEN IT WAS REVIEWED LAST XMAS.

BUT A LOT OF TIME HAS PASSED SINCE *DD2* WAS A BRAND NEW PROSPECT, AND MANY NEW RACING GAMES HAVE EMERGED SINCE. IS IT STILL WORTH THE MONEY, ESPECIALLY AS YOU CAN NOW PICK IT UP SECOND HAND OR AT A DISCOUNTED PRICE?

IN A WORD, YES. *DD2* MAY BE A ONE PLAYER GAME ONLY, BUT YOU CAN ALWAYS GO BACK TO IT AND CRUSH A FEW CARS TO PULP, AND THE LONG LASTING ABILITY OF *DD2* MUST BE DOWN TO THE COMPLETELY RANDOM VIOLENCE IT OFFERS.

INSTEAD OF JUST COMPLETING A LEVEL BY HAVING TO PERFORM CERTAIN TASKS, TO GET THE HIGHEST POINTS IN *DD2* YOU JUST POINT YOUR CAR IN THE DIRECTION OF SOME ON-COMING HIGH SPEED TRAFFIC AND GRIT YOUR TEETH. THE RESULTS ARE COMPLETELY RANDOM AND DIFFERENT EVERY TIME.

CAR HANDLING IS GOOD ENOUGH TO RATE THE GAME FOR DRIVING ENTHUSIASTS, AND IT IS STILL ONE OF THE ONLY GAMES TO OFFER REAL CAR DAMAGE.

DESTRUCTION DERBY 2 IS A GOOD LONG TERM DEAL BECAUSE YOU CAN ALWAYS GO BACK TO IT. THERE ARE PLENTY OF COURSES, LOTS OF FENDER-RIPPING ACTION, BUT IT SHOULD HAVE A TWO PLAYER MODE THOUGH.

WORTH A LOOK.

LONG TERM TEST



NAME: PSX DOMINATOR
LENGTH OF TEST: 3 MONTHS
REPLAY VALUE: 4/5

THE DOMINATOR IS THE FIRST THIRD PARTY JOYSTICK FOR THE PLAYSTATION. FORGET SONY'S OWN DOUBLE JOYSTICK – IT SOLD LIKE A DOG AND WAS TOO EXPENSIVE. THIS LITTLE BEAUTY IS WHAT YOU NEED IF YOU ARE IN ANY WAY SERIOUS ABOUT PLAYING FLIGHT SIMS WITH AN SENSE OF REALISM – IN FACT AS AN ANALOGUE DEVICE, IT CAN BE USED FOR JUST ABOUT ANYTHING.

THE MAJORITY OF THE DOMINATOR'S TEST TIME WAS SPENT TACKLING JUST ONE GAME – THE MOST UP-TO-DATE FLIGHT SIM ON THE PLAYSTATION – *ACE COMBAT 2* BY NAMCO.

HERE IT PERFORMED ADMIRABLY, WITH GOOD ERGONOMICS AND EVEN A TOP HAT CONTROL FOR THE THUMB, WHICH PRESUMABLY COULD BE USED FOR LOOKING LEFT/RIGHT, UP/DOWN IN A GAME IF THIS WAS SPECIALLY PROGRAMMED IN.

THE BUTTONS ALL SEEM FIRM ENOUGH, ALTHOUGH THE STICK ITSELF DOES FEEL A LITTLE BRITTLE, AND HEAVY HANDED PLAYERS WOULD HAVE NO TROUBLE RIPPING IT CLEAN OFF.

THERE IS NO ANALOGUE THROTTLE CONTROL THOUGH WHICH IS A MISTAKE BECAUSE IT MEANS YOU HAVE TO CONSTANTLY HOLD DOWN A BUTTON, RATHER THAN LEAVE IT AT A PRE-SET LEVEL.

YOU DO GET SOME NIFTY TURBO FIRE BUTTONS, WHICH ARE BOUND TO BE USEFUL TO SOMEONE (WE NEVER HAD ANY NEED TO TOUCH THEM THOUGH), AND OVERALL IT'S A GOOD STICK FOR A COMPETITIVE PRICE (£29.99). THERE IS STILL ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT HOWEVER.

GAME		SCORE	WE SAY...
Transport Tycoon	1	78%	Absorbing strategy about transport networks.
Trash It	1-4	55%	Average hammer-based puzzle game.
True Pinball	1	85%	Highly overrated pinball tosh. No save game!
Tunnel B1	1-2	87%	Glitzy graphical showpiece. Short lived.
Twinbee Deluxe Pack*	1-2	65%	Vivid Japanese cartoon shoot-'em-up. Naff.
Twisted Metal	1-2	78%	Visually scrappy, but paved the path for...
Twisted Metal 2 (World Tour)*	1-2	88%	Remarkably compelling two player blast-a-thon!
Vandal-Hearts*	1	81%	Very Japanese fantasy strategy RPG. Bloody.
Victory Boxing	1-2	90%	Fast and smooth rendition of the 'sport.'
Viewpoint	1	74%	Glossy isometric shoot-'em-up. Bad slowdown.
Virtual Golf	1-4	61%	Drab golf sim, *Actua Golf 2* is much better.
Virtual Pool	1-2	68%	Great PC game, awkward and slow on PSX.
V-Rally	1-4	87%	Fast and accurate rally sim with great split screen.
VR Baseball '97	1-2	80%	Excellent and comprehensive sim of the sport.
V-Tennis	1-2	75%	Bland tennis game. Get *Sampras* or *Smash Court*.
Warcraft 2: The Dark Saga	1	86%	Utterly compelling medieval strategy fest!
Warhammer: SOTHR	1	82%	Unbelivably complex, but rewarding war game.
Warhawk	1	68%	Distinctly adverage helicopter shoot-'em-up.
WCW Vs The World	1-2	79%	Best wrestling game on PSX, until the next one.
Wild Arms*	1	85%	Hugely enjoyable RPG with serious challenge.
Williams' Arcade's Greatest	1-2	84%	Decent retro pack. Best: *Robotron*, *Defender*.
Wing Commander III	1	82%	Expensive space opera, involving plot.
Wing Commander IV	1	67%	Even more costly, but minus originality.
Wipeout	1-2	94%	A state-of-the-art pop culture racer. Now weary.
Wipeout 2097	1-2	93%	Far better than *Wipeout* – a stunning game.
World Cup Golf	1-8	71%	Wholly rendered golf sim. Better than average.
Worms	1-4	92%	Crap looking, but oh-so playable in multi-player.
Wrestlemania	1-4	74%	Wrestling – not a real sport. Game sucks.
X2	1-2	77%	Amazing looking shoot-'em-up, but too hard!
X-Com: Enemy Unknown	1	82%	Compelling turn based strategy adventure.
X-Com: Terror from the Deep	1	88%	Deeply involving underwater strategy game.
Xevious 3D/G*	1-2	72%	Collection of every *Xevious* game. Not bad.
Zeitgeist*	1	51%	Incredibly slow shoot-'em-up. Worthless.
Zero Divide*	1-2	68%	Hopelessly clumsy robot beat-'em-up.

POUND STRETCHER

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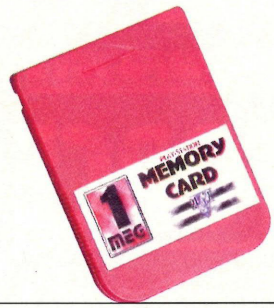
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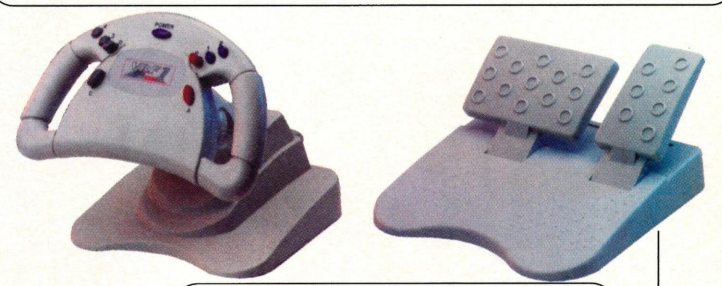
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NEXT MONTH PLAY travels to the Big Apple for the launch of Core Design's *Streets of Rage*-style multi-player beat-'em-up *Fighting Force*. PLus we also get to see more of *Tomb Raider 2!* Which is nice.

PLAY ISSUE 26, ON SALE 25 SEPT, DON'T MISS IT!



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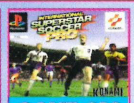
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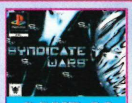
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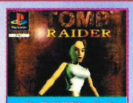
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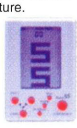
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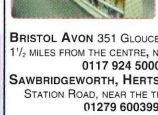
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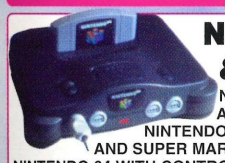
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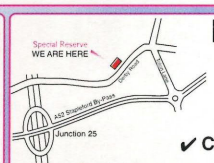
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